Evaluating Education:
Normative Systems and Institutional Practices

Sharon Rider
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World Class Universities

A Contested Concept

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Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices

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This series addresses the normative implications of and assumptions behind schemes for assessing and assuring the quality of education at all levels and the role of education in the knowledge society. Educational assessment in most countries has become a standardized function of governments and funders, raising concerns that the distinctive aims of different parts of the educational system and their inherent values base will be eroded over time. Moreover, contemporary education research tends to be compartmentalized, having limited contact with relevant research in philosophy, sociology, history, economics and management studies. This series seeks to rectify this situation by: - examining the historical development, theoretical underpinnings and implicit conceptual assumptions of different regulatory and evaluative regimes and making these explicit - investigating the implicit or explicit values exemplified in and buttressed by policy, and studying its implications in practice - proposing and developing models for alternative practices for realizing goals and promoting norms tied to different conceptions of the purposes of public education and the mission of the university. The series will focus on the pragmatic as well as the theoretical aspects of valuation activities in education and foster dialogue between different approaches within the field, taking as a starting point the fact that processes of valuation are not always quantitative and that these regularly involve a variety of interests and actors. Thus the series will address the diversity of valuation practices, measurements and techniques in education in general at all levels – primary, secondary, tertiary and postgraduate, as well as adult and continuing education –, and higher education in particular, especially regarding potential sources of dispute or controversy. The series will also deal with the consequences of valuation practices in higher education, exploring the ways they resolve, engender or conceal conflicts of values, goals or interests. By bringing forward the normative and institutional dimensions, the series opens the prospect of providing more integrative coverage. This will be of benefit to scholars in the humanities and social sciences, and especially to evaluation researchers and people training to be academic and school administrators. Viewing the field through a philosophical, sociological and historical lens, while incorporating empirical research into the institutions of education and its instruments of assessment, the series seeks to establish and enrich understanding of links between values, pedagogy and evaluation.

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ISSN 2570-0251 ISSN 2570-026X (electronic)
Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices
ISBN 978-981-15-7597-6 ISBN 978-981-15-7598-3 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3

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The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Acknowledgment

We are indebted to the interdisciplinary research program Engaging Vulnerability at Uppsala University for generous funding which enabled the editors to work efficiently during the last phase of the project and to publish this anthology in Open Access.

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Chapter 1
Welcome to the World Class University: Introduction

Sharon Rider, Michael A. Peters, Mats Hyvönen, and Tina Besley

The notion of World Class Universities, and the use of rankings in general, has been an object of study for decades. Perhaps the first major critical work was Ellen Hazelkorn's *Rankings and the reshaping of higher education: The battle for world-class excellence* (2011). Just as the influence of rankings shows no sign of abating, neither does the impetus to provide practical proposals for how to use them to advantage, or, alternatively, to examine the sources and effects of the practices involved. Recent interventions belonging to the first category are Downing and Ganotice's *World university rankings and the future of higher education* (2017), while Stack's *Global university rankings and the mediatization of higher education* (2016) and Hazelkorn's *Global rankings and the geopolitics of higher education: Understanding the influence and impact of rankings on higher education, policy*

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_1

and society (2016) are notable examples of the latter.[1] The essays presented in the present volume are intended to contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon, its causes and consequences by filling three functions: (i) to provide an updated analysis of current trends in rankings and an examination of recent data regarding World Class University (WCU) initiatives relevant to the form and content of higher education; (ii) to study these especially with an eye to particular ramifications for work on the shop floor, that is to say, for university teachers and students; (iii) to investigate possible future courses and alternative trajectories.

Critics of rankings and the WCU discourse argue that the systems now in place have pernicious and perverse effects, not least on university faculty and students, skewing knowledge in favor of the calculable and cachet, the latter often a result of reputational and economic legacy. They argue that rankings do not actually live up to their promise of offering greater transparency and reliable bases for decision-making for students, university administrations, and governments. Rather, the algorithms are themselves both agents and effects of a technical ideal that lends a spurious objectivity to the processes involved in ranking, which, in turn, are integrated into marketing with ever finer differentiation and new sectors, giving rise to a steady stream of new rankings released to be utilized in the governance of global higher education. The ubiquity of rankings as a global service industry contributes significantly to the emerging redefinition of the social purposes of higher education, and facilitates the creation of a new, knowledge-identified, transnational capitalist class and new forms of social exclusion (Amsler and Bolsmann 2012).

With the development of research evaluation and the increasing sophistication of citation analysis and bibliometrics since the1960s, it has been possible to map the emerging economy of global science, at least on a comparative national and continental basis. The Institute for Scientific Information was established by Eugene Garfield in 1958. Garfield was one of the founders of bibliometrics and scientometrics, creating SCI, Current Contents, and Journal Citation Reports, and his work led to the calculation of the impact factor, and, later, information retrieval algorithms. The Science Citation Index, which was acquired by the Thompson Corporation in 1992, provides bibliographic and citational information from an expanded data base of 8897 (as of July, 2017) of the world's scientific and technical journals, covering over 100 disciplines. The SCI, Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) Arts and

[1] There is now substantial literature on the World Class University. On the critical side, a good deal of research has focused on problems arising from the rules of play in "the ranking game", i.e. the explicit conjunction of academic standing with political and economic power (cf. Rhoads et al. 2014). Academic and political leadership around the world, as well as faculty and students, use the various rankings available today as instruments for achieving their goals and realizing their values (Kauppi 2018; Hazelkorn 2016; Altbach 2012; Kauppi and Erkkilä 2011; Holmes 2006). Others are more positive to rankings and the notion of World Class Universities, seeing them as means for improving higher education everywhere. On this account, rankings increase transparency by making comparison and the basis for it comprehensive and clear. For arguments to this effect, see the publications emanating from conferences on World Class Universities arranged by the International Ranking Expert Group and the Center for World-Class Universities at Shanghai Jiao Tong University (cf. Liu et al. 2011).

Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) and the Web of Science were until recently owned by Thomson Scientific as part of Thomson Corporation, which advertises itself as "a leading global provider of integrated information-based solutions to business and professional customers". It is one of the leading information utility corporations, with some $8.5 billion in revenues from legal and regulatory, learning, financial, and scientific and health care global market groups.

Comparable "products" in the social sciences (SSCI) and humanities (A&HCI) cover bibliographic information from 3000 journals in 50 disciplines and 1700 journals, respectively. The SCI eventually became the Web of Science, which provides access to current and retrospective multidisciplinary information from approximately 33,000 journals. The Century of Science was launched in 2005, extending back-files to 1900 and adding 850,000 fully indexed journal articles from 262 scientific journals published in the first half of the twentieth century to the Web of Science. On 11 July 2016, Thomson Reuters announced a definitive agreement to sell its Intellectual Property and Science business to private equity funds affiliated with Onex Corporation and Baring Private Equity Asia for $3.55 billion, giving rise to a new conglomerate called Clarivate.

The connection between the handful of Big Publishers who control the bulk of academic publications (Springer, Taylor and Francis, Elsevier, Wiley-Blackwell, Sage), universities that control academic labor and ranking agencies constitutes an algorithmic form of governance through a template for academic innovation and development. After nearly a half century of neoliberalism, the regulation of university life through New Public Management technocratic measures such as performance indicators now serves as the benchmark for a global system of knowledge that encompasses some 20,000 universities and other HE institutions worldwide (Peters 2017).[2]

Since the early 2000s, the growing impact of global rankings as a means of restructuring higher education systems in order to increase global competitiveness has led to a "reputation race" and the emergence of the global discourse of the WCU. The latest annual rankings among (the predominantly American and British) institutions that comprise the "winners" are used by national and regional governments, among other things, to repurpose higher education institutions as players on a global market, following an ideal of higher education that is "unsustainable for all but a small group of marquee universities" (Mittelman 2018, p 1). One major policy strand of this discourse anchored the concept of the WCU in a global competitive model of the knowledge economy promoted by The World Bank (Salmi 2002, 2009). The model concentrates resources in a small number of elite universities, creating a greater hierarchical reputational differentiation, often separating teaching and research

[2]The ranking systems include: Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, est. 2003); Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities (National Taiwanese University, NTU, est. 2007); QS World University Rankings (Quacquarelli Symonds, QS, est. 2004); Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE, est. 2004); University Ranking by Academic Performance (Informatics Institute of Middle East Technical University, URAP, est. 2009); US News and World Report Best Global University Rankings (USNWR).

universities to link resource allocation to institutional profiling or other classification tools informed by rankings; by contrast, the social democratic model attempts to balance excellence and equity, with an emphasis on horizontal differentiation and a "good quality" university system based on the integration of teaching and research (Hazelkorn 2015).

It has been suggested that the discourse of "quality" and "excellence" has been used to legitimate attempts to capture the characteristics of "world-class" universities, anchoring the idea in popular and political consciousness, and fueling the scramble to identify the formula for building world-class universities. The world ranking systems emerging in the mid 2000s have helped engineer the global obsession with WCU and are engaged in the hugely profitable proliferation of new data sets that endlessly refine regional and discipline groupings. Yet there are many problems with global rankings, not all of which can be solved through technical improvements to indicators: the seemingly irrevocable dominance of elite US and UK institutions, the relative neglect of the arts and humanities, the lack of recognition of cultural differences, the focus on research at the expense of attention to teaching, and the coarseness of rankings and single composite scores that conceal the complexities of academic institutions, and misrepresent what universities are and do.

There are a number of fundamental questions to ask about the widespread push toward world-class status for universities around the world. Why should the aspiration to build "world-class" institutions overshadow or even crowd out other models for tertiary education systems, such as increased access and equity? Might citizens not be better served by developing locally relevant systems, without concern for their relative merits in a global comparison? Is the definition of "world-class" synonymous with "rich", and if so, what are we prepared to invest and what are we prepared to forego in order to finance such efforts? Are only research universities world-class? Can other types of HE institutions (polytechnics, community colleges and open universities, for instance) aspire to be among the best of their kind? If so, what would that entail, and how are their respective achievements to be assessed?

To begin answering these questions, the first section of the book consists of reflections on the nature of the beast. Part one begins with Jon Nixon's essay, "Disorderly Identities: University Rankings and the Re-ordering of the Academic Mind", in which he elucidates the characteristics of the dominant order engendered by rankings and the WCU ideal, and, in particular, how this order establishes a particular field for academic labor, circumscribing the space for following the norms dictated by academic professionalism. Finally, he maps out alternative routes that make room for principled intellectual and pedagogic activity beyond the metrics. In "Becoming World Class: What it Means and What it Does", Mats Benner surveys university strategies to achieve WCU status, and examines how such goals and strategies emerge from the reification of indicators associated with successful institutions or ones in ascendancy. His analysis shows how the fetishization of ranking hierarchies, publication patterns, patents and the like can undermine the quality of the activities measured through the increased monitoring and control that the adoption of, and adaptation to, the standards demands. In the last paper in this section, "Three Notions of the Global", Sharon Rider argues that the idea of international

comparisons between institutions and university systems assumes a confused notion of the global that conflates economic, political and epistemic ideals and yardsticks, with the consequence that the achievement of "global excellence" in one respect can actually entail deterioration in another.

The second section, "World Class Around the World", consists of articles that describe the conditions and study the implications of the world-class discourse in different countries from various perspectives. Cris Shore and Sue Wright draw on ethnographic cases from the UK, New Zealand and Denmark for their account of "The Kafkaesque Pursuit of 'World Class': Audit Culture and the Reputational Arms Race in Academia". Echoing Nixon's concerns regarding the disciplining role of rankings on academic culture, they consider the reputational arms race in terms of how HEIs are reconfigured through the audit regimes developed to win it. In particular, they examine the changes in institutional behavior arising out of the focus on international standing with respect to its effects on faculty. In "World Class Universities and Global Rankings", Jack Lee and Rajani Najdoo pursue a similar line of inquiry, here inspecting the footprint left by metrics on institutional conduct in the Global South. They address how the hegemony of the rankings is reproduced under different conditions and therefore with somewhat different effects. Most analyses of rankings focus on top or mid ranking institutions, often in the Global North, and therefore miss the specificity of the influence of international comparisons on the Global South, as well as their concrete effects on institutional behavior, emphasizing that the actors involved are not carried away by the storm, but are actively complicit. Judith Novak's study of a legal case in Sweden, Dickinson v. Mälardalen University, shifts focus from broad political and economic strategy to the creeping effects of juridification. Novak argues that litigation, or even merely the perceived threat thereof, is increasingly seen as a tool in the development and maintenance of WCUs. She demonstrates, however, that the reliance on formal rules and strictures is not simply one route to achieve the goals pursued. To the contrary, choosing this path will have significant repercussions on HE policy in the long run. Remaining in Sweden, in "World Class at all Costs", Mats Hyvönen takes up the now infamous case of the so-called Macchariani Scandal in light of the Karolinska Institute's tactics for maintaining and enhancing its position as a WCU. Hyvönen pays special attention to research funding policies in general, and, in particular, the role of the chairman of the Institute's Board of Trustees, the Liberal politician Lars Leijonborg, as an example of how the dream of becoming a world-class country in the increasingly fierce global competition can have far-reaching negative consequences for national higher education systems as well as for individuals. Finally, in "The Paradox of the Global University", Mitchell Stevens and Sonia Giebel elaborate on what they call the "paradox" of being a "global university". While touting international reach and reputation is a nearly essential feature of university strategic planning worldwide, institutions historically are servants of particular cities, regions and nations. International rankings and the competition for tuition revenue on a global market ignore the fact that all HE, like all politics, is (also) local.

The third section, "Playing The World-Class Numbers Game", scrutinizes the very methods and results of the comparisons that constitute rankings and relative

standings. In "World Class Universities, Rankings and the Global Space of International Students", Mikael Börjesson and Pablo Lilla Cea take a truly global look at rankings, analyzing them in light of the international market for HE. Their contribution links the rankings of WCUs to the global space of international student flows, demonstrating that this space has three poles, corresponding to three different logics of recruitment: a market logic, a proximity logic and a colonial logic. They show that the market pole dominates the space due to the high concentration of economic, political, educational, scientific and linguistic assets resources, and that this dominance is reinforced by the ranking itself. Focusing on Europe, in "What Counts as World Class? Global University Rankings and Shifts in Institutional Strategies", Tero Erkkilä and Ossi Piironen scrutinize policy discourse, paying careful attention to the likelihood that a given institution has any realistic chance of being counted among the top 100 and thus being designated a WCU. Analyzing the strategies of 27 Northern European universities in different tiers, they show that the discourse of global comparison and excellence has become more common. They also discern an emergent trend among those clearly outside the top-100 ranked institutions to refer to the regional role of universities. China is the focus of Tien-Hui Chiang et al's discussion of "The Role of the State in Excellent University Policies in the Era of Globalization". Using the successes and failures of China's Double-First-Class-Universities initiative as their case in point, they warn that the catchword of efficiency in achieving pre-set goals for HE may jeopardize state sovereignty, and that social responsibility can conflict with the logic of the free market, especially capital accumulation.

In the fourth and final section, "The Future of World Class Universities", the tone is intentionally optimistic and even speculative. Here the hope is to articulate visions of an alternative way of thinking about the world, classification and the university. Paul Gibbs's essay, "The Marketingisation of Higher Education", sets the stage by reviewing the structural changes alluded to in earlier essays in this volume, acknowledging that increased accessibility and greater transparency have been beneficial, while noting that these improvements, as consequences of market interventions by governments, media attention to league tables and stakeholder demands for skill sets has also led to a displacement from universities' core mission of educating to enhancing return on capital. Following on Gibb's reflections on the consequences of marketingisation, Michael A. Peters and Tina Besley suggest a way of conceiving the tension as a productive one. In "Contesting the Neoliberal Discourse of the World Class University: 'Digital Socialism', Openness and Academic Publishing", they contrast the global competitive model of the knowledge economy with a social democratic model based on open science and education. Arguing that universities need to share knowledge in the search for effective responses to pressing world problems of fragile global ecologies and the growing significance of technological unemployment, the paper makes the case for 'knowledge socialism', a communitarian ideal of a sharing and participatory academic economy based on peer-to-peer production, social innovation and collective intelligence. In "Spaces of Life: Transgressions in Conceptualising the World Class University", Sonja Arndt, Søren Smedegaard Bengtsen, Carl Mika and Rikke Toft Nørgård draw on Julia Kristeva's

notion of revolt, Emmanuel Levinas' conception of Otherness and Novalis' idea of *Romantisierung* to formulate an ideal intended to radically call into question the market and measurement as standards for defining World Class Universities. They propose that in lieu of the streamlined, benchmarked economic powerhouse ideal of a WCU, we should consider a greater globalism, one which includes the perspectives and interests of inhabitants of a world that no longer is and which has not yet arrived. The final contribution to the collection is by Ron Barnett, who offers a framework for "Realizing the World Class University: An Ecological Approach". Barnett asserts that the trope of WCU is employed from two rivalrous perspectives: on the one hand, by transnational and national organizations and institutions to promote global positioning; on the other hand, as a target of critique by those who observe that the WCU-discourse presses the interest of cognitive capitalism. In his intervention, Barnett seeks to find a way to hold onto the term—'world-class university'—that retains links with core values of the university. In his "ecological approach", Barnett focuses on the ecosystems connecting the university to the world—such as those of knowledge, learning, social institutions, persons, the economy, culture and the natural environment—and lays out the ways in which they are impaired. He proposes then that a 'world-class university' would be one that draws on its resources to advance the wellbeing of the major ecosystems of the world. Such a university, he concludes, would be a university in a *class-of-and-for-the-world*.

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Part I
What's in a Word?

Chapter 2
Disorderly Identities: University Rankings and the Re-ordering of the Academic Mind

Jon Nixon

Abstract This chapter focuses on the use of university rankings as a means of ostensibly achieving increased transparency and covertly introducing a competitive market which has impacted on the sector as a whole, on institutions, and on individuals. The systemic characteristics of this new and now increasingly dominant market-driven order are outlined, followed by an exposition of how that order has impacted on the mind-set of academic practitioners by defining the norms of academic professionalism and academic practice. A new kind of orderliness now circumscribes and defines what it means to be an academic. Some of the emergent but pressing alternatives to this identity-kit of orderliness are suggested: disorderly identities that transgress the spatial boundaries of the dominant order, challenge its control of the chronology of that order, and begin to constitute participative and non-hierarchical foci of pedagogical action and participative research.

Introduction

University rankings are now a world-wide phenomenon. Used ostensibly as a means of achieving increased transparency, and covertly as a way of introducing a competitive market into higher education, the various ranking exercises have had an immense impact on the higher education sector as a whole, on individual institutions, and on professional career paths. They have been instrumental in defining 'the world class university' and establishing the benchmarks for academic preferment. Within the UK, the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)—now re-branded the Research Excellence Framework (REF)—has in effect created a new and increasingly dominant order. This chapter discusses the systemic characteristics of that order and explains how it has impacted on the mind-set of academic practitioners by

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_2

defining the norms of academic professionalism and academic practice. A new kind of orderliness now circumscribes and defines what it means to be an academic.

I focus on one policy in particular: namely, the use of university rankings as a means of ostensibly achieving increased transparency and covertly introducing a competitive market which has impacted—in my view deleteriously—on the sector as a whole, on institutions, and on individuals. I begin by outlining the systemic characteristics of this new and now increasingly dominant market-driven order. I then show how that order has impacted on the mind-set of academic practitioners by defining the norms of academic professionalism and academic practice. Finally, I suggest some of the emergent but pressing alternatives to this identity-kit of orderliness: disorderly identities that transgress the spatial boundaries of the dominant order, challenge its control of the chronology of that order, and begin to constitute participative and non-hierarchical foci of pedagogical action and participative research.

The Shaping of the Sector

Over the last 30 years the ranking of universities according to their research output has shaped the UK university sector as a whole, had a profound impact on individual institutions, and been a major determinant of academic career trajectories. It has created a new ordering of institutions, which has in turn created a new order of academic prestige and status. Of course this orderliness has always been an insistent and pressing subtext of the UK higher education system, but the increasing influence of ranking exercises—and, in the case of the UK, the direct linking of one such exercise to government funding streams—has ensured that the increasing stratification of the university sector has kept pace with what until the financial crisis of 2008 was an exponential increase in its expansion. University rankings are continuing to shape not only the institutional landscape of the university sector, but also the mental landscape of its academic practitioners.

The mechanism by which the research ranking of UK universities is achieved was initially termed RAE[1], but has now been modified and renamed the REF. The RAE was conducted in 1986, 1989, 1992, 1996, 2001 and 2008. The most recent REF exercise took place in 2014, and the next REF exercise is scheduled for 2021.[2]

[1] The 1986 RAE predated the UK *Times Higher Educational Supplement* league table, which was first published in 1993. The inception of the RAE also predated the Shanghai Jiao Tong University league table, which was first published in 2003. Because it set precedence, the RAE—now the REF—continues to exert considerable influence not only within the UK but internationally. Indeed, the RAE might be seen as having served as a model for the later development of global rankings.

[2] Although the assessment criteria for both the RAE and the REF have remained much the same, with a continuing emphasis on 'originality', 'rigour' and 'significance', the REF has placed a renewed emphasis on 'impact'. See, for example, Watermeyer (2016), Watermeyer and Hedgecoe (2016) and Wilkinson (2017).

The prime purpose of the RAE—now the REF—is to provide a basis for the allocation of government funding to higher education institutions. Each university is invited to submit as its entry a profile of research outputs represented by academics' selected publications (up to four publications per academic). University departments are then ranked according to these profiles through a process of peer review (i.e. subject panels of expert academics). It is these rankings that determine the allocation of research funding each university receives.

Although presented as a means of encouraging research excellence across the higher education sector and of providing a differentiated system with the capacity to cater for diverse student needs, the exercise has had a stultifying effect by conferring on a small segment of that system the status and prestige of super-elite institutions and relegating all other institutions to second and third class status—and, in some cases, putting at risk their very survival. As a funding mechanism the erstwhile RAE and the current REF have, therefore, served to reproduce the deep structural inequalities across the sector—inequalities that, in turn, reinforce the social and economic inequalities across British society as a whole.

Moreover, this exercise in competitive ranking has been undertaken with the cooperation of academics without whom the peer review process would have been inoperable. Professional status has been accorded to those academics appointed to the various subject panels with responsibility for overseeing the assessment of particular units of assessment, while appointments to senior academic posts have been heavily influenced by applicants' potential rating in the research assessment stakes. Indeed, some of those who have been most vociferous in their condemnation of the research assessment process have been its greatest beneficiaries in respect of professional promotion and academic prestige. A ranking exercise that is continually defended as exemplary on account of its rigorous peer-reviewing processes would be impossible to implement were it not for the active involvement of those academic peers who chair and sit on its panels, occupy chairs in universities that disproportionately benefit from the results of the exercise, and spend a considerable amount of time preparing their departmental submissions at each point in the reporting process.

Academic identity is now bound into this new order. It is almost impossible to opt out given what is at stake—not just personally and professionally, but institutionally. The stakes are high: increased government funding, increased and enhanced staffing levels, more research students, enhanced facilities and resources, higher national and international profile, etc. Not to compete for these stakes appears to be at best self-defeating and at worst plain perverse: to be 'professional' is to enter wholeheartedly into the game; to stay on the sidelines is to be 'unprofessional'. For anyone who questions the premises upon which the competitive game is being played the space for maneuverability is highly restricted. The orderly identity denotes 'professionalism' and is commensurate with professional advancement and institutional loyalty. It would appear—within the current UK context—to be the only identity available.

The Established Order

It is necessary to understand something of the history of higher education within the UK in order to appreciate why the RAE was deemed necessary and why it has impacted—and through the REF continues to impact—so heavily on the self-identity of academics. The post-2008 recession has revealed the ever-widening gap between the welfare dream of the post-WWII settlement and its pragmatic realisation in the funding policies over the ensuing period. One of the unavoidable questions facing policy makers over the last 50 years has been how to manage their economies in a period of rapid globalisation and technological expansion. Crucial to any viable policy response to this question has been the development of a workforce with the necessary skills and understandings to face the challenges of late capitalism. The expansion of higher education was generally assumed to be a necessary precondition of an upwardly mobile and endlessly affluent society: universities were—unwittingly or otherwise—taking up a position in what has turned out to be an increasingly uneasy place between dream and reality, promise and fulfilment, consumption and cost.

The expansionist trend has been particularly pronounced in the UK and US. In the US, for example, 'between 1950 and 2000, the number of degree granting institutions more than doubled, from 1851 to 4084 [...] with total enrolment increasing from 2.6 million to 14.8 million students, more than fivefold in the fifty years' (Lazerson 2010, p. 14). The Netherlands, too, had seen student numbers rise steadily from approximately 50,000 in 1950 to approximately 500,000 in 2006 (Ritzen 2010, p. 162). Tony Judt, in his history of post-WWII Europe, highlights the rapidity of that expansion across post-WWII Europe:

> By the end of the 1960s, one young person in seven in Italy was attending university (compared to one in twenty ten years before). In Belgium the figure was one in six. In West Germany, where there had been 108,000 students in 1950, there were nearly 400,000 by the end of the Sixties. In France, by 1967, there were as many university students as there had been *lycéen* in 1956. All over Europe there were vastly more students than ever before. (Judt 2010, p. 394)

More recently other national regions have sought to increase educational opportunity at a bewildering pace: Canada, China, Japan, Russia, Singapore to name but a few. That expansion has had a huge global impact and has not come cheap. Responses to the soaring costs varied across regions. Jozef Ritzen documents what he terms 'the financial suffocation of European universities' (Ritzen 2010, pp. 133–156). In the US, on the other hand, annual expenditure for higher education went from $2.2 billion in 1950 to $134.6 billion in 1990 (National Center for Education Statistics 2008, Table 187, quoted in Lazerson 2010, p. 14). Where expansion has been matched by expenditure it has been justified on the grounds that universities provide personal advancement and national competitiveness. For the individual, universities were seen as the necessary route to the old and new professions; and, for the state, they provided the resources necessary for keeping ahead in the global markets.

The crucial policy issue was—and is—how, and on what basis, to fund what was considered to be not only a vital but an essential expansion of the university sector. Responses to this policy issue invariably involved, on all sides of the political spectrum and across the globe, an emphasis on increased privatisation and increased profitability. The economic liberalisation that characterised the last two decades of the twentieth Century and the early years of the twenty-first Century did not in itself signal the fall of the welfare state, notwithstanding the best efforts of many of its economic and political theorists. It did, however, illustrate what Judt (2010, p. 558) has termed 'a seismic shift in the allocation of resources and initiative from public to private sectors'. What that shift from public to private occasioned was a new order based on managerial efficiency, cost effectiveness, and competition as a perceived driver of quality.

University rankings have become an increasingly important element within this now well established order. Marvin Lazerson (2010, p. 84) pointed out that '[s]ince the 1980s published rankings of colleges and universities have intensified the competition, in ways similar to various consumer reports on the quality of every item that is available for sale'. Within the UK the older universities have almost permanent and undisputed occupancy of the premier league; the post-1992 universities are well represented across the broad span of second league institutions; and the bottom league is occupied almost entirely by institutions that have gained university status more recently. What we see are levels of institutional sedimentation that provide the bases for structural inequalities that define, restrict and control the horizons of expectation and possibility. Competition between and within universities does not foster equity. It creates winners and losers.

Universities are now the cornerstone of this competitive order. They sustain a large part of what Sheldon S. Wolin in *Democracy Incorporated* termed 'a loyal intelligentsia'. 'Through a combination of governmental contracts, corporate and foundation funds, joint projects involving university and corporate researchers, and wealthy individual donors, universities (especially so-called research universities), intellectuals, scholars, and researchers have', he argues, 'been seamlessly integrated into the system'. Universities—and those who work within them—have become, as he puts it, 'self-pacifying' (Wolin 2010, p. 68). We pacify ourselves though our acquiescence to a system the underlying principle of which is self-interest.

The Rankings Mind-Set

The RAE would have been impossible to implement—as will the REF—without the cooperation and collusion of professional academics. UK academics have consistently collaborated in a system that stratifies institutions by judging them all according to a common yardstick. Of course, universities are judged by other yardsticks—for example, teaching excellence and student satisfaction—but, within the UK, research output has over the last 25 years become the prime measure of institutional and academic prestige. The UK higher education sector is thus at once homogenised and

deeply stratified within an institutional hierarchy at the apex of which are a small number of research-led institutions fiercely competing for research funds, academic prestige, and high profile staff who are deemed capable of bringing in those funds and adding to that prestige.

The sector is also locked into a treadmill of academic production. Since the accounting system operates according to specific census points, research plans develop according to that timescale. It is imperative that research outputs are published within that time scale in order for them to 'count' in the overall assessment. Again, this both stratifies and homogenises institutions—and professional practices—across the UK higher education sector. They are at once wrapped into a common timeframe of accountability, while having vastly different resources with which to meet the accountability requirements. As each census point approaches the job market intensifies as institutions vie for the most prestigious and research-active staff and the pressure to publish in the top-rated journals mounts as those journals struggle to process the back-log of submissions. The effect on institutional systems and on academic cultures is dysfunctional in its erosion of collegiality and its imposition of bureaucratic frameworks.

The complex balance of priorities that characterises higher education is thereby skewed towards the production of research outcomes published in what are deemed to be the most prestigious academic journals. This affects the morale and motivation of academic staff, for whom the complex balancing of priorities is a defining feature of their academic professionalism. Referring specifically to the RAE, John K. Walton has argued that 'these deceptively simple evaluation systems are convenient for managers, who can use them to bully academics into publishing in the "right" journals; while academics in their turn are tempted to follow "hot" topics which generate citations and discouraged (or even forbidden) from performing necessary but less visible roles' (Walton 2011, p. 22). Similarly, Michael Bailey highlights the extent to which 'the pressure to perform well in the RAE has resulted in academics being subject to ever-increasing layers of micromanagement and performance indicators whose logic are more corporate than they are academic' (2011, p. 96).

The negative impact of RAE 2008 was also highlighted in a survey commissioned by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET). The ensuing report analysed the influences of the RAE on departments of education in 30 institutions. It found that a significant proportion of the staff surveyed 'reported negative impacts on their morale and motivation, on the quality, focus and breadth of their research publications, and more generally on their career development opportunities'. They also 'reported a sense of struggling to work and develop in what they described as a negative work climate, and of being hindered in their engagement, at a good level of quality, in other academic and academic-related activities, in particular in teaching' (BERA and UCET 2010, pp. 6–7).

This sense of the RAE having detracted from the quality of other academic-related activities—and, in particular, from the quality of teaching—is reinforced by the findings of another survey conducted by the UK Open University Centre for Higher Education Research and Information. It found that between 1992 and 2007

there had been a decline in the number of hours UK academics from across subject areas reported spending on teaching and an increase in the amount of time they reported spending on research. The proportion of academics that reported a primary interest in teaching had also decreased since 1992, whilst the percentage of staff claiming a primary interest in research rose by 9%. Moreover, far fewer academics in the UK reported a primary interest in teaching compared with their international counterparts, with the UK lagging far behind China, South Africa and the USA. Although the authors of the report did not attribute this trend directly to the RAE, it is difficult not to infer a connection given the strong influence of the RAE in the period from 1992 to 2007 (See Universities UK 2008).

Not only has the RAE impacted negatively on teaching quality—by skewing the institutional priorities towards the production of research—but some would argue that it has also had a deleterious effect on the quality of the research produced. The BERA/UCET review, previously referred to, found that, 'while productivity may have increased, outputs were seen as not only of questionable quality (rushed, re-hashed, salami-slicing, etc.), but also skewed towards particular formats, audiences, and outlets (mainstream journals, rather than professional publications and books)' (BERA and UCET 2010, p. 31). Indeed, the extent to which RAE 2008 did in fact judge research quality is open to question. With over 200,000 outputs submitted as part of the 2008 exercise, it was not possible for panel members to read through each and every article. Consequently, panel members had to rely on proxy measures of quality, such as the supposed prestige of the journal in which a particular article had been published or even the reputation and/or professional standing of the author.

Institutions of higher education within the UK are increasingly homogeneous in their orientation towards a research agenda that has been shaped by the RAE and REF and increasingly stratified in respect of that agenda. Moreover, the 'winners' in the RAE stakes are inevitably on an upwardly mobile spiral, while the 'losers' are on an equally inevitable downward trajectory. The only discernible movement is among those institutions whose ranking places them in the middle ground. The 'winners' not only receive the lion's share of the public funding available through the RAE, but are best placed to attract funding from non-government sources and particularly from the private sector. Thus, an important aspect of the 'ideal type'—towards which the RAE and REF nudge institutions of higher education—is its appeal to private interests.

The institutional drift carries in its wake an academic drift towards an 'ideal type' of academic identity: the system is premised on the assumption that, if every university craves to be a little Harvard, then a significant proportion of academics yearn to be tenured professors at that top-rated institution—or at the next best down the road. Many argue that this is in the interests of excellence, but in many ways it plays against the excellence of those institutions that are not at the top of the hierarchy—and, as the hierarchy deepens and sharpens, the proportion of those institutions that lose out increases and is increasingly reflected in the allocation of funding. Just as institutions are pulled towards uniformity, so individuals are pulled towards conformity.

Academic identity becomes increasingly orderly: increasingly ordered according to the rules of the game determined by the ranking exercises and the prominence given to these rankings by the commercial press and funding agencies (including government)—and by the university sector itself. Ranking becomes a mind-set.

Exquisite Tensions

Peter Scott (2011) has noted: 'Altruism no longer applies outside narrowing "tribes" of universities. Russell Group universities[3] are beginning to choose only referees from other Russell Group universities on appointment and promotion committees, or as external examiners. Other "tribes" also favour their own (or, if they go outside, trade up—but hardly ever down).' If these habits become routine, he argues, 'everyone will be a loser—"top" universities and ex-polytechnics alike—just as both rich and poor suffer in unequal societies'.

The kind of tribalism that Scott sees as characterising the UK higher education sector is clearly detrimental to the collegial well-being of universities and as such impacts adversely on their institutional effectiveness. At the level of academic practice, this lack of well-being is experienced as a clash of professional priorities and as a generalised sense of not being able to meet competing and sometimes conflicting requirements: the most obvious being the competing—and sometimes conflicting—demands of both teaching and research excellence. 'At the meso level,' as Lew Zipin and Marie Brennan (2012, p. 256) argue, 'managerial offices tend to simplify complexities, rather than come to grips with them; while, on the other hand, at the micro level, varied locations of university action cannot avoid grappling with new ways and degrees of real complexity'. The result is what Zipin and Brennan call 'a deep and *exquisite tension*' (original emphasis) that generates a vast range and complexity of competing claims thereby eroding any sense of shared institutional purpose.

Looking beyond the UK to the wider context, the focus on global university rankings is occasioning a more extensive drift towards international conformity. Anthony B. L. Cheung (2012, p. 102) notes a 'longstanding concern from some universities and academics that, with the reliance on international benchmarks developed by the USA and Western Europe, research in the humanities and social sciences of local significance has been increasingly marginalised'. The pull, in other words, is towards a notion of research excellence that is narrowly defined with regard to US, and to some extent UK, criteria—and that, as a consequence, fails to recognise any 'local significance' that falls outside that definition. Here the 'deep and *exquisite* tension' results from the global rankings restricting and diminishing the international diversity of universities world-wide.

[3] The Russell Group is a grouping of 20 UK universities that together receive two thirds of research and contract funding in the UK. It was established in 1994 to promote their collective interests.

Simon Head has observed that '[w]ith the recession eating away at the budgets of universities on both sides of the Atlantic, the times are not propitious for those hoping to liberate scholarship and teaching from harmful managerial schemes'. Such liberation, he argues, would require 'a stronger and better-organized resistance on the part of the academy itself than we have seen so far' (Head 2011, p. 64). It would certainly involve among other things a new academic professionalism and a new sense of academic identity. It is difficult to see how the 'harmful managerial schemes'—of which university rankings are a component element—can be resisted without the refusal of academic workers to collude in their implementation. New forms of collaborative endeavour—professional, institutional, and sector-wide—are required to provide collective solutions to what are essentially collective problems.

Any such search for solutions would require an acknowledgement by the sector as a whole that university rankings are part of a collective problem that can only be addressed collectively; and any such acknowledgement would constitute a disruption of the order by challenging its underlying assumptions: namely, that competition necessarily drives up quality, that markets are invariably beneficial, and that productivity must lead to profitability. Any such disruption would, in turn, require a disorderly academic presence—a pre-emergent identity—driven by discontent with the '*exquisite* tension' implicit in the established order: what William Morris, in a lecture entitled 'The hopes of civilization' given to the Hammersmith Branch of the Socialist League in 1885, called 'the holy flame of discontent' (See Morris 2004, p. 321).

Disorderly Identities

The kinds of emergent—or pre-emergent—disorderly identities I am thinking of manifest themselves in activity that by disrupting the dominant order insists upon the possibility of new beginnings. Of course, not all such activity points to new ways forward: some may be deeply reactionary and simply motivated by a desire to return to 'the good old days', while others may be merely a novel re-branding of some aspects of the established order.

Raymond Williams, writing about the nature of cultural formation referred to these elements as 'emergent', 'residual' and 'dominant', and emphasised the difficulty and importance of distinguishing between them:

> By 'emergent' I mean, first, that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created. But it is exceptionally difficult to distinguish between those which are really elements of some new phase of the dominant culture […] and those which are substantially alternative or oppositional to it: emergent in the strict sense, rather than merely novel. (Williams 1977, p. 123)

It is worth bearing these distinctions in mind when considering the plethora of so-called initiatives that claim to be radical and progressive, but turn out to be recycled versions of the same old tired and often regressive policies that are designed to give

an impression of innovation while maintaining the *status quo*—the REF being a case in point since it is indistinguishable in its underlying purposes from the RAE which it supersedes.

Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish genuinely emergent elements, and Williams' analysis is again helpful in enabling us to do so:

> What matters, finally, in understanding emergent culture […] is that it is never only a matter of immediate practice; indeed it depends crucially on finding new forms or adaptations of form. Again and again what we have to observe is in effect a *pre-emergence*, active and pressing but not yet fully articulated, rather than the evident emergence which could be more confidently named. (Williams 1977, p. 126, original emphasis)

Tactically this is an important point, since one of the ploys of reactionary rhetoric has always been to assert that unless one can confidently name one's alternatives one has no right to criticise.[4] Williams reminds us that in order to gain a critical purchase we must on occasion speak from a position that is as yet undefined or only partially defined and from within an identity that is as yet unnamed or named only in deficit terms. Such is the case with what I am terming disorderly identities, which, although oppositional, are oriented towards an emergent or *pre-emergent* order discernible in the opportunities for new forms of inter-connectivity, new ways of using one's own and others' time creatively, and new modes of cooperation and collaboration: opportunities that can only emerge through the disruption to existing sectoral *boundaries*, bureaucratic *time-frames*, and institutional *hierarchies*.

Disrupting Boundaries

The academic workplace is heavily bounded institutionally, professionally and epistemologically. Moreover, the boundaries denote highly contested territories: the university sector as a whole defends its patch against other sectors in the struggle for public and private funding; institutions fiercely defend their institutional autonomy and their particular market niche—and, also, their competitive edge if they are fortunate enough to be able to claim it; academics defend—with equal ferocity—the status of their particular group and their individual status within that group and the prestige that goes with it; disciplines and fields of study hedge themselves round with professional associations, learned journals and a seeming endless stream of academic conferences, seminars and symposia. Breaking down these boundaries—or transforming them into fuzzier and more permeable borders—does not necessarily break up the competition and exclusivity by which they are maintained. Indeed, it may compound the problem of specialisation by spawning and ever-increasing number of exclusive sub-fields. But it can make the break-up of boundaries more likely, and, in so doing, hold out the possibility of increased inter-connectivity

[4] Hirschman (1991) provides a witty and ironic analysis of the uses of reactionary rhetoric to deny the validity of legitimate criticism.

across institutions, between academic workers, and among different disciplines and fields of study.[5]

Disrupting Time-Frames

'As gravity bends light, so power bends time', writes Christopher Clark (2018): 'time is not a neutral, universal substance […] but a contingent cultural construction whose shape, structure, and texture have varied' (pp. 1, 4). As experienced by academic workers, time is almost entirely framed by institutional requirements. Of course, all organisations need agreed time-frames in order to ensure the fulfilment of complex tasks requiring individual and collective effort. However, time has now become one of the prime tools of management: external agencies impose deadlines on universities, which then pass a foreshortened version of those deadlines down the line to department heads, who in turn impose still tighter deadlines on those on the front line of 'delivery'. Complexity intensifies and gains pace as it is passed down the system (in the form of what, as noted above, Zipin and Brennan term 'a deep and *exquisite* tension'). The apocalyptic endpoint of this intensification of speed and complexity is—to mix metaphor and cliché—an organisational *dance macabre* within which the only observable activity is akin to headless chickens chasing their tails. To disrupt the dance is deemed to be 'unprofessional': a clear sign that one has distanced oneself from the corporate endeavour that represents university life and begun to join the ranks of the shirkers and skivers. Yet the disruption of the dance is essential if the organic time of academic work—the time to read and re-read, to research and think, to teach and mentor, and to write and re-write—is to be preserved and valued. It is only through the creative use of time that academic work becomes creative.[6]

Disrupting Hierarchies

Despite much academic rhetoric extolling democratic participation and distributed leadership, universities in the UK remain deeply and complicatedly hierarchical in both their management and governance. Moreover, the various hierarchies of seniority, status and prestige—each of which may be mystifying in its opacity—often collide in the course of everyday interaction as well as in the process of more formal

[5] The debate on cross-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary pedagogic practice and curriculum theory is relevant in this context. See, for example, the various contributions to Gibbs (2017).

[6] For differing perspectives on the conceptualisation and organisation of time in higher education, see: Alhadeff-Jones (2017), Berg and Seeber (2016), Gibbs et al. (2014), Rider (2016) and Vostal (2016).

decision making. The huge disparity in contractual arrangements and conditions of service—with, for example, strict confidentiality relating to top professorial salaries and an increasing reliance on part-time staff and staff on fixed-term contacts—further complicates the culture of academic workplaces. With many vice chancellors and principals of institutions of higher education within the UK now on salaries well in excess of £300,000 a year, and some professors in some fields drawing both a hefty academic salary and a professional salary from other sources—and with women under-represented in the higher echelons of academia—universities have become extremely *un*equal workplaces. The potential for genuine cooperation and collaboration in such circumstances is extremely limited. Nevertheless, attempts to disrupt this force field of overt and covert hierarchies and establish small spaces for working together collectively—and against the grain of the structural inequalities inherent in the institution—do at least begin to model what collaborative practice and cooperative ways of thinking together might look like.[7]

Conclusion

Although university ranking exercises such as the RAE and REF locate institutions, departments and/or individuals on a scale, they are in effect zero-sum exchanges in which one institution's or individual's gain becomes another's loss. That in turn becomes a mind-set which shapes academic identities and institutional cultures by prioritising competition over cooperation. What Richard Sennett (2012, pp. 65–95) calls 'the fragile balance' between competition and cooperation—the give and take of human exchange—is thereby destroyed. Unlike differentiating exchanges that recognise different contributions and encourage cooperation and collaborative endeavour, zero-sum exchanges recognise only winners and losers. Within the UK university sector this prioritising of competition over cooperation has resulted in sectoral fragmentation, institutional stratification and professional atomisation.[8] It is only at precise points of interconnectivity, creative work and cooperative practice that we can begin to develop alternative notions of what it means to be an academic—and thereby counter the competitive culture that currently dominates the higher education sector and point the way forward to a new kind of 'world class university'.

[7] I develop this theme more fully—and more broadly in relation to the structural inequalities within the higher education sector and the contested notion of higher education as a public good—in Nixon (2011, 2015).

[8] See Nixon (2008, pp. 16–24) for a fuller discussion of this process of fragmentation, stratification and atomisation.

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Chapter 3
Becoming World Class: What It Means and What It Does

Mats Benner

Abstract On the basis of a critical survey of university strategies, it is argued that universities reify and objectify "world class" and turn it into absolute and precisely defined goals (location in ranking hierarchies, publication patterns, number of start-ups and licens-es, etc.) and that this in turn is based on a skewed reading of the ascendancy of some universities (notably leading US higher education institutions) to that level. The notion of a "world class university" may therefore be self-defeating as it entails even closer monitoring, adaptation and adoption of indicators and steering that is outlined accordingly.

Introduction

"World class" has become a central goal in university policy worldwide. The concept in turn is dependent on the emergence of measurements and yardsticks of "world class" and how it might be attained. University rankings form a key part in the construction of "world class" as a measurable and purportedly attainable goal for universities—and the construction of an organizational identity as "ranked" and "measured". This paper affords an analysis of how one instrument in the constitution of "world class", university rankings, influences university governance. In particular, the focus is on how universities of different composition and historical roles have—and could—relate to rankings and other proxies of "world class".

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_3

Measuring Universities—A Historical Sketch

Who's afraid of world class universities these days? No one it seems. China's Double First Class Plan from 2015 was set up to propel 42 universities and 185 disciplines into leading international standard, aiming to make China a globally dominant "higher education power" by 2050. Japan's Top Global University Project (from 2014) took as its goal to make 13 universities part of the top 100 universities in the world. India's government, which has been reluctant to accept the rather dismal positions of Indian universities in global rankings, has recently launched an initiative to designate six universities "Institutions of Eminence", with degrees of freedom and resource allocation far surpassing those of ordinary higher education institutions in the country (Benner, forthcoming). Europe has had its share of world class initiatives as well. The German excellence initiative is one of the most profiled initiatives on the continent, France has in waves initiated schemes to propel its universities to the global top rank. In 2009, then President Sarkozy stated: "Our aim is quite simple: we want the best universities in the world." (cited in *The Guardian*, December 142,009). The European Union at first eschewed and criticized global rankings, and instead supported the development of U-Multirank as an alternative allowing "users to develop their own personalised rankings by selecting indicators in terms of their own preferences" (https://www.umultirank.org/about/u-multirank/the-project/). However, more recently, the European Union has championed the notion of "networks of universities" (initially launched by France's President Macron), helping European universities to boost their academic performance and the mobility of students and faculty, with the following motive: "The consensus is that European universities are not competitive on a global level—even the best we have are far behind ones in Asia and the US" (Kelly 2018).

Hence, the notion of a global hierarchy of universities—with world class as denominator of a top position within that hierarchy—has taken hold of university policy. The pattern is not valid everywhere, it should be noted. The two main exceptions are Africa and Latin America, where pressing concerns—social cleavages and historical legacies chief among them—have made their structure and work modes less compatible with the definitions of "world class" (Hazelkorn 2012). But with those two notable exceptions, "world class", despite its fluidity, has emerged as a yardstick for university policies in many countries. But what does world class mean? And how is that meaning transformed into action within universities?

World Class: Theoretical Foundations and Implications

In this paper, I will argue that rankings function as a critical intermediary between global trends on the one hand, and university activity on the other hand. A global university system, and ensuing notions of world class, are shaped by comparative instruments, with rankings emerging as stratifying devices. Rankings also function

as devices which in themselves create and reproduce notions of what qualities in universities are and which instigate strategic re-considerations within universities.

The underlying assumption of this paper is that rankings are part of the emergence of measurements and hierarchizations of heterogeneous entities, driven by factors that both allow for standardization and match articulated needs to standardize. Any kind of organizational structure, from voluntary associations to nation-states, builds on standardized measures for inclusion and exclusion (Ahrne 1994). This organizational quality in turn has allowed for the standardization of such organized activities, including comparisons and measurements, a standardization that is embedded in processes of vertical management control. Organizations tend also to be closed to one another, even if they operate in similar areas, to ensure secrecy and to elevate organizational dominance over members and employees (Costas and Grey 2016). However, universities have traditionally been viewed and understood as loose confederations of activities and people, with few uniting elements and relatively diffuse organizational hierarchy within them—or for that matter clear-cut barriers between them and the external world (Clark 1983). Taken together, this would make comparisons and rankings meaningless, as the boundaries between universities as well as their internal relations, are too vague to pinpoint what is actually being measured and compared.

Nonetheless, several processes have, arguably, reduced the fuzziness (and ensuing incomparability) of universities. An organizational structure has emerged as a global template of efficiency and accountability, affecting also areas and activities that have been impossible or difficult to square with such structures. Rankings have also evolved in productive parallel with the rise of a world order of science, affecting how societies are governed (and by whom), but also leading to an increased homogenization on a global scale of the processes and organizational forms of science (Drori et al. 2003). Rankings thus emerge as part of an instrument to measure and compare activities that increasingly share properties, which has, unsurprisingly, fostered a rise of managerial techniques to control behavior and relations within universities, with rankings serving as a foundation for such managerial ambitions (Huzzard et al. 2017). Rankings may thus provide an impetus for universities to disentangle and describe their actions, but they may equally well contribute to a homogenization of practices and disregard of specific conditions pertaining to their location, history and financial underpinnings (Muller 2018).

The outcome of this, I assume, is an unstable combination of global templates and local practices, forged by combinations of imitation and the enmeshing of global and national (or local) practices (Fourcade 2009; Wedlin 2006). While universities are increasingly exposed to global comparisons, and indeed voluntarily expose themselves to such hierarchical exercises, their approach to such comparisons can be expected to vary according to their historical role and missions, resource base, task structure and their form of patronage (Thoening and Paradeise 2016). We should therefore distinguish between different types of universities and how they might approach and deploy rankings and other structuring devices. Such distinctions, which we will turn to later on in this chapter, should reflect the aforementioned factors:

- Historical role
- Missions
- Resource base
- Task structure
- Patronage

To sum up, I assume that rankings and notions of world class have become globally dispersed and disseminated, and enmeshed in university practices, and their organizational structure and internal relations. However, I also assume that the uptake will vary depending the organizational properties of universities. This leads us to the issue of what rankings are, how they have evolved, how they are structured, before we venture onto the issue of how world class is understood and acted upon by different types of universities.

Can Universities be Compared?

Universities, while truly international as organizations (in their professional nomenclature and their disciplinary structure), have historically been closely tied to national conditions and national concerns, with only limited opportunities to compare beyond (and often also within) national boundaries. Indeed, most comparative studies of universities have emphasized the systemic difference between universities in different national settings (Clark 1983).

Their funding and their tasks have been at the same time detailed and loose. Governments or other patrons regulated the administrative procedures for universities and gave broad remits for their missions in education and research. Within this broad framework, universities enjoyed considerable operational autonomy (Clark 1983). Hence, universities have operated in a concomitantly national, political and autonomous space. While there were certainly sharp demarcations within the group of universities—with differences in funding and reputation to match—these demarcations were seldom or never translated into lists or explicit hierarchies, neither domestically or internationally. Following Clark's typology, universities were either market-oriented, politically-oriented, or academically-oriented in their governance. Market-oriented universities—exemplified by the USA—were determined by competitive forces, either in the form of pecuniary resources (the recruitment of fee paying students, the mobilization of external support for research in competitive processes), and operated in an organizational ecology with competition-based (and therefore variable) positions. A typical such hierarchization is afforded by Hermanowicz (2010), who distinguishes between elite universities, pluralist universities, and community colleges. Elite universities (leading private universities such as Harvard and Stanford, plus a select number of "flagship" public universities such as Berkeley and Michigan) are marked by international recruitment of students and staff, large numbers of faculty being members of learned societies, prominent prize-winners, prestigious funding, and so on. Pluralist universities—typically state

universities with more limited research budgets—are primarily defined by their educational remit and broad recruitment profile, and have neither the resources nor the mandate to pursue activities that aim for the prestige of the top-tier universities. Community colleges in turn provide essentially societal services and engage only occasionally in research. This stable hierarchy was, albeit unintentionally, the template for ranking policies, namely, to concentrate resources and prestige to a small set of institutions while giving the rest of the higher education landscape more constricted and confined roles.

For universities in politically governed academic systems—Sweden is the example chosen by Clark—the overarching determining role is that of a prolongation of politically decided functions and governance mechanisms. Universities are primarily seen as extensions of political power, and are shaped and moulded by such expectations. They operate in a hierarchical system, though, as political steering is blended with historical appropriations and task assignment to the universities, with marked differences between old comprehensive universities, new comprehensive universities, old specialized universities and more recent specialized ones. But the ambition has not been to elevate a small set of institutions to a position of excessive privileges, but rather to mitigate the preexisting hierarchies by emphasizing missions and mandates rather than preselected institutional positions.

For the third category of university systems identified by Clark, those primarily governed by intrinsic academic procedures and values, hierarchies and positions are not tied to institutions but to professional roles. This gives the professoriate a dominant role in the procedures of academic environments. While this is not in itself incompatible with the accumulation of prestige in some higher education institutions, the direction of higher education policy is not to create a select number of high-ranking institutions. Instead, countries marked by "academic oligarchies" (Clark's term) operate on a sharp bifurcation, where universities are either part of a rather homogeneous group of venerable institutions or part of a set of practice-oriented sites, with only limited status differentials within those groups. Belgium or the Netherlands are clear examples of this, where a set of universities has been deemed more or less equally well-performing without any major differentials in funding or governance arrangements—or specific initiatives takes to elevate their respective positions.

Clark depicted the university systems in operation after WW2 until the 1980s—with some elements remaining even today. What has happened since has been a partial convergence, in the sense that the capacity of the US university system to produce high impact research, scientific prizes and globally leading institutions, has become a policy template for others to emulate (Aghion et al. 2010; Marginson 2009). While the recipe for how to emulate the US exemplar varies, and the recipe itself is not widely known even in the US (Cole 2010; Labaree 2017), the notion of "world class" and "excellent" universities has spread, as has the notion of "entrepreneurial universities", that is, universities that have developed governance models for evaluating them out of dependence on the state and instead engage with markets and other non-public stakeholders. For the Nordic countries, the last couple of decades have seen the rise of new ways of governing universities, with increasing

organizational leeway, performance-based funding and enforced mergers and reorganizations (Pinheiro and Geschwind 2018). While little of this has been explicitly based on ranking positions and the like—indeed, in some cases (notably in Norway), the effect has been the opposite, namely, to decrease the ranking positions of universities that have been merged (Bjørgan 2018)—the reforms reflect a globalized template of university governance. For the US, the last decades have seen continuity rather than change as the North American universities still constitute the very template for many of the rankings available. This notwithstanding, even they are in the midst of various mutations and reforms, notably, to ensure that their contribution to societal development are properly organized, so as to ensure affordability and alignment with critical issues for US society (Christensen and Eyring 2011; Crow and Dabars 2018).

The most significant change in recent history is, of course, the rise of Asia within global higher education and research (Benner, forthcoming). The main instruments for the elevation of Asian universities in the aforementioned countries have been resource mobilization and the recruitment of students and staff from the region. But a significant measure to bolster and direct activity has been the use of rankings. University rankings are used explicitly in university governance in some Asian countries, and influence recruitment policies, resource allocation and organizational strategies, certainly not as the sole input, but as one of several measures to assess achievements of individual universities, but also of the nation as a whole (these countries typically aim to have a certain number of higher education institutions within the global 100 or 200 universities). In addition, rankings have been elevated as a side-effect of the global mobility of Asian—in particular, Chinese—students, who use rankings as a selection device in their search for locations of their international studies (Chao et al. 2017).

The outcome has been the continuous proliferation of ways to enable comparisons but also yardsticks for university performance. Indeed, the very notion of "performance" has been established only rather recently, and rankings have been instrumental in this process. While both the theoretical and methodological foundations of this development are rudimentary, much of the literature on higher education institutions pointing at the increasing complexity of universities *qua* organizations, the practice of performance measurement and organizational comparisons has been undeterred. This situation reflects in part the globalizing nature of university environments, marked by student and staff mobility, and the mounting interactivity in communication and in collaboration which compels universities and university systems to relate to their environments, scan and map them so as to act on the basis of that information. This translational process has been largely driven by actors and interests that operate outside the confines and control of the higher education institutions themselves. We would therefore expect both a reflective deployment of rankings as well as a critical discussion of the value of the information they provide and how that information might feed into the governance of universities.

Rankings and their Methodologies

As mentioned, rankings are a relatively recent phenomenon in university governance and politics. Starting out as a media-based attempt (emanating in the US and then spread to Europe) to assess and evaluate which universities are by one measure or another deemed "best" in a national context, they have developed into a global template for measuring and comparing universities. The most important element in this surge of rankings was the Shanghai ranking (officially Academic Ranking of World Universities, ARWU) commenced in 2003, which set out to disentangle different groups or strata of universities globally. The Shanghai formula is not hegemonic, but has rather been complemented by a different model, spearheaded by the Times Higher Education Supplement's ranking, now split into two, QS and THES, with some commonalities but also some fundamental differences.

ARWU is often considered the most influential of all contemporary university rankings (Marginson 2014; cf. Fernández-Cano et al. 2018). Developed to serve as a yardstick for the renovation of China's elite universities, it has evolved into a powerful instrument to compare and assess the qualities of the world's universities. It is based on six indicators that are assumed to measure the degree of institutional excellence:

- Quality of alumni: the number of alumni that have received the highest scientific awards (Nobel prizes, Fields prize)
- Quality of teaching: the number of teachers who have received Nobel and Fields prizes
- Quality of staff: the number of staff belonging to the category of "highly cited researchers" in 21 different fields
- Quality of research: the number of papers in *Nature* and *Science* (with special reference to first or corresponding authorship)
- Quality of research: the number of papers in journals indexed in the Science Citation Index and the Social Science Citation Index
- Productivity: as measured in the number of publications per full-time faculty members.

The first and last of these indicators represent 10% of the total weight of the ranking, the other four 20% each.

The Shanghai ranking is based on an ideal university, the research-focused, large-scale (comprehensive, almost by necessity including a medical school), resource-intensive university that operates in a global system of recruitment, retention and reward. This, again, reflects the duality of the Shanghai ranking: it is based on the contemporary conception of a "world class university", namely, one which hosts scholars who are leading in their respective fields, at the topmost level (Nobel prizes, etc.), and at the next highest level (highly cited) and which have at its disposal instruments to assure that productivity is high and widespread.

Another ranking exercise that has been described as the most transparent and the least marred with methodological ambiguities (Fernández-Cano et al. 2018), is the

Leiden ranking, based solely on bibliometrics, with data provided by the Web of Science database (Clarivate Analytics). It has been continuously refined since it was launched in 2003, and is updated annually. In its most recent incarnation, it covers the period 2013–2016, and papers published in English and in so-called core journals (with an international, rather than purely national, reach and remit). It covers around 1000 universities worldwide: the smallest one produces 1000 publications over a four-year period (Rockefeller University), the largest one (Harvard University) 30 times more. Incidentally, they are number 1 and number 4, respectively, in terms of scientific impact at the highest level (1%).

The Leiden ranking uses two measures to rank universities: scientific impact and collaboration. Scientific impact is ranked at different levels of refinement, from 1% (as proportion of publications that belong to the one 1% most cited) to 50% (Fernández-Cano et al. 2018). This gives an indication of how influential a given university is in the production of the most influential publications (1% being a very small set, 10% a reasonably large one, and 50% indicating the breadth of publications and its relation to the world average). In addition, the Leiden ranking provides information on the mean number of citations of a given publication from a given university.

The Leiden ranking profiles itself as a transparent and reflexive ranking, transparent in that it only uses publicly available data, reflexive, in so far as it includes critical reflection on the very exercise of ranking universities and deploying the data available. It has also cautioned against the use of rankings more generally (Waltman, Wouters, and van Eck 2017).

Moving then to the other ideal type, which draws heavily on the inclusion of peer review, are the QS ranking and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE), respectively. These rankings typically profile a mixed set of indicators, organized into four broad categories: teaching environment, research volume and impact, international reputation, and collaboration with industry. These rankings are therefore more complex and thus target slightly broader audiences than the ARWU ranking.

QS and THE afford a degree of openness and reflexivity concerning their methodological considerations, pitfalls and opportunities.[1] A critical element for them is comparability between disciplines and areas of specialization for research performance, response rates among academics in the peer review, or the balance between national and international reputation.

They structure these inputs somewhat differently: THE gives 30% weight to the teaching environment, 60% to research (of which 30% is based on bibliometrical measures), and the remaining 10% to international reputation (7.5%) and collaboration with industry (2.5%).

Reputation surveys have a strong influence on these rankings. For THE, the teaching component represents half of the ranking value. Research represents 60% of the total value. QS operates with slightly different weightings. It does not include

[1] http://www.iu.qs.com/university-rankings/subject-tables/

financial metrics, but instead puts an even heavier emphasis on peer surveys (40% in the world university ranking, with more than 80,000 respondents altogether). It further gives a 10% weighting to responses in an employers' survey (40,000 respondents). It follows THE in including a citation analysis (citations per faculty, with weighting according to research areas, which accounts for 20%), faculty/student ratio (20%), and international faculty/international student ratio (10%).

QS and THE have been somewhat less influential as global yardsticks compared with the Shanghai ranking, but they are intended to be more versatile and flexible (Marginson 2017). They have also taken on a somewhat different strategic orientation than Shanghai, with various extra and sub-rankings tailored to different consumers, such as for newer universities, or targeting specific disciplines and areas. This reflects their foundation on the market value of rankings, and the ability of their patrons to secure increased revenue for ranking exercises. Their methodologies rely heavily on their peer review approach, which—albeit corrected to reflect the composition of responses—reproduce conceptions of a reputational hierarchy heavily skewed towards Anglo-Saxon universities.

In conclusion, rankings are based on a fundamental theoretical and methodological challenge, namely, to pare down a very complex set of activities into a small number of indicators, which are in turn conjoined. They also struggle with the relatively complicated matter of data management and the desire to manipulate and change weightings and relative importance over time with expectations of predictability and longevity. This, as we shall see, is in turn a reflection of the rather abrupt introduction of rankings as a measure of both communication strategies among universities. The fact that rankings have grown in importance as a source of identity and instrument for internal steering (and, to some extent, government policy) has increased the pressure on the rankings to be refined and changed intermittently.

One of the main weaknesses of rankings is the limited intersubjectivity, as ranking position tends to be different depending on the ranking at hand. Lund University ranks among the top 100 in QS and UWR, in the 101–150 category in ARWU, and as 353 in Leiden. While some of this variation is inevitable, it also invites an à la carte approach to rankings, as they may vary significantly and no stable standard exists. This has also led to the introduction of very heterogeneous and inclusive rankings—not included in this report—such as the multi-rank exercise, which offers rankings that may satisfy needs and interests of those institutions that do not necessarily score very highly in other rankings. There has also been a surge of more or less dubious rankings which elevate specific experiences at the expense of others (Donetskaia 2017). Multi-rank, the European Union's alternative measure, merely underlines this tendency, as its multidimensional form—intended to serve as a complement to the skewed focus of existing rankings—primarily reflects another university ideal.

The different rankings therefore represent different forms of predefined yardsticks of world class: ARWU favours the North American large-scale research-intensive university ideal, whereas QS and THE favor Anglo-Saxon universities more generally (Bornmann and Glänzel 2017). While this reflects tendencies in how universities globally are oriented and where they identify strategic directions

(Marginson 2008), it nevertheless indicates a defining weakness among rankings, namely, that they reproduce current understandings of university qualities rather than emerging ones. If rankings are to be sustained, they need to find measures that encourage innovation and change, not only adaptations to global best practices.

Different Types of Universities, Different Responses

A key element in the understanding of what rankings are concerns how they are met with, and acted upon, by universities. It has generally been assumed that rankings are an increasingly important backdrop to university strategy (Hazelkorn 2007, 2008). However, as has been argued above, the role of rankings and other measures of "world class" may vary between different types of universities. Thoening and Paradeise (2016) have identified four types of universities, and this typology can be modified according to how the types approach and deploy rankings:

- One category is the "top of the pile university", recognized as globally leading higher education institutions (e.g. Harvard)
- Another category is "venerables", with a solid national position but less pronounced international visibility (e.g. Uppsala)
- A third category captures the "wannabes", universities with only limited international recognition but with the explicit aim of enhancing their international status and visibility (e.g. National University of Singapore)
- A fourth category encompasses relatively small, applied and new ("missionary") universities, with missions tied to local rather than global conditions (e.g. Jönköping University).

Top of the pile universities belong the leading 20–30 universities in the world. They generally have large budgets, especially for research, compiled through a combination of state appropriations and competition-based funding, and/or with significant amounts of accumulated capital, land ownings or endowments. In their academic work, they aim for disruptive and innovative activities, and to match those ambitions recruitment of faculty tends to be global and recurrent; they consider themselves "recruitment machines" more than anything else. Strategic thinking among these universities is generally long-term, aiming to secure and possibly propel their status in relation to other leading institutions. Strategies in these universities tend to evolve from both the top level and from the level of faculty—i.e. university-wide leadership sets goals with regard to research incomes, participating in certain selective fora, and the formation of networks and activities that are conducive to the goal of being "truly world class". Their main yardstick is therefore international, and they aim not only for international recruitment of students, but also to attract faculty and funding globally.

How do these universities relate to rankings and other measures of "world class"? One might expect them to disregard such notions, but the contrary can be argued. Rankings may confirm their position as institutions that outsize their national role,

i.e. they not only serve as leading institutions in their own university system but also function as nodes in a global system. Rankings give their patrons evidence of their performance, but they also serve as yardsticks to elevate ambition, reduce internal slack and generally exert productive pressure as well as reproduce conducive modes of operation and generalize a quality culture and quality norms. With internal expectations of strong management, the leadership needs underpinnings: rankings may serve as one input for those ambitions. Rankings are primarily aimed at ensuring that no major reputation drop is recorded, and that the university is in good company: *top of the pile*, indicating that it belongs to a group of universities that define quality and impact. This also means, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, that these universities are less critical of the methodologies of rankings than the *venerables*; given that they aim for the highest positions in the rankings, they adhere and adapt to the principles of the rankings.

We have studied one of the universities in this category. For it, rankings are used among other criteria of a "leading" university: its top performance in employability, its global links, its location, its linkages and its position in global rankings conjoin to give the university its identity. In this case, the identity work has also laid ground for some radical redeployments of resources, including significant cuts in one of its faculties and the parallel inauguration of a business school as well as the construction of new buildings. In this process, rankings served as one of many inputs, in particular regarding international attractiveness and how that might be attained. When a new Vice Chancellor was appointed, a numerical goal was set to belong to the "super-elite" group of universities in the top 20 of the world (cf. Hertig 2016).

A second category deployed by Thoenig and Paradeise (2016) is that of *venerables*. These universities have a stable position in their national contexts, as leading or among the leading with respect to reputation and attractiveness, but their international visibility is less pronounced than the *top of the pile* universities. Typically, they would count as among the global 100–200 universities, reputable but without the position (or funding) that ensues with the elite status.

For these universities, appropriations are more modest than for the leading universities, and predominantly based on student number, historical trajectories, with some additional funding available for various profiling purposes (typically centers of excellence or collaboration with industry). These universities tend therefore to focus on the constraints rather than the opportunities associated with their position in the national university policy system but also internationally: "we will never be widely known internationally", said one vice chancellor of a venerable institution, as an indication of the (relatively) limited reach of rankings. Nevertheless, this university, like others in this category, keeps track of its performance and from time to time compares itself with equivalent institutions, both nationally and internationally. This approach is similar to the tracking within a field of similar universities but in adjacent systems that the *top of the pile* institutions do. On the basis of this, the university at hand argues that it has had a much stronger development as a research university in terms of scientific impact and scientific prizes than other similar-sized universities. In fact, and this is pointed out in the interview, it has actually taken some measures to profile its international reputation (recently its position in the

THES ranking) as a vehicle in discussions with the relevant ministry. In addition to such ad-hoc measures and activities, it does not consider itself very active in relation to rankings as its position is more difficult to translate into specific actions than it is for the "super-elite", where both financial, recruitment, and visibility goals are more tangible. Hence, this and other *venerables* are neither very high profiled nor entirely disengaged.

Like the *top of the pile* universities, these universities view THES and QS as the most relevant of the global rankings available—contrary to the popular belief (also in Marginson 2014) that ARWU matters the most. For universities with only few or no historical or active Nobel or Fields prize winners, ARWU is seen as too geared to extreme measures of excellence, whereas THES and QS are more versatile and flexible. They are viewed as valid even though the methodology, especially the dynamic view of weightings, is questioned, as is the lack of transparency. They also find the competition for services and arrangements surrounding rankings, including some of the *top of the* pile institutions, cumbersome, and they find it difficult to understand why some universities are so actively engaged.

The official standpoint among *venerables* tends to be that recruitments and resource deployment are not contingent upon rankings. However, it was observed in one interview that internationally recruited faculty benefit from rankings as they help them identify the institutional status of the university. Students at this type of institution tend to be less inclined to engage in ranking exercises, as they fear that it might drive the orientation too much towards research priorities and recruitment exercises internationally, to the detriment of current student conditions. The differences with *top of the pile* institutions should not be exaggerated, not least because of the small data set on which these observations are made, but rankings must align with their constrained resources, dependence on the state and their recruitment profile, which is still largely national. Unlike the *top of the pile* universities, for which the rankings serve as an important yardstick, the *venerables* studied here seem to fear that their fragile balance between different interests and goals are rocked if rankings are taken "too seriously": they express the anxiety of rankings becoming straitjackets, and instead wish for them to measure comparable issues but not point universities in specific strategic directions that are currently not attainable for them. This ties in with the generally rather constrained strategic maneuvering space of these universities: they strive to reduce complexity and risks, in contrast to the *top of the pile* universities which aim to maximize their exposure to change and innovation. Hence, rankings may serve as a disturbing force for the *venerables*; by keeping rankings at arm's length, however, they run the risk of stagnation and an overly strong focus on stability and incremental change.

A third category, applicable to the Asian experience (Benner, forthcoming), is that of *wannabe universities*. These universities challenge the *venerables* in particular by actually aiming to be counted among the leading universities in the world, if perhaps not (yet) as part of the "super elite" which still are far more influential. Wannabe universities share with the *venerables* the relatively modest international status, but they match this with a totally different type of engagement both from their patrons—normally the state—and from within the universities. Wannabe

universities are embedded in national strategies to raise resources to attract students and staff, both nationally and internationally (in particular from other Asian countries, but also to some extent from North America and Europe). Governments invest heavily in these universities, in particular for research, and align these expectations with various numerical goals, rankings chief among these. For the *wannabe universities*, ARWU seems to have a better alignment than QS or THE, as the former points in the direction of goals that are embraced by their patron governments, such as high impact papers, contributions to Nature and Science, and globally leading scientific prizes. They do not aim to the same degree for the rounded profile that QS and THE reward, and may be seen largely as emulating the North American ideal of the research-intensive and resource-intensive institutions that climb the ladder of international recognition via massive infusions of resources and recruitments into fast-moving areas. Their time-horizon is also quite short: the strategies of these universities tend to focus on and reward short-term and tangible gains in rewards and recognition, and rankings tend therefore to be of considerable importance as they give recurrent feedback on the development of specific fields and specific institutions. Ranking positions tend therefore to be included in the dialogue between patrons and universities. For these universities, top-down steering via managerial prerogative is an immanent feature, and rankings therefore deployed as an instrument to steer and evaluate not only on a general level, but also in some detail. If the *top of the pile universities* use rankings as a device to ensure that they are still defining the frontiers of their respective activities, and *venerables* use various techniques to ensure that rankings do not cause internal friction or radical changes in university governance, rankings function as yardsticks and measures of progress for the *wannabe universities*. Rankings identify, in a rather pedantic and straightforward manner, a set of institutional models and measures that can be deployed to reach the desired status. These are then in turn implemented through the organizations and applied systematically to recruitments and rewards (Benner, forthcoming).

The final category, *missionary universities*, represent the broad range of universities that operate with only marginal alignment with rankings, either because of their profiles (they are often single faculty universities) or due to their age and reputation (which are nascent). Simply put, their profiles and historical legacy are neither rewarded nor recognized in rankings. Among these universities we may discern different strategies, but most of them seem to deploy a strategy of being an actively unranked university, viewing rankings as largely unproductive; for them, the main matter is comparability and justice (in the sense that indicators should be dynamic and not simply punish newcomers). The *missionary universities* thus operate through the identification of specific profile areas, where they want to align innovative research profiles with educational and social engagement and collaboration. Instead of aiming to reinvent and innovate entire fields, or to ensure that their reputations are at an international level (whatever that is taken to mean), the *missionary universities* seek alliances with governments and other patrons who support and reward specific profiles. They share this trait with the *wannabe universities*, which aim to excel in particular fields where they can enhance their international standing (and align that with national goals). For the missionaries, the goals are somewhat

more eclectic, as they primarily seek to forge alliances with local interests, with more modest aims to excel in fast-growing globalized fields. If a national system of negotiated profiles in which historical factors were downplayed were to be established, the universities could leverage their status on the basis of such profiles. This would also enable them to translate their active non-engagement with rankings into clear-cut internal strategies of priority-setting and profiling. Without such alliances and such yardsticks of progress and success, they are left without direction.

Conclusions: Will World Class Prevail?

Rankings, despite their multifaceted origins, have morphed into a governance force to structure and hierarchize universities in the world. Rankings are by definitions intended to produce lists, and in so doing they represent a sharp break with one of the foundations of both higher education policy and studies of higher education institutions, namely that universities are embedded in their settings and contexts. They reflect the existing hierarchies and the steady state of higher education institutions—based on language, size, research income and other factors that are not universally distributed. While this has been alleviated by some measures (such as rankings of institutions below the age of 50), rankings tend to reward and highlight institutions that are already widely known and recognized. Rankings are therefore somewhat of a self-defeating game, as rankings reproduce existing hierarchies among universities, in particular between categories of higher education institutions: globally leading ("top of the pile") universities, "venerable" universities (say, top 100), "wannabe universities" (relatively low-ranking institutions moving in an upward direction) and an undifferentiated group of "missionary" universities with limited capacity (or willingness) to climb in the ranking tables.

Despite multiple methodological drawbacks, a shallow theoretical foundation, and commercial alignments and implications, rankings are instruments utilized for institutional capacity-building and university strategy. One reason for this is that rankings provide benchmarks for universities and identify certain properties associated with different ranking positions. Rankings, along with many other data sources available, are used by universities for a variety of purposes. They are rarely used directly (e.g. for recruitments and the like) in "mature" higher education systems, but more often so in emerging higher education systems where recruitments tend to be based on citation patterns, prizes and similar indicators. They have, in addition, become one of many outcome instruments available to higher education policy in its totality: from students to policymakers, rankings are seen as indicators of relative positions in a (partially) global higher education system according to a (delimited) set of objectives for higher education. They are also deployed to some extent by the higher education institutions as steering instruments in their profiling, external communication and internal processes.

The implications for universities vary. For globally leading (*top of the pile*) universities, as well as *wannabe universities,* rankings are of rather great significance.

For mid-range (*venerable*) universities with secure national identities and roles but variegated conditions in global comparison, they matter less. Rankings may instead pose a challenge for the rather loose organizational and leadership structure of these universities. However, somewhat paradoxically, the *venerables* profile their ranking positions externally and are therefore rather vulnerable. They are therefore the type of universities that are most affected by the rankings. As a result, some of the *venerables* have taken on a more active relationship to the rankings, for instance by hiring analysts and integrating ranking as one (of many) ingredients in their strategy work. Are notions of "world class" therefore irrelevant and useless? Unsurprisingly, they do not come across as panaceas, even for the more ardent followers, but as one of many different reference points for a university that claims to be among the leading universities in the world. The alternative would of course be to avoid such comparisons and such unstable claims (unstable in the sense that they may change, and that they do not reflect any objective measures or analyses). That, on the other hand, would entail a very different approach to external communication and perhaps also an activist stance among universities in the world towards the phenomenon of rankings and comparison altogether.

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Chapter 4
Three Notions of the Global

Sharon Rider

Abstract Why do universities go to so much effort to become "international"? Is it to create cosmopolitan global citizens, or to propel themselves up league tables? Is it to promote liberal democratic ideals, or to better recruit international students? There are actually different ways of understanding what is meant by "global thinking". Currently, the predominant thinking is centred around economic development. But the political ideal of "internationalism" and the philosophical concept of the universal as an intellectual virtue are also alternatives. In this paper, I discuss the sometimes uneasy relationship between these three types of "global thinking", while at the same time pointing out a common denominator - the connection between the global and the local.

Educational institutions throughout the world, universities especially, for very pragmatic reasons devote a great deal of time, effort and resources to achieving "internationalization". Aside from practical needs (student recruitment, climbing to better positions in rankings and league tables, etc.), there is a more idealistic notion that the meeting of different cultures is itself of inestimable value for the cultivation of the mind. The ideal is to transform students and faculty into world citizens through intercultural encounters and international experiences, which are thought to advance a desirable, and, for society, even necessary, liberal, progressive and democratic point of view. Further, social as well as scientific progress is thought to depend on the capacity for critical thinking that is assumed to emerge out of a cosmopolitan diversity of impressions, associations and ideas. But there are actually different ways of understanding what is meant by "global thinking".

The currently predominant conception, *globalism* properly speaking, is essentially concerned with *economic* development, in particular, the operation or planning of economic policy on a global basis. The governing ideal in this conception

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_4

is that of the market, in which free competition between individuals, institutions and regions in the exchange of goods and services leads to innovation and efficiency, to the benefit of all. In a different conception, which we may call *internationalism*, the guiding principle is a *political* ideal, having to do with the advocacy of cooperation and understanding between nations, where states and societies aim at inculcating in people the sense of solidarity between individuals, groups and nations required for a broadening of the rights and duties associated with citizenship ("international socialism"). The ideal is one of human freedom, to be advanced by the fostering of the values of mutual recognition and equality. Finally, there is a third conception, one which we may call *philosophical.* This is the ideal of *universalism* as an intellectual virtue, at the heart of the University at its inception, which culminated in the Enlightenment. In this paper, I will discuss the sometimes uneasy relationship between these three ideal types of "global thinking", while at the same time pointing out a common denominator, namely, the connection between the global and the proximate. My point is simply this: when we have "global" aims, or strive to be "world-class", we should be clear about what it is that we want.

While these three ideals (the economic, the political and the philosophical) *can* overlap, they can also come into conflict with, even undermine, each other. At that point, we have to choose what we see as the guiding principle, or mission, of the university. A "world-class" university in the economic sense is not necessary one from the perspective of the goals of internationalism or universalism.

I will begin with *internationalization*, that is, the aim to adapt the institutions of science, scholarship and higher education to the global market.

The Globalization of HE: From "Generous Mother"[1] to Tough Competitor

As many of the essays in this volume attest, there is much evidence indicating that institutions of higher learning are reconceiving their missions—who they are and what they do—in order to accommodate their roles as players on a global market (see also e.g. Connell 2019). The global activities of universities are certainly increasing: universities invest in branch campuses abroad, or offer what is sometimes called "offshore delivery"; universities devote substantial resources to attract foreign students as an important indicator of quality as well as a vital source of (tuition) revenue; they seek to enhance the prestige of the university or department through international recruitment of faculty; they emulate corporate business strategies to become more efficient, flexible and adaptable actors on the global higher education market through innovation hubs etc. That university management sees their role of global market player as primary is clear from the mission statements prominently displayed on university websites, which often include terms such as

[1] The use of the term *alma mater* meaning, in a general sense, something or someone providing noursishment dates back to the seventeenth century.

"world-leading" or "world-class". Even universities not counted among the top 50 by the main rankings (especially Academic Ranking of World Universities, or the "Shanghai Ranking" as it is usually called; QS World University Rankings; and Times Higher Education World University Rankings), but seeing themselves in the running, such as Uppsala University (n.d.), describe their mission, for instance, as being "active in a global context characterised both by partnerships and competition for talent and resources. Improving and strengthening our position as a dynamic and vital environment for education and research requires active and intentional efforts". This development is generally lauded by global, national and regional policy actors, student associations and the media, who salute efforts to respond to consumer demands and stakeholder expectations.

Starting with the premise that the university *is* an actor in the "knowledge economy", and confident that the market mechanism will ensure better quality at lower cost, it stands to reason that where the competition is most fierce, which is to say, "global", the quality will be better. On this view, the best way to achieve maximum efficiency in the system is to create a functional market, that is, a system in which actors are forced to lower costs and increase productivity and/or quality to gain a competitive edge in the pursuit of clients and customers (in the case of universities, these being student fees, government contracts, grant capture, donations, etc.). The construction of a market or market-like framework or field of activity is thus tied inextricably to competition—or at least to the perception of competition. Universities therefore adapt their ideals and practices to meet the requirements of competition on a global market, which is to say that they are being *transformed*, both through their own efforts to "compete" as well as through state and policy efforts to regulate and govern *how* they compete (Rider and Waluszewski 2015; Rider et al. 2013). But what does competition in the case of academic activity (research and teaching) mean, really? Who is competing with whom, and for what? In what does this competition consist, and what are its consequences?

While policy stresses global competition with other universities worldwide, in point of fact many, indeed *most*, universities are regional, and primarily serve local populations, organizations and institutions. This is particularly clear in the case of educational programs, which are locally embedded and serve local and national labor markets. Research, on the other hand, is, and has always been, transnational in character (see Giebel and Stevens in this volume). Whatever boundaries exist between international networks, collaborations and disciplinary identities, they do not follow or even respect national borders. On the other hand, what is true, even in the case of research, is that it is the regional and national higher education and research systems that provide the lion's share of the funding and other resources, both through state block grants and through competitive research funding mechanisms and agencies. However global the research program, funding, in most cases, begins at home.

Leaving aside that proviso, let us consider the idea of *competition* as such, to see what it means, or can mean, for research and teaching. To begin with, the term can be used as a mass noun: the activity or condition of striving to gain or win something by defeating or establishing supremacy over others, as in "the competition for customers". Or it can be used more specifically, as a number noun: a contest or

event in which participants attempt to establish superiority in a particular area, say, as in a beauty competition. It can also be used in the definite singular: to designate a person/group/organization over whom one is attempting to establish superiority or supremacy, as in the phrase, "I walked around the field to size up the competition". Finally, there is an ecological use, for the interaction between species or organisms to gain a share of a limited environmental resource, as in "the competition with ungulates seems to have led to the elimination of marsupials in North America."

Notice then that there is a distinction to be made between two forms of competition: competition for resources, as in the case of the customers and marsupials, and competition for status, as in the case of the athlete and the beauty queen. Naturally, a heightened status can lead to a gain in resources, and an abundance of resources can bring with it enhanced status, but they are nonetheless distinct kinds of competition: the beauty queen gets modelling contracts because of her having established herself as Miss America. She doesn't win the Miss America contest in virtue of having secured modelling contracts. In the case of economics, competition arises when actors compete to achieve something or obtain more of it, usually capital, but it can also be qualified personnel, technological advantage or some other thing. Competition for status, on the other hand, is about attention, reputation and recognition, which may or may not reap other benefits.

In short, competition for status and competition for resources are distinguishable, if not always distinct. As Wedlin (2014) notes, there are two differences that deserve special notice: While the grounds for resource competition is scarcity, a matter of increasing one's share of a limited commodity, status is primarily comparative. Status is a matter of supremacy or superiority relative to some other person, group or organization. Thus, unlike the given facts of what resources are or are not available, status competition depends on the framework or system which sets the terms for the comparison, and determines with whom or with what one is compared. Secondly, the reality of status is in the eye of the beholder: if it is not acknowledged by others, it does not exist. Hoofed animals in North America weren't trying to impress other mammals when they beat the marsupial competition. The competition in this case, as opposed to the beauty contest and the sporting event, did not require a judge or an audience in order for it to be a competition. But in the case of competition for status, the judgment of others is decisive. This means, among other things, that the competitors are not autonomous with regard to establishing their status, since their supremacy is something existing in the opinion of others. Further, having established superiority over another once is no guarantee for having it in perpetuity; status must be jealously guarded and upheld. By contrast, in a competition for real and unevenly distributed resources, one can defeat the competitor once and for all by driving him into bankruptcy, or by buying up the company; similarly, once extinct, the marsupial competition for resources is gone forever.

This distinction between competition for resources and competition for status can help us better understand a given conception of the "global". The so-called global competition between universities is in the main related to creating, enhancing and maintaining status; one speaks of a "reputation race" (Hazelkorn 2015). But recall what we said earlier: while competition for reputation can very well be global,

the competition for resources—funding, in the first instance, but also for students and faculty—for most colleges and universities, remains largely a national or a regional matter. This qualification will return in another form at the end of this article, with respect to the local or proximate conditions of thinking itself. For now, the main point that I want to stress in this short survey of globalism in the economic sense is the central role of a competition between isolated players, and the idea of the world market as some abstract arena that constitutes the playing field. This notion is strictly at odds with a previously popular ideal of higher education, one that I have labelled "internationalism".

Internationalism as Educational Ideal: The Politics of Human Perfectibility

I will make a few general observations about "internationalism" as an ideology. By 'internationalism', I mean ideas that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in conjunction with a period of radical political, cultural and socio-economic upheavals in European society: continuous wars until 1871; revolutions in industry, trade, communications, technology and science; state-building; major economic fluctuations; a demographic explosion; urbanization; violent uprisings, etc. These all had far-reaching effects on political theories and practices of education.

In the middle of the nineteenth century until after WW II, socialist and liberal internationalists alike saw the struggle for political and social reforms as something that necessarily begins as a national struggle. But both shared the Enlightenment's belief in universal historical progress. In the case of socialism, the main sources of influence were Hegel and Marx, while liberal internationalism was indebted to Kant, Bentham and Mill, especially the utilitarianism of the latter two. What all shared was a commitment to the ideals of scientific and social advancement, and faith in the intrinsic potential of human beings to transform the world according to the dictates of reason, the cultivation of the capacity for which would demand equal opportunity for education to achieve these ideals, all of which amounted to nothing short of universal human emancipation. The comprehensive adoption of the principles of reason, the enemy of tradition and superstition, would lead to progress on a worldwide scale toward the realization of freedom, equality, justice, peace and democracy.

Political internationalism emerged as a reaction to authoritarian regimes and the violation of individual liberties. Absolutism, colonialism and imperialism were to be abolished; they were not just unjustifiable crimes unto themselves, but they also led to war and impeded the continuation of the liberal or socialist reforms which would otherwise culminate in the realization of human potential everywhere. Education played a central role for both socialists and liberals, as it promoted the use of reason and, thus, freedom, progress and equality. The failure to achieve these aims was thought to result inevitably in violent conflict. Access to education was

thus a guarantor of both peace and prosperity. For liberals, this could be achieved by enforcing a minimal set of laws that would provide opportunities for individuals to realize their potential as full-fledged members of society. Liberals promoted reforms to achieve this objective at home and abroad within the existing order. The spread of liberal democracy, through its institutions and through education, would be a vehicle for the realization of human freedom everywhere.

Socialists did not think this was possible under prevailing conditions, which they therefore sought to abolish. Class society was itself the cause of social disharmony and antagonisms, and only its disappearance in favor of a universal classless order could insure peace and prosperity. In contrast to liberals, who saw no necessary antagonism in the capital-labor relation insofar as it is viewed as a contract between equals, the legality of which was secured by the state, socialists viewed the state itself as an instrument of the ruling class (the bourgeoisie in capitalist society), something to be overcome at the highest stage of human development. Or rather, when the state becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself obsolete. For laissez-faire liberal internationalists (who seem to be legion in our own day), to the extent that there exist economic inequalities between individuals or peoples, these provide an incentive to improvement through unrestricted competition and minimal government regulation. Progressive liberal thinkers, however, viewed social ills largely as imperfections of the system. And an imperfect system, like all situations deriving from human action, was perfectible. Indeed, human perfectibility was a central notion for liberal theory, which is why access to education came to play such a fundamental role for Enlightenment thinkers. Progressive liberal thinkers and statesmen insisted on the introduction of political and social reforms to turn workers into citizens.

Education in particular was a key sector for reforming not only social institutions, but the minds and hearts of the people who constitute them. Employers and workers would no longer be rivals, but rather partners in the market economy, and members of society endowed with equal rights and obligations. For liberals, it was a matter not of creating equality as such but of creating equal opportunities for all individuals. Liberalism aimed for a society that rewarded its citizens according to their merit, not according to their needs. At the international level, this meant equality of opportunity for participation in commerce and equity in access to the world's resources and the ability to cultivate them. All of this would require greater access to education. It was in this context that the US and the UK, for instance, started expanding their educational systems to train adults from different walks of life, not only in the latest in industrial and agricultural science and engineering, but also in the art of citizenship, by offering them the opportunity to study liberal arts together with their vocational or professional training at the university level, together with students destined by virtue of birth and upbringing to become lawyers, doctors and parliamentarians. Further, the hope was that the mingling of social and economic classes and ethnic backgrounds would expand the horizons of all, and lead to mutual understanding and cooperation. It is against this historical backdrop that the contemporary valorization of globalism and internationalization, combining political, economic and moral elements, should be understood.

On Knowing One's Place in the World[2]

Let us now consider the idea of education as the cultivation of capacities, ones that are thought by some to be indispensable for a good (fair, just, democratic) society and a good (dignified, fully human) life. What is the connection that many of us assume exists between the human faculty of reason and the idea that cosmopolitanism, or a global perspective, is crucial to its development? What is the conceptual relationship between a liberal attitude and "critical thinking" or rational self-examination?

In this section, I will look closely at the relationship assumed between the human capacity for reason and the idea that cosmopolitanism is crucial to its development. Martha Nussbaum is a noted proponent of the view that there exists an intimate relation between a liberal or democratic attitude, both toward politics and toward one's own life, and "critical thinking" or rational self-examination. In her essays on world-citizenship (see Nussbaum 1997, 2010a[3]), Nussbaum cites Kant's "political" essays (Kant 1983a, b). But oddly, given that the cultivation of enlightened, rational judgment is central to Nussbaum's educational project, she does not discuss in detail the question of the connection between rational thought and a cosmopolitan point of view. Let us begin then by noting what Kant seems to have regarded as what one might call "the cosmopolitan capacity of thought".

The faculty of learning through the free exchange of ideas and evaluations is summed up, famously, in Kant's three maxims for human understanding formulated in §40 of the *Critique of Judgment* (1951), to wit, the intention and capacity to:

(i) Think for yourself;
(ii) Put yourself in your thinking in the place of everyone else;
(iii) Always think consistently.

These three maxims are, respectively, the maxim of unprejudiced thought, the maxim of enlarged thought, and the maxim of consecutive thought.

Kant explains that reason can never be passive, since passivity belongs to the heteronomy of reason, also called prejudice. According to Kant, the greatest prejudice of all is to assume that that the world is beyond the grasp of human reason. This picture, Kant says, renders us passive, enslaved by and obligated to the authority of others. A man whose mind has been enlarged, on the other hand, however limited his natural gifts, can be educated to disregard the "subjective private conditions of his own judgment, by which so many others are confined, and reflect upon it from a universal point of view (which he can only determine by placing himself at the standpoint of others"). In short, Enlightenment means being able to see clearly that one has starting points that are contingent, and can reasonably be called into question. The 3rd maxim, viz. that of consecutive thought, "is the most difficult to attain,

[2] Parts of this section have been previously published in Rider (2019).

[3] The idea of a cosmopolitan ideal of culture and education is also sketched out in Nussbaum (2010b).

and can only be achieved through the combination of both of the former, and after the constant observance of them has grown into habit." Kant summarizes: "We may say that the 1st of these maxims is the maxim of understanding, the 2nd of judgment, and the 3rd of reason" (Kant 1951, pp. 135–138).

Kant thinks that the faculties of the human mind (or, as Nussbaum would say, human capabilities) can be cultivated through the right sort of education. Such a cultivation is first and foremost directed toward the actualization of the human potential for autonomy (self-legislation), in the individual, the community, and, ultimately, the species. The real substance of education is enlightenment, not information or skills; learning how to think, not what to think. Indeed, toward the end of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, in a section on method in teaching ethics, Kant asserts that the core of moral education is to make the student aware that he himself can think (Kant 1964, §50, p. 146).

The point of all of this is that unprejudiced, broadminded and consistent thinking does not arise spontaneously or without effort. It is something that *can* be brought about and fostered, i.e. while it can't be taught as such, it can be learned or developed. Kant goes so far as to say that it is through education, and *only* through education, the basic scheme of which is cosmopolitan, that humanity can achieve autonomy.

Nussbaum's (1997, 2010a, b) *Cultivating Humanity* and *Not for Profit* are attempts at providing such a global program suited to our interconnected but also fragmented way of life. Nussbaum thinks that she can provide a general framework for the development of the capacity for responsible action, autonomous judgment and conscientious decision-making, in public affairs as well as in private life, in matters both theoretical and practical. To the objection that ideals of, say, logical coherence, are white, European, male and heteronormative, Nussbaum responds: "We do not respect the humanity of any human being unless we assume that person to be capable of understanding the basic issues of consistency and validity and the basic forms of inference. We sell that person short as a human being unless we work to make that person's potentiality for logical thought into an active reality" (Nussbaum 1997, p. 38). This is reminiscent of Donald Davidson's (1973) "Principle of Charity", the charitableness of which consists in attributing to others the capacity to reason in such a way as to be amenable to our way of thinking, that is, in such a way that we could, in principle, understand their thoughts and actions and deem them rational or reasonable by our own lights.[4] In this view of charity, openness demands of us that we do our best to assimilate alternative or alien forms of thought

[4] Of course, Davidson's Principle of Charity is intended to make a purely logical point, not one about human dignity: "Since charity is not an option, but a condition of having a workable theory, it is meaningless to suggest that we might fall into massive error by endorsing it. Until we have successfully established a systematic correlation of sentences held true with sentences held true, there are no mistakes to make. Charity is forced on us; – whether we like it or not, if we want to understand others, we must count them right in most matters. If we can produce a theory that reconciles charity and the formal conditions for a theory, we have done all that could be done to ensure communication. Nothing more is possible, and nothing more is needed." See Davidson (1973, pp. 5–20)

into our conceptual apparatus. Nussbaum (1997, p. 60) writes: "Our task as citizens of the world, and as educators who prepare people to be citizens of the world", will be to make all human beings like our neighbors. This, in her view, is possible insofar as we are all, through enlargement of our thought and vigilant undoing of preconceived notions through education, potential "world citizens": "Above all, education for world citizenship requires transcending the inclination of both students and educators to define themselves primarily in terms of local group loyalties and identities" (Nussbaum 1997, p. 67).

This sounds reasonable enough, if all that is meant is that each and every one of us can recognize the difference between saying "Germany invaded Poland", and saying, "As a Pole, it is important for me to maintain and propagate the claim that Germany invaded Poland". But Nussbaum seems to want to say something more than that we should distinguish between what is good or desirable for ourselves or a certain group or community, on the one hand, and states of affairs which are not amenable to revision by virtue of consideration of such interests. Rather, she is at great pains to use education as a way of lifting college students out of their presumably limited and limiting social and cultural contexts by exposing them to what Max Weber called "uncomfortable facts", things that can only be assimilated in their understanding by widening the latter. She asserts, "There are no surer sources of disdain than ignorance, and the sense of the inevitable naturalness of one's own way". For this reason, "awareness of cultural difference is essential in order to promote the respect for another that is the essential underpinning of dialogue" (Nussbaum 1997, p. 68). A recurrent theme throughout Nussbaum's work on education is the idea that there is a necessary connection, not only between "ignorance" of other cultures, histories and ways of life, on the one hand, and a monolithic, insensitive and hegemonic attitude, on the other; Nussbaum also infers, ipso facto, that exposure to a broad spectrum of ideas, histories and identities, together with training in discussing, challenging and arguing about them will lead to a tolerant, respectful and creative atmosphere that encourages intellectual and social advancement, progress and innovation.

I have referred to Nussbaum at length because she is such an eloquent exponent of a certain idea of universalism that is at once a perplexing and recurring feature of our current ideas about the value of globalism in questions of higher education. On the one hand, there is emphasis on the need to break out of the bubble of one's own upbringing, one's native language, community traditions and parochial concerns, etc. On the other, these tend to be described in the most general ideal-typical terms: "Western", "heterosexual", "white", "Christian", and so forth. But these kinds of "identities" are arguably constructed for and within the realm of the political.[5] At the same time, as Goodhart (2017) among others has noted, this kind of argumentation gives the impression of performative inconsistency. Expressions of cultivation, erudition and cosmopolitanism tend to display "the sense of the inevitable

[5] An argument to this effect is offered by bell hooks' observations about the production of white supremacy in rural Kentucky (see hooks 2009).

naturalness of one's own way" (Nussbaum 1997, p. 68) that, in other contexts, are quite emphatically associated with egoism and even narcissism—traits that are thought to be dissipated and, ultimately, eradicated with adequate education.

Here is the dilemma for cosmopolitanism as it is presently understood. Perhaps it is not possible to revise, amend, enhance or cultivate an education that has been so fragmented as to fail to constitute a genuine identity or culture. Aside from deviant desperate cases, such as neo-Nazis, the problem for many "white, Christian Western males", for instance, is not that they're too embedded in their own language, local traditions and regional culture, but that they're not embedded at all. They don't know why water comes out of the tap in the kitchen, what can and can't be grown given the weather conditions and soil type in the area in which they live; they are unaware of the labors involved when their grandparents first learned to speak English, and clueless as to what decisions were made on what bases and by whom when their hometown was recognized as a municipality; they haven't the foggiest idea about the theological differences between their own Baptist upbringing and the practices and beliefs of their Anabaptist neighbors next door. They are, as it were, "culturally disinherited"; they've lost the cultural capital of self-sufficiency that is so important for cosmopolitan ideals, and this, among other things, because schooling has taken so little of genuinely local conditions and practices into account. "Place" has, as it were, no place in education. It's difficult to see how you will negotiate your way in foreign territory if you don't know where you are to begin with. "Europe", for instance, isn't a place in this sense. A place has a particular climate, specific material and social conditions, distinct forms of interaction and patterns of behavior, often its own dialect and idioms. The envisaged liberal world-citizen has to start from somewhere, but this "somewhere" in liberal arts education tends to be nowhere in particular. "American History" and "Anglo-American literature", for instance, are already far too general to serve as a starting point for self-reflection.

Strikingly, Nussbaum (1997, p. 128) herself stresses that "real cultures have varied domains of thought and activity", but she makes this point only to address the problem that "non-western" cultures are too often studied with a focus on "an urban elite, ignoring daily life and the lives of rural people". Somehow this insight is lost when we consider higher education in the Global North.

The idea that a cosmopolitan liberal education (i.e. the production of "truly free and self-governing citizens") is something that can be accomplished through planning and reforms formulated by those who have already to a high degree "achieved" their humanity, who are already "citizens of the world", has the character, in the eyes of those who question its value, of self-promotion. Nussbaum (1997, p. 156) writes: "There is a common human tendency to think of one's own habits and ways as best for all persons in all times," but doesn't seem to notice that the kind of globalism that she herself advances does not escape the rubric of a "common human tendency".

From a cosmopolitan point of view, the supposition that one need not take into account the lived experience of others is profoundly illiberal. Yet the heady discourse of "internationalization" and "global citizenship" today suggests that the

best way to counter the critique of the liberal ideal of world citizenship as a "subtraction story", i.e. what you have left when local, religious, cultural and linguistic factors are removed, is to replace it with an "addition story", an ideal of the world citizen as within herself "containing multitudes".

But while knowledge of ancient Greek, acquaintance with the role of the trickster in contemporary Latinx novels, appreciation of raga in traditional Indian music, study abroad and colleagues from around the world are all good and advantageous things in many respects, they are not pre-requisites for a properly human life or for the use of reason. To claim that they are is to suggest that nothing is to be gained by looking around one's own corner. From the point of view of global commerce, rootedness is a problem. But from the perspective of teaching and learning, it is rather a possible solution. Our own specific place in the world, our home, has something to teach us about ourselves and others; to define it as inherently parochial, provincial, confined and confining as a starting point is to deny the very real and necessary conditions of thought.

As an example of an alternative notion of enlarged thinking, one might consider Timothy Larsen's (2014) *The Slain God: Anthropologists and the Christian Faith*, where it is argued that the canonical anthropologists E. E. Evans-Pritchard and Mary Douglas were profoundly influenced by their experience of the Catholic faith and their own religiosity. On Larsen's account, their capacity to recognize the rationality of tribal cultural practices, to understand the nature of ritual from the point of view of a believer, to see the value of hierarchy as an ordering structure, and to acknowledge the centrality of spiritual concerns in cultural systems were directly related to their immersion in Christianity and the Church. In short, it was the richness of their self-understanding that enabled their openness toward other cultures. This requirement that self-knowledge begins at home, i.e. within a living tradition, receives little attention today: we think that we understand ourselves first when encountering the Other and seeing ourselves with her eyes. One might also object to the thought that exposure to distant societies, alternate forms of life, religious and sexual minorities, etc. is in the first instance a means to enhance self-awareness among white, middle-class American and European college students, as if they for some reason were in need of enlightenment that others are not.

The issue is how we understand "openness", that is, in good liberal fashion as cosmopolitanism in the cultural sense, rather than the philosophical sense. On Nussbaum's account, a cosmopolitan is at ease with people, artefacts and practices from many countries and cultures, as in phrases such as "her knowledge of French, German, Hindi and Latin made her genuinely cosmopolitan"; or "an influx of students and faculty from around the globe has transformed Euphoria State University into a cosmopolitan hub of international intellectual exchange"; or associated with travel and novel experiences, as in "our research program has collaborations with groups in numerous countries, and is on the cutting edge of the latest global developments." The idea here is that higher education and science are by their nature universal. This is essentially correct. The university has since its inception been relatively "open" in comparison to other institutions at the time, in the sense that joining the community of students and scholars was thought to free its members

from the shackles of linguistic parochialism, clan loyalties and provincial prejudices. And universities today indeed stress the value of "openness", "tolerance" and "dialogue".

The problem is that this emphasis often supposes that we either learn to be liberal cosmopolitans, or we are left in the dark cellar of irrational bigotry and narrow-minded dogmatism. *Heimat und Volk*, *Blut und Boden*. But to argue that human beings and their institutions, including universities, have a definite place is merely to say that they are real, not virtual. They are actualized in the activities and aspirations of people, who are themselves always somewhere. We all have parents and histories; we are not mushrooms sprung from spores and spread by the winds. To know our place is to know who we are, and it is a precondition for grasping the alien and engaging in reasoned dialogue with others. The dissemination of cosmopolitan cultural capital to the benighted masses is in essence the replacement of local doxa with the code of the salon, on the assumption that the latter has achieved a higher state of moral perfection than the former. But according to what criterion? We should take care to notice that the tolerance and openness ostensibly engendered by higher education can be redolent of the principle of noblesse oblige. As is often the case when privilege speaks, the public is not invited to participate on an equal footing in the conversation.

Nussbaum deserves credit for noticing that a truly broadened perspective must be found also in more intimate contexts. Internationalization and a global point of view are not things that can be attained merely at the level of policy and politics, but must be an ongoing, daily effort on the part of individuals and institutions. We must open ourselves to the world by enlarging our cognitive and moral capacities, which, in turn, requires that we meet with people different from ourselves, who speak other languages and whose beliefs and ordinary assumptions are unlike our own. Such meetings can, of course, lead to toleration and sympathy, but can just as easily lead to conflict and dissolution. The question is what in the enriched program of study envisioned guarantees the effects sought, and how it achieves this.

It is worth considering that while "globalization" tends to be associated primarily with the free market, and "internationalism" with socialist ideals, "cosmopolitanism" is thought to be somehow "above" or "beyond" the fray of current political agendas. As we saw, it has its beginnings in Enlightenment thinkers, for whom it connoted the liberation of the individual from religious and political authority, as well as from the biased grasp of the world that loyalty to one's own group or culture can entail. To be "cosmopolitan", for someone like Kant, it will be recalled, was to be capable of impartiality in one's judgments and universality in one's reason. What a higher education can do for students is offer an intellectual experience that makes them think: actively, objectively and logically. They are to be led to see that they have assumptions, to interrogate those assumptions, and to learn to address those assumptions critically, without being told by a higher authority what ideas they should or should not embrace. Confrontation with alien thought (which can be everything from the intricacies of tax law in the EU to non-Euclidean geometry to Farsi syntax) means learning how to deal with the cognitive challenges posed by difficult tasks and texts. In principle, even if exposure to ethnic, gender, religious

and cultural diversity is surely helpful, it is not the key to cognitive and moral development.

At Home with Reason

If universities have higher ambitions and deeper aims than preaching to the choir or writing handbooks for likeminded colleagues and policymakers, then we should be prepared to consider more seriously the consequences of the insight that human dignity is in the eyes of the beholder, that there can be other "dignified", indeed rational, forms of life than that of a worldly sophisticate.

A more philosophical ideal of cosmopolitan education would take its bearings from Kant's third Critique, i.e. the ideal that education means training in a rigorous kind of self-discipline in which the student is consistently challenged to think and think again. The first step is to get her to see that she doesn't know what she takes herself to know intimately (for instance, her native language), and make her hungry to know more. The second is to force her to articulate what she might know very well (her local surroundings, for instance) in such a way as to make her knowledge comprehensible to others and explicit to herself. Finally, she should submit herself to the demands of coherence. As Kant points out in a footnote, even if Enlightenment might seem to be quite a simple matter, in practice it is very difficult to accomplish; it is both arduous and slow. Not to allow one's reason to remain passive, but to attain and maintain self-legislation is something that is often accompanied by the desire to move beyond what is strictly speaking possible to know, and, importantly, there is no dearth of self-appointed authorities who will satisfy that desire. The most demanding part of enlightenment is to acknowledge that its constitution is only "negative". Its essence is self-regulation and self-correction, nothing more. For this, it requires confrontation with a world of other minds and other thoughts, as well as laws of nature. This encounter ought to begin with what is so immediate that it is barely noticed, like the air we breathe. It is unlikely that Plato knew any other language than his mother tongue, yet we have inherited the idea of an Idea, general principles apart from any particular group or collective holding them, from him. And Kant, famously, never left Königsberg.

Concluding Thoughts

The notion that there is a real referent object to the term "world-class university" only makes sense within the framework of the "global" idea of competition for status. In the context of internationalism, the good performed by the university in question would have to do with how well it succeeds in refining or "cultivating" the raw material at hand, to wit, its students. It is likely that many small rural colleges produce greater "added value" than elite schools such as Harvard or Stanford. Similarly,

from the point of view of Kantian enlightenment or "enlarged thinking", it would be difficult to quantify "success" at all. "Enlarged" relative to what starting point, and in which respect? The aim of the reflections above is not to disavow rankings altogether, but merely to point to the very good reasons that many of us have to doubt their validity beyond the very particular interests of what is increasingly an educational-industrial complex for the production and maintenance of status and privilege.

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Part II
World-Class Around the World

Chapter 5
The Kafkaesque Pursuit of 'World Class': Audit Culture and the Reputational Arms Race in Academia

Cris Shore and Susan Wright

Abstract Since the 1980s universities have been subjected to a seemingly continuous process of policy reforms designed to make them more economical, efficient and effective, according to yardsticks defined by governments and university managers. The pursuit of 'excellence', 'international standing' and 'world class' status have become key drivers of what Hazelkorn (High Educ Pol 21(2):193–215, 2008) has termed the 'rankings arms race' that now dominates the world of academia. These policies are changing the mission and meaning of the public university and, more profoundly, the culture of academia itself. While some authors have sought to capture and analyse these trends in terms of 'academic capitalism' and the 'enterprise university model', we suggest they might also be usefully understood theoretically as illustrations of the rise of audit culture in higher education and its effects. Drawing on ethnographic examples from the UK, Denmark and New Zealand, we ask: how are higher education institutions being reconfigured by these new disciplinary regimes of audit? How are ranking and performance indicators changing institutional behaviour and transforming academic subjectivities? What possibilities are there for alternative university futures? And what insights can anthropology offer to address these questions?

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_5

Introduction: The Kafkaesque World of the UK University

In 2014, Marina Warner, professor of English and celebrated novelist (Dame Warner, DBE, FRSL, FBA), suddenly left her post at Essex University. Writing in the *London Review of Books*, she recounted the events leading to her resignation, starting with a meeting chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, Anthony Forster:

> The Senate had just approved new criteria for promotion. Most of the candidates under review had written their submissions before the new criteria were drawn up, yet these were invoked as reasons for rejection. As in Kafka's famous fable, the rules were being (re-)made just for you and me. I had been led to think we were convened to discuss cases for promotion, but it seemed to me we were being asked to restructure by the back door. Why these particular individuals should be for the chop wasn't clear from their records. Cuts, no doubt, were the underlying cause, though they weren't discussed as such. At one point Forster remarked aloud but to nobody in particular: 'These REF stars—they don't earn their keep' (Warner 2014).

At that stage, U.K. universities were still obsessively focused on meeting the demands of the government's latest research assessment exercise, the 'Research Excellence Framework' (REF), a five or six-yearly research evaluation exercise which determined a large part of universities' budgets. Little did academics know that the criteria for funding had suddenly changed:

> Everyone in academia had come to learn that the REF is the currency of value. A scholar whose works are left out of the tally is marked for assisted dying. So I thought Forster's remark odd at the time, but let it go. It is now widely known—but I did not know it then—that the rankings of research, even if much improved, will bring universities less money this time round than last. So the tactics to bring in money are changing. Students, especially foreign students who pay higher fees, offer a glittering solution. Suddenly the watchword was 'Teaching, Teaching, Teaching' (Warner 2014).

Warner had recently been invited to chair the Man Booker International Prize for 2015. Her Dean had encouraged her to accept—and promised to cover her teaching duties—and the Vice-Chancellor had written a letter of congratulation, enthusiastic about the prestige this would bring—and evidence of her research 'impact'—a key criterion for the REF. However, a few months later the university's priorities had shifted. The executive dean for humanities now presented Warner with the university's 'Tariff of Expectations' with 17 targets, and her success in meeting them would be assessed twice a year. Suddenly, the promises of adjusting her workload to meet her public commitments evaporated and her 'workload allocation' became impossible to reconcile with the commitments she had been urged to accept. If she could not teach whilst chairing the Man Booker prize committee, the university asked her to take a year's unpaid leave: In that way they would save her salary, yet her research would still count towards the next REF and earn the university future income. 'I felt that would set a bad precedent', wrote Warner: 'other colleagues, younger than me, with more financial responsibilities, could not possibly supervise PhD students, do research, write books, convene conferences, speak in public, accept positions on trusts or professional associations, and all for no pay'. So she resigned.

Marina Warner's story highlights a number of significant features of the shifting—and often obtuse—higher education policy regimes and their often anxiety-inducing and subjectifying effects. Warner likens her situation to Kafka's protagonist, Joseph K, who is permanently wrong-footed by the ever-changing and inscrutable rules of the administration. In her case, what had changed were the key policy drivers of the university funding system. Teaching had always yielded the central and relatively stable funding of departments, whereas research funding depended on the fluctuating outcomes of the REF assessments. In 2010, the government suddenly removed direct funding for teaching and transferred the resources into loans that students could take out to pay higher fees—but with the growing likelihood that these loans will never be fully recouped (McGettigan 2013). The new basis for departments' and institutions' financial viability lay in attracting ever-increasing numbers of high fee-paying students and to this end staff resources were concentrated on achieving high 'student satisfaction' scores for teaching. Alongside the goals of pursuing 'research excellence' and achieving 'world class' status, UK universities are also subject to an annual National Student Survey (NSS) to measure student satisfaction with their degrees and a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) that the government hoped could be used to link student-intake numbers to an institution's reputation for quality teaching (more on this below). As Warner's case illustrates, these shifting and cumulative workload priorities created incompatible demands on the individual academic's time and energy. In this paper, we set out to map the features of this higher education regime and assess its implications for university futures. We ask, how are these disciplinary regimes of ranking and performance indicators changing institutional behaviour and transforming academic subjectivities, and at what cost? What kind of governance regime is the proliferation of 'audit culture' in higher education producing?

Context: Universities and the Rise of Audit Culture

Warner's allusion to Kafka is both fitting yet problematic. 'Kafkaesque' is greatly overused as a term to describe almost any situation where individuals are confronted with a bizarre and impersonal bureaucracy they feel powerless to control or understand (Edwards 1991). As most dictionaries define it, the Kafkaesque situation usually entails having a nightmarishly complex, confusing, bizarre and illogical quality.[1] While the goal posts for reputation management and funding keep changing, unlike in Kafka's castle, there is a fathomable rationale behind these shifting priorities that relates to changes in the political economy of higher education. As Slaughter and Rhoades (2004:17) put it, universities provide the two 'raw materials' of the global knowledge economy; the knowledge and graduates that can be converted into innovative products. However, whereas in the past universities were

[1] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Kafkaesque

called upon to support their governments' attempts to make their countries more globally competitive, now they are regarded as economic players themselves and integral drivers of that economy—including through 'export education' and the trade in international students (Wright and Ørberg 2017).

In a world composed of competing states each struggling to increase its share of capital and footloose assets in an increasingly mobile, insecure and risk-averse global knowledge economy, the role of national governments is now often depicted as one of finding and galvanizing into productivity the underproductive, under-utilized and dormant capacity in the sector as a whole—including the unharnessed potential of each individual. Various government reports on higher education reform have termed this 'realising our potential' (UK Cabinet Office 1993) or harnessing the sector's 'untapped capacities'. This explains the plethora of attempts to render universities more accountable through ever-more elaborate and calculative systems of measurement and auditing—what we have elsewhere termed the rise of 'audit culture' (Shore and Wright 1999, 2015a, b). In turn, the ranked results of these competitive audit systems are linked to differential funding. Within this punitive system, winners are rewarded with funding and prestige, while losers are named, shamed and have their resources withdrawn and reallocated to more successful competitors, thereby placing them further in jeopardy—what Warner aptly terms 'assisted dying'. According to the rationales of neoliberal governments, this system of economic rewards incentivizes institutions and individuals to mobilize all their resources so that they become more efficient and productive. In the eyes of many government ministers and those higher education reformers who believe that outsourcing and commercialization are the solution to current funding shortages, academics are basically 'lazy' and 'inward looking' and prone to teaching from dusty old lecture notes, while leaving their more valuable ideas languishing in the bottom drawer of their desks. The role of the 'competition state' is to incentivize academics and university managers to activate these dormant resources and untapped human capital by putting them to work for the benefit of the economy.

The mobilisation of these supposedly under-exploited resources requires a new set of disciplinary technologies for steering institutions, reorganizing work and incentivising desired changes in academic behaviour. The introduction of these new steering systems—which include benchmarks, output targets, workload allocations, performance appraisals, and various measures of quality and productivity—does far more than simply incentivize behavioural changes: they have a transformative effect on social relations and academic subjectivities. They alter the way individuals see their work, their institution, and themselves. While some policy makers contend that standardized measures create better opportunities for personal and professional advancement—because they make performance expectations more explicit and transparent—others experience them as a source of deep anxiety and insecurity. As Bovbjerg's (2011) research shows, opening oneself up to an institutional gaze where one is unable to predict or control the way supposedly objective information will be used is inherently stress inducing. However, these mechanisms of measurement and audit are extremely effective in raising productivity and enabling managers to govern 'at a distance', as many university senior leaders have discovered. This

emphasis on 'governing by numbers' and the utility of calculative practices is often seen as a central feature of governmentality, which suggests that, for academia and other professions, the 'roll-out' phase of neoliberalisation is far from over (Peck and Tickel 2002).

How best to theorise these developments? Among the most notable concepts and frameworks that have been advanced to help explain these trends are 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Leslie 1999) and the 'entrepreneurial university' (Marginson and Considine 2000). Other authors have deployed suggestive epithets to capture the transformation of the sector, ranging from the 'Fall of the Faculty' (Ginsberg 2011) and 'Wannabe U' (Tuchman 2011), to 'University Inc' (Washburn 2005), 'College for Sale' (Shumar 1997), 'The Exchange University' (Chan and Fisher 2008) and the 'University in Chains' (Giroux 2007). What all these books share is a critique of the way higher education has become progressively more marketized and commoditized. While we do not disagree with these analyses, we suggest that another useful theoretical lens for understanding the transformation of universities today is through the concept of 'audit culture'. By this term (itself another suggestive epithet) we mean the processes of enumeration, calculation, measuring, monitoring and accounting that have elevated auditing from a narrow set of practices used to assure the integrity of finances to an instrument of management and a general principle of social organization. Audit '*culture'* refers to the manner in which whole areas of work and life have been refashioned—and some would say colonized—by the logics of financial accounting. As Marilyn Strathern (2000, p. 2) has observed, '[p]rocedures for assessment have social consequences'. They create regimes based on the 'twinned precepts of economic efficiency and ethical practice'—ethical because they are predicated on claims about transparency and accountability. Audit thus creates a space where 'the financial and the moral meet' (Strathern 2000); where visibility supposedly induces legibility, probity and efficiency.

The growth of audit has been accompanied by the rise of new actors and industries geared to producing indicators, inventing systems for measuring outputs against targets, and generating rankings in order to raise performance and productivity. Like the world described in Kafka's books *The Trial* and *The Castle*, this new bureaucracy produces a frustrating and arbitrary controlling system with which academics, like K's fellow villagers, try to comply even though they often realise auditing in pursuit of 'world class' is a futile chase after an unfathomable and unobtainable goal. Auditing is effectively a new form of knowledge/power (i.e. a new configuration of what Foucault termed disciplinary power) with new sets of professionals creating new kinds of proprietorial knowledge and also new ways of extracting surplus and profit. In this respect, audit culture is both cause and effect of itself: not only do its regimes of accountability recreate organisations by rendering them auditable, they also create the raw material that feeds the expansion of the auditing and accounting industries. In the context of higher education, these technologies often have an authoritarian character: the 'tyranny of transparency' (Strathern 1998)—or 'coercive commensurability' (Brenneis et al. 2005)—is one of the key reasons why universities have lost the ability to run themselves or act as self-governing institutions.

Measurement and Quantification of Everything

Universities—and education systems more generally—have long been sites where the testing, marking and grading of individuals have been instruments of ranking and discipline, and in many countries such assessments continue to serve as vehicles for the reproduction of elites. In recent decades, however, this process has been extended. No longer are pupils and students the only ones subject to regular performance assessments; now whole institutions, including their professionals, administrators and leadership teams must contend with the imperative of continually improving performance.

The imperative to perform is wonderfully exemplified in Espeland and Sauder's (2007) analysis of the ranking of U.S. law schools. Even though many law school deans view these rankings as absurd, calling them an 'idiot poll', 'Mickey Mouse' 'plain wacky' and 'totally bonkers' (Sauder and Espeland 2009, p. 68), every decision they take is now made with a view to its effects on their college's rankings. The rankings have become 'omnipresent' and impossible to avoid. Any drop in a law school's position has immediate repercussions on student recruitment and hence, on income, with cuts, redundancies and loss of reputation as inevitable consequences. The rankings they take most seriously are those published by *US News and World Report*, an American media company founded in 1948 by conservative newspaperman David Lawrence. At the time of Lawrence's death in 1973, this magazine had reached a circulation of over two million and subsequently became a major competitor to *Time* and *Newsweek*. However, in 2010 it changed to an online-only format and switched its business to ranking services. The company now produces rankings across a vast swathe of areas, from 'Best Doctors and Medicare Plans' and 'Best Pensions', to 'Best Cars', 'Best Vacations', 'Best Hotels', 'Best Real Estate Agents', 'Best Financial Advisors', and 'Top-Performing Funds' (US News and World Report 2016). It also publishes an annual 'Best College Guide' that ranks all types of colleges, and this has become the most important source of information for prospective students when deciding which programmes to choose. Indeed, even when it was still a magazine, the spike in sales for its annual 'Best College Guide' was so high that this became popularly known as their 'swimsuit edition'. However, the methodologies used to construct these league tables are questionable and far from scientifically robust (Wright 2012). As Gladwell (2011) points out, 20% of the overall grade comes from 'Faculty Resources', which is calculated from a weighted combination of class size, faculty salary, percentage of professors with highest degree, student-faculty ratio, and percentage of full-time faculty. These measures are bad proxies for education and do not capture in any way how a college informs, inspires and challenges students. Another category—'Undergraduate Academic Reputation' (22.5% of the mark)—is based on a survey of presidents, provosts and administrative deans who are asked to grade 261 national universities: '[w]hen a president is asked to assess the relative merits of dozens of institutions he [sic] knows nothing about, he relies on *their* ranking' (Gladwell 2011, our emphasis). In short, reputation and ranking become a mutually constitutive circuit. The rankings

induce involuntary 'reactivity' and their unwilling endorsement by the deans 'makes these shaky measures pervasive, and generative of the organisation itself' (Sauder and Espeland 2009, p. 68).

These are just some of ways that information is provided to students as 'consumers' so that they can make more informed, rational choices when selecting their courses. In England, education quality evaluations were traditionally uncoupled from issues of funding as university teaching was covered by a block grant from government. However, since 2004, the economic survival of universities has increasingly come to depend on their reputation, rankings and ability to attract fee-paying students. This began with the introduction of a market in fees that year by the New Labour Government, but was massively amplified after 2010, when the coalition Liberal-Democrat and Conservative government took the highly controversial decision to triple university fees and withdraw funding for all teaching except for the STEM subjects. Currently, one of the main sources of information for students (and parents) choosing university courses is rankings—notably, the QS or Times Higher Education World Rankings—yet none of these metrics actually measures education or teaching. The other main source of information about universities is the National Student Survey (NSS), run annually since 2005 by the national student union and based on an online questionnaire administered to final year students. This is based on 22 'attitude' questions about the 'learning experience' and includes measures for teaching, assessment, personal development, academic support, learning resources, organization and management, and overall satisfaction. As in the United States, university managers take enormous pride in positive results and use these in profiling and promoting their institutions to prospective students. However, a recent critical report by Ipsos MORI found major flaws in the reliability of these data (Jump 2014). This was attributed in part to students filling out their questionnaire as quickly as possible and ticking 'yes' to everything (the average time was five and a half minutes, but 20% completed it in under two minutes), but also to the fact that students have a 'vested interest' in the 'over-zealous promotion' of their institutions (Havergal 2015a). This report concluded that since the NSS scores are 'likely to benefit both students and institutions themselves', there may 'be some incentive on the part of both to encourage or give positive ratings' (Havergal 2015a). UK universities are not alone in mobilising students to enhance their ratings: the University of Auckland in one of its advertising poster slogans proclaims: 'Let our reputation build yours!'

A key problem for governments is that there are few reliable metrics for evaluating education or teaching. In response to this, in 2017 the UK government introduced the 'Teaching Evaluation Framework' (TEF) to help students 'drive' the system and allow the top-tiered universities to increase their fees. The hunt for a suitable concept and method to evaluate teaching led some to look at the US Collegial Learning Assessment system which aims to test and measure student 'learning gain' over the period of their study. The problem is that while these tests purport to be a neutral measure of generic skills (e.g. problem solving, interpersonal communication, use of digital information, dealing with complex situations), 'the contents of a test will be far more closely related to some subjects … than others' (Wolf, cited in Havergal 2015b, p. 21). The UK government also decided to include

'employability' as a metric to evaluate teaching excellence. They use the Destinations of Learners in Higher Education (DLHE) survey to measure the proportion of students who are in highly skilled employment or further study 6 months after graduation (Blyth and Cleminson 2016). A more recent proposal from the newly created Office for Students is to use data from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs office to calculate this (OfS 2018, pp. 4, 17). The capacity of universities to embed 'employability' and the ability of students to gain meaningful employment will be measured by financial earnings and tax returns, reinforcing the neoliberal assumption that the value of a university degree must be financialised and measured in terms of its return on investment.

Auditing Research Excellence: The Managerial Uses of Pseudo-scientific Measures

> These managers worry me. Too many are modest achievers, retired from their own studies, intoxicated with jargon, delusional about corporate status and forever banging the metrics gong. Crucially, they don't lead by example (Bignell, cited in Colquhoun 2012a).

University research is another area that has been subjected to repeated attempts to measure the quality of academic work. Since the 1980s, there has been an explosion of national research evaluation exercises aimed at improving performance, output and competitivity among individual researchers, their departments, their institutions and even entire countries. The UK's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was one of the first of such exercises, introduced in 1984 as part of a package of neoliberal reforms developed by the Conservative government of Mrs. Thatcher. The RAE (subsequently rebranded the 'Research Excellence Framework' or REF) is an intensive research evaluation exercise conducted every 4–6 years that measures and competitively ranks the research outputs of university departments across the UK. While the evaluations are based on peer-review, the academic community has no influence over the resulting allocation of resources, which are in the hands of the ministry.

There are four points of significance about this process. First, each academic only has to submit up to five pieces of work produced during the assessment period. This limit is intended to emphasise quality and to deter salami-slicing and rushing to press. Second, evaluations are based on panels of experts in each field who are expected to read the books, articles and scholarly publications or creative works submitted. The 2012 REF Guidelines stated explicitly that 'No sub-panel will make any use of journal impact factors, rankings, lists or the perceived standing of publishers in assessing quality of research outputs'. Third, these research assessment exercises have been used to stratify the higher education sector. Successive exercises have been used to concentrate research funding in ever-fewer institutions and departments. This strongly incentivizes university leaders to maximize their REF scores by making 'strategic decisions' about where to invest and which subject areas or departments to close. It also incentivizes academics to publish at any cost

as failure to be classified as 'research active' and meet the required performance target may result in 'demotion' to teaching-only contracts and the end of their research career (despite claims by university senior managers that the RAE or REF process has no bearing on HR processes or academic employment matters). Everyone in the university therefore learns what 'counts' and is pressed to re-orientate their energies accordingly in a process we might call the systemic RAE-fication of academia (Loftus 2006: Shore 2008: 290–91; Lucas 2017: 216). Fourth, and unsurprisingly, national reviews have revealed massive gaming of the RAE system as academics and managers seek to play the system (Lucas 2006; Wright 2009).

Universities have developed strategic plans to climb up the ranking ladder that now employ ever-greater expectations of each individual academic. For example, Queen Mary University of London was ranked 48 in the RAE 2001 and made an astounding leap to 13th place in RAE 2008. The leadership then devised a strategy to elevate the university into the top five UK universities by RAE 2015. In 2012, the university produced a table of its expectations for academic performance over four criteria: the quantity of papers published; the quality of journals where papers are published (the proxy measure is journal impact factor); total research income; and research income as 'Principal Investigator' (PI). Furthermore, these criteria were applied *retrospectively* to assess the performance of academics over the period 2008–2011. To keep their jobs, academics at Queen Mary had to meet the minimum threshold in three out of four categories. For a lecturer, that included 5 papers, one 'quality journal' paper; $200,000 in research income and at least half of that as the PI. For a professor, the expectations were 11 papers, 2 in top journals, $400,000 in research income of which at least half as PI.

As critics have noted, as well as being unattainable for many academics, Queen Mary's yardsticks were 'utterly brainless' (Colquhoun 2012a). As Sir David Colquhoun (a professor of pharmacology, member of the Royal Society, and honorary director of the Wellcome Trust) noted, mass-producing articles is discouraged because it either results in publishing data in multiple fragments, or in appending a senior researcher's name to somebody else's work, often without properly reading or checking the data. 'Such numbers can be reached only by unethical behaviour', and 'the rules provide an active encouragement to dishonesty' (Colquhoun 2012a). There are many Nobel Prize winners (including Andrew Huxley, Bernard Katz, Bert Sakmann and Peter Higgs) who published very few papers in their lifetime and who would have doubtless been fired on these grounds.

The university's criteria defined high impact journals as those that have an impact factor greater than 7. However, as Colquhoun notes, for some disciplines the highest ranked journals have impact factors of only 4 or 5, while in others, the top journals only publish review papers, not original research. Moreover, the number of citations that a paper receives bears no relation to the impact factor of the journal (Seglen 1997). Colquhoun (2012a) quotes an analysis of the journal *Nature* that found the mean number of citations for a paper was 114 but, whereas one paper had 2364 citations, 35 other papers had 10 or fewer. Similarly, a study in 2001 of the citations accrued by the 858 papers published in Nature in 1999 found only 80 of them (16%) accounted for half of all the citations (Colquhoun 2012a). In addition to these faulty

yardsticks, every academic at Queen Mary had to produce at least one PhD student in the assessment period. Given the state of the employment market and lack of jobs for such graduates, the ethics of expanding research by increasing numbers of doctorates simply to increase a university's league table standing is highly questionable.

The use of such spurious metrics to evaluate scientists was criticized publicly by several scholars, including two from the institution itself. In a letter published in the *Lancet*, two biologists, John Allen and Fanis Missirlis, criticized the way the criteria had been applied to the School of Medicine and Dentistry (where 29 academics were facing dismissal for not meeting the performance criteria). They made four important points. First, these targets often hit the wrong people because the Head of School and Human Resources relied on cold, abstracted metrics rather than an understanding of the quality of an individuals' research or potential. Second, the manner in which this disciplining was conducted, where targeted victims have to justify their 'retrospective crimes' in an audience with the Head of School and Human Resources, was a punitive procedure that recalls the Spanish Inquisition or, to continue our analogy, Kafka's officials who never explain the procedures or what the condemned person has been accused of. Third, the criteria fail to address the quality of science itself; as Allen and Missirlis (2012) note, 'there are no boxes to tick for advances in knowledge and understanding—no metrics for science itself … [this] slaughter of the talented relies entirely on a carefully designed set of retrospective counts of the uncountable'. Finally, these performance criteria are rarely applied to the 'Grand Inquisitors' themselves who, as the authors note, would conspicuously fail by their own criteria—'yet to question them is heresy'. That last statement proved prophetic as the authors of the *Lancet* letter were charged with misconduct and subsequently sacked. Their department was the second chosen for this treatment, having under-performed in the RAE 2008, and Missirlis was dismissed for not having met the criteria. Allen—a highly respected and productive professor who did meet the criteria—was initially sanctioned by having all of his specialist teaching taken away and being required to teach service courses instead. When he indicated his unwillingness to accept this punishment, he was sacked for 'refusing to obey a reasonable management instruction' (Jump 2015b). He subsequently moved to University College London, but without a lab.

What is interesting in this and many other cases where performance measures are turned into managerialist tools for ranking, disciplining and firing staff is the pseudo-scientific language that is used to justify such decisions. In response to Colquhoun's criticisms, the Vice Chancellor of Queen Mary University (QM), Professor Simon Gaskell, wrote a letter to *The Times* arguing that as QM was ranked in the top dozen research universities in the UK, these actions were necessary to address areas where 'performance does not match expectations' so as 'to ensure that our students receive the finest research-led education' and 'to safeguard QM's financial stability'. Management had 'applied objective criteria to the assessment of individual academic performance based on generally recognized academic expectations', and now he would invest to rebuild those areas where staff had been fired (Gaskell 2012). This discourse combines several threads: the imperative to 'safeguard' the university's financial future by raising its rankings; an ethical obligation

to defend its students' interests; and the application of strictly 'objective' and impartial criteria based on 'recognized' and commonly accepted expectations of academic performance.

In fact, none of these claims are true, as Colquhoun notes in his rejoinder (2012b). The number of publications demanded of QM academics was far beyond what the RAE required, and staff who produced large numbers of publications were unlikely to have the time or inclination to teach students as well. To improve its standing in the REF, QM's leadership deployed methods that had been explicitly ruled inadmissible in the REF guidelines. When evaluating the research output of individuals, management assumed that research was the primary activity of an academic, whereas Missirlis was shouldering high teaching loads. As in Marina Warner's case, this highlights the Kafkaesque way in which the orientation of an institution changes, jibbing and tacking to follow shifts in government funding. This creates a volatile environment in which, when teaching funding is stable, managers focus primarily on pursuing variable funding from research, but when teaching funding follows students, the focus suddenly becomes 'teaching, teaching, teaching'.

Effects of Indicators and Rankings on Academia

The question posed at the outset was how should we theorise these trends in higher education, and what effects is this quest for world class status though a proliferation of performance targets, indicators and rankings having on academics and on universities? Do they actually deliver the better outcomes and organizational transparency that they proclaim? As the examples above illustrate, the REF system has perverse effects on the public university and corrodes its civic mission. Peter Scott (2013), professor of higher education and former editor of the *Times Higher Education* (THE) likens the REF to a monster: 'a Minotaur that must be appeased by bloody sacrifices'. Like the Minotaur too, it occupies a place that is labyrinthine in its complexity that has consumed the professional lives of many of its victims. At Queen Mary University, the fate of Missirlis and Allen can be conceptualized as sacrificial offerings to the new regime of academic accountability; they were effectively 'collateral damage' in a system where institutions and individuals believed they had no real choice but to play this high-stakes game. Yet the overall result was a corruption of the university's main purpose so that pursuing better REF grades rather than producing good science and scholarship becomes the ordering principle. As Scott (2013) puts it, 'research is reduced to what counts for the REF'—and those aspects of academia that cannot be counted or rendered commensurable on numerical score sheets, by definition, do not "count"'. Reflecting on Warner's experience, Meranze (2014) similarly concludes 'the demands for scholarship were increasingly irrelevant for the funding of the university or for the allocation of resources within the university'. Rendering certain aspects of university life visible—and therefore more calculable and governable by senior managers and administrators—is a logical counterpart to the systematic downgrading or invisibilising of other areas of

academic life (like scholarship for its own sake, critical research, unconventional yet inspirational teaching) that are inconsistent with the neoliberal and managerial vision of the competitive 'world class' university.

However, it would be misleading to conclude that the effects of these indicators and rankings are simply repressive or perverse: they are also performative and productive and, for senior administrators and managers at least, often extremely empowering. Indeed, one of the most important effects of this avalanche of indicators and rankings has been to reinforce a series of developments already underway as a result of the neoliberal reforms of higher education. The first of these was to recast universities as transnational business corporations operating in a competitive global market. This development has been particularly evident since the 1980s in English speaking countries such as the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, but also increasingly in many European countries. A second development was the withdrawal of public funding across the sector and the encouragement of universities to pursue alternative revenue streams, particularly from the private sector. Managers have financialised and marketized the university throughout its operations as it has increasingly come to resemble a for-profit organization. A third development is the shift in power from academics towards senior administrators and managers who increasingly arrogate to themselves the role of decision making, steering the enterprise and deciding on its policy priorities—even to the extent of claiming ownership of the university and referring to *themselves* as 'the university' (Shore and Taitz 2012; Ørberg 2007).

Indicators and rankings have thus helped to establish a new regime of governance and authority, one that equates the role of a vice chancellor with that of a private company's CEO, with corresponding executive salaries and privileges. They have also reinforced the new hierarchies and cleavages that have come to characterise the neoliberal university, particularly the division between a new class of professional administrators (the 'administariat') and the burgeoning ranks of increasingly de-professionalised and casualised academic workforce (the 'precariat'). One of the paradoxical effects of these changes is that while universities have been given greater institutional autonomy and 'freedom' to manage their own financial affairs and risks, they have also become increasingly dependent and vulnerable to market pressures and servile to government political agendas. Many university management teams have started to impose minimum expectations for research performance in their effort to improve their institution's standing in the next research assessment exercise. In some instances, these performance targets have been pitched at such a high level that they are unachievable. At Newcastle University in 2013, for example, under the terms of a new management initiative called 'Raising the Bar', professors, readers and senior lecturers in the humanities and social sciences were expected to bring in at least £6000 to £12,000 a year in external grant revenue (for lecturers the required amount was £3000 to £6000 a year), as well as producing at least four 3* research outputs in the period before the next REF (Grove 2015). Even more unrealistic was the expectation that each academic should graduate one PhD student per year. Given the total number of PhD students, this target would have required Newcastle University to monopolise the entire supply of publicly funded PhDs in the UK (BBlaze 2015).

Academics rightly fear that these new targets could be used to make individuals redundant on capability grounds—which is undoubtedly part of the rationale behind the initiative and a logical consequence of failure to meet the targets. In 2019, there was a dispute at Liverpool University after the administration informed junior academics that they would not pass probation unless they published a paper that was 'judged to be internationally excellent' every 18 months. This level of output was far in excess of what the REF demanded and was accompanied by a new timetable policy which, staff claimed, cut research time, thus making these targets even more difficult to reach (Grove 2019). Similarly, at the University of Exeter, the probationary period for new lecturers in the social sciences has been increased to 5 years, during which time they are expected to have raised £100,000 in external grants (personal communication). A 2015 survey found that one in six universities in the UK had introduced individual performance targets for obtaining research grant money (Jump 2015a). As Grove (2015) notes, such funding income targets also represent a threat to academic freedom 'as they would effectively govern the way academics approach their subject', leading them to forego 'blue skies' research and pursue smaller, short-term 'normal science' projects to meet income targets (Wright 2009). In some universities, this process has been taken further with senior management and commercialisation units now deciding on academic appointments based on calculations of future research areas that promise the greatest financial returns to the university (Lewis and Shore 2017).

Conclusion: The Costs of Being 'World Class'

Global ranking and the pursuit of 'world class' status are clearly having a transformative effect on universities. They have been catalysts in recasting academics as atomised individuals operating in a competitive higher education market: a de-professionalised workforce of researchers and teachers whose work must be incentivised, monitored and measured by management. They have also been influential in reshaping academic behaviour. Academics must also constantly measure their own performance in a labyrinthine system whose logic is often lost or meaningless for those at the academic chalk face. The university arms race for 'world class' status is conducted through auditing procedures which have departed from a search for probity and trust and deviated into calculations, proxy measures and rankings driven largely by financial bottom lines. As in the bureaucracy emanating from Kafka's castle, the system is riddled with contradictory logics and perverse effects: it claims to be founded on economic rationality yet its consequences are profoundly irrational; it fetishises innovation and entrepreneurship and yet produces conformity, conservatism, and risk-aversion; it lionises competition, individualism and choice yet most of academia works through cooperation; and it now claims to put 'the student experience' first, yet the level of debt it produces has created an epidemic of student stress and mental health problems.

As Kafka's protagonist Joseph K found, it is difficult to locate the author or agent behind the processes that created this system and futile to ask who (or what) is leading the incessant drive towards ever more coercive and calculative forms of measurement and control. The process has gone feral and increasingly runs according to its own logic, feeding on the metricised and performative world it creates. It has also become so normalized that it is now part of the fabric of contemporary university life. Despite its evident flaws and shortcomings, the use of metricized performance targets, indicators and rankings appear to many as both unstoppable and impossible to oppose. However, like any regime of truth, they are in fact assemblages of diverse and contingent threads, held together in arbitrary webs of power which, when examined more closely, turn out to have little substance, although they have powerful effects. In this case, what these calculative practices and financialised targets are producing is a new kind of university regime, one increasingly orientated around neoliberal policy agendas, financial markets, and the priorities of a new class of senior administrators and managers.

How then are these disciplinary regimes of ranking and performance indicators changing institutional behaviour and transforming academic subjectivities, and at what cost? As our examples show, university management's increasing reliance on instrumental and calculative performance measurement creates its own dynamic, one that further institutionalises the spread of audit culture. These performance indicators and targets are instrumental in producing calculable, accountable, 'responsibilized' and self-disciplined subjects: i.e. these are the qualities of the 'ideal' academic in the new managerially led and neoliberalised university (Dean 1999; Lund 2012). Yet this ideal is itself far from fixed or stable, always shifting according to the latest changes in priority or new calculations of what pays, and therefore what 'counts'. The net result of these proliferating systems of performance measurement is a regime of governance structured around out-of-reach or impossible targets that can then be used to discipline and punish dissenters and laggards. For academics, these measuring and ranking systems generate a sense of permanent insecurity and the feeling that one can never quite do enough. Those anxieties, in turn, produce an increase in centralisation, loss of academic freedom, increasing workloads for academics, and all the associated health issues including depression and burnout that this creates.

Throughout this chapter, we have likened the regime of metricised performance management in universities to the alienating and surreal world of Kafka's castle, but how useful or appropriate is this analogy? Kafka's novels typically depict nightmarish settings in which characters are crushed by blind authorities or systems that are incomprehensible and inscrutable. Their sense of reality begins to fall apart as they struggle to grasp their changed circumstances. Kafka's best known work of fiction, *The Trial*, for example, portrays a world gone mad. As Ivana Edwards (1991:12) explains, the book 'is about Joseph K., who, although in hot pursuit of the truth, is executed for an unnamed crime. Time and space are rearranged so they can work either for or against the protagonist; the horror of that world is that he never knows what is happening, or when.' Many academics would no doubt recognise these elements of the Kafkaesque in their own workplaces. However, according to Edwards:

'You don't give up, you don't lie down and die. What you do is struggle against this with all of your equipment, with whatever you have. But of course you don't stand a chance. That's Kafkaesque.' In fact, *The Trial* ends with Joseph K voluntarily submitting to his accusers and being led away to his execution. But this need not be the outcome. In Marina Warner's case, she managed to find a path that led her away from the castle. She gained a new position as professor of English and Creative Writing at Birkbeck, University of London and became a fellow of All Souls College in Oxford. In 2017, she was elected as the first ever woman president of the Royal Society of Literature. A high-profile resignation, it would seem, can have a resounding impact and is not necessarily the death of an academic career even in the Kafkaesque university.

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Chapter 6
Complicit Reproductions in the Global South: Courting World Class Universities and Global Rankings

Jack T. Lee and Rajani Naidoo

Abstract The proliferation of global rankings has led to vigorous debates about the dominance of world-class universities and the encroaching institutional isomorphism in higher education. Specifically, the narrow metrics of rankings celebrate STEM research and institutional reputation at the expense of the humanist roots of higher education: teaching, self-cultivation, and community engagement. This critique on global rankings faces an equally vocal demand that a country must develop world-class universities in order to remain economically competitive in the global era – an instrumental logic that attracts devotees in both advanced economies as well as developing economies. Ironically, policymakers in both contexts simultaneously lament the prevalence of rankings and calibrate strategies to promote success in league tables. Although rankings attract scrutiny in both higher education policymaking and research, the implications of these metrics on higher education in the Global South receive little attention. The discourse is largely focused on top and mid ranking institutions, which are often located in the Global North. In the Global South, global rankings and the concept of world-class universities act through subtle yet powerful mechanisms to shape the contours of higher education. For many institutions and states in the Global South, the fervour is less about creating a world-class university and more about establishing links with well ranked universities (domestically and internationally). Therefore, while the explicit goal is not to build a world-class university, policymakers are nevertheless complicit in reproducing the hegemony of global rankings. This chapter will examine the activities in which

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_6

global rankings exert tremendous pressure on the Global South: curriculum development, student mobility, faculty recruitment, research partnerships, and strategic planning. In mapping out the mechanisms of reproduction, the goal is to highlight the pervasive influence of global rankings and the complicity in reproduction rather than paint a binary division between the global and local dimensions of higher education.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, the discourse on world-class universities (WCUs) has permeated many domains of higher education as stakeholders attempt to define, interpret, and evaluate the apex of higher learning. This discourse transcends institutional differences and cultural contexts remarkably well to capture both the imaginations and anxieties of policymakers and institutional leaders. While some institutional leaders may lament the widespread use of ranking as an indicator of quality, many others are quick to tout their institutions' performances in the latest league tables. National policymakers may also have reservations about a global standard in assessment, yet many are eager to judge other higher education systems and foreign institutions using league tables. Similarly, higher education researchers can hardly ignore the WCU discourse despite their own misgivings about elitist higher education and the methodology of quantifying excellence. These contradictions between rhetoric and practice seldom appear in the literature on WCU, which focuses on methodological problems in ranking universities rather than the ubiquitous use of league tables to guide decision-making in planning and management.

The discourse on WCUs illustrates three broad streams of concern: clinical inquiry, practical guidance, and existential angst. Which methodology can accurately measure excellence? Have the metrics changed from last year? How can policies and strategies create and sustain world-class institutions? What constitutes a world-class university? Are we a world-class university? Does every country need a world-class university? These questions ultimately reinforce rankings as the most visible instrument in the comparison of universities worldwide. Rather than assess the quality of education, these ranking systems use proxy indicators that inflate the role of research and reputation (Hazelkorn 2017). While higher education researchers are largely critical of rankings, policymakers, institutional leaders, and students benefit from the simplicity of a league table in making sense of uncertainty (Esposito and Stark 2019). From selecting institutions for enrolment to the hiring of academics and the formation of partnerships, ranking has become the lingua franca of international higher education. In short, rankings promote an augmented reality of higher education that reduces complexity to palatable information for decision-making. Academic credentials and workplace affiliations become valuable social and cultural capital in this international competition akin to an Olympics.

While rankings dominate many planning efforts in higher education, the reality is that most institutions in the world are preoccupied with teaching and learning. Proponents of rankings often fail to recognize that research is a privileged endeavour in higher education that remains inaccessible to many institutions around the world due to the lack of resources. Furthermore, the developmental trajectories of many higher education institutions never included research for historical and cultural reasons. For example, the venerated German universities of applied sciences (fachhochschulen) have historically worked very closely with industrial partners for the purpose of professional skills training and technology transfer rather than research. Most universities in Asia are largely teaching oriented except the rarefied national flagship institutions (e.g. Peking University and Seoul National University). While historical traditions run deep in these contexts, the tides of mimetic isomorphism are also rising as institutions pursue research to emulate leading universities around the world.

This chapter focuses on the complicated relationship between policymakers and the concept of world-class university. Specifically, the chapter examines this relationship in the context of rapidly developing higher education systems, where institutions with shorter histories and smaller international footprints often face barriers in achieving quality, visibility, and legitimacy. Many of these institutions are located in the Global South, where diverse stakeholders also demand academic credentials that can be recognized beyond the local context. The rhetoric of world-class universities affects many policy decisions in such dynamic systems. Using theoretical heuristics from two major sociologists, the discussion will highlight complicity in social reproduction. Namely, Pierre Bourdieu's insightful work on capital and reproduction and Syed Hussein Alatas' critical work on intellectual captivity provide analytical lenses for our discussion. While Bourdieu's work is widely known in the West, Alatas' work on post-colonial theory and foray into politics are well recognized throughout Southeast Asia. Alatas was also the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya (1988–1991), the flagship university of Malaysia, in the later part of his career.

Essentialism and Fetishism in WCU Discourse

Given the focus in this chapter on higher education systems in the Global South, it is important to first clarify our perspectives on the relevant literature that already exists. Among the critiques of the world-class university discourse is a rebuttal against Western hegemony in education policymaking. This incisive critique builds on the growing debate about the rise of global metrics and the literature on policy borrowing in comparative education (Kamens and McNeely 2010; Rizvi and Lingard 2009; Steiner-Khamsi 2016). Some of these critiques echo the methodological and practical concerns over a global template for education as expressed by many scholars. The hegemony of rankings and its negative impact on universities in the Global South is well documented (Ordorika and Lloyd 2015). On a more

profound level, some scholars criticize the ontological and epistemic biases in university rankings (Shahjahan et al. 2017). Namely, the Eurocentric framing of rankings enforces a narrow architecture of excellence in higher education. Ranking is also criticized as a form of soft power that hinders self-determination in non-Western higher education systems (Lo 2011). These critical reflections highlight the inequities of global metrics and the adverse consequences on higher education in the South. However, an overly homogenous view of higher education in the Global South often underpins such analyses, which rely on assumptions about culture, power, and geography. Specifically, these critiques often portray the Global North as an oppressive regime juxtaposed to a powerless Global South. Seemingly, the education landscape of the Global South is riddled with imported artefacts. From international best practices to standardized curricula, the once pristine Global South must now make sense of these artefacts. Furthermore, critical theorists often present non-Western traditions in education as innately humanistic and transformative. This binary perspective perpetuates not only stereotypes about world order but also a fetishism that romanticizes the Global South—a complete reversal of the orientalism that Edward Said chronicled in his seminal treatise (Said 1978). By framing rankings as a foreign artefact and emphasizing the impact of league tables, these critiques present power as an exogenous force, displace accountability, and exonerates local actors. We purposely avoid using the term "impact of rankings" because it maintains the spotlight on the object (rankings) rather than the subject (policymakers and policymaking). In other words, *impact* obviates the end user of responsibility and assumes that local agency does not exist. While indigenous knowledge and higher education institutions in developing countries are unequivocally marginalized, the Global South is far from passive in its educational development.

This chapter will examine higher education policymaking in Malaysia and Kazakhstan to illustrate the ways in which local actors perpetuate the concept of the world-class university and legitimize rankings as a global metric. Rather than focus on the intricacies of the different ranking systems, the analysis here examines the uptake and exploitation of rankings in the development of higher education.

Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter employs concepts and ideas from two eminent sociologists: Syed Hussein Alatas and Pierre Bourdieu. While the latter is well known in the West, the former is widely recognized in Southeast Asia as a public intellectual and political activist. Alatas is often considered a pioneer in Southeast Asian studies and an early advocate of multiracial unity in a diverse and fragmented Malaysia. While both scholars wrote on fundamentally different topics in different cultural contexts, both lived nearly identical years in history: Alatas (1928–2007) and Bourdieu (1930–2002). Alatas' work provides valuable heuristics on complicity in the Global South while Bourdieu's work illuminates the process of reproduction. Together, these theoretical ideas underpin the analysis of WCUs in this chapter.

Syed Hussein Alatas on Complicity

Alatas is well known for his expositions on colonialism and intellectual captivity among Third World nations. His ideas emerged in the 1950s and crystallized in the 1970s, particularly in his seminal book *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977). He admonished colonial powers for their violence and prejudice just as influential scholars in Latin America and Africa did in the 1960s and 1970s. However, Alatas' ideas were noticeably more pragmatic and progressive than ideological. Alatas' writings do not simply condemn colonialism for all its excess and permanence, but his incisive critiques also target the elites of the Global South. He wrote extensively about *intellectual captivity* as a phenomenon of imitating the West without thorough consideration of local relevance and awareness of indigenous knowledge. He later called this *intellectual imperialism* and *academic imperialism* to highlight the geopolitics of conformity. Specifically, intellectual captivity relies on Western theories and methodologies and exhibits "incapacity to construct cognitive alternatives" (Alatas 2000, p. 38). "The whole phenomenon of uncritical transmission of thought can be regarded as unconscious continuation of colonialism not in the political but in the cultural sense" (Alatas 2000, p. 33). Rather than blame the colonial masters like many critical theorists of his time and social scientists of today, Alatas emphasized that intellectual captivity is self-induced. His advice for his compatriots and leaders in other developing countries was well noted for its pragmatism:

> We should assimilate whatever is necessary for progress. We should be practical and independent, and at the same time tap the maximum from our own tradition. (Alatas 2000, p. 27)

These views strike a different theoretical tenor than most critical theorists because Alatas emphasized local complicity in his assessment of under development. Unlike the dependency theorists of Latin America, Alatas never advocated de-linking from former colonial powers or the absolute rejection of Western canons. His ideas on complicity are also evident in his tireless writings on corruption in developing countries: *The Sociology of Corruption* (1968) and *The Problem of Corruption* (1986). In *Intellectuals in Developing Societies* (1977), he demonstrates that theoretical ideas on complicity are not merely abstract constructs confined to academia; this book provides numerous empirical examples of complicity.

Pierre Bourdieu on Reproduction

In some ways it might appear strange to deploy the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu in the postcolonial contexts of the South and to use him in conjunction with Alatas. After all, we are all too aware of Bourdieu's antipathy towards Franz Fanon and Jean Paul Sartre, whom he accused of being utopian during the struggles against colonialism in Algeria (Burroway and Von Holdt 2002). But we also know that Bourdieu was horrified by the violence perpetuated by the colonisers that he

witnessed during his fieldwork in Algeria. Bourdieu, in essence, conceptualised colonialism as a racialized system of domination, backed by naked force, which restructures social relations and creates hybrid cultures (Bourdieu 1979 [1963]). In an interesting reversal of the situation in which northern templates are projected onto the South, Bourdieu's ethnographic study of the Karbyle in Algeria provided the foundation for his theoretical framework which he then applied to France (Calhoun 2006). And similar to Alatas, Bourdieu too speaks of the complex interpenetration of the global and the local. He introduces the concept of the 'cultural sabir.' The sabir is caught between "two mutually alienating universes" (Bourdieu and Sayad 2004, p. 164).

We therefore see potential in deploying Bourdieu's conceptual framework and combining this with more recent conceptualisations which draw inspiration from world systems analysis. Bourdieu's framework enables us to conceptualise universities within national and global fields of higher education (Naidoo 2004; Marginson 2008). According to Bourdieu, social formations are structured around a complex ensemble of social fields in which various forms of power circulate. The field of higher education is conceptualised as a field with a high degree of autonomy in that it generates its own organisational culture consisting of values and behavioural imperatives that were traditionally relatively independent from forces emerging from the economic and political fields (Bourdieu 1988). The activities in the field of higher education have traditionally revolved around the acquisition and development of scientific capital (Bourdieu 1986), which may be defined as particular resources that are invested with value and through which individuals and institutions are located in hierarchical order (Bourdieu 1996). As Enders (2015) has noted, rankings are so powerful in higher education because many ranking classifications echo and re-valorize significant components of scientific capital. While fields of higher education enjoy a relative degree of autonomy, these are at the same time heavily influenced by national and global fields of power within which macro actors such as the state, powerful international organisations and multi-national corporations struggle over the principles of legitimacy and power over societies. Drawing on the above conceptualisations, we argue that the strategies of higher education leaders in the South must be understood not merely within an analysis of relations within national and global fields of higher education but also in the context of wider economic, political and social power relations constituting the world system. The earlier work (for example Wallerstein 1974; Amin 1976) which theorised core and periphery relations between countries has been criticised for being static and overdeterministic. However, more recent work taking inspiration from world systems theory links agency, resistance and multi-scalar power struggles to the relationships between different cores and variegated peripheries (see, for example, Bouziane, Harders, and Hoffmann 2013). Revolving around the axes of relationality, hierarchy and power, the theoretical framework of Bourdieu combined with recent emanations of world systems theory can be seen to work together productively to provide a greater understanding of Southern complicity in global ranking. In the next sections, we introduce the empirical cases of Malaysia and Kazakhstan.

Comparative Case Studies

Several factors inform the methodological decision to compare Malaysia and Kazakhstan in this chapter. Although categorized as upper middle income countries today, both Malaysia and Kazakhstan may nevertheless be classified as semi-peripheral and former colonies, which are particularly apposite to our research focus. Both countries are extremely active in developing their higher education and promoting global engagement across many policy sectors (e.g. education, trade, and finance). Recently, Malaysia's Minister of Higher Education touted its higher education as "the most re-designed system in the world", following multiple waves of reforms dating back to the 1980s (Academic Affairs 2018). Similarly, Kazakhstan's higher education system has weathered through a series of reforms after the country gained independence in 1991 (Kovaleva and Lee 2016). Both countries also share a long history as former colonies. British and Russian conquests of Malaysia and Kazakhstan, respectively, date back to the eighteenth century. In the twentieth century, both territories gained independence and reaped tremendous benefits from the export of natural resources as rentier states (Franke et al. 2009; Varkkey 2014). Today, both Malaysia and Kazakhstan are classified as upper middle-income economies based on the World Bank's economic indices. Both countries also struggle to transform from rentier states to knowledge economies. Based on these uncanny similarities in history and political economy, this chapter draws comparisons between the two countries to illustrate local agency in the reproduction of world-class universities. Table 6.1 provides some indicators for comparative purposes.

Malaysia

Malaysia's higher education system has expanded dramatically since the Parliament passed the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act in 1996. While private institutions have made tremendous inroads in quality and innovative program offerings over the last decade, established public universities still dominate the country's higher education system. Malaysia has pursued a few national level initiatives to cultivate world-class universities. In 2006, the government identified five

Table 6.1 Indicators for comparative purposes

	GDP per capita[a]	Population (million)	HE participation rate	# of public HEIs out of total HEIs	# of designated research universities	Education expenditure as % of GDP
Malaysia	$9900	32	42%	20 / 148	5	4.7%
Kazakhstan	$8800	18	50%	61 / 131	2	2.9%

[a]USD in 2017 participation rates from: http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/my, http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/kz

universities as research universities under the Malaysian Research Universities (MRU) program. Specifically, this policy aimed to place one Malaysian university among the top 50 in the world while the remaining four would rank in the top 100 (MOHE 2007; Sirat 2013). In 2008, under the Accelerated Program for Excellence (APEX), the government vetted several universities and decided to invest further in the Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) as the leading institution in the country with the potential to attain international stature. Notably, USM's winning strategic plan for attaining excellence included a specific focus on environmental sustainability and service to the "bottom billions" in the world. Ultimately, these national policies toward building WCUs utilized preferential funding schemes, competitive student admission, infrastructure construction, and the commercialization of research to move designated universities up in rankings. While the outcomes of these bold initiatives are debatable, success in the league tables have not materialized as sought by policymakers. In fact, the designated research universities have dropped in rankings over the years. Today, the highest ranked Malaysian university is the University of Malaya, ranked in the 300–400 range by both Times Higher Education and ARWU. Established in 1905, it is also the oldest university in the country.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's higher education system has experienced tremendous growth since the country gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Similar to Malaysia, private higher education expanded dramatically to meet both the demographic demands of a growing population and the aspirations for a knowledge economy. A new law in 1993 allowed the establishment of private higher education institutions. While no clear taxonomy exists for higher education in Kazakhstan, the government has cultivated two national universities, several regional universities ("state universities"), and a high-profile international university established in 2010 (Nazarbayev University). The Ministry of Education and Science has recently conferred the status "research university" to Nazarbayev University, the only institution in the country with this official designation. Overall, these public institutions dominate the higher education system. The oldest institution, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, established in 1934, is also the highest ranked (800–1000 range by Times Higher Education). In 2019, Nazarbayev University decided not to participate in global rankings until 2030, despite its strong research orientation and prominent international partnerships. The university leadership worries that the institution could be typecast as an inferior institution during its early stage of development without all the comparable metrics of a WCU (Nazarbayev University 2018). Overall, the current drive toward WCUs in Kazakhstan is heavily focused on Nazarbayev University as the higher education system undergoes systemic reforms to increase institutional autonomy and financial independence.

Several areas of higher education policymaking in Malaysia and Kazakhstan illustrate local agency in reproducing the WCU concept and affiliated ranking

systems. The next section briefly describes these examples to provide empirical evidence for our theoretical discussions.

Selecting Strategic Partners

Many higher education institutions have strategic international partners that benefit from deep collaborations over several years. These strategic partnerships receive greater resources and publicity compared to smaller scale partnerships that emerge organically among individual academics with shared interests. In Kazakhstan, the leading national universities are keen to choose partners that rank highly in league tables. For example, the country's leading university, Nazarbayev University, touts strategic partners that include Cambridge, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Pennsylvania, and the National University of Singapore. Partnership activities include academic program development, external quality assurance, student exchanges, joint research, and the screening of potential new faculty members. While subject expertise is essential to sustain these partnerships, the institutional profiles of the partners (i.e. their positions on league tables) played an influential role in early discussions of creating Nazarbayev University. The international reputations of these institutions also influence the renewal of partnership contracts. Similarly, another leading university in the country, the Kazakh-British Technical University, touts a prominent partnership with the University of London rather than lower ranked institutions in the UK. In the case of Malaysia, the large private higher education sector provides many transnational education (TNE) programs. Whether it is a twinning degree or a franchised degree program, the stature of the foreign partner is critical in gaining the trust of students, parents, employers, and investors. Foreign providers such as Nottingham, Southampton, and Monash operate their own branch campuses in Malaysia. While the TNE competition in Malaysia is fierce, policymakers and institutional leaders do accord more cultural capital to a modestly ranked foreign university than it enjoys in its home country, thus reflecting Malaysia's status in both the global field of higher education as well as its semi-peripheral status in the global geopolitical system. This inflation of cultural capital is pervasive in the Global South as local institutions seek legitimacy and visibility. In many discussions, "an appropriate partner" is more about the ranking position of an institution rather than a compatibility of academic interests or institutional needs.

Developing Curriculum and Assessing Students

Another area of reproducing the WCU discourse is curriculum development and the subsequent assessment of student learning. What is considered legitimate knowledge? Who can offer it? How do we properly assess student performance? In Kazakhstan, the curricula developed by well-ranked foreign universities receive

great fanfare. Cambridge, Warwick, and University College London have all played an active role in creating curricula and assessment tools for Kazakhstan's higher education system. Cambridge Assessment is active in the systemic reform of student assessment in Kazakhstan. Specifically, Cambridge Assessment is working with an elite network of government funded schools and Nazarbayev University to reform the assessment of secondary students for entry into higher education. In higher education, the strong legacy of Soviet influence means programs and curricula are modelled after Russian examples. However, a growing movement in adopting European models is also evident in Kazakhstan's participation in the Bologna Process. Institutions such as the Institute Sorbonne-Kazakhstan and German Kazakh University also rely on flying faculty to deliver curricula developed by European scholars. Malaysia's large private higher education sector is also renowned for its import of foreign curricula in the forms of franchised and twinning degree programs. While there is a movement to supplement foreign curricula with local content, the attraction of a foreign degree program delivered in Malaysia remains quite strong.

Sending Students Abroad

The world-class university discourse also plays an influential role when Malaysia and Kazakhstan select foreign institutions for study abroad experiences. The most prominent example is Kazakhstan's Bolashak program, a prestigious national scholarship scheme that fully funds students to pursue degrees overseas. This program began in 1993, soon after the country gained independence. Today, the Bolashak program stipulates that recipients can only study in a university that is ranked in the top 100 in the world, with further specifications for subject areas based on subject rankings. Given this restriction, applicants have been known to prioritize institutional status over subject expertise or personal interests when selecting a place and program to study. On a smaller scale, the selection of institutions for semesters abroad or internships abroad also have restrictions based on league tables. National and institutional funding schemes are hesitant to support students who might have found a welcoming foreign institution that is not well ranked. Yet, these welcoming institutions may have the resources to properly host visiting students for academic studies, research experiences, and cultural immersion.

Evaluating Senior Leaders and Academics

Using world-class university rankings to inform decisions on human resource management is another example of complicit reproduction. When vetting new faculty members and academic leaders, a candidate's institutional affiliation and academic credentials may play an outsized role in hiring. Individuals with pedigrees from

highly ranked universities in the world are commonly found in the national universities of Malaysia and Kazakhstan. Malaysia's Ministry of Education even uses rankings as one of the key performance indicators (KPIs) when evaluating its Minister of Education and state appointed university vice chancellors. This approach to personnel management trickles down to institutions' evaluations of deans. In fact, in 2006, Malaysia's flagship university, University of Malaya, sacked its vice-chancellor (Datuk Dr. Hashim Yaacob) after the university tumbled 80 places in rankings over the course of 1 year from 89th to 169th in the Times Higher Education-QS league table. This sharp drop was apparently due to incorrect data submission that counted local ethnic Chinese and Indian students as "international students", thereby inflating the university's score as the 89th university in the world (Usher 2017). While the media focused on the alarming drop in ranking and the public demanded the resignation of the vice-chancellor, this incident begs us to ask broader systemic questions: Why are policymakers setting unrealistic expectations of overnight success in league tables? How did narrow global metrics of the world-class university become a KPI of senior leadership in a higher education system? Surely the performance of any university over 1 year cannot be accurately captured through its performance in rankings (negatively or positively).

Discussion

These empirical examples from Malaysia and Kazakhstan illustrate the power of the WCU concept and the complicit reproduction of rankings as an instrument of governance. While the examples have singled out Malaysia and Kazakhstan, they are certainly not alone in the Global South when it comes to building and courting world-class universities. Many other countries engage in similar policymaking that maps out a national agenda for WCUs while neglecting important developments at lower ranked institutions. This obsession with WCUs has several critical implications for higher education systems in the Global South.

The first clear implication is mimetic isomorphism as institutions imitate the leading universities in the world based on rankings. Aspiring institutions internalize these global metrics of excellence and begin to pursue strategies that will accrue tangible points for rankings. While this trend is also evident in the Global North, institutions in the Global South with shorter histories and smaller international footprints are more susceptible to this global pressure of mimicry for the sake of legitimacy and visibility. An example of this mimicry is the premature creation of technology transfer offices and commercialization units on campuses before a university is fully prepared to engage in research (i.e. putting in place an administrative system to support research and secure grants). This type of mimicry also favors STEM disciplines while marginalizing social science and the humanities. Indigenous models of higher education such as the normal universities in East Asia with roots in education as a discipline (e.g. Beijing Normal University) and the indigenous universities in Mexico with strong ties to local communities are neglected in the

pursuit of WCUs. These trends toward research and STEM are not necessarily helpful for developing countries or middle-income countries that require a diverse set of competencies and skills in the workforce to support economic growth. An advanced economy may be able to afford a narrow specialization in competencies while outsourcing labor, but this is a privileged path that is not accessible by many countries in the Global South. Interestingly, several advanced Western economies do not have top-ranking universities in league tables, yet they excel in research and produce leading scholars: Germany, Japan, and the Nordic countries.

Another clear implication of the pursuit of WCUs is the resource imbalance that an elitist form of higher education demands. Most countries in the Global South struggle with funding for higher education. If a country pursues a national agenda to build world-class universities, it must make difficult decisions to siphon resources away from other institutions in order to cultivate one or more promising beacons (Naidoo and Ranchod 2018). This strategy results in severe discrepancies in resources across a higher education system and generates resentment toward the elite institution(s). Interestingly, while many higher education systems in the West are confronting their shortcomings by widening participation and contributions towards social mobility (at least at the level of policy pronouncements), many governments and institutions in the Global South are chasing an elitist form of higher education based on rankings.

Another serious implication of the pursuit of WCUs is system fragmentation. As higher education institutions increasingly seek international partners for academic programs and research, local collaborations may suffer in this race toward internationalization. Several ranking systems reward institutions for the pursuit of internationalization. Where does this leave local collaborations that do not generate as much fanfare? For many institutions in the Global South, local partners are more accessible than offshore partners. As institutions continually seek international linkages, the center of gravity of a higher education system can become displaced and detached from local realities.

In essence, politicking and coercion by the Global North are insufficient to sustain the power and resilience of the world-class university discourse. Rather, key actors in the Global South are complicit in reproducing the oppressive hierarchy of global rankings. In theory, ranking discourses and practices within the national contexts of Malaysia and Kazakhstan could be recontextualised in at least three different ways. First, core ranking discourses can be simply appropriated by a cosmopolitan elite of government and higher education. Second, such appropriation can occur with major principles of hierarchy intact but with slight modifications to fit the Southern context. Third, ranking discourses can be rejected in favour of principles of subversion which are positioned as local and authentic. In the two cases that we have examined, our explanation for the extreme engagement of Southern elites with global rankings can be grounded in Bourdieu's concept of *illusio*, which is a visceral belief in the stakes of the game that translates into an inability to question its underlying principles, even when it reproduces disadvantage for the player (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). So *illusio* is at the same time an investment in the

ranking game, an institutionalized interest and a principle of perception through which high status, well-resourced universities in the Global South are intimately connected to the global power nodes of higher education. Thus, exonerating policymakers and institutional leaders in the Global South from the architecture of this hierarchy creates an artificial vacuum in the discourse of world-class universities.

It is also crucial to point out that ranking systems are not entirely a Western creation as several scholars often admonish. One of the most prominent ranking systems in the world was created by Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China: the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). A few other countries in Asia have also created national and international ranking systems for universities (e.g. Taiwan and Japan). Assertions that ranking systems are Western instruments of domination conveniently ignore the role of Chinese researchers in making ARWU a global instrument since 2003.

Syed Alatas' pragmatic advice for development is highly germane as the concluding remarks for this chapter. Alatas argued, "I am not suggesting that we should close our minds to genuine knowledge from any part of the world. We should assimilate as much as possible from all sources, from all parts of the world, all useful knowledge" (Alatas 2000, p. 27). In this perspective, Alatas takes an inclusive approach to synthesize knowledge from different cultural and ontological traditions rather than rely on essentialist tropes that reinforce a divisive world order. For the advancement of scholarship, Alatas further argues that "We have to avoid assessing ourselves in terms of foreign yardsticks" (Alatas 2000, p. 31). Metrics for a world-class university represent such perverse yardsticks. Ultimately, the challenge of development is less about a binary world order than about self-determination:

> The emancipation of the mind from the shackles of intellectual imperialism is the major condition for the development of a creative and autonomous social science tradition in developing societies. (Alatas 2000, p. 44)

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Chapter 7
On Realizing the World-Class University: Litigation and the State

Judit Novak

Abstract This chapter examines *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University* as an empirical manifestation of state action for creating and maintaining world-class universities (WCUs). It advances the argument that while litigation has long been assumed to play a far more limited role in higher education (HE) than it does in other areas of public policy, this element of governing fuels a different form of state building, in which courts and judges—sometimes from even the mere existence or threat of their intervention—can play a crucial role in WCU development. At the same time, we need to ask a variety of questions about the outcomes of lawsuits and their effects on HE. Does litigation have the effect of realizing the WCU, or does it not matter at all whether policy goals are pressed in courts or through legislation and professional choices? If it does matter, how and why? This chapter argues that a turn to the courts and a reliance on more formal, less malleable rules is not merely an alternative route to the same goal; litigation matters because law is different, because judicial decision-making shapes and constrains HE politics and policy in important ways.

In 2018, the high-profile case of an American student, Connie Dickinson, made the headlines in Europe and beyond when she won her 5-year battle against a Swedish university over "insufficient quality" teaching that had "violated her contract" concerning the quality of the education service, securing a refund of tuition fees in the Swedish Supreme Court. Concurrently with *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University*, in the United Kingdom, a graduate student filed suit and claimed £1,000,000 in damages from the University of Oxford, arguing that the "inadequate teaching" he had received cost him entry to a top US law school and, hence, had a "marked deleterious effect" on his subsequent career (Mortimer 2018, February 8). Although the High Court dismissed his claim, the lawsuit, like Dickinson's, can be seen as part of a trend legal analysts such as Charles Epp (2009) and Sean Farhang (2010) have

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_7

identified in other realms: a growing tendency among individuals to turn to the courts to resolve grievances as part of a broader sense of rights consciousness manifested over the course of recent decades.

The application of contract law to the student–university relationship has become a hot topic for discussion, attracting attention not only from the media, but also among scholars. There is growing evidence that students suing their alma maters contributes substantially to turning campuses into testing grounds for a host of constitutional challenges (Rocheford 2001, 2008; Olivas 2013) and that this trend is related, at least in part, to discourses of consumerisation (Kamvounias and Varnham 2006; Varnham 2001; Harris 1993; Palfreyman and Warner 1998) and the commodification of HE (Kaye 2000; Kaye et al. 2006). Amanda Fulford (2019) observes that central to both of these aspects of a university education is the demand for value for money and, more recently, for holding higher education institutions (HEIs) accountable through the use of judicial mechanisms such as formally binding contracts. This has brought about a situation where students not only are suing universities for gross mismanagement, negligence or failing in instruction; rather, "students are now able to legally challenge universities that do not provide what they have indicated they will provide at the standard they have promised in terms of breach of contract" (Onsman 2008, p. 83).

One might readily acknowledge the importance of private statutory enforcement litigation in policy enforcement while resisting the characterization of it as a form of state action for creating and maintaining world-class universities (WCUs). After all, why should we consider private litigation a component of state capacity? The decision to litigate is made by civilians pursuing their own interests. The answer, Farhang (2010) suggests, is that "if the object of interest is the state's capacity to implement its policy choices by controlling the behavior of other entities, then one must attend not only to the direct actions of state officers, but also to more indirect pathways of regulatory control" (p. 7). He refers to these pathways as policy instruments: that is, "the repertoire of *means* available to policy makers to achieve their objectives" (Farhang 2010, p. 7).

Extending Farhang's line of reasoning, this chapter contributes to emerging debates in HE research by advancing the argument that the judiciary is a venue not only for adjudication, but also for state efforts to create and maintain WCUs. Central to this argument is the idea that the private enforcement of law is an extension of government power through mechanisms previously overlooked in "traditional" accounts of constitutional government, which describe a fairly straightforward sequence of law and policy enforcement. Using *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University* as a case, I demonstrate that the development of private litigation as a means for creating and maintaining WCUs can be seen in light of what analysts of globalization have pointed out in other sectors, namely, as part of increasingly important structures of global governance in which the role of the state and the nature and locus of authority is being transformed and rearticulated. The important point here, however, is that, in litigation, the government is adopting not only law, but also a legal logic and ethos concerning "service delivery." While it has long been assumed that litigation plays a far more limited role in HE than it does in other areas of social

policy, this element of governing, which has not yet received sufficient attention in HE research, thus introduces new actors and logics into the HE system. *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University* illustrates the ways in which governing by judicial decision-making works, the importance of framing, and, once framed, the power of that frame to influence and shape the future direction for HE.

I proceed by first providing a brief account of the policy context: Sweden's introduction of tuition fees for students from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland. This reform is key to understanding both the link between the case and the discourse on WCUs and the ways in which the case reached the judiciary. In the subsequent section, I briefly review the judges' reasoning on the primary issues before the courts and, in so doing, identify the patterns and pathways by which Swedish HE became firmly positioned within the remit of modern contract law. As will be shown, these patterns and paths are not limited to litigants and judges; they also powerfully influence and shape future HE policy choices. Lastly, I turn to this chapter's fundamental questions: Does litigation have the effect of realizing WCUs, or does it not matter at all whether policy goals are pressed in courts or through legislation and professional choices? If it does matter, how and why?

Tuition Fees in Sweden: A Path to World-Class Universities?

In 2011, continuing the previous decade's work on the internationalization of HE, the Swedish government introduced tuition fees for students from outside the EEA and Switzerland who apply to Swedish HEIs apart from the framework of exchange programs. These students pay an application fee of SEK 900 and, if admitted to their chosen universities, a tuition fee corresponding to full-cost coverage.[1] A central element of this reform was an attempt to shift the HE sector from a bureaucratic to a market culture by incorporating business values and practices designed to boost efficiency, decrease public spending, and increase the responsiveness of HEIs. This clearly follows from a white paper report published 5 years prior, which investigated the prospect of introducing tuition fees and argued that "the fee system must be seen as the linchpin of a strategy" for, among other things, HEIs to work their way into "a market characterized by fierce international competition" (Government Official Report 2006:7, p. 65). Introducing tuition fees was believed to open up opportunities for HEIs to become players on the global HE market by forcing them to increase the quality of their education and develop courses and programs attractive to new categories of students.

[1] If an education program covers more than 30 higher education credits, the university may decide that the tuition fee be paid in installments. For details on application and tuition fees at universities and university colleges, see the Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434), chapter 4, section 4, and the Ordinance on Application Fees and Tuition Fees at Higher Education Institutions (SFS 2010:543), sections 2 and 5–8.

The Swedish government published its tuition reform bill *Compete with Quality—Tuition Fees for Foreign Students* (Government Bill 2009/10:65) in February 2010. Following the line of the investigator, the government argued that Sweden is "a country that wants to assert itself in the ever-stronger global competition" (p. 18). As part of this endeavor, "Swedish universities and university colleges should to a greater extent compete with foreign universities with high quality, rather than with free education" (p. 13). The introduction of tuition fees was believed to foster "quality-enhancing competition" among HEIs (p. 17) because abolishing that existing advantage in providing free education to students from outside the EEA and Switzerland will "force [the HEIs] to compete fully with high quality" and give them an opportunity for "profiling" on the global HE market (p. 18). In the subsequent plenary meeting,[2] several members of parliament expressed support for the bill, emphasizing the importance of the reform for creating and maintaining world-class HE. Sweden "needs a world-class education [system] characterized by high quality" (Parliamentary Minutes 2009/10:107, p. 64), and the political parties "aim to create a Swedish higher education of world-class" (p. 71); thus, through this reform, Swedish higher education, despite already being "of world-class quality," "will become even better and sharper" (p. 78).

For the purpose of this chapter, it is important to note that the government did in fact recognize that the payment of fees might give students rights similar to those observed in civil law agreements. Rather than investigate this potential side effect further, however, the government ordered that any consequences following from students gaining such rights "are to be settled by the judiciary for the time being" (Government Bill 2009/10:65, p. 20).

In sum, while the introduction of tuition fees and the handling of possible civil rights-related conflicts by the judiciary promised both enhanced quality of Swedish HE and important steps towards creating and maintaining WCUs, it left unclear what these aspirations would mean in practice. This meaning emerged in the conflict dynamic of *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University* and entailed, as we shall see, placing HE firmly within the remit of modern contract law.

Case Facts

The American student was admitted to Mälardalen University to study a program in analytical finance in the fall of 2011, the same year Swedish universities introduced tuition fees for international students.[3] The program comprises 180 ETCS (3 years of full-time study) and leads to a bachelor degree in mathematics/applied

[2] Plenary meetings are held in the Chamber. During these meetings, the members of the Swedish Parliament debate matters and make collective decisions. Full transcripts (in Swedish) of held plenary meetings are publicly available on the Swedish government's website.

[3] Because the student was not a citizen of an EEA member state or Switzerland, she was obliged to pay tuition fees to enroll in the program.

mathematics. The student quit the 3-year program midway through due to dissatisfaction with the teaching, and asked the university to refund the tuition fees she had paid. Her claim was rejected on the grounds that the university did not have any legal provision to refund the tuition fees.

The student then approached the Center for Justice [*Centrum för Rättvisa*], a Swedish organization working for people's rights with respect to public and private organizations, to take up her case. Three lawyers at Center for Justice wrote an op-ed article in a major Swedish daily newspaper, arguing that public service authorities such as HEIs have the same responsibility for the delivery of quality services as businesses in any other sector: "If you go to a swimming pool and pay the entrance fee and the pool is not filled with water, then you are entitled to have your entrance fee refunded, even if there is no law explicitly stating this" (Crafoord et al. 2015, April 20).

The student filed suit in Västmanland's District Court, claiming that she and the university had entered into a mutually binding agreement under civil law.[4] According to the student, the university committed a breach of contract by allowing shortcomings in the quality of its education and, thus, must refund the fees she had paid. The university disputed that it had engaged in any civil law agreement with the student. According to the university, the parties' legal relationship was governed by public law regulations only (Mälardalen University 2015, pp. 1–2). Furthermore, the university disputed that the student was entitled to a rebate, as the university had rectified the alleged deficiencies.

The primary issues before the District Court—and subsequently, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court—were threefold: first, whether the student and the university had entered into a mutually binding agreement (and, if so, what this agreement entailed); second, whether the university had committed a breach of contract; and third, what the consequences of such breach of contract might be. While all three courts ruled in favor of the student, their reasons for doing so deserve closer attention. The case illustrates the workings of judicial decision-making, the importance of framing, and the power of frames to influence and constrain future choices.

Did the Student and the University Enter into a Mutually Binding Agreement?

The first question the courts had to answer was whether the relationship between the student and the university belonged purely to public law or whether the student and the university had entered into an agreement that entailed mutual obligations, thus extending governance to private law. Faced with a lack of relevant regulations in the legal system, the courts followed several steps of argumentation, looking for more

[4] The Center for Justice (2015) proceeded with the case on behalf of the student.

general points of reference that would allow the parties' legal situation to be determined.

HE in Sweden clearly has elements of public law regarding the relationship between a student and a HEI: decisions on admission, graduation, temporary suspension and expulsion, and other disciplinary measures are regulated by law and are considered part of the exercise of public authority. Further, the Swedish Higher Education Authority (SHEA)[5] provides examination standards to publicly funded universities and university colleges and has the authority to withdraw these in the event of serious shortcomings in the courses and/or study programs. However, the courts argued, the provision of education itself must be distinguished from these public law elements. It must be distinguished on the grounds that "education and teaching generally means that someone provides a function that requires some knowledge. Thus education is a service" (District Court 2016, p. 7; see also Court of Appeal 2017, p. 7). In this specific case, therefore, "the education is to be regarded as a service provided by Mälardalen University" (District Court 2016, p. 8; see also Court of Appeal 2017, p. 3). Furthermore, as the student had to pay a fee to receive the education, her legal relationship with the university was considered a mutually binding agreement. Thus, upon being accepted to the program and having paid tuition fees, the student could expect to be able to complete a bachelor's degree program in mathematics of the quality outlined in HE laws and regulations (District Court 2016, p. 9; Court of Appeal 2017, p. 3–5; Supreme Court 2018, p. 8).

This first step established the existence of a mutually binding agreement. Given this, the courts reasoned that, because HEIs are obliged by the Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434, ch.4, s. 4) to ensure high-quality courses and study programs, the student must prove that there were fundamental deficiencies in the quality of the education to substantiate her claim that the university had breached the contract.

Did the University Breach the Contract?

The main reason for the courts' verdict in favor of the student was a previous quality evaluation by the SHEA, which had reported inadequacy in the main subject of mathematics at Mälardalen University.[6] The SHEA reported that four out of five degree objectives were not met and graded the university as having a "inadequate

[5] The SHEA (*Universitetskanslersämbetet* in Swedish) is the main government agency responsible for legal oversight, statistical monitoring, and quality assurance (QA) of HE. It is also responsible for degree authorisation of HEIs and has the authority withdraw HEIs' degree-awarding powers. The SHEA receives its funding-target agreements (or public service agreements) from the government and is accountable to the Ministry of Education and Research.

[6] This quality evaluation was part of the SHEA's nation-wide quality assurance of courses at Swedish universities and colleges that led to bachelor's degrees in mathematics, mathematical statistics, and related main subject areas. The quality evaluation was based on three measures: (i) a sample of students' bachelor's degree projects, (ii) self-assessments from the HEIs, and (iii) accounts from students and former students.

quality" in courses and programs leading to a bachelor's degree in mathematics (SHEA 2013, p. 17). In response to the SHEA's evaluation, the university took several measures in 2013 and 2014. For instance, new faculty were hired and new courses were introduced. In a follow-up, the SHEA found that the training now met the requirement for high quality (SHEA 2015).

Interestingly, the Supreme Court, like the two preceding it, viewed the improvement measures as confirming that deficiencies had existed: "The evaluation and the subsequent measures taken by the university to improve the quality of education show that the education program has not had the quality that [the student] had reason to expect" (Supreme Court 2018, p. 10). Or, as the Court of Appeal (2017, p. 6) stated, "[the student] cannot be required to produce additional documentation to prove that the university has violated the quality requirement in the agreement."

At this juncture, a comment is in order. While it is beyond dispute that the SHEA deemed the quality of the university's program leading to a bachelor's degree in mathematics insufficient for meeting the requirements of the Higher Education Act, it could be questioned whether and how this result should be relevant to the courts' judgement. Aside from the fact that the purpose of the SHEA's quality evaluations is, of course, not to prove breaches of contract and that criticism from a supervisory authority cannot reasonably constitute a basis for civil law sanctions, the significance of the SHEA's evaluation results must be analyzed more closely.[7]

What Are the Consequences of the University's Breach of the Contract?

As previously mentioned, existing laws and regulations do not contain any specific rules on agreements between HEIs and students. Hence, to establish legal grounds for the third issue, i.e., the consequences of the university's breach of contract, the courts were dependent on the principles of general contract law and analogies with laws and precedents in other areas.[8]

[7] Such analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter. It should be noted, however, that this QA system was abolished in 2015. One of the main reasons was that it had caused the SHEA to be excluded from the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in 2012 (i.e., prior to *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University*) because of its single singular focus on "results," i.e., student theses. SHEA's new QA-system was formally implemented in 2016. For an extensive analysis of this reform work as well as the SHEA officials and Swedish vice-chancellors' perceptions of the process, see Segerholm et al. (2019).

[8] A legal precedent is "a decided case that furnishes a basis for determining later cases involving similar facts or issues" (Garner and Black 2009, p. 1295). Although precedents do not *determine* the outcome of a particular case, they set down guidelines by way of which a judge approaches a decision.

Specifically, the courts used two precedent cases as points of reference. The first precedent case, ruled in 1998 (NJA 1998 p. 656),[9] concerned a dispute regarding a parent's right to receive a refund of fees paid for municipal childcare due to health-hazardous premises. In the second case (NJA 2008 p. 642), ruled a decade later, the matter of dispute was whether parents were obliged to pay public childcare fees to the municipality for time during which day-care center staff were on strike. The Supreme Court had ruled that the municipalities and the parents had entered into a mutually binding agreement and that the payment obligation for access to childcare, unlike the determination of the size of the fee, was to be considered contract law. Because it is a fundamental principle of contract law that anyone who does not receive an agreed upon service is not obliged to pay for it, the court freed the parents from the obligation to pay for the childcare.

Against the backdrop of the aforementioned precedent cases, the student was considered to have the right to a refund. Section 38 of the Sale of Goods Act (SFS 1990:931) stipulates that if a buyer requires a rebate, the reduction shall be calculated such that the relationship between the reduced price and the contractual price corresponds to the relationship between the value of the goods in faulty condition at the time of delivery and the value of the goods in the contractual condition. The courts found this method of determining refund applicable for determining refunds in the event of proven deficiencies in goods or services in HE. Thus, the courts established that, while courses and programs are an intangible service, this rule should be applied analogously to the question of the consequences of the university's breach of contract (District Court 2016, p. 13; Court of Appeal 2017, p. 7; Supreme Court 2018, pp. 10–11). From this followed that the size of the refund was to be determined by comparing the value of the education agreed upon by the parties to the value of the education the student received.

Now, few would dispute that it is virtually impossible to determine the value of education, at least outside the court room. However, judicial decision-making follows certain rules and is driven by certain incentives, limited by domain-specific constraints, and addressed to specific audiences in a specific language. The District Court decided for a full refund of the tuition fee paid, which was later reduced by the Court of Appeal to 50%. The Supreme Court, finally, raised it to two-thirds. While the courts' exercise of determining the economic value of higher education is of great interest in and of itself, I am primarily concerned here with another question: Does litigation have the effect of realizing the WCU, or does it not matter at all whether policy goals are pressed in courts or through legislation and professional choices? If it does matter, how and why? Following Gordon Silverstein (2009), I argue that a turn to the courts and a reliance on more formal, less malleable rules is not merely an alternative route to the same goal; litigation matters because law is different, because law shapes and constrains politics and policy in important ways.

[9] NJA is the abbreviation for *Nytt Juridiskt Arkiv*, where precedents (i.e. Supreme Court cases) are published. 1998 is the year, and p. 656 is the journal page. I cite this source in the format used in Sweden.

The Juridification of Higher Education

As I have argued elsewhere, law and politics cannot be easily disentangled (Novak 2019). This makes terminology tricky. Because law and politics are intimately related, scholars have struggled to find a term that distinguishes what might be called the "traditional" role of law, courts, and judicial reasoning in policy and politics (an exercise in ethical reasoning that is placed categorically "above" politics, i.e. by establishing the preconditions for the conduct of politics) from legalistic approaches to institutional, political, and policy problems that substitute for, displace, and even undermine the ordinary political process. *Juridification* is a term that is commonly used by scholars in various disciplines to describe, among other things, the degree to which areas of social life are increasingly controlled by a profusion of rules, laws, and statutes (Teubner 1987; Habermas 1996; Blichner and Molander 2008; Comandé and de Groof 2018). Juridification is not to be understood as solely the processes of once-unregulated and unrestrained arenas of life being bound, tied, structured, and ordered by law; importantly, the term also recognizes the degree to which rights have been *part* of a process and have come to dominate, structure, frame, and constrain debates and their products (Croce 2018; Gustafsson 2018; Novak 2018; Sinding Aasen et al. 2014; Trägårdh and Delli Carpini 2004).

While juridification processes are embedded in ideas of serving national governments and assume particular kinds of relations among agents and between agents and societal institutions, it is difficult to anticipate their consequences, as different patterns and processes of juridification generate different outcomes. These patterns and processes, Silverstein (2009) argues,

> … are the product of the interaction of political and judicial actors, institutions, and practices in a way that "progressively shapes" their strategic behavior. Juridification is the product of a long series of interactive and interdependent choices, rather than the sum of a series of individual contests in which there is a winner and a loser and then everyone starts all over. It is an iterated process, one in which the results of earlier rounds of play shape and constrain current choices, as do expectations about future behavior that also are calculated into each choice in the present. (p. 16)

The above quote underlines the importance of recognizing the interactions of courts, legislators, law, and politics not as series of individual interactions, but as the end products of long interaction chains. This is clearly illustrated by *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University.* The two precedent cases referenced in the case support the claim that civil law principles may well be applied to legal relationships that essentially belong to public law. However, it should be noted that the first case from 1998 did not deal with the question of how to review the obligations of a service provider. Further, in the 2008 case, the provider had completely failed to deliver the service (i.e. the provision of day care). That no payment should be made seems reasonable. A significant difference between the precedent cases and *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University* is that the latter was neither about health-hazardous premises nor failure of service delivery, but, rather, the low quality of the service delivered. Thus, the agreement concerning educational service between the university and a fee-paying

student would, reasonably, be considered different. Not only does the relationship between a student and an HEI a policy area not invoke the same type of rights discourse as childcare, but there are clearly other differences between the referenced cases and *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University*. Yet, despite their fundamental differences, the courts followed the same line of reasoning as in the other two cases.

As Silverstein has succinctly noted, court rulings are part of an iterated sequence: a court ruling triggers new legislation, which triggers further litigation, which triggers more legislation. Thus, the branches are interlaced and interdependent, each reacting to and trying to anticipate the other. Because of how judicial decision-making works, decisions in one substantive area (e.g. childcare) can influence, shape, and constrain decisions in other substantive areas (e.g. HE), making it even harder to unwind these tangles.

Lobbyists, legislators, and concerned citizens alike pay close attention to the Supreme Court. When crafting legislation, legislators look backward to identify trodden paths that will influence judges' acceptance and reinforcement of legislative decisions. However, they also look forward, prospectively trying to anticipate where the government is willing or inclined to take the court and the country. Legislative and executive decisions, such as those made in *Dickinson v. Mälardalen University*—themselves influenced by the choices judges have already made—constrain the next rounds of court decisions, and these, in turn, shape and direct any legislative and executive choices that follow.

Concluding Remarks

The expansion of private litigation in the area of HE has been both a product and an enabler of broader neoliberal processes of globalization, and the authority of the private citizen must be seen in the light of these processes. To a considerable extent, this is a consequence of the broader process of commodification that has increasingly treated HE as a service to be sold on an open market and provided by the most efficient and effective education providers, as well as the increasing acceptance of quality-assurance (QA) agencies' status as market actors providing quality assurance services for market offerings. As part of this process, the provision of education has been reconfigured as a market in which the public is composed of consumers: a realm of individuals actively engaged in making choices about their education within a marketplace in which public HEIs are only one (albeit important and, in many ways, still privileged) provider.

Belief in the models of the commercial enterprise as the most efficient form of service delivery, of the public as consumers, and of an education market comprised of education providers competing for students beyond national borders has become an important element in the political conceptualization of both WCUs and the delivery of quality education (Sadlak and Liu 2007; van Vught 2008; Deem et al. 2008; Marginson 2011; Enders 2014; Ramirez and Tiplic 2014; Liu et al. 2016; Wu et al. 2018). According to several HE scholars, such conceptualizations have pushed

universities into a "reputation race" (van Vught 2008, p. 168) and a "Faustian bargain" (West 2009) in which the long-term cost outweighs the short-term gains (Naidoo 2018, April 20; Marginson 2016). This process cannot be grasped by seeing it simply as the erosion of state authority, nor as the opposite: the straightforward strengthening of the state through the integration of private/civil capacities. What is emerging is a much more complex governance structure, indicating new trajectories that reach far beyond the niches from which it arose. Clearly, political actors can use private litigation as a policy instrument to compel organizational change, as Farhang and other scholars of private enforcement have described. However, in this process, the law becomes an even more consequential part of the state.

By using litigation as a policy instrument, litigants and courts are empowered as vehicles for buttressing state power. This leads to a different form of state-building in which courts and judges—sometimes through the mere existence or threat of their intervention—can play crucial roles in HE development. Coupled with a growing support structure that has rapidly expanded access to the courts, the legal strategy for creating "world-class" HE in Sweden has in many ways revised the understanding of HE by reinterpreting many provisions of existing statutes in directions never expected or, arguably, desired by the national legislative body that produced them.

It remains a task to examine the impact of litigation in the HE workplace and the role of professionals in turning dissatisfied students from seeking legal redress for their complaints and toward more pro-manager solutions. Amanda Fulford (2019) has elaborated critically on the now general acceptance of the relationship between students and HEIs as contractual, and argued that the turn toward formal contract law in the UK, as in Australia, has brought about a fundamental shift in the nature of the relationship between tertiary institutions and their students. This redefinition of the student–university relationship can be seen as stripping away some of the broader goals of HE (most notably the Humboltian ideal) in its pursuit of individual-centered rights justice.

The *Dickinson v. Märlardalen University* case is closed, but there clearly remain important questions. The spread of legalistic rules and procedures in HE is controversial in its form and effects, as is the placing of HE firmly within the remit of modern contract law. It is not possible here to explore the potential consequences of these dynamics, but it seems safe to say that litigation is not merely a substitute form of state power; the change in forum has effects on the participants in and outcomes of dispute resolution and policy-making. While the spread of legalistic rules and procedures in HE is not widely questioned, the effectiveness of this spread in creating and protecting not only civil rights, but also WCUs, remains unclear.

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Chapter 8
World Class at All Costs

Mats Hyvönen

Abstract This chapter takes up the now infamous case of the so-called Macchariani Scandal in light of the Karolinska Institute's tactics for maintaining and enhancing its position as a WCU. It pays special attention to research funding policies in general, and, in particular, the role of the chairman of the Institute's Board of Trustees, the Liberal politician Lars Leijonborg, as an example of how the dream of becoming a world-class country in the increasingly fierce global competition can have far-reaching negative consequences for national higher education systems as well as for individuals.

The Scandal

When the first installment of the three-part documentary series entitled "The Experiments"[1] (Lindquist 2016a) was aired on Swedish national television on January 13, 2016, it marked the beginning of the public unraveling of one of the greatest scientific scandals in the history of the country. Paolo Macchiarini, a "superstar surgeon" recruited to Karolinska Institutet (KI) and Karolinska University Hospital in 2010, who performed the world's first transplant of a synthetic trachea in June, 2011, was accused of gross scientific and clinical misconduct. Not only had the numerous transplants since 2011 (including the first one) failed, causing terrible suffering and the premature deaths of several[2] patients, but the procedure was also

[1] In Swedish: "Experimenten". When the documentary was aired on *BBC Four* in October 2016, the title was changed to "Fatal Experiments: The Downfall of a Supersurgeon" (Lindquist 2016b).

[2] Biomedical researcher and independent science journalist Leonid Schneider (2017), has documented a total of 20 tracheal regeneration procedures conducted by Macchiarini in Sweden, Russia, Spain, the UK, and the US. Only three of the 20 recipients are still alive.

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_8

misleadingly represented as the patients' last resort (McCook 2016). Although they were all very ill, none of the three patients on whom Macchiarini operated in Sweden were in immediate mortal danger (Hawkes 2016). There were no results from experiments on lab animals that used the specific techniques employed in the operations. The legally mandated ethical approval for clinical research had not been obtained. Moreover, the articles published on the procedures contained "fabricated and distorted descriptions of the patients' conditions before and after the operations" (KI 2018). When Macchiarini's contract at Karolinska University Hospital was terminated in November 2013, after the "unfavourable results and other circumstances surrounding the surgical procedures became clear to clinic and hospital management" (Asplund 2016, p. 4), he continued to perform transplantations at a hospital in Krasnodar, Russia. According to Bosse Lindquist, the journalist who had produced the documentary, the vice chancellor and the rest of the management at KI knew of Macchiarini's continued activities (Svahn 2016). But most scandalous of all was that the KI leadership had been warned about Macchiarini as early as 2010. Senior management had pushed through the recruit despite the strikingly negative references provided to them, including strong indications that there were serious doubts regarding the soundness of his work, and information suggesting that his CV contained falsehoods. Macchiarini's contract with KI was extended in 2013 and 2015 without any proper evaluation. From 2014 on, whistleblowers were consistently ignored and even silenced by KI management.

Despite the difficulty of the subject matter and the scale of the scandal, Bosse Lindquist and his team succeeded in providing the public with an understanding of the complex world of regenerative medicine as well as a revealing overview of the course of events up until January 2016. Supported by a highly capable editorial team, and with access both to Macchiarini (because of his love of the spotlight) and to his patients and their families, the reporters investigating the events at the time probably had a better understanding of the situation than Macchiarini himself.

Naturally, the documentary caused quite a stir. Public trust in KI plummeted, and a series of resignations followed in February 2016, including the vice-chancellor and the dean of research at KI. The Secretary General of the Nobel Assembly at KI, which appoints the Nobel laureates in Physiology or Medicine, also resigned in February. Citing the scandal as his reason, the chairman of KI's university board resigned that September. The entire university board of trustees was dismissed by the Minister for Higher Education and Research shortly thereafter. The vice chancellor of KI at the time of Macchiarini's recruitment, was dismissed both as university chancellor and as director of the Swedish Higher Education Authority. Macchiarini himself was sacked on March 23. In June 2016, a Swedish prosecutor opened an investigation into his surgical practices, on suspicion of involuntary manslaughter and causing grievous bodily harm. To the surprise of many, not least Bosse Lindquist and his colleagues, in October 2017, the prosecutor announced that she was closing the investigation because she was unable to prove that any crimes had been committed.

Academic Norms

How could a scandal of such proportions occur at one of the world's most prestigious medical universities? A number of investigations were conducted into the affair, and, to date, hundreds of newspaper articles have been published on it. There are as of now four books having to do with the scandal (Sundberg 2016; Lindquist 2018; Leijonborg 2018; Wallberg-Henriksson and Appelqvist 2019), and it even inspired a play (Lagercrantz 2017). Many commentators attributed the scandal to Machiarini's personality—the charismatic careerist willing to ignore ethics, break laws and defy basic human decency in order to attain his goals. Others emphasized his compulsive lying, as exposed in *Vanity Fair*'s story about how the US television news producer Benita Alexander, who fell for Macchiarini while filming a documentary about him, was lead to believe that Vladimir Putin, the Obamas, and the Clintons were planning to attend their upcoming wedding ceremony at which the Pope would be presiding (Ciralsky 2016). Still others, especially the investigators, focused on Macchiarini's research and procedures, and/or the administrative aspects of KI's handling of Macchiarini and his research activities (Asplund 2016; Heckscher et al. 2016a, b). The rather narrow focus on either Macchiarini himself or on KI's administrative failure—its nonchalant and irresponsible attitude towards regulations and other formalities—is only a part of a broader picture. One is given the impression that many of those involved or affected, directly or indirectly, were inclined to frame the scandal as a spectacular deviation from the normal state of things. An editorial in *Nature* (2016), for instance, described the scandal as "a valuable lesson for the Karolinska Institute". Any contextual explanations such as, for example, increased government pressure on medical research to move from bench to bedside as fast as possible, were dismissed out of hand: "most institutions don't respond to such pressures in this way". Just nine months after the documentary was aired, *Nature* observed KI's "exemplary approach to the scandal" and was content that they had already "fine-tuned many of their procedures, including those for recruitment and handling whistle-blowers". According to *Nature*, KI should not tighten its procedures too much, so that it "no longer feels comfortable taking justifiable scientific risks": "the world of biomedicine might yet forgive KI this one major slip," but "it will not forgive a slip into mediocrity."

One of the investigations initiated by KI itself (focusing only on the administrative aspects, and not on science or medicine) touched upon possible structural explanations to the scandal. The external investigators briefly mentioned that research policy in the last few decades has increasingly emphasized the need for investments in excellence, and that government committee inquiries as well as research budgets have certainly stressed the need for recruitment of prominent researchers from abroad. "A growing fixation on excellence", the investigators summarize, "may have had impact on the course of events" (Heckscher et al. 2016b, p. 8). These structural explanations were only mentioned in the passing, however, in one paragraph of the 200-page report.

Unlike the investigations initiated by KI and the Karolinska University Hospital, numerous op-ed articles published in the wake of the scandal pointed to factors that made the recruitment of "star scientists" both possible and desirable. On these accounts, the questionable recruitment of Macchiarini and the failure to monitor and follow up his activities properly bore witness to structural problems caused by recent and current research funding policies.

One name is mentioned recurrently in the articles: *Lars Leijonborg*, a politician who was formerly chairman of the Swedish Liberal Party who was Director of the Ministry of Education and Research between 2006 and 2007, and Minister of Higher Education and Research between 2006 and 2009. After leaving politics in 2009, he was appointed chairman of the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company and the media group Mittmedia. In 2013, he assumed the role as chairman of KI's university board. Many commentators saw a connection between his past and present careers. An editorial in Sweden's leading morning newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, for example, made the point that Leijonborg's ideas about how to govern universities have contributed to giving the vice chancellors autocratic powers, and they have probably also contributed to a cult of genius in academia" (*Dagens Nyheter* 2016).[3]

Global Competitiveness

In 2005, a year before the general election in Sweden, the Liberal Party held its annual congress in Gothenburg. As the election campaign was set in motion, the party leader Lars Leijonborg made several appearances in the media, regularly making use of one of his favorite expressions—"turbo-globalization"—to describe the increasingly fierce global competition between regions and countries. He was likely inspired by the American political commentator Thomas L. Friedman (2005). Friedman's bestselling book *The World Is Flat* was published earlier that year, and it argued that a perceptual shift was required for countries and companies as well as for individuals to remain competitive in an increasingly global market. According to Friedman, the world was rapidly "flattening ", i.e. historical and geographic differences between regions and countries were becoming increasingly irrelevant. Leijonborg shared Friedmans conviction that the emerging abilities of developing countries would put pressure on businesses and individuals in the Global North, making rapid change inevitable. In Leijonborg's view, the key to meeting the challenges arising out of competition with low-cost countries was *knowledge* (*Dagens Industri* 2005). Higher education and research were thus becoming strategically important. In his speeches, Leijonborg asked "why not make 'more Nobel Prizes to Sweden' our election pledge?" (Molin 2005). He was, of course, not alone in promoting the role of universities in the global knowledge and innovation race. The

[3] All translations from Swedish original into English are by the author of this chapter.

decade after the turn of the millennium saw a growing interest in higher education and research on all political levels, national as well as international.

In April 2005, at about the same time as Friedman published his book, the European Commission published a communication entitled *Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: Enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy* (European Commission 2005a). The document identified universities as an indispensable part of the commitment by EU governments to concentrate their efforts on economic renewal. The introduction predicted future developments and pinpointed a challenge:

> Within the next 20 years, Europe's economic paradigm will change fundamentally. Its manufacturing base will continue to shrink, future growth and social welfare will rely increasingly on knowledge-intensive industries and services, and ever more jobs will require a higher education qualification. Yet European universities, motors of the new, knowledge-based paradigm, are not in a position to deliver their full potential contribution to the relaunched Lisbon Strategy. (European Commission 2005a, p. 2)

The solution was to "strengthen the three poles of Europe's knowledge triangle: education, research and innovation". Obviously, universities are essential to all three and hence "investing more and better in the modernization and quality of universities is a direct investment in the future of Europe and Europeans" (European Commission 2005a, p. 2). Mobilizing existing brainpower was not enough, though. To counterbalance the effects of increased global competition, European countries had to become better at attracting the best talent. The attractiveness of higher education institutions is crucial in this regard: "Mindful of these concerns, EU Ministers of Education have already set the objective of transforming the EU into 'the most-favoured destination of students, scholars and researchers from other world regions'" (European Commission 2005b). The strategy to achieve both competitiveness and attractiveness was to push for a transformation of the entire organizational architectonics for funding of research and higher education. In the early 2000s, the EU initiated an ideologically framed large-scale project aimed at the integration of national publicly funded systems. The concept of the "European Research Area" constituted the framework for a rethinking of the rationale for supporting research and the role of higher education and research policy (Nedeva and Wedlin 2015).

The strategies largely revolved around two concepts: *autonomy* and *excellence*. While the former was a step towards improving efficiency at the local level by decentralizing power to university managements so that they could profile their institutions, prioritize what areas to invest in and take control over the recruitment of academic staff, the latter was a move towards centralization of national research funding by concentrating investments on certain internationally competitive strategic research areas.

Autonomy and Excellence

In its report *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society* from 2008, the OECD identified less state involvement and more institutional autonomy in higher education as one of the strongest current trends. Some countries had already made reforms to transform universities from state agencies to self-governing legal entities. According to the report, one of the challenges was "finding the proper balance between governmental steering and institutional autonomy" (p. 16), but the main policy was to "give institutions ample autonomy over the management of human resources" (p. 17). Increased flexibility in hiring and firing was just one of the many options the OECD wanted to review in order to "widen the scope of institutional autonomy so as to allow for greater responsiveness (to students, stakeholders, regions) and efficiency in operations" (p. 18).

While the OECD's "Pointers for future policy development" were somewhat cautious, the EU was more straightforward about the alleged need for institutional reforms towards greater autonomy. The EU Commission made it clear that "[u]niversities will not become innovative and responsive to change unless they are given real autonomy and accountability" (European Commission 2006, p. 5). New internal governance systems based on "strategic priorities and on professional management of human resources, investment and administrative procedures" were required. The aim was to overcome the universities' "fragmentation into faculties, departments, laboratories and administrative units" and to "target their efforts collectively on institutional priorities for research, teaching and services". To achieve this, the member states were advised to build up and reward management and leadership capacity within its universities, for example, by "setting up national bodies dedicated to university management and leadership training, which could learn from those already existing". Furthermore, to improve their competitiveness, European universities must be given "autonomy to position themselves, cooperate and compete at European and international levels, and better link their research activities to the needs of industry and society" (European Commission 2007, p. 14). In 2007, things were looking promising: autonomy reforms were under way in many countries. These reforms needed to be completed "and extended to the whole of Europe".

As Minister of Higher Education and Research in the government that took office in 2006, Leijonborg was swift to take action in line with the OECD's and the EU's strategies. In 2008, he submitted a comprehensive government bill entitled *A Boost for Research and Innovation* (Prop. 2008/09:50) to the Swedish Parliament. The bill was based on proposals presented by several commissions of inquiry between 2005 and 2008, some of which had been initiated by the previous Social Democrat government (there was then and remains today a broad consensus across the spectrum of Swedish political parties on these issues). Four of these official reports are especially interesting with regard to the ambition of enhancing Sweden's competitiveness by mobilizing universities.

The report *Resources for Quality* concerns funding for research and higher education in Sweden. Changes had to be made so as to move from a consolidated

higher education system with an emphasis on "classic universities" towards profiling and differentiation: "In the university landscape of the future, the Inquiry wants to see a diverse range of higher education institutions with a higher degree of independence" (SOU 2007:81, p. 25). The report recommends that Swedish universities develop individual profiles and set new priorities to a greater extent than was the case, in order to concentrate education and research on their strengths, where they are best placed to compete successfully internationally.

The commission of inquiry behind the report *Careers for Quality* proposed improvements to the current academic employment structure—the appointment procedures at higher education institutions in Sweden needed to be more streamlined. According to the report, the existing rules of employment in general (regulations aimed at ensuring accountability and impartiality in the state administration), and the requirement for external expert reviews of candidates in particular, were too time consuming and rigid: "In a globalized world where knowledge as well as competition knows no boundaries; where the ability to attract and to keep talent is crucial for success, the current recruitment process causes problems" (SOU 2007:98, p. 246). The solution was to reduce the number of central regulations and thus increase university autonomy by granting them more local self-determination.

According to the official report *World Class!—Action Plan for Clinical Research*, Sweden has clear competitive advantages over other countries, e.g. high levels of education, assets in the form of public health data registers, national healthcare quality registries and biobanks, and patients who willingly take part in research projects. Sweden also has a long tradition in clinical research which, for many years, contributed to the strong position of the Swedish medical industry today. "All this adds up to competitive advantages that many other countries do not have", the report stated, concluding that "Swedish clinical research should therefore not be satisfied with being good enough—it has the potential to be world class!" (SOU 2008:7, pp. 20–21). In order to achieve this goal, it was necessary to "change tactics". The key to success was "the ability to identify the best researchers, give them good opportunities to carry on their activities and achieve good results" (SOU 2008:7, p. 21). Fewer, but larger, grants should go to the best researchers so as to optimize the outcome of publicly funded research.

Research Funding—Quality and Relevance echoing many of the ideas in these reports, it emphasized the need for better strategic coordination of research funding at the national level. According to the report, the existing funding structure was too fragmented. In order to achieve excellence and global competitiveness, funds should be concentrated on certain successful research areas. The aim of the new funding structure was to ensure that limited resources would be invested where they produced maximal output and best contribute to "the creation of excellent research environments, cutting-edge research, and increased commercialization of research outputs" (SOU 2008:30, p. 172).

Many of the reports that formed the basis for Leijonborg's government bill cite both OECD recommendations and EU communications as well as different kinds of rankings. The outlook is international, and the reports convey a sense of urgency in meeting the challenges posed by a rapidly globalizing world. Sweden's future

welfare depends on the organization and funding of research and higher education, it was argued, because they are what give the country a competitive edge in the global quest for talent, innovation and prestige. On the one hand, the reports advocated decentralization, i.e. more flexibility and institutional autonomy with regard to faculty recruitment and research profile. On the other hand, they argued for centralized control over the distribution of research funding to ensure the highest possible return on investment. The tendency to centralize and decentralize at one and the same time was especially evident in two reforms initiated and/or undersigned by Leijonborg: the establishment of Strategic Research Areas and the Autonomy Reform.

Between 2010 and 2014, the Swedish government established 43 *Strategic Research Areas* aimed at developing internationally prominent research environments to solve key social issues (as defined by bureaucrats and politicians) in a long-term perspective. The ideas behind the *Autonomy Reform* were first introduced in a committee report entitled *Independent seats of learning* (SOU 2008:104) that proposed all public Swedish higher education facilities be classified and constituted as legal persons rather than government agencies. Many considered the proposal too radical, and the Ministry of Education further revised the proposal. A year later, in 2009, the government issued a new bill that proposed that Swedish universities remain government agencies but with substantially increased autonomy. The Autonomy Reform was implemented in 2011.

Both the Strategic Research Areas and the Autonomy Reform have been criticized. The Strategic Research Areas were faulted with promoting competition between universities at the expense of collaboration and concentrating public resources for research funding to a few universities and research areas. The Autonomy Reform has been shown to undermine collegial bodies as a consequence of the deregulation of the internal organization of higher education institutions. Before 2011, the law stipulated that all higher education institutions must have at least one faculty board consisting of faculty and student representatives with discretionary powers with respect to issues involving the quality and content of educational programs and research. The new law softened the requirement, stating simply that academic matters be decided by academically qualified faculty (Sahlin and Eriksson-Zetterquist 2016), which gave vice chancellors enhanced discretionary powers with regard to the internal organization and positions of his or her institution. A wave of reorganization followed the deregulation in 2011, resulting in a replacement of collegial organizational structures with managerial forms of governance and control (Sundberg 2013, 2014).

With few exceptions (faculty at remaining collegially governed universities in Uppsala, Stockholm and Lund), the reforms have met relatively little resistance—even by Swedish standards. As the Macchiarini scandal erupted, however, many critics cited the reforms as factors contributing of the catastrophe. There seemed to be a pent-up frustration among faculty that now found a much-needed outlet.

Accountability

One of the earliest critics of the Autonomy Reform was playwright and television producer Ylva Lööf, who wrote the aforementioned play inspired by the Macchiarini scandal. In an op-ed article published in *Dagens Nyheter* in November 2008, two years before Macchiarini was recruited, she urged Leijonborg to stop the proposed reform, especially the proposed removal of the requirement for external independent experts in faculty recruitment. Having taught courses in university pedagogics for faculty at KI for 14 years, Lööf had ample occasion to observe the effects of nepotism. Her article in *Dagens Nyheter* presented three clear cases of flawed recruitment processes in which KI faculty had manipulated the recruitment process so as to ensure that a favored but less qualified applicant was awarded a position. Lööf warned that the Autonomy Reform would open the floodgates for this kind of cronyism: "having the right connections would become even more decisive for career opportunities" (Lööf 2008). Looking back at the scandal in an interview in 2019, Lööf said that "Leijonborg's reform paved the way for it, long before Macchiarini was hired at KI" (Beeck 2019). She described a culture at KI in which it was common to decide who would get a professorship in advance of the recruitment process and regardless of the qualifications of the applicants. "This is why the Autonomy reform is so upsetting", writes Lööf in another retrospective article, "it legalized this corrupt behavior" (Lööf 2017). Torbjörn Tännsjö, a professor of ethics and prominent public intellectual in Sweden, argued along the same lines when he described the derailed elitist atmosphere at KI. The problem, in his view, was that "KI has been dazzled by the Nobel prize and lacks academic culture" (Tännsjö 2016).

In the op-ed article "Leijonborg's reforms paved the way for the catastrophe" (Carlsson et al. 2016), three highly respected Gothenburg University faculty, Nobel Prize winner (2000) Arvid Carlsson, Elias Eriksson, both in pharmacology, and Kristoffer Hellstrand (tumor immunology) described the consequences of the establishment of Strategic Research Areas: "The unfortunate competition for mega grants that Minister of Education, Leijonborg, introduced contributed to the catastrophe that KI Board of Trustees chairman, Leijonborg, now has to deal with." Instead of focusing on errors committed by KI officials, we should "analyze the political decisions that made this catastrophe possible in the first place". In particular, they noted Leijonborg's idea that concentrating resources to a few "excellent" research environments would lead to more Swedish Nobel Prizes and higher global rankings for Swedish universities. The problem, according to Carlsson et al., was that even though more funding was made available for research, the control over its distribution became even more centralized. The idea of allocating more public funding to a few selected research areas in order to recruit international star researchers to Sweden reminded them of "Russian oligarchs who use their oil money to transform mediocre football teams into champions".

Although their criticism was directed at the Strategic Research Areas, Carlson et al. also questioned the Autonomy Reform: "Was it really wise to abandon collegial forms of governance and introduce line management, inspired by the corporate

world, at Swedish seats of higher learning?" They were convinced that "this tragedy could have been avoided if traditional academic forms of governance would have remained in place." Leijonborg and the previous government were blamed for drastically lowering the quality of the decision-making at Swedish universities, "by concentrating almost all the power to wannabe CEO vice-chancellors monitored only by university boards of trustees dominated by laymen too ignorant of academic conditions to be able to exercise any real balancing influence."

Political Scientists Li Bennich Björkman and Shirin Ahlbäck Öberg have also linked both the Strategic Research Areas and the Autonomy Reform to the Macchiarini scandal, calling it a catastrophe, one owing much to the cronyism among a handful of professors at KI, but also to Leijonborg's pursuit of international star quality in recruitments which, together with the investment in Strategic Research Areas, "paved the way for really poor judgement" (Bennich-Björkman and Ahlbäck Öberg 2016). The ignorance of the "politico-research complex" and its overconfidence in management models from business threatens to undermine academic culture as a whole. Line management, groupthink and fear are corroding academic environments throughout the Swedish higher education landscape (see also Ahlbäck Öberg et al. 2016).

Together with Ulf Danielsson, professor of theoretical physics at Uppsala University, Ahlbäck Öberg wrote another op-ed article, in which they argued that the Macchiarini case demonstrated clearly the consequences of dismantling collegial governance structures. When the discretionary powers of the vice chancellor are so expanded as to enable him or her to ignore or even stifle whistleblowers or external investigators, collegial control systems can no longer prevent disasters like this one from happening. "What we are witnessing", conclude Ahlbäck Öberg and Danielsson, "is the result of a politically generated system failure that risks destroying one of our most important societal institutions" (Ahlbäck Öberg and Danielsson 2016).

According to Czarniawska (2015, p. 38), the Autonomy Reform demonstrated in full sociologist Peter Blau's (1970) observation that "the decentralization of large bureaucracies results in power shifting only one level down". Many vice chancellors used their newly found "autonomy" to take control over research and teaching by formulating overarching visions and profiles for their institutions. The next logical step was reorganization. Such reorganizing meant a shift away from traditional collegial governance over curricula and research towards a line organization in which every section could be assessed in light of institutional mission statements. Thus, for instance, the academic quality and value of work done in certain disciplines, especially in the humanities and the social sciences, is quite irrelevant, if it's the "wrong" kind of research in relation to the institution's overarching profile. A vision, mission or profile enables assessment of incommensurable disciplines that can be used, among other things, to marginalize dissenters among the faculty and staff. At the "corporate" university, traditional academic structures, values and concepts were quickly usurped by the principles and practices of corporate management (Hyvönen 2013).

But perhaps we ought not to attach too much importance to Leijonborg. In many respects, he was just following "a fashion at the state level" (Czarniawska 2015, p. 38) when he introduced reforms similar to initiatives launched throughout the Nordic countries at the time. Leijonborg was a vehicle for the New Public Management trend that then held sway. His initiatives as Minister of Higher Education and Research reflected similar plans formulated elsewhere by others, especially the OECD and the EU. According to Löwdin (2010), Leijonborg seemed almost clueless about the inner workings of academia. Rather than liberating the universities from government control, which appears to be what he thought he was doing, his reforms lead to severely reduced faculty autonomy. Leijonborg was a stranger to the world of research and higher education, and "it often felt as if he was just repeating the words of others without a clue about academic realities" (Löwdin 2010).

In his autobiography, published in 2018, Leijonborg devotes an entire chapter to the Macchiarini scandal, but it is nearly devoid of self-criticism. Even retrospectively, Lejonborg acknowledges no responsibility for what happened, either as minister or as chairman of the KI Board of Trustees.

Rankings unto Death

> It is strange to be accused of having done the opposite of what you think you did. (Leijonborg 2018, p. 373)

On the morning of September 22, 2016, seven months after the Macchiarini scandal erupted, Swedish Radio's news broadcast *Ekot* reported that KI had been placed 28th in Times Higher Education's global ranking. The universities in Uppsala and Lund were both ranked within the top 100, and the universities in Stockholm and Gothenburg, together with the Royal Institute of Technology, were ranked as being among the top 200 higher education institutions in the world. "This makes Sweden the fifth best country for higher education in Europe", the broadcast announced (Samzelius 2016). In an interview after the announcement, the acting Vice Chancellor of KI at the time, Karin Dahlman-Wright, stated that she was very pleased with the ranking, because it proved that KI "has a good reputation".

Two weeks later, *Dagens Nyheter* published an op-ed article by Leijonborg (2016) with the heading, "KI's reputation has been saved by good crisis management". He cited the Times Higher Education ranking as proof that the handling of the crisis at KI—for which he himself, as chairman of the KI Board of Trustees, was ultimately responsible—had been very successful:

> A few months ago, the media reported that KI may fall in the 2016 university rankings. Now that the results of the Times Higher Education ranking have been published, it turns out that KI did not fall at all, but was ranked as the 28th best university in the world—outstanding among Swedish and Nordic universities. [---] In the Shanghai ranking, which was also published recently, KI gained four positions. This is largely due to KI's handling of the

> Macchiarini crisis. Since the affair exploded […], much has been done right. (Leijonborg 2016)

Apparently, Leijonborg saw no reason to let the prolonged suffering and premature deaths of vulnerable patients as a result of scientific and clinical misconduct prevent him from patting himself on the back for good crisis management and high rankings. In the op-ed, he expressed concern that the Macchiarini scandal might be used by some to criticize the investments in the Strategic Research Areas and to question the Autonomy Reform, asserting that because "[it] is well-documented that a high degree of autonomy is important for universities," the factors that have made Swedish research policy so successful must be safeguarded. "We must continue increasing resources for research and protecting the autonomy of the academy" (Leijonborg 2016).

The chapter on the Macchiarini scandal in Leijonborg's autobiography makes clear his view of the politician's role vis-à-vis public universities. He compares his Strategic Research Areas initiative to John F. Kennedy's expansion of the space program, and Richard Nixon's "war on cancer". In Leijonborg's view, such grand projects are too general to pose a threat to the integrity of universities. To the contrary, Leijonborg regards himself as a stalward defender of academic freedom (whatever that term might entail for him). Similarly, he considers himself an ardent champion of collegial decision-making:

> There is a lot of confusion about what a collegial body really is. [---] Some say that the Macchiarini scandal could have been avoided with more collegial decision-making. Excuse me? [---] Professors and associate professors, dozens of professors and associate professors—and none other than professors and associate professors—made the decisions that lead to the hiring of Paolo Macchiarini (Leijonborg 2018, pp. 374–375).

It is obvious that Leijonborg is himself confused about the nature of collegial bodies. While it is true that the people responsible for the decision to hire Macchiarini were all medical scientists, they were not acting in their capacity as colleagues but *as managers*. "We must stand up for collegial decision-making", Leijonborg writes, but "we should not pretend that it will guarantee that things will not sometimes go very, very wrong…" (Leijonborg 2018, p. 375). He does not see that these decisions were taken by individuals and coteries, not by a collective body of experts exercising their expertise in concert. In a line organization, top management is in control, and the chain of command is clear and simple—managers tell you what to do. The reforms initiated by Leijonborg led to a decline of collegial governance, which was replaced by bureaucratic structures that disfavor cooperation and collective responsibility.

The danger is that without any deeper knowledge about the organization's core activities, managers are inclined to focus on superficial metrics to evaluate performance. At "autonomous", corporate universities, academics are "subject to the same accountability and incentives as, say, a call-center worker" (Roelofs and Gallien 2017). Productivity is measured in terms of how many publications are published per year. Quality is measured by citations. This kind of quantification of quality contributes to what Giacalone (2009) has called the problem of "metricality", i.e.

that focus has been redirected from producing quality work (which used to be the assumptions that underpinned academic professionalism) toward "succeeding within a metrics-based reality […] where quality is narrowly and artificially defined" (Giacalone 2009, p. 124).

Leijonborg is not personally responsible for the Macchiarini scandal, but like EU policy-makers, he certainly helped create the conditions that made it possible. The shared sense of urgency to meet the challenges of a rapidly globalizing world, led to a "silent regime change" (Hellquist 2016)—plans and strategies were formulated with the aim of universities more like corporations, which in turn undermined professional judgment. The logic of these ideas is as simple as it is clear: Organizations cannot be efficiently managed if the employees have too much control. To really run universities efficaciously, new funding and management models had to be implemented at all costs, which turned out to be at the expense of students and faculty of universities throughout Europe. But Macchiarini's patients paid the ultimate price.

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Chapter 9
The Paradox of the Global University

Mitchell L. Stevens and Sonia Giebel

Abstract No university of ambition officially claims to be local. Touting international reach and reputation is a nearly essential feature of university strategic planning worldwide. Yet being a global university is paradoxical. Academic institutions historically are servants of particular cities, regions, and nations, and one of their essential functions has been to connect particular places with world affairs. International rankings regimes, the search for tuition revenue among schools in a few large markets, and the remarkable consistency with which nations pursue status through higher education: all of these deepen the implication of universities in the fate and future of particular locales.

No university of ambition officially claims to be local. Touting international reach and reputation is a nearly essential feature of official university strategic planning worldwide. Transnational research and study exchanges, satellite campuses, web portals and offices and senior officials for global affairs—all of these are now routine and even essential components of academic organizational architecture (Friedman 2017). Some have argued that this transnational ambition represents a new chapter in the history of higher education (Wildavsky 2012). Others contend that it merely extends a longstanding ambition of academic cosmopolitanism (Levine 2016; Stevens et al. 2018; Willinsky 2018).

Our task here is to theorize the simultaneous truth of both of these approaches by arguing that the spatial implication of universities is paradoxical. A constitutional purpose of universities, continuous from their Medieval origins into the present, has been to connect particular localities with transnational webs of ideas, technologies, and people. This means that universities are cosmopolitan and parochial at the same time. However "global" they might be, universities almost never move from the

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_9

cities and regions of their origins. They are anchored in particular places in part through the sunk costs of their physical plants and their accumulated agreements with spatially specific clients and patrons, and additionally by a meaning constitutive of virtually all academic institutions: they are creatures of their places.

Surfacing this paradox has at least three utilities. First, it enables social scientists to better appreciate the university as a distinctive organizational form (Musselin 2007). Specifically, the place-specific anchoring of universities contrasts starkly with the peripatetic character of corporate firms, while rendering universities somewhat akin to the metropoles of nation-states and empires—albeit with highly circumscribed powers and jurisdictions. Second, it suggests limits to the universalizing and homogenizing capacities of transnational cooperative agreements, ranking schemes, and satellite campuses. Third, it offers wisdom to planners and boosters of particular universities, to wit: the desirability and status of any university are deeply linked with its region.

Our work below proceeds as follows. First, we borrow from a large historical literature to implicate universities in projects of place-making over hundreds of years. Here we specify the first side of the paradox: the cosmopolitan purpose of universities. Second, we consider the special roles that universities came to play in projects of state-building—first in the United States and then throughout the world—in the decades following World War II. Here we specify the second side of the paradox: the immobility of universities. Third, we address three major transnational academic phenomena of recent decades—the rise of third-party ranking schemes, the Bologna process, and the proliferation of satellite campuses—to consider the obdurate localism of universities in the twenty-first century. In the final section, we offer specific lessons for academic planners and policy-makers on how to think about university and regional advancement as coextensive.

Prioritizing rhetorical efficiency over concision, we use the terms "university" and "universities" as summary terms for the wide variety of organizational types that populate the academic world—polytechnics, liberal arts, and community colleges among them. While our inquiry is tuned to major research universities most closely, we suspect that our general insights apply to other academic forms to variable degrees.

Universities and Place-Making

When geographers and historians speak of "place-making," they refer to the myriad ways in which people seek to create strong identities for particular locations—to put places "on the map" to various audiences and thereby aggrandize the fortunes and prestige of those places (Cronon 1992). The simple act of naming a place can be part of its aggrandizement: it is no accident that the city housing Harvard University is named Cambridge and that the larger regional settlement in which it is located is called New England. Identifying settlements with copycat names connotes a wish that one place be associated with the other. Building campaigns are important, even

essential, to making places as well. City halls, churches, schools and squares built to scales and designs intended to impress can enhance the knowability of a place to distant others. The goals of place-making are typically multiple: to underscore a particular group's domination of physical territory; attract human migration and economic investment; enhance real estate values; accrue prestige. In their names and physical plants, universities have been important mechanisms of place-making since their Medieval beginnings.

John Willinsky (2018) notes the curious fate of Medieval monasteries. Built as cloisters of piety at a time when learnedness was a harbinger of heresy, they came to serve as aggregators of learning and knowledge and were early precursors of the modern university form. Monasteries were self-governing, highly disciplined, and occasionally well-endowed organizations that legitimately operated at some remove from other sources of social authority. They were in, but not fully of, the political regimes in which they were located. This partial autonomy enabled monasteries to serve as enclaves for manuscripts and religious travelers carrying new ideas throughout Europe beginning in the tenth century. Monasteries gradually developed new forms and functions to accommodate their accumulating intellectual wealth, first with cathedral schools, which would accrete into semi-autonomous scholarly organizations as expressions of place and patron renown. By the thirteenth century, entities known as *studium generales* emerged in Bologna, Paris, and Oxford and catalyzed enduring relationships between scholars from different fields, at different stages in their careers, for organized collaborative study. These were the seeds of the modern university.

Centuries later, the rise of modern European polities brought new and secular patronage to university evolution. Intellectual historian Emily Levine (2016) has recently explained how Prussian elites envisioned universities as mechanisms for putting science and systematic learning in the service of an enlightened, rational, and culturally progressive society. Cities were major functional polities of the Prussian lands. Governments and private patrons used city universities on the Prussian model to enhance the prominence and prestige of particular places. In this Levine finds an important parallel to academic place-making in the young United States.

A rich historical literature amply documents the remarkable extent to which Americans used the founding of schools to make places on the nation's western frontier (Thelin 2011; Labaree 2017). In contrast with Germany, however, US academic institutions were as likely to be created for reasons of piety and business as they were for civic uplift. The young United States included many who were deeply religious, many who were entrepreneurs, and many who were both these things. Planting colleges and universities was a frequent means of marking territory for particular Christian denominations, training clergy, raising real estate values, and enhancing the likelihood of securing stops on railroads and waterways. These incentives combined to fuel an enthusiastic stream of college-founding. By 1880, the nation boasted over 800 institutions, outnumbering the entire aggregate of European universities five-fold (Labaree 2017). As in Europe, colleges and universities marked the identities of particular places, often in name. The impressively scaled

Universities of Michigan, Texas, Washington and many others are prominent examples, even while many eponymous towns and schools remained small: Grinnell (Iowa), Middlebury (Vermont), and Oberlin (Ohio).

US colleges of the late nineteenth century were "contributing institutional citizens" (Owen-Smith 2018) of their regions at a time when such citizens were in short supply. Their endurance on the national landscape is testament to the importance of their role in creating and sustaining that landscape over time. On the normative valence of higher education's role in the transformation of the North American frontier we remain ambivalent. By helping to "settle" the West, colleges and universities actively participated in the dislocation of Native peoples and a fundamental redefinition of the physical landscape as national territory and private property. They were institutional citizens of a particular nation and served to aggrandize the interests of particular people over others. The affectionate and even triumphant narration of this process in mainstream US history is testament to a certainty of national virtue that our analysis here does not share. But there is no question that in the nineteenth century and (as we shall see) well into the twentieth, postsecondary expansion was directly implicated in national aggrandizement.

As multiple sociologists have recently explained, institutions of higher learning provide complicated, plural value to their settlements. They are hubs, linking particular locations with people and ideas that would otherwise be hard to reach through their courses, colloquia, performances, libraries and museum collections. Those that endure become anchors, retaining the reputation and relevance of their locations in national and global networks of discourse and creativity. Those that grow and diversify internally become sources of new knowledge and technologies because their dense concentrations of varied expertise create ideal conditions for innovation (Owen-Smith 2018; Padgett and Powell 2012; Stevens et al. 2008).

Thus it is no accident that the most esteemed universities of the nineteenth century were located at or near the metropoles of global empires. Berlin, Cambridge, Oxford, and Paris all hosted institutions of higher learning, providing the personnel, knowledge, and technologies of governance and control that sustained colonial domination (Willinsky 1999; Steinmetz 2007; Stevens et al. 2018). The decline and ultimate demise of those empires hardly ended the utility of universities for place-making, however. Instead that utility was drafted into the service of fashioning twentieth-century nation-states. The federal government of the United States led the way.

Universities and Nation-States

While the university long precedes the nation-state as an organizational form, the implication of universities in projects of state-building is so ubiquitous as to suggest that in their modern expressions the two institutions have come to require each other. In the 1970s, Talcott Parsons and Gerald Platt theorized the indispensable role of universities in inculcating a "modern cognitive complex" for the functional administration of rational bureaucratic organization in government and economy

(Parsons and Platt 1973). Pierre Bourdieu later (1998 [1989]) explained how a modern elite inscribed its conception of an ideal society into a higher education system that enabled its domination of the government and political order in France. In the early twentieth century, Indian elites encouraged ambitious young Indians to seek technical training at the best universities in the West, then bring their skills home and put them in the service of building an independent and self-sufficient nation (Bassett 2016). City universities were important incubators for the expertise and personnel that scaffolded the Prussian state (Levine 2016). And in the loosely federated and geographically dispersed United States, the central government in Washington serially called upon universities to build civic infrastructure, disburse welfare programs, and wage wars. The multifarious roles of universities in projects of state-building have solidified a presumption that the primary patrons and beneficiaries of higher education are national. This history ties universities both materially and symbolically to their home countries.

We continue with what may read as a parochial focus on the United States for a historically and sociologically important purpose: the peculiar expression of the research-intensive, multi-purpose university that coalesced in the United States immediately following World War II set the model for excellence of "national" universities in the subsequent twentieth century. These in turn came to set benchmarks for what excellent "global" universities might be in the current era. We recognize the imperial connotation of this idea and address it below.

Our analytic account begins with the "land-grant" universities of the US nineteenth century, so named because their genesis was a result of serial acts of Congress—the Morrill Acts of 1862 & 1890—offering grants of physical property to state governments. The legislation enabled states to sell the land to support universities that would provide training and expertise in the applied sciences specifically. As is characteristic of the evolution of the US polity, these institutions were public-private amalgams (Stevens and Gebre-Medhin 2016): while the term "land-grant" is popularly associated with public state universities (e.g., Iowa State, Michigan State, Texas A&M), several prominent private universities (e.g., Cornell, MIT, Tuskegee) are also beneficiaries of the land-grant program. It is no accident that the dates of their passage surrounded the US Civil War. The 1862 act was intended partly to demonstrate the asset of national union; 1890 was partly an effort to restore industry and civic infrastructure to the US South (Thelin 2011). The Morrill Acts represented the explicit cooperation of universities and the federal government in projects of nation-building. Such cooperation would be rehearsed and expanded serially during the twentieth century.

Consider the New Deal. A sweeping welfare initiative that entailed massive spending by the federal government, what became Franklin Delano Roosevelt's domestic legacy was, in the 1930s, a highly uncertain political proposition. With Southern Democrats wielding outsized political power and able to check any traditional attempt to disrupt the South's anti-union, segregated political regime, President Roosevelt needed many allies to enact New Deal provisions. Distributed liberally throughout the nation's continental expanse, colleges and universities proved to be readymade mediators of Washington programs during the 1930s.

Historian Christopher Loss (2011) explains how colleges and universities provided physical and ideological spaces, defined as politically neutral, where government-funded projects could be connected with local leaders who might otherwise be skeptical of their provenance. In this way, the US postsecondary sector acted as what Loss calls a "parastate," catalyzing New Deal initiatives.

The New Deal was not just a portfolio of welfare programs. It also represented a new relationship between the federal government and common people that required both concerted explanation and attitudinal change among citizens (Loss 2011). New Dealers thus made educating the citizenry, especially adults past conventional college-going age, a primary objective. The Federal Forum Project (FFP) was one mechanism by which to achieve this aim. The FFP began by convening public-policy discussion groups in Des Moines, Iowa, and ultimately grew across the country, bolstered by the aid of local school districts, public libraries, and radio stations. University personnel served as discussion leaders. The FFP represented unprecedented discursive engagement between Washington, educators, and everyday Americans, abetting a slow but steady ideological shift in lay understandings of how the federal government might be more of a civic asset than an outside imposition. This was no small feat, since New Dealers needed to win the affection of a citizenry largely unfamiliar with the social-welfare logic the New Deal embodied.

On the skeletal network of relationships between Washington and universities built via the Morrill Acts and the New Deal, mobilization for World War II and the subsequent Cold War accreted the body of national higher education that would come to include and define "world class" universities. US entry into WWII required rapid and multifarious mobilization of technology, managerial expertise, and personnel, and the federal government relied on universities to aggregate and produce all three. University research labs were enlisted in the development of communications and weapons technologies; academic psychologists developed tests of human fitness and aptitude to rationalize the allocation of military personnel; and college campuses provided convenient bases for military recruitment and training (Lowen 1997; Loss 2011).

In light of the US federal government's serial reliance on higher education to disburse social provision and mobilize for war, it is perhaps of little surprise that Congress would turn to colleges and universities to reward veterans and manage their return to civilian life at war's end. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, popularly known as the GI Bill, provided fully subsidized college educations to war veterans. This massive investment in human capital helped lay the foundation for postwar economic expansion and a broad-based postwar middle class (Mettler 2005; Goldin and Katz 2007). And of course, higher education was enlisted as well in the service of a different kind of warcraft after the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957, which almost overnight transformed national anxiety about the technological and military capacity of the United States into a decades-long investment in national paramilitary academic infrastructure (Kleinmann 1995; Gilman 2003; O'Mara 2015). In 1958, Congress authorized massive investments to address that problem with the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which got welded into the institutional architecture of the US polity when it was superseded by the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA).

We rehearse this parochial history to make an important point about the evolution of higher education globally, to wit: the academic system built in the United States during the middle decades of the twentieth century was a project of nation-building. Propelled by domestic politics and international warcraft, the twentieth century US research university accreted over serial generations to serve the interests of a particular nation in particular times. To be sure, the US model of a multi-purpose, semi-independent, research-and-teaching university diffused globally during the second half of the twentieth century. Having at least one such university that took on the formal structure of this particular organizational type became an icon of social progress and modernity in nation-states worldwide (Frank and Gabler 2006; Schofer and Meyer 2005). Yet the model came from a particular time and history. The parochial became a global standard through a complicated combination of organizational mimicry, historical contingency, and US Cold War hegemony that has yet to be fully specified.

Simultaneously, a testament to the legacy of British empire and a manifestation of the current US higher education hegemony is the primacy of the English language in the global academic world. English is the *lingua franca* of contemporary transnational academic discourse and the preponderant language of publication for many disciplines. Classroom instruction conveyed in English is a strong signal that an institution seeks students and prominence worldwide. International faculty hires, colloquia, guest speakers, publications in "top" (i.e., English-language) journals and the smooth transmission of ideas increasingly require the use of English. Even in contexts where bi- or multilingualism is commonplace and many languages are spoken in close proximity, English tends to be the default linguistic medium of academic exchange.

The ubiquity and necessity of English poses existential questions for students, faculty, and academic leaders in countries without an indigenous Anglophone legacy. Whether or not and how well one is able to engage in academic discourse in English shapes individual careers and institutional fates. Yet the elevation of English tends to go hand in hand with the devaluation of native language. John Airey writes of "diglossia," in which English becomes the privileged academic form over the native tongue (2004). Airey considers the case of Sweden, where concerns about "domain loss," in which certain subjects can effectively only be discussed in English, raise additional concerns about the erosion of democratic access to scholarship. As is true for any hegemon, these are problems that Anglophone academics in predominantly English-speaking nations-states do not share.

Shanghai, Bologna, Abu Dhabi

Thus far we have sketched how colleges and universities have been implicated in the settlement and aggrandizement of particular places since their Medieval inceptions. We have focused specifically on the varied roles higher education has played in US territorial expansion and twentieth-century warcraft because US universities have

been preponderantly influential in higher education globally since the close of World War II. More recent developments in the worldwide evolution of higher education might seem to make ours a story of times past. The rise of third-party ranking systems, perhaps most prominently the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)—more commonly called the Shanghai Index—purported to recalibrate academic excellence according to universal metrics. In Europe, the declaration of the Bologna Process appeared to lessen the importance of national borders in the organization of academic study. Since 2000, many US universities have opened satellite campuses in Asia, Africa, and the Persian Gulf. Yet it is our claim that even as the global organization of higher education continues to evolve, universities remain deeply tied to and shaped by their localities in fundamental ways.

Rankings

Twentieth-century wars brought US higher education a political stature and material support it had not previously enjoyed. The close of the Cold War altered the social contract between the US state and universities and, more fundamentally, the meaning of higher education in American political culture. A college education came to be seen as a private good to be individually acquired, rather than a public good worthy of collective investment (Labaree 2017). At the same time, the market for high-achieving students was beginning to nationalize. College hopefuls with top grades and test scores had easier access to information about a wider variety of schools and could presume that low-cost transportation and communication would ease the friction of distance between home and school (Stevens 2007). As the economist Caroline Hoxby notes, "students used to attend a local college regardless of their abilities and its characteristics. Now [student] choices are driven far less by distance and far more by a college's resources and student body" (p. 96). The result was a mutually constitutive process that increased competition among students and universities alike. Top students faced dwindling admission rates at top schools, which in turn were no longer guaranteed matriculants from their own backyards. Yet this intense competition for top academic talent has been restricted to the very elite end of the US academic order. Just 4% of the nation's colleges admit fewer than 50% of their applicants (Hoxby 2009).

It is these same few schools that carry the prestige of what counts as "US universities" to competitive observers elsewhere. For example, the ARWU/Shanghai Rankings rate institutions according to their collective academic or research performance, including "alumni and staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals, highly cited researchers, papers published in *Nature* and *Science*, [and] papers indexed in major citation indices" (Shanghai Ranking Consultancy 2018). Since their inception in 2003, the top slots on the ARWU/Shanghai rankings have overwhelmingly gone to a handful of US universities. Only Oxford and Cambridge have ever managed to break a complete American monopoly on the "top ten" slots. Thus, even while elite US universities are in direct competition with each other for students and

prestige, they collectively reenforce the hegemony of US schools in global rankings regimes. Rankings strengthen the dominance of American higher education in the global academic order.

Viewed one way, global ranking systems are sure to agitate already competitive actors in the quest for the title of the world's best. Indeed, much has been made of the rise of international academic rankings regimes and their standardizing and homogenizing effects on conceptions of academic quality (see Espeland and Sauder 2016 for an exhaustive review). Yet for all their evident capacity for normative coercion, rankings do not explicitly challenge national and institutional sovereignty. Rankings produce comparisons across political and organizational boundaries even while leaving those boundaries in place. In fact, the spatial paradoxes of universities are manifested every time boosters of particular universities use rankings to proclaim their assets to various constituencies. Rankings enable claims that a particular university is "the best" in the US, or Sweden, or Europe, or the southern hemisphere, or the world. We note also that the ARWU/Shanghai website offers "location" as a first-order filter to users, enabling swift and simple within-nation comparisons. Our conclusion is that global rankings surely refract, but hardly sever, the relationships between universities and places.

Bologna

The Bologna process is a spectacular endeavor of transnational academic cooperation. First formally declared in 1999, the agreement now includes nearly fifty countries in a compact to enable mobility of academic credits, degrees, students, and personnel throughout greater Europe (Crosier and Parveva 2013). This rationalization of the continental higher education ecology has smoothed academic commerce across national borders and enabled the forwarding of European ambitions to build an integrated and globally influential knowledge economy (Zahavi and Friedman 2019). While at first blush it might seem that Bologna undermines our claim about the enduring ties of universities to particular locations and nations, in fact Bologna does not diminish so much as refract and remediate those ties.

First, Bologna recognizes national sovereignty over universities. In contrast to the governance structures of the European Union (EU), Bologna is fully voluntary. It does not tamper directly with legal, financial, and normative relationships between universities, government agencies, and other national academic units. Instead, Bologna enables transactions across national and organizational borders even while it recognizes them—a strategy that has characterized academic diplomacy in other times and places (Hutt and Stevens 2017). Under Bologna, people and credits move smoothly across borders even while borders are maintained and universities themselves stay put.

Second, Bologna facilitates national status competition. Above and beyond administrative capability, Bologna is an academic treaty that explicates mutual trust and terms of academic commerce across national borders. As with economic

treaties, Bologna enables participating nations to engage in "coopetition:" the simultaneous competition and cooperation between rivals (Nalebuff and Brandenburger 1997; Luo 2007). In contrast with international rankings, which were created by non-academics in the mass media (Espeland and Sauder 2007), Bologna was an indigenous effort by European academic elites to enable transnational coordination. Students and faculty can freely navigate the continental academic infrastructure, taking advantage of academic opportunities far afield from their home countries. In doing so, students and faculty act as ambassadors of their universities and locales, bringing recognition to their home institutions whenever they cross borders. We do not mean to suggest that Bologna is fully cooperative while rankings are fully competitive; instead, we posit that the fundamentally competitive character of academic life is mediated and sustained in Europe by Bologna's cooperative accord. Much like intercollegiate sports enables the routine performance of fierce institutional rivalries through the precise specification of shared rules of play (Lifschitz et al. 2014), Bologna makes it possible for participating nations to compete rationally, systematically, and even congenially.

Third, Bologna serves to construct broader continental Europe as a coherent academic place, even as it reinforces the national identities of its member countries. As Zahavi and Friedman (2019) remind us, "[H]igher-education policy is formed at three different levels simultaneously—the national and the local, the European and the regional, and the international and the global" (p. 28). Bologna was built specifically to enable cooperation across European borders so as to realize a continental higher education enterprise that might compete on the global stage. We follow Zahavi and Friedman's notion that Bologna contributes to the vision of a cosmopolitan European citizen: a well-traveled and educated individual who can freely inhabit Europe's many academic anchors. Bologna defines Europe as an academic place in its own right, with its own distinctive means of conducting academic business.

At the same time, and in keeping with the paradox, the implementation of the Bologna Process demonstrates that Europeanization and re-nationalization processes occur in tandem. More specifically, as Musselin (2009) argues, even as Bologna served to further the construction, diffusion, and institutionalization of policy paradigms and shared beliefs across Europe (Radaelli 2002), it also enabled the French ministry to achieve domestic goals: the promotion of university autonomy and the standardization of degrees across different institutional sectors, among others. In this way, French universities were "renationalized" so as to remain distinctively French, even as they contributed to an emergent, coherent European identity in the global higher education market.

It may not be too much to assert that the Bologna process serves as a European counter to American domination in global rankings. A few US universities may be "the best" according to the rankings, but that is not the only way to be demonstrably excellent. While the continent may have few universities in the highest tier of international rankings, overall academic quality in Europe is impressively high. Consider for example what Aghion et al. (2008) found when they assessed European universities through the lens of the Shanghai Index. Their research confirmed a growing

lead for the US over European universities in the top 50 spots in the rankings; at the same time, Europe does considerably better than the United States in the number of universities in the top 500. This suggests far less variance among European universities and an ongoing construction of Europe as a globally distinctive academic place.

Satellite Campuses

One of the most dazzling manifestations of the spatial paradox of universities is the proliferation of satellite campuses of US institutions in Asia and the Persian Gulf since the 1990s (Miller-Idriss and Hanauer 2011). Typically the result of public-private partnerships between particular schools and national governments, these campuses might seem to defy the notion that universities are bound to stay put in their original locations. With branches of Cornell, Georgetown, and Northwestern in Doha, NYU in Abu Dhabi, and Yale in Singapore, it may seem that the weight of geography no longer bears on the evolution of higher education. But a closer consideration of this phenomenon betrays the paradox once again.

First, institutions stay put. They neither move, nor create entirely new versions of themselves, but instead evolve hybrid branches far afield from their original locations. The identities of the legacy institutions remain linked to Ithaca, Washington D.C., Evanston, New York City, and New Haven even while the new locations extend that identity to fresh populations. Second, the patrons of the satellites stay put too. The patrons recognize the ability of a university's physical presence to enhance the connectedness, visibility, and prestige of *their* places. In effect, satellite campuses represent a compromise in light of the spatial paradox. The legacy institutions exchange spatial extension for patronage, while the patrons exchange the loss of nationally identified universities for the prestige and know-how of offshore brands.

What is historically novel in these joint ventures is that the rising global powers of the current era are not just mimicking the academic organizations of their predecessors; they also are joining those organizations. The direct patronage of elite US schools by governments elsewhere may represent capitulation to American academic hegemony or, perhaps, a new form of coopetition whose terms and metrics remain under construction.

Conclusion

We have challenged our readers to recognize universities as simultaneously local and global, despite the tendency of contemporary scholars to emphasize the latter. We have argued that universities have played key roles in creating localities from their Medieval inception into the present era; that they were elemental to the project of nation-building in the United States and, after World War II, worldwide; and that recent transnational developments that beg internationalization refract, but hardly

undermine, the essential ties between universities and their places. In addition to suggesting a tempering of scholarly enthusiasm about a "globalizing" academy, we believe that our work might imply useful advice for academic leaders.

If our general argument about the peculiar relationship between universities and places is correct, those who have influence over particular universities are obliged to attend to their localities at least as much as to patrons and possibilities far afield. To our knowledge, no university of national or international stature has ever moved its physical location. This means that the economic vitality and quality of life in any university's immediate environs will affect its ability to attract and sustain students, faculty, and attention far into the future. Local communication and transportation infrastructures matter a great deal, as does the international reputation not only of universities, but also of regions. Sustaining and enhancing localities must be a priority of every university leader, as must collegiality and ongoing collaboration with regional civic leaders and even nearby academic competitors.

Our argument echoes many who have advocated for higher education to be considered primarily as a public good that prioritizes service to whole societies, rather than their own or any others' parochial interests (Owen-Smith 2018; Labaree 1997). Indeed, we see universities playing a pivotal role in knowledge creation, in connecting individuals and ideas from across the globe, and as hubs where scientists, government officials, business firms, and the organizations of civil society intersect (Stevens et al. 2008). In the twenty-first century, however, the constituency that counts as "the public" for academic public goods is not obvious.

The towns and cities within which universities reside are certainly part of that public. So too are the nation-states that imbue universities with their charter to produce and certify knowledge (Meyer 1970) and underwrite so much of this activity with subsidies and tax exemptions. It also is the case that universities increasingly contribute to what we might call global public goods: knowledge, relationships, and modes of collaboration that can benefit humanity regardless of where on the planet beneficiaries reside. Yet the world is at present without mechanisms for enlisting academic fealty or patronage from this global public, nor does this largest of publics have any recognizable mechanism for defining its collective academic interest and influencing academic policy. This leaves university leaders with global ambitions no clear polity to honor, consult, nor enlist.

For better or worse, this means that universities are obliged to contribute to local, national, and global public goods simultaneously. Even in an increasingly interconnected and internationalizing world, it is a risky misconception to think that attending to the global should override local needs or national service. To chase global ambitions at the expense of local and national ones not only undermines the quality of life in one's own backyard; it also potentially jeopardizes the largesse and goodwill of patrons who remain anchored in local communities, regional economies, and national governments.

We recognize that the allure of expanding global reach is strong and ubiquitous, and that attention to local priorities is unlikely to move institutions upward in international rankings in the near term. Institutional theorists would posit that global engagement is now a requisite element of any legitimate university (DiMaggio and

Powell 1983), and we agree. Yet by the same token, being global is no longer distinguishing or novel. As competition for talent, attention, and distinction grows more intense with each academic planning cycle, the most audacious ambitions might be close to home.

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Part III
Playing the World-Class Numbers Game

Chapter 10
World Class Universities, Rankings and the Global Space of International Students

Mikael Börjesson and Pablo Lillo Cea

Abstract The notion of World Class University suggests that this category of universities operates at a global and not national level. The rankings that have made this notion recognised are global in their scope, ranking universities on a worldwide scale and feed an audience from north to south, east to west. The very idea of ranking universities on such a scale, it is argued here, must be understood in relation to the increasing internationalisation and marketisation of higher education and the creation of a global market for higher education. More precisely, this contribution links the rankings of world class universities to the global space of international student flows. This space has three distinctive poles, a Pacific pole (with the US as the main country of destination and Asian countries as the most important suppliers of students), a Central European one (European countries of origin and destination) and a French/Iberian one (France and Spain as countries of destination with former colonies in Latin America and Africa as countries of origin). The three poles correspond to three different logics of recruitment: a market logic, a proximity logic and a colonial logic. It is argued that the Pacific/Market pole is the dominating pole in the space due to the high concentration of resources of different sorts, including economic, political, educational, scientific and not least, linguistic assets. This dominance is further enhanced by the international ranking. US universities dominate these to a degree that World Class Universities has become synonymous with the American research university. However, the competition has sharpened. And national actors such as China and India are investing heavily to challenge the American dominance. Also France and Germany, who are the dominant players at the dominated poles in the space, have launched initiative to ameliorate their position. In addition, we also witness a growing critique of the global rankings. One of the stakes is the value of national systems of higher education and the very definition of higher education.

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_10

Introduction

The notion of the 'World Class University' suggests that this category of university operates on a global rather than a national level. The rankings that have established the validity of this category are global in their scope, ranking universities on a worldwide scale, and feed an audience from north to south, east to west. The very idea of ranking universities on such a scale must be understood in relation to the increasing internationalisation and marketisation of higher education and the creation of a global market for higher education. We will here look into this relationship between the rankings and the world class universities on the one hand, and the global market for higher education, or more precisely the global space of international students (Börjesson 2017), on the other.

The process of creating a global market for higher education, where rankings and the notion of the 'World Class University' are essential, has reshaped the balance between geographical levels. The emphasis on the global level challenges the national level and aims to override it. However, much of what is going on in higher education functions according to a national logic. In most countries, funding is mainly national and public, the regulation national or regional, and the recruitment of students primarily local (Engwall 2016). Nevertheless, it is obvious that the global level has become more important in national affairs. Countries increasingly strive to sharpen their edge in the international and global competition for talent.

At the same time, international rankings also augment the importance of the local level; it is primarily universities and higher education institutions that are ranked rather than national systems. This implies that we need to focus on the global, national and local levels at the same time and study the interplay between them. Following the sociologist Saskia Sassen (2006), we need to acknowledge that "[t]his rescaling [of geographical levels] does not mean that the old hierarchies disappear but rather that novel scalings emerge alongside the old ones and that the former can often trump the latter" (p. 16). With this in mind, in this contribution we will give priority to the national level. This focus stems from our wish to integrate international rankings and the discourse on world class universities within the context of international student mobility, where the data are at the national level rather than at the institutional level. The aim is to achieve a more aggregated understanding of patterns of domination within the global space of higher education (cf. Marginson 2008, who uses the notion of 'global field of higher education').

A crucial notion in this contribution is space, drawing on Bourdieu's (1979) elaboration of a 'social space' (see also Bourdieu and de Saint Martin 1976). We deploy the notion for two main reasons. First, space is more general than the market and can contain both the market and other logics. A key point in the analysis of the global space of international students (Börjesson 2017) is that the space encompasses the market, which forms an important pole in the space but is not exhaustive. Other logics exist in parallel to the market. However, it is clearly the case that the market logic is predominant in the space taken in its totality. Secondly, space is a

multidimensional notion and can contain different hierarchies and oppositions, which allows us to avoid an overly reductionist approach.

We will take the year 2010 as a starting point for two reasons. First, we have already conducted an analysis of the structure of the global space of international students for that year. Second, in order to be able to discuss tendencies in the international rankings and international student flows, we prefer to adopt a point of reference that is not too distant in time, and, after 2010, we are able to trace the development for 8 years with regard to rankings and for 6 years for international student mobility.

We will first discuss international rankings and their importance for creating the idea of the 'World Class University'. Thereafter, we analyse the international rankings as national league tables in terms of symbolic orders of nations, languages and economic as well as geopolitical powers. The following section focuses on the global space and depicts its structure in 2010, which is used as a year of reference for comparison. In the final stage, the symbolic order created by the international rankings is related to the structure of the global space of international student flows, and the homologies (or structural similarities) between the two are discussed.

World Class Universities, International Rankings and Nation States

The Crucial Link

When the notion of the 'World Class University'—often abbreviated WCU—is used to label a given institution, whether it is to highlight its current status or to define its goals for the future, it is typically conveyed as a sign that indicates the possession of an array of allegedly objective quality features, which international university rankings are reputedly able to measure. However, notwithstanding the relative stability that the use of the adjective 'world class' may have attained in certain fields, the scope of its meaning has never been crystal-clear (Altbach 2004). In one early contribution to this debate, the WCU was rendered as an index of global competitiveness strategically deployed by institutions to attract high fee-paying students, thus ensuring a reliable source of self-funding in the context of the internationalisation and marketisation of higher education (Batty 2003).

After the First International Conference on World Class Universities in 2005—organised by the Center for World-Class Universities at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University—a collection of essays was published in the form of a book, providing an in-depth analysis accounting for the increasing prominence of the WCU around the globe (Saldak and Liu 2007). Rather than discussing the choice of 'world class' instead of other alternative terms ('top-tier', 'top-ranked', 'elite', 'world-acclaimed', etc.), the essays embodied an attempt to dispel the ambiguity surrounding the term by focusing on three main topics: the characteristics, evaluation and construction of WCUs.

As the title of the volume suggests—*The World-Class University and Ranking: Aiming Beyond Status*—one main argument throughout the work is the idea that subjective perceptions of status do not suffice to grant the 'world class' designation to a higher education institution. Simply put, "aiming beyond status" calls for the setup of a quantifiable and measurable standard, an argument which at once explains and is explained by the participation of authors directly connected to international university rankings, including both editors of the volume.[1] Other contributions have been made in this direction, openly suggesting that the use of rankings for defining what the WCU is reduces the vagueness of the notion (Huisman 2008).

Previous research provides evidence to support the statement about the abundance of globally framed discussions on universities. This increasing trend was noted by making use of the Web of Science database to retrieve journal articles, books, reviews and editorial addresses referring to WCUs up until 2008 (Ramirez and Tiplic 2014). After carrying out a similar procedure in order to update the results, 216 items were found, with the chronological distribution of references confirming and extending prior findings of an expansion in usage. As shown in Fig. 10.1, the number of items containing the notion of WCU has consistently increased every year from 2010 onwards, with a very marginal decrease in 2018.

The rising popularity of rankings and the key role they have been playing as a basis for consecrating WCUs as such fostered the need to address the widespread concern about their actual capacity to objectively assess, compare, and hierarchically organise universities on a global scale. Hence, the declaration of *The Berlin Principles on*

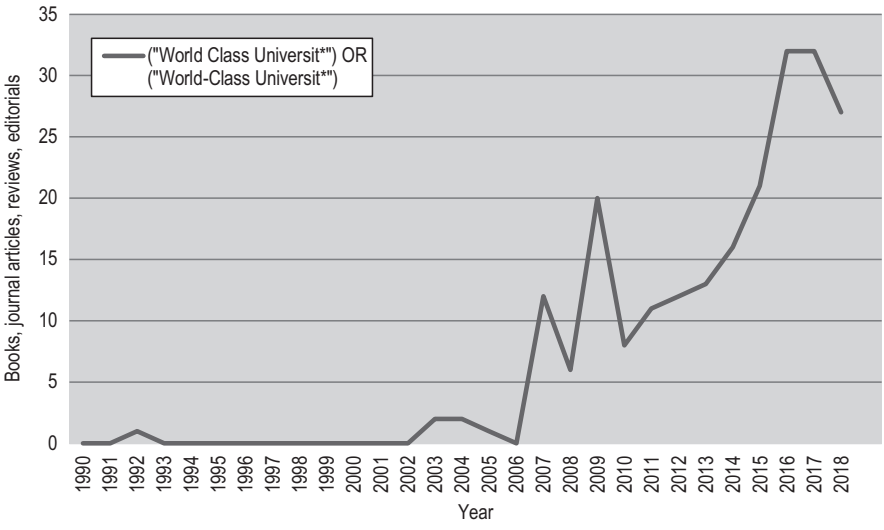

Fig. 10.1 Items retrieved from the web of science 1990–2018. (Source: Web of Science)

[1] Liu Nian Cai is the director of the Center for World-Class Universities at Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China, and Jan Sadlak was elected 10 years ago as the President of the IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence.

Ranking of Higher Education Institutions (IREG 2006) constitutes a crucial follow-up to the First Conference on World Class Universities. Convened by the UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education in Bucharest and the Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington DC, this document represents a guideline consisting of 16 general precepts concerning the purpose, design, construction and divulgation of league tables. Publishers of these rankings are expected to abide by these principles if their publications are to be recognised as an outcome of good practice.

Studies on the fate of the Berlin Principles largely agree that there is room for improvement, though there is disagreement about the form such improvement should take. Whilst some researchers have called for the refinement of certain precepts (Cheng and Liu 2008), others have taken a more critical position, stating that these guidelines suffer from formal and substantial problems that cannot be so easily overcome, including their development within a self-organised network of agents who either engage in rankings themselves or are representatives of organisations that produce rankings, their usage in practice as a tool to rank the rankings themselves, as well as the fact that they can be ambiguous and even contradictory (Hägg and Wedlin 2013). Scholars holding this latter stance also contend that the Berlin Principles paradoxically have been disengaged from ranking practices, which suggests that the document itself and the social context of its production are regarded more as a source of legitimacy for the institutionalisation of rankings rather than as a technical tool (Barron 2017).

Thus, by means of ranking practices, the arbitrariness underpinning the division that is made between those universities that are distinguished as having 'world-class' status and those that do not is concealed, giving way to what Pierre Bourdieu referred to as a *rite of institution* (1989, pp. 140–162). Indeed, league tables—especially the most famous ones—can be regarded as true acts of ordination insofar as it is through their enactment that the power to establish a particular order of things which aspires to be recognised by everyone as rational and legitimate is exerted. In other words, universally pre-existing or not, ambiguous or not, the sense of hierarchical division between higher education institutions is transformed into a social division universally presented as true.

Three Research Strands: Practice, Methodology and Context

As regards the main bulk of research on WCUs and international university rankings, roughly three types of work stand out. First, several works, more or less in line with the interests of the International Ranking Expert Group and its endeavours, have been written on how to create a WCU. This category of *practice-oriented* texts usually emphasises how important it is for national governments to get involved in the process of reaching a level of global-competitiveness in addition to the efforts that a given higher education institution must make in order to achieve such a goal (Horta 2009; Salmi 2009; Liu et al. 2011; Altbach and Salmi 2011; Hou et la. 2012; Soh 2012; Huang 2015; Tayeb et al. 2016). These works frequently recognise rankings as a valid WCU index in an explicit way, regarding the indicators used to rank the institutions as guiding principles through which the desired status can be reached.

A second group of studies deals in detail with *the methodologies* underlying the creation of league tables. Taking on the task of discussing and providing answers to the fierce criticism directed towards the suitability of rankings to objectively classify universities worldwide, this literature seeks to salvage institutionalised benchmarking practices by delivering formulas to overcome their shortcomings (Shin, Toutkoushian, and Teichler 2011; Millot 2014; Soh 2017). The texts fitting these first two groups are often written from the perspective of policy-making and include educational remarks, rarely offering exhaustive accounts on the social embeddedness of ranking practices (an exception being Part III of Shin et al. 2011).

Finally, a third cluster gathers studies focusing precisely on what the others leave aside, examining *the context* and the agents involved in the adoption of policies derived from rankings (Shin and Kehm 2013) or going even further by acknowledging and studying the broader impact that rankings have had on higher education at large (Hazelkorn 2015). These texts provide thorough and consistent evidence to suggest that rankings not only serve the purposes claimed by their publishers, but also function as (re)shaping factors of the space they claim to be merely assessing. Of the most critical works within this group, it is particularly illustrative to note the studies that examine how league tables have been used to promote the adoption of neo-liberal policies (David 2016; Sabzalieva 2017), how international rankings have altered the definition and distribution of symbolic capital in the international field of management education (Wedlin 2011), how these devices shape management and policy discourse amongst research-intensive universities (O'Connell 2015), how law school rankings have had negative impact (Espeland and Sauder 2016) as well as how the use of bibliometrics in university rankings have generated 'perverse effects' (Gingras 2016), to name a few examples. Moreover, there is also empirical work indicating that the WCU is only viable for a well-off minority of countries, mostly from the global north, who can afford what is required to attain and maintain such status (Mittelman 2017).

Our contribution can be best situated within this third line of research. However, our ambition here is not primarily to criticise the rankings for not evaluating or assessing quality; there is an abundance of this relevant literature, rather we will look into the relationship between the idea of world class universities and international rankings on the one hand and international student mobility on the other, and scrutinise especially the homologies between the space of national higher educational systems (as apparent from the international rankings of universities) and the flows of international students (between nation states). In a sense, we explore the relationship between a symbolic order (international rankings), and a social, cultural and economic order (international student flows).

International Rankings: A Short History and an Overview

Although the practice of comparison for global competition within the space of higher education is not totally new, attempts to rationalise such comparisons by using quantifiable indicators are a more recent phenomenon. During the early 1980s, the first ranking with a larger institutional focus was published by the US News and World Report. However, this and subsequent rankings were national in

their scope. The first global ranking of universities was created by the Centre for World-Class Universities at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, which in 2003 launched the first issue of the very well-known Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)—often referred to as 'the Shanghai ranking'. The next year, the Times Higher Education Supplement (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) issued their own ranking and continued to do so up until 2010 when they parted ways and began their own separate rankings. As of today, these three rankings—differing from each other generally in their weighting of the indicators—have the reputation of being the oldest rankings of their kind and are often regarded as the most reputable among the more than 15 different rankings that exist. It is precisely because of their reputation that we will be focusing primarily on them.

It is important to note that the rankings are composed in such a way that hierarchical divisions at particular reference points yield different meanings and functions. Starting at the top, a set of divisions can be identified: the first-ranked, which represent the top three, the top five, and the top 10. In the Shanghai ranking, the top 20 forms the first statistical unit. Thereafter the top 100, the top 200, the top 300, the top 400 and the top 500 follow. In 2018, all three major global rankings grew to include the top 1000, increasing their scope yet further.

To give an idea of the number of students that the different levels comprise, we can make a rough calculation. According to the QS World Ranking published in 2019,[2] the top 100 universities enrol about 2,750,000 students out of today's approximately 220 million students (UNESCO Institute for statistics); that is, slightly over 1% of all students. Within the top 500 universities of the same list, approximately 11,600,000 students are accounted for, which represent just over 5% of the total number of students in the world. Within the top 1000, about 23,500,000, or roughly one out of 10 of the world's students, are included. This can be contrasted with the top five, which amount to approximately 74,000 students, or not even one per thousand. The top 20 amounts to nearly 400,000 students, or less than three per thousand.

Which institutions are ranked first or in the top three or top five is a concern for a very limited set of American and British universities and tells us something about how the ranking criteria relate to the American and British fields of elite higher education and the characteristics of the most dominant universities.[3] The absolute

[2] This data was provided by the QS Intelligence Unit at request for research purposes.

[3] Over 17 years (2003 to 2019), the Shanghai ranking has constantly ranked Harvard University as number one. The second position has been occupied by Stanford University for 13 years, with University of Cambridge at this position twice and University of California, Berkeley, once, whereas position 3 to 5 have alternated between Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, University of Cambridge, University of California, Berkeley, and California Institute of Technology, and no other universities. The Times Higher Education Supplement ranking has during its 9 year had three institutions listed as number one (California Institute of Technology, University of Oxford, and Harvard University), which, with the addition of University of Cambridge, Stanford University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have competed for the two following positions. Between 2005 and 2019, the QS ranking had three institutions at the top: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University and University of Cambridge, which all have been the top 3 in the other two rankings. The positions 2 and 3 include alongside the three

top, the first position, is also of paramount importance for the ranking institution itself. A ranking that did not rank one of the leading American or Oxbridge universities at the top would have serious problems obtaining legitimacy, which is the most important factor for a ranking.

The top 100 has become a crucial dimension and threshold. This is probably because it meets the criterion of being broad enough to include a sufficient number of institutions so as to be relevant for more countries than just the US and the UK, while at the same time it is still exclusive enough to suggest excellence and a type of elite division. The successive levels, the top 200 and the top 300, are less distinguished and less symbolically laden. The top 500 represent a fairly large portion of the world's universities and students, especially when the provision of longer and more advanced programmes is considered. For many western countries, all or most major universities are included at this level and the distinctive value is low.

The importance of the top positions in rankings is reinforced in many national systems in different ways. In Russia, for example, a list was compiled in 2012 of 210 foreign universities that held high positions in the three international rankings under study, with the outcome that diplomas from these institutions became automatically recognised (Krainova 2012). In Chile, the AWRU and the THE have been used as part of a point-based scholarship programme[4], in a similar fashion as how rankings have been used in Denmark and the Netherlands for immigration programmes (Luxbacher 2013). Yet another example can be found in the attention that league tables have received in the pursuit to improve the implementation of the King Abdullah Scholarship programme in Saudi Arabia (Alhalabi et al. 2017).

International Rankings as League Tables of Nations

In this section, we will analyse the rankings as league tables of nations by focusing on the number of universities and higher education institutions per country. This will enable us to discuss the hierarchy of national higher education systems and of countries more generally, including changes in this hierarchy over time. In addition, the league tables also provide interesting information about the status of languages.

The Dominance of the US…

It is hard to find rankings that are so dominated by one single country as in international university rankings (see Table 10.1). For the Shanghai ranking, in 2010 the US accounted for 17 of the 20 first-ranked universities (85%) and for 54 of the first

mentioned above, Stanford University, University of California, Berkeley, and University of Oxford. The only newcomers are Yale University and Imperial College London.

[4] Seehttps://www.conicyt.cl/becasconicyt/2014/02/17/conicyt-y-becas-chile-inician-convocatoria-de-becas-de-doctorado-en-el-extranjero-2/

Table 10.1 The 20 most important countries in the Shanghai (2010), QS (2010) and times higher education supplement (2011) rankings. Sorted decreasing by top 100. Shares in percent

Shanghai								QS							THE			
Nr	2010	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2010	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2011	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200
1	US	85.0	54.0	44.5	37.0	34.3	30.8	US	65.0	31.0	26.5	23.7	21.5	21.8	US	75.0	53.0	36.0
2	UK	10.0	11.0	9.5	10.0	8.8	7.6	UK	20.0	19.0	15.0	13.0	11.8	10.2	UK	15.0	14.0	14.5
3	Japan	5.0	5.0	4.5	3.3	4.3	5.0	Australia	5.0	7.0	4.0	6.0	5.5	4.8	Australia	0.0	5.0	3.5
4	Germany		5.0	7.0	7.7	8.3	7.8	Germany	0.0	5.0	6.0	7.3	9.0	8.4	Canada	5.0	4.0	4.5
5	Canada		4.0	4.0	6.0	4.5	4.6	Japan	0.0	5.0	5.0	4.3	3.8	5.0	Switzerland	5.0	4.0	3.0
6	France		3.0	3.5	4.3	4.5	4.4	Canada	5.0	4.0	5.0	5.0	4.3	4.0	Germany		3.0	7.0
7	Australia		3.0	3.5	3.0	3.3	3.4	Netherlands	0.0	4.0	6.0	4.0	3.0	2.4	China		3.0	3.0
8	Switzerland		3.0	3.0	2.3	1.8	1.4	Switzerland	5.0	3.0	3.5	2.3	2.0	1.6	France		3.0	2.0
9	Sweden		3.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.2	Hong Kong		3.0	2.5	1.7	1.5	1.2	Sweden		2.0	3.0
10	Netherlands		2.0	4.5	3.0	2.8	2.4	China		2.0	3.0	2.3	2.0	2.0	Japan		2.0	2.5
11	Denmark		2.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	0.8	France		2.0	2.5	4.3	4.3	4.2	Hong Kong		2.0	2.0
12	Belgium		1.0	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.4	Sweden		2.0	2.5	2.3	2.0	1.6	South Korea		2.0	2.0
13	Israel		1.0	2.0	1.3	1.5	1.4	South Korea		2.0	2.5	1.7	2.8	2.6	Ireland		2.0	1.0
14	Norway		1.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.8	Denmark		2.0	1.5	1.3	1.0	1.0	Singapore		1.0	1.0
15	Finland		1.0	0.5	0.3	0.8	1.2	Singapore		2.0	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.4	Netherlands			5.0
16	Russia		1.0	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.4	Belgium		1.0	2.0	2.3	1.8	1.4	Taiwan			2.0
17	China			2.0	4.3	4.8	6.8	Ireland		1.0	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.6	Denmark			1.5
18	Italy			2.0	2.7	3.3	4.4	New Zealand		1.0	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.2	Austria			1.0
19	South Korea			0.5	1.3	1.8	2.0	Taiwan		1.0	1.0	1.3	1.8	1.8	Belgium			1.0
20	Austria			0.5	1.0	1.5	1.4	Norway		1.0	1.0	1.3	1.0	0.8	Spain			1.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	98.0	95.0	92.3	90.2		100.0	98.0	93.5	87.7	82.3	78.0		100.0	100.0	96.5

100. Within the top 200, US institutions accounted for less than 50% (44%) and decreased slowly but steadily as more universities were ranked. The Times Higher Educational Supplement had a similar order in its own first ranking, in 2011, however slightly less pronounced: 15 out of the first 20 and 53 out of the first 100 universities were American, and American institutions accounted for 36% of the top 200. The 2010 QS ranking was the least US dominated, with "only" 13 out of the top 20 and 31 of the top 100 representing American universities, with a decrease to 22% in the number of American institutions in the top 500. However, no other country comes close to the figures of the US.

The UK stands out as the second most highly ranked country, with around 10% in the Shanghai ranking at all levels. The position of the UK is further emphasised in the QS ranking, with 20% of the institutions in the top 20, 19% in the top 100, and 15% in the top 200. The THE lands in between, with around 15% UK institutions at all levels. The third country position is less distinct. The Shanghai ranking has Japan and Germany with five institutions and Canada with four in the top 100. In the top 500, Germany has reached the level of the UK (8%) and China is fourth (7%) with Japan as fifth (5%). The QS has Australia as third among the top 100 (7%) with Germany and Japan sharing the fourth position (5%) and the same countries occupying the third to fifth positions within the top 500, but with Germany in the third position with 8% and Australia and Japan with 5% each (Tables 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4).

... of the West in General ...

When countries are aggregated according to geographical regions, it becomes clear that North America and Europe dominate the lists heavily. In the 2010 Shanghai ranking, North America together with Europe accounted for 95% of the top 20 institutions, 92% of the top 100 and still 78% of the top 500. The figures were similar, although slightly lower, for the QS ranking the same year, and for the THE ranking the subsequent year. The rankings were also almost completely dominated by OECD countries, which represented 100% of the top 20 universities, 99% of the top 100 and 89% of the top 500 in the 2010 Shanghai ranking. The QS ranking has a slightly smaller share of OECD countries for the top 500, 85%, but all in all is very similar.

The most interesting difference between the rankings regards the balance between North America and Europe. Both the Shanghai and the THE rankings favour North America over Europe, while QS has a larger share of European universities. For instance, Europe accounted for 42 of the 100 most highly ranked universities in the QS ranking, but only 34 according to the Shanghai ranking and just 28 in the THE ranking; that is a 14 percentage points difference between THE and QS. However, the difference was smaller within the top 200, with a moderate 6 percentage points difference between the 45% of European universities represented in QS and the 39% in the THE. The difference between these two rankings with regard to European universities ceased to be apparent in the top 500. At the same time, the dominance of the northern transatlantic regions implies that the other

Table 10.2 Geographic regions in the Shanghai (2010), QS (2010) and times higher education supplement (2011) rankings. Sorted decreasing by top 100. Shares in percent

Shanghai							QS							THE			
2010	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2010	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2011	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200
North America	85.0	58.0	49.0	43.3	39.0	35.6	North America	70.0	35.0	31.5	29.0	26.3	26.2	North America	80.0	57.0	40.5
Europe	10.0	33.0	37.0	41.0	42.0	40.8	Europe	25.0	42.0	45.0	46.0	45.5	44.4	Europe	20.0	28.0	41.0
Asia	5.0	6.0	9.5	10.7	13.0	16.4	Asia	0.0	15.0	17.5	16.7	19.0	21.2	Asia		10.0	13.5
Oceania		3.0	3.5	3.7	3.8	4.4	Oceania	5.0	8.0	5.5	7.3	7.0	6.0	Oceania		5.0	4.0
Other			1.0	1.3	2.3	2.8	Other			0.5	1.0	2.3	2.2	Other			1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 10.3 The largest national languages in the Shanghai (2010), QS (2010) and times higher education supplement (2011) rankings. Sorted decreasing by top 100. Shares in percent

ShanghTbrowendai							QS							THE			
2010	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2010	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2011	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200
English	95.0	72.0	62.0	57.7	52.8	49.0	English	95.0	68.0	57.5	53.7	49.8	46.8	English	95.0	81.0	63.5
German		8.0	10.5	11.0	11.5	10.6	German	5.0	8.0	10.0	10.7	12.0	11.0	German	5.0	7.0	11.0
Scandinavian		6.0	4.0	5.0	4.5	3.8	Dutch		5.0	8.0	6.3	4.8	3.8	Chinese		3.0	5.0
Japanese	5.0	5.0	4.5	3.3	4.3	5.0	Scandinavian		5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	3.4	French		3.0	2.0
French		3.0	3.5	4.3	4.5	4.4	Japanese		5.0	5.0	4.3	3.8	5.0	Scandinavian		2.0	5.0
Dutch		3.0	6.5	5.0	4.3	3.8	Chinese		3.0	4.0	3.7	3.8	3.8	Japanese		2.0	2.5
East European		2.0	1.0	1.0	2.5	2.8	French		2.0	2.5	4.3	4.3	4.2	Korean		2.0	2.0
Other		1.0	2.0	1.7	2.5	3.0	Korean		2.0	2.5	1.7	2.8	2.6	Dutch			6.0
Chinese			2.0	4.3	4.8	6.8	East European		2.0	1.0	2.0	3.3	3.6	Other			1.5
Italian			2.0	2.7	3.3	4.4	Other			2.5	4.3	5.8	8.2	Spanish			1.0
Spanish			1.0	2.0	2.3	2.8	Spanish			1.0	1.7	3.0	3.4	East European			0.5
Korean			0.5	1.3	1.8	2.0	Italian			1.0	1.7	1.8	3.0	Italian			
Portuguese			0.5	0.7	1.3	1.6	Portuguese			0.0	0.7	1.3	1.2	Portuguese			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 10.4 Number of countries, by level and ranking, 2010 and 2018

2010	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	
Shanghai	3	16	24	30	34	39	
THE (2011) *	4	14	26				
QS**	5	22	29	36	45	50	
2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	Top 1000
Shanghai	3	18	26	31	38	42	59
THE*	3	16	27	32	40	46	76
QS**	5	21	34	39	48	59	84
Difference	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	Top 1000
Shanghai	0	2	2	1	4	3	
THE*	−1	2	1				
QS**	0	−1	5	3	3	9	

* Differentiate Hong Kong (top 100) and Taiwan (top 200)
** Differentiate Hong Kong and Taiwan (top 100)

regions were marginal. Asia, the third most important region, only accounted for 5% of the Shanghai's top 100, but 10% of the THE's top 100 and 15% of the QS' top 100. That the QS rates North American universities lower than the other two makes room for other regions to find a place in the spotlight.

… and of English

A rough estimate of the distribution of languages, where the most important official languages in the country have been taken into account, yields a picture of a very English-dominated elite world in global higher education. Countries where English is the main language accounted for 95% of the top 20 universities, 72% of the top 100 and 49% of the top 500 in the 2010 Shanghai ranking. The Times Higher Education Supplement had an even higher share for the top 100, 81%. The QS, which has the lowest representation for US and North American institutions, still had 68 universities in the top 100 located in English-speaking countries. The dominance of English is thus more marked than the dominance of the (geographical) West. It is striking that the Oceanian countries Australia and New Zealand add a fair share to the English category as do English-speaking countries such as Singapore and Hong Kong. If these countries are included in a culturally defined West, the western dominance becomes almost hegemonic.

After English, German was the most important language in the Shanghai ranking, with around 10% of institutions in the top 100 having been German-speaking, and the shares having been similar for the other two rankings. Other languages had different profiles. Chinese increased its importance in general and most apparently at the broadest level, the top 500 (7% in the Shanghai, lower in the QS), whereas the Scandinavian countries were strongest in the top 100 (6% in the Shanghai, a bit lower in the QS). However, it is eminently clear that no other language came close

to the position of English. And yet, the importance of English is underestimated in the figures. In many non-English-speaking countries that are more highly ranked, such as the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, English is the working language at many departments, especially in medicine, technology and science, and also increasingly in the social sciences.

Nuances

When the three main global rankings of universities are compared, it is possible to notice some differences and nuances in what are generally overwhelmingly similar patterns. These differences are interesting because they remind us that the rankings themselves are part of a field of production in the Bourdieuian sense, with its own stakes and struggles. One such stake is the degree of concentration and dispersion of country representation. The QS ranking, and to some extent also the THE ranking, results in a broader dispersion of countries. Whereas Shanghai only had three countries represented in the top 20, THE had four and QS five. Within the top 200, QS had 29 countries represented and Shanghai 24. The other side of the coin is the degree of concentration of countries and, more specifically, of American excellence, where the Shanghai ranking was the most positive toward American universities. This is connected to the relative weight of European and Asian universities. At a more precise level, it is clearly about the value of the British universities, where the QS and the THE, which are both UK-based, tend to rank UK universities higher than the Shanghai ranking.[5] The crucial dividing line within the top 100 was the weight of Asian countries. The Shanghai ranking only ranked one Asian country at this level, Japan, whereas QS had seven Asian countries: Japan, Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand (or five if Hong Kong and Taiwan are included as part of China as they are in the Shanghai ranking). The THE was closer to the QS ranking, with five Asian countries (China, Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore). Yet another difference is that the QS listed a set of Arab and/or Muslim countries (United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Indonesia and Egypt) in the top 500, which were not included at the equivalent level in the Shanghai list.

[5] A parallel case is the establishment of a Europe-based ranking of business schools by Financial Times, which, by creating a global list, managed to emphasise the European schools in relation to American schools (Wedlin 2007).

Shifting Balances?

Eight years later, in 2018, the rankings look very similar, which is to be expected, given the criteria used to produce the rankings as well as the inertia in the field of higher education. The US and Western countries still dominate, and English continues to be by far the most important language. Nonetheless, interesting tendencies can be observed. The first trend is the decreasing dominance of the US. It is down from having 54 (2010) to 46 (2018) universities represented within the top 100 of the Shanghai ranking and has decreased from 31 to 28% representation within the top 500. Similar decreases can be noticed for the THE (from 53 to 41 institutions within the top 100, and from 36 to 31% representation within the top 200, when comparing 2018 and 2011) and QS at the less exclusive levels (31 universities represented both in 2010 and 2018 in the top 100, but a loss from 27 to 24 institutions in the top 200, and from 22 to 19 institutions in the top 500).

A second trend is a more diversified landscape regarding country representation. All rankings have increased the number of countries that are positioned at each level, from the top 100 and after. The most concentrated list, the Shanghai ranking, had two more countries in the top 100 in 2018 than it did in 2010 and three more in the top 500. The QS ranking, which had the most countries represented in the 2010 rankings at all levels, in 2018 expanded further with nine new countries in the top 500, reaching a total of 59 countries. That all rankings have added a top 1,000 division also implies broadened competition.

These two changes, the weakening of US domination and broadened competition, lead to the question of further shifts in the hierarchy of nations. At the most aggregated regional level, the North American loss is a gain for Asia (at all levels except for the top 20) and Europe (top 20 and top 200) in the Shanghai ranking, and for Asia in the QS ranking. This can be further qualified. At the second position in individual country representation, the UK stands firm and has a similar share in all three rankings. Thus, unlike the US, the UK has not lost in relative importance. In the subsequent positions, Australia has risen to the third position within the top 100 in the Shanghai ranking (from sixth), kept the third position in the QS ranking and stayed in second position in the THE. China has also now established itself within the top 100 of the Shanghai ranking with three universities. China's growing importance is also underscored at the broader levels. It has increased from four to 10% of institutions represented within the top 300 and from seven to 12% within the top 500, making China the country with the second strongest representation after the US at both levels. China's expansion is less visible in the other two rankings. In the THE, China has two universities in the top 100 (a decrease of 1) and does not reach more than 4% after the top 100. In the QS, China has six universities within the top 100 (an increase of four), but oscillates between three and 4% representation in the following levels. It is also noticeable that Germany has increased its position in the THE ranking (with 10 universities in the top 100 and 12% representation in the top 300), but lost ground in the other two rankings.

To summarise, the dominant country, the US, has declined somewhat in relative position, whereas the second ranked nation, the UK, has kept its relative standing. The decline of the US runs in parallel with an increase in Asian representation, where China moves forward in the Shanghai ranking, but not in the others. Other important changes include an increased diversification, with more countries competing at higher levels and a doubling of the number of ranked institutions overall, making the top even more exclusive.

The Global Space of International Students

We now turn from the rankings to international student flows. Here, we will draw on a previous analysis of the global space of international student flows (Börjesson 2017). On the basis of a contingency table of countries of destination and regions of origin (aggregated from country information), a correspondence analysis (Le Roux and Rouanet 2004) was performed, displaying the relationships between the two sets of entities (the countries of destination and the regions of origin) and the oppositions within the different entities. In short, the position of a single country is determined by its inflows of students in relation to all other countries' inflows. Countries that have similar patterns of recruitment tend to end up in neighbouring positions in the space, and countries that have divergent patterns are found in opposing locations. The most important differences are presented in the first dimension of the space, followed by the second most important. Here, we will limit the analysis to the first two dimensions of the space.

A Three-Polar Structure

The global space of international students (see Fig. 10.2 below has a first dimension that sets (to the right) the most important country of destination, the US, and the most important region of origin (East Asia) together with other countries of destination surrounding the Pacific Ocean (Australia, New Zealand and Japan) in opposition to countries of destination in Europe and regions of origin also located in Europe (to the left). The second dimension positions (below in the figure) France, Spain and Portugal as countries of destination, mainly recruiting from Africa and Latin America, against Eastern Europe (upwards in the figure). Thus, the space has a basic three-polar structure in the plane of the first two axes, with a *Pacific pole* to the right, a *Central European pole* to the (upper) left and *French-Iberian pole* at the bottom in the middle.

We can further locate a group of countries of destination in the middle of the space, including the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Cyprus; these countries have a more diversified recruitment, attracting students from all regions. Characteristic of the regions of origin at the Pacific pole is the Asian dominance; all Asian regions are

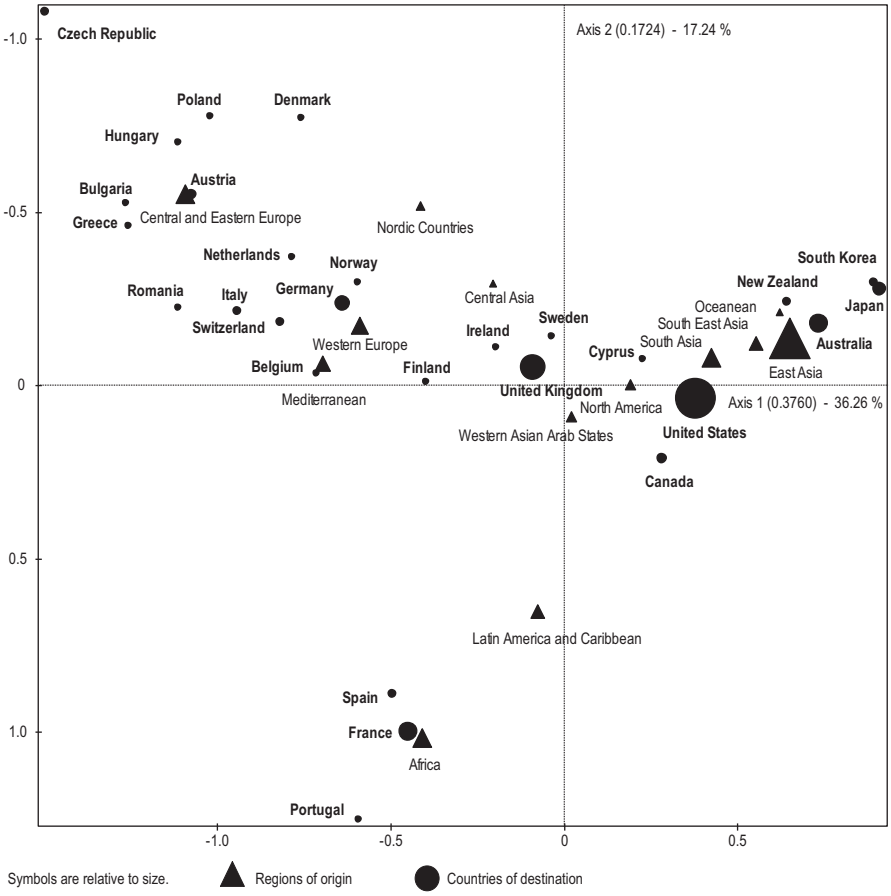

Fig. 10.2 The global space of international students in the plane of Axes 1 & 2

located in this part of the space. Although an internal Asian market also exists, where countries such as Japan and South Korea are important countries of destination, this does not challenge the overall dominance of Anglo-Saxon countries, which serve as the primary choice of foreign destination for Asian students.

Market, Colonial and Proximity Logics and Linguistic Patterns

These three poles represent three different logics of recruitment in the global space of international student flows. The dominant pole, the Pacific pole, is largely defined by a *market logic*. Although the market logic is not restricted to the Pacific pole (it also stretches to the central part of the space), it is most pertinent here. Market logic foremost implies a tuition-fee-based higher education system, with sometimes

substantial fees, which is the case for all three of the most important countries of destination in terms of number of international students: the US, the UK and Australia. Both national and international students are required to pay tuition fees, but international students can often be charged higher fees than local, national or regional students. This indicates that international students function as an important source of revenue for higher education institutions (Findlay 2011) and, in the case of Australia and New Zealand, for the whole country given, for example, their contribution to the economy through spending (Lewis 2011). Market logic also includes active recruitment strategies and activities, extensive use of recruitment agents, visibility in international student markets and marketing in general. One crucial dimension of this is the marketing of the university as well as nations as brands. In all this, international rankings play a fundamental and increasingly important role.

Furthermore, the dominant pole, the Pacific pole, is largely defined by its provision of higher education in English. All three major countries of destination, the US, the UK and Australia, are English-speaking. These three countries alone account for 38% of all international students. Adding other English-speaking countries, such as New Zealand and Ireland, the figure totals to 41%. The countries that together with the UK constitute the central part of the space are also either English-speaking, such as Ireland, or have, like Sweden and Finland, developed a substantial array of educational offerings in English (OECD2012, p. 367). The dominance of English in the global space of international students is obviously related to the fact that English has become the global language and the most important second language (Crystal 2003).

The opposing pole to the Pacific pole, the Central European pole, follows a different logic. Here, market logic is less visible, and of greater importance is a *proximity logic*, which has many dimensions. First, geographically, the countries are neighbours in Central and Eastern Europe, and they also tend to be grouped in such a way that the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary are together (in the upper left quadrant) while Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland are also located near one another (more towards the centre). Second, politically, all the main countries of destination (with the exception of Norway and Switzerland) and all regions of origin in this part of the space are members of the European Union. Although the students analysed in this context are free movers and not exchange students, the creation and existence of the world's largest exchange programme, the Erasmus programme, in the EU has an impact on other forms of student mobility. Furthermore, the EU countries often share a principle not to charge higher tuition fees for students from other EU countries than they would for domestic students, which provides a fertile ground for the intra-European mobility of students. These mobility patterns are also part of a larger context of mobility and flows of persons and goods (Brooks and Waters 2013). Third, linguistically, it is first noticeable that no countries in this part of the space have English as the first language. Equally important are the strong linguistic affiliations between many of the countries, which are most clearly illustrated by the closeness between German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland) in the space. Also, the Scandinavian countries can understand each other's languages fairly easily, but here the different positions in the space are more related to their varying stances towards tuition fees for third country students, that

is, students from outside of the EU. In 2010 tuition fees had been introduced in Denmark, but not in Sweden or Norway.

The third pole, the French/Iberian, defined by France, Spain and Portugal as countries of destination and Africa, Latin American and the Caribbean as regions of origin, is best characterised by a *colonial logic*, where student flows trend from the former colonies to the former colonial powers. In this context, the languages of the ex-colonial powers (French, Spanish and Portuguese) are an important bridge between the countries alongside the overall links that have been established over the years, although in a very asymmetrical way. It is important to highlight that these bonds are not built up around a market logic; rather, geo-political and cultural motives are most decisive in shaping the flows.

Finally, the relative weight of the different poles needs to be addressed. It is obvious that the Pacific pole has a dominant position in the space. This is highlighted by the fact that the most important countries of destination (the US, the UK and Australia) and regions of origin (East Asia) are located here and that the largest part of the educational provision is available in English, thus enabling a truly global recruitment. The other two poles are dominated by the Pacific and market-oriented pole. The number of students involved in higher education abroad is lower and more geographically concentrated, due either to proximity in the space (the Central/Eastern European pole) or colonial history (the French/Iberian pole). As the marketisation of higher education continues to evolve and spread, the two other poles weaken, and leading countries such as Germany and France have taken increasing measures to compete for students on the international market of higher education.

Increased Dominance of the Pacific Pole and Market Logic

When analysing the transformation during recent years, drawing on data from 2016 on the overall numbers of international students per country of destination, the clearest pattern is that of stability. The US still holds the first position, followed by the UK as second. Among the top 10, only one country, Italy, at the tenth position in 2010, is not part of the list, but has the 11th position. The newcomer Malaysia occupies the tenth position instead, a move up from the 14th position. The most important change is the rise of China, now positioned as the third most important country of destination, just above Australia. Additionally, Russia has risen to fifth place, and both Germany and France have dropped two positions. Beyond the 10 most important counties of destination, there has been more movement. Many countries, such as South Africa, Spain, Egypt, and Switzerland, fall out of the 11th to 20th positions, while Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands and Argentina enter in.

At a more aggregated level, Europe tends to lose ground while Asia is gaining importance. When we relate the shifts in recruitment to the structure of the global space of international students, we notice a further increase in the weight of the Pacific pole, where beside the crucial countries of the US and Australia, China has also become a major country of destination. At the same time, both the French/Iberian pole and the Central/Eastern European pole have lost attraction, where all

three defining countries of destination in the former, France, Spain and Portugal, have lost relative weight and positions, and where the largest countries in terms of recruitment in the latter, Germany, Italy, Austria and Switzerland, have all also lost in relative weight, while some counties with lower levels of international students, such as Poland and Denmark, have increased their share.

Rankings and International Student Flows: Reinforcing Logics

The previous discussion of rankings, on the one hand, and the structure of the global space of international student flows, on the other, can be set together in a comprehensive analysis, which reveals that the hierarchies overlap and largely reinforce each other, while there also are some interesting differentiations. As shown by Fig. 10.3, the most important countries of destination are also the countries with the largest share of the top 500 ranked universities. The US holds the most prominent positions according to both hierarchies, accounting for the largest share of international students, 19%, and of ranked universities, 31%. The UK comes second in the hierarchy of the share of international students, 11%, and third in the hierarchy of ranked universities, 8%, as Germany takes the second position. The third country according to recruitment of international students, Australia with 8%, is more modestly placed according to the Shanghai ranking at the ninth position with 3% of universities represented. This is also true for France, the fourth country according to

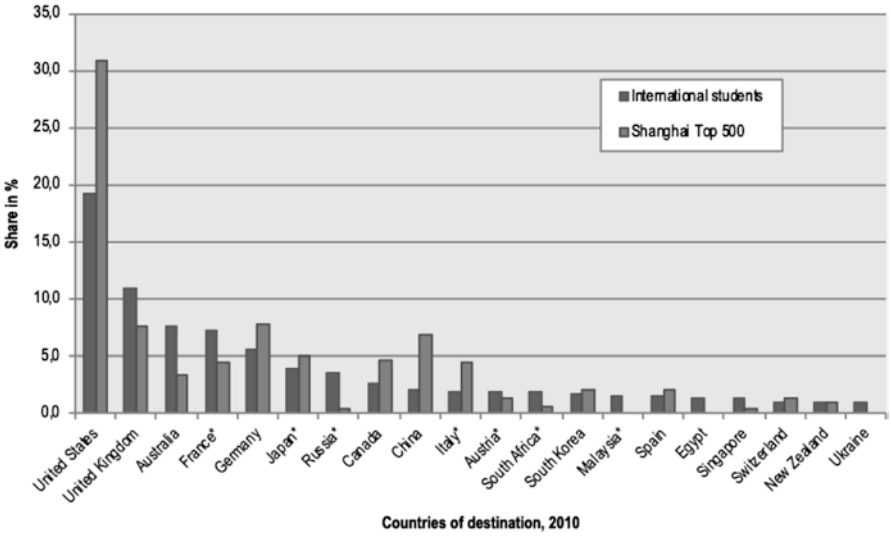

Fig. 10.3 The 20 largest countries of destination, 2010, and institutions on the Shanghai-ranking Top 500. Sorted decreasing by number of incoming international students. Shares in per cent. (Source: UNESCO (International students), Academic ranking of World Universities (Shanghai ranking). Remark: * Country using foreign citizenship as indicator)

international student recruitment, accounting for 7% of all students, but in seventh position according to the Shanghai ranking with 4% of universities represented. Germany has an opposite configuration, a lower position as a destination country of international students, at the fifth position, accounting for 5% of international students, but at the second position in the Shanghai ranking, with 8% of universities represented. Further down the list according to international student recruitment, China stands out with disproportionally few international students, in the ninth position, accounting for 2% of all international students, while its position in the Shanghai ranking is four with 7% of universities. Italy has a similar configuration, although less pronounced. Some countries in the top 20 list of destinations, namely Russia, South Africa, Malaysia, Egypt, Singapore and Ukraine, have very few universities (from none to three) among the top 500.

When the top 100 is considered (see Fig. 10.4), the dominance of the US in international student flows is underscored by a further distinctive supremacy. With the exception of the UK, Germany, Japan and Canada, which have levels of international students on par with their share of top 100 universities, all other countries have a significantly lower share of highly ranked universities. Thus, it is clear that the symbolic order of nations based on the rankings is much more skewed than the hierarchy of nations on the basis of their share of international students.

In 2016, the patterns are similar (Fig. 10.5 and Fig. 10.6). The slightly lowered share of the top 100 and top 500 universities for the US has not reduced their share of international students in any noticeable way. Although China has increased its

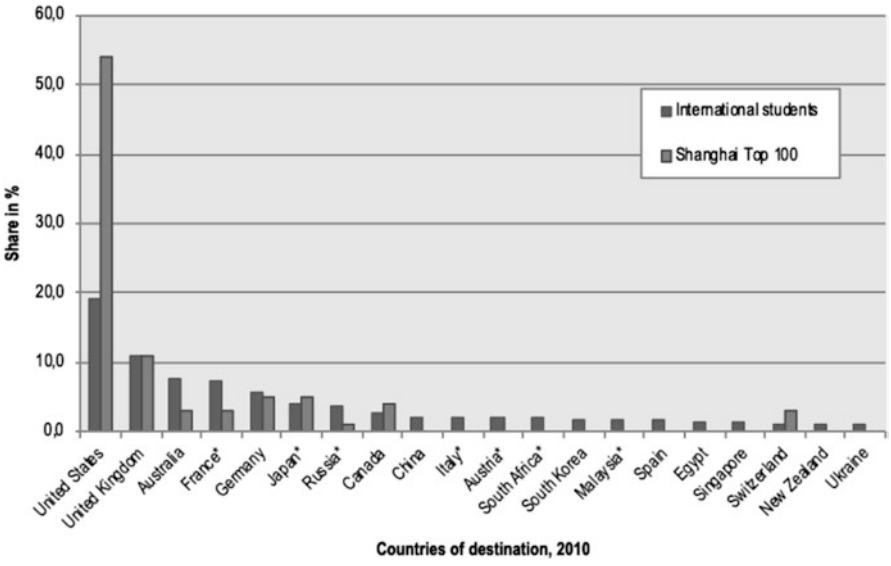

Fig. 10.4 The 20 largest countries of destination, 2010, and institutions on the Shanghai-ranking Top 100. Sorted decreasing by number of incoming international students. Shares in per cent. (Source: UNESCO (International students), Academic ranking of World Universities (Shanghai ranking). Remark: * Country using foreign citizenship as indicator)

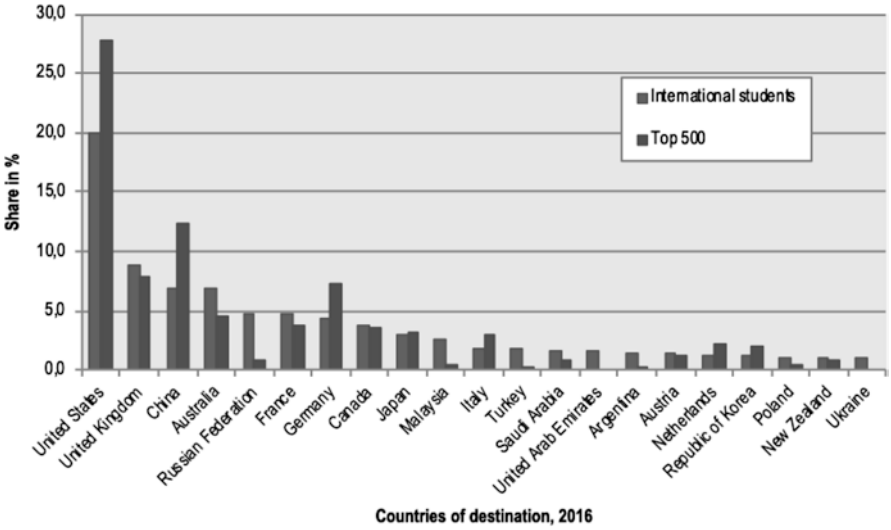

Fig. 10.5 The 20 largest countries of destination (2016), and institutions on the Shanghai-ranking Top 500 (2018). Sorted decreasing by number of incoming international students. Shares in per cent. (Source: UNESCO (International students), Academic ranking of World Universities (Shanghai ranking). China figures from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Remark: * Country using foreign citizenship as indicator)

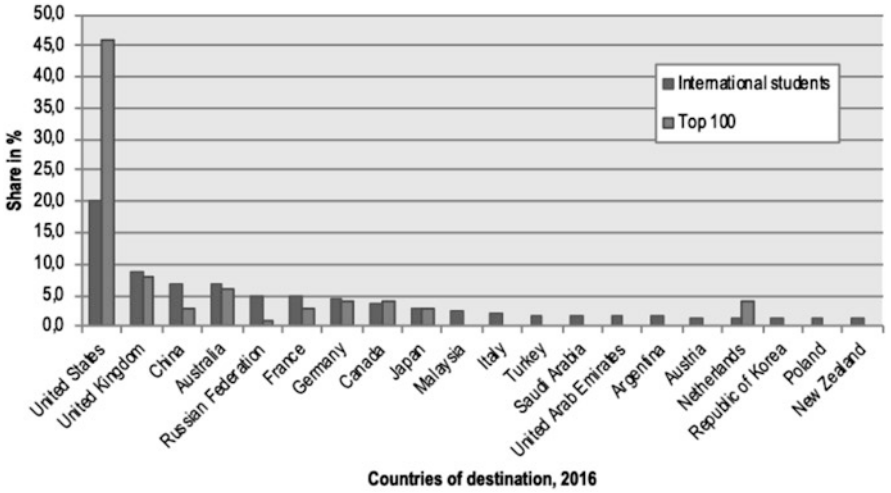

Fig. 10.6 The 20 largest countries of destination (2016), and institutions on the Shanghai-ranking top 100 (2018). Sorted decreasing by number of incoming international students. Shares in per cent. (Source: UNESCO (International students), Academic ranking of World Universities (Shanghai ranking). China figures from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Remark: * Country using foreign citizenship as indicator)

level of both international students and its ranking positions, the US dominance is still extreme at the top 100. No other country has such a large share at the top 100 in relation to its share of international students. The Netherlands might be a candidate, but it has very low levels of international students, just 1%, and the other major countries of destination have either an equal share (the UK, Australia, Germany, Canada and Japan) or a markedly lower level (China, Russia, and Malaysia).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have provided a general account of the emergence of and the connections between the notion of the 'World Class University' and the international university rankings so as to contextualise our study on the isomorphism between the space of national higher educational systems and the global flows of international students. We scrutinised the symbolic order of nations, languages and geopolitical powers (re)produced by the three major league tables existing today—AWRU, THE and QS—paying attention to patterns and nuances between them and throughout time. A depiction of the structure of the global space of internationally mobile students in 2010 was presented and later used as a point of departure for a deeper analysis on its correspondences with the symbolic order created by these international university rankings.

The data have led us to conclude that, although there are interesting differences between the most important rankings both synchronically and diachronically, the landscape they present is a very stable one. In general, it is true that the US has lost some relative dominance within the space and that competition has broadened over time, making room for new actors on the scene; however, it is also true that such loss is minimal and that the competition is still led by the same countries and institutions, as well as that the US holds an unchallenged leading position. Furthermore, the linguistic pre-eminence of the English language and the larger importance of the western world—and especially of English-speaking nations—are still strong and show no signs of abating whatsoever. In accordance with the evidence presented, this symbolic order (re)produced by international university rankings is mirrored to a significant degree by international student flows. This mirroring becomes particularly clear in the case of the market logic defining the Pacific pole, which also is the most prominent logic within the space and is primarily embodied by universities in the US. It is entirely clear that the symbolic order is much more skewed than the order that is based on flows of individuals (international students).

The extreme dominance of the US, followed by the UK and Australia, overshadows the subtle dynamics taking place in other regions of the analysed space. Thus, as mentioned before, a closer examination of the ranking data would be fruitful in order to properly assess the character and weight of further shifts that may have taken place in the hierarchies of nations. Additional examination of the positioning of the higher-profile Asian actors—China and India—as well as a more in-depth study of the most important dominant regions of the space—France and Germany—must be provided in the future.

Appendix

AU1 **Table 10.5** The 20 most important countries in the Shanghai, QS and times higher education supplement (2018) Rankings. Sorted decreasing by top 100. Shares in percent

Shanghai								QS							THE						
Nr	2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500
1	United States	80.0	46.0	34.5	31.7	29.3	27.8	United States	55.0	31.0	23.5	19.7	18.8	18.6	United States	75.0	41.0	31.0	28.0	27.4	25.0
2	United Kingdom	15.0	8.0	10.5	9.3	8.5	7.8	United Kingdom	20.0	16.0	14.0	12.7	11.8	10.2	United Kingdom	20.0	12.0	15.5	12.7	12.9	11.8
3	Australia	0.0	6.0	4.5	5.0	5.3	4.6	Australia	5.0	7.0	4.5	5.7	5.3	4.6	Germany	0.0	10.0	10.0	12.0	9.7	8.6
4	Switzerland	5.0	5.0	3.5	2.3	2.0	1.6	China	0.0	6.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	4.2	Netherlands	0.0	7.0	6.5	4.3	3.2	2.6
5	Germany		4.0	7.0	6.7	7.0	7.2	Japan	0.0	5.0	4.5	3.7	3.5	3.0	Australia	0.0	6.0	4.0	5.3	6.0	5.8
6	Canada		4.0	4.5	4.0	4.5	3.6	Hong Kong	0.0	5.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.2	Canada	0.0	4.0	3.0	4.7	4.0	3.6
7	Netherlands		4.0	4.5	3.3	2.8	2.2	Switzerland	10.0	4.0	3.5	2.3	2.0	1.6	Switzerland	5.0	3.0	3.5	2.7	2.0	2.0
8	China		3.0	7.5	10.0	10.8	12.4	Canada	0.0	4.0	3.5	4.3	3.8	3.8	Sweden		3.0	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.2
9	France		3.0	4.0	4.7	4.3	3.8	South Korea	0.0	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.8	2.8	Hong Kong		3.0	2.5	1.7	1.2	1.2
10	Japan		3.0	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.2	Germany	0.0	3.0	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.4	China		2.0	3.5	2.3	2.0	2.4
11	Sweden		3.0	2.5	2.7	2.3	2.2	Singapore	10.0	2.0	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.6	South Korea		2.0	2.0	2.3	2.2	2.2
12	Belgium		2.0	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.4	Netherlands		2.0	5.0	4.0	3.3	2.6	Japan		2.0	1.0	1.7	1.7	2.0
13	Israel		2.0	2.0	1.3	1.0	1.2	France		2.0	2.5	3.7	4.0	3.8	Singapore		2.0	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.4
14	Denmark		2.0	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.0	Sweden		2.0	2.5	2.3	2.0	1.6	France		1.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0

Shanghai								QS							THE						
15	Singapore		2.0	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.4	Belgium		1.0	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.4	Belgium		1.0	2.0	1.7	1.7	1.6
16	Norway		1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.6	Denmark		1.0	1.5	1.0	1.3	1.0	Finland		1.0	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.4
17	Finland		1.0	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.8	Taiwan		1.0	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.2	Denmark			1.5	2.0	1.5	1.4
18	Russia		1.0	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.8	New Zealand		1.0	1.0	1.7	1.8	1.6	Italy			1.0	1.7	3.5	6.2
19	South Korea			1.0	1.7	2.0	2.0	Ireland		1.0	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.0	Spain			1.0	1.0	1.2	1.4
20	Saudi Arabia			1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	Russia		1.0	0.5	1.3	2.5	2.6	Ireland			0.5	1.3	1.2	1.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	97.0	92.3	89.0	85.4	Total	100.0	99.0	87.0	82.3	79.8	74.7	Total	100.0	100.0	96.5	93.3	90.3	87.0

Table 10.6 Geographic regions in the Shanghai. QS and times higher education supplement (2018) rankings. Sorted decreasing by top 100. Shares in percent

Shanghai							QS							THE						
2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500
North America	80.0	50.0	39.0	36.0	34.0	31.6	North America	55.0	35.0	28.0	24.7	23.0	22.8	North America	75.0	45.0	34.0	32.7	31.3	28.5
Europe	20.0	34.0	40.0	40.0	39.3	39.0	Europe	30.0	33.0	45.0	44.3	44.8	43.1	Europe	25.0	38.0	50.5	50.0	49.5	50.3
Asia		10.0	16.0	17.7	18.8	21.2	Asia	10.0	23.0	19.0	21.0	21.5	23.4	Asia		11.0	10.5	10.3	11.2	12.6
Oceania		6.0	4.5	5.3	6.0	5.4	Oceania	5.0	8.0	5.5	7.3	7.0	6.2	Oceania		6.0	4.5	6.0	7.0	7.2
Other			0.5	1.0	2.0	2.8	Other		1.0	2.5	2.7	3.8	4.6	Other			0.5	1.0	1.0	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 10.7 The largest national languages in the Shanghai, QS and times higher education supplement rankings (2018). Sorted decreasing by top 100. Shares in percent

Shanghai							QS							THE						
2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	2018	Top 20	Top 100	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500
English	95.0	66.0	55.5	51.7	50.0	47.0	English	90.0	67.0	52.0	50.0	46.8	43.3	English	95.0	68.0	58.5	55.7	55.5	51.7
German	5.0	9.0	11.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	German	10.0	7.0	10.5	9.3	9.0	9.0	German	5.0	13.0	14.5	16.0	13.2	12.2
Dutch		6.0	6.5	5.3	4.5	3.6	Chinese		7.0	4.5	5.0	6.0	6.4	Dutch		8.0	8.5	6.0	5.0	4.2
Scandinavian		6.0	5.0	5.0	4.3	3.8	Japanese		5.0	4.5	3.7	3.5	3.0	Scandinavian		3.0	5.0	6.3	5.2	5.0
Chinese		3.0	7.5	10.0	10.8	12.4	Korean		4.0	3.5	3.0	2.8	2.8	Chinese		2.0	4.0	2.7	2.5	3.2
French		3.0	4.0	4.7	4.3	3.8	Dutch		3.0	7.0	6.0	5.0	4.0	Korean		2.0	2.0	2.3	2.2	2.2
Japanese		3.0	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.2	Scandinavian		3.0	5.0	4.3	4.3	3.4	Japanese		2.0	1.0	1.7	1.7	2.0
Hebrew		2.0	2.0	1.3	1.0	1.2	French		2.0	2.5	3.7	4.0	3.8	French		1.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0
East European		2.0	1.0	1.0	2.3	2.8	Spanish		1.0	3.5	5.0	4.8	5.4	East European		1.0	1.5	2.0	2.7	3.6
Korean			1.0	1.7	2.0	2.0	East European		1.0	1.5	2.3	4.5	5.8	Italian			1.0	1.7	3.5	6.2
Arabic			1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	Italian			2.0	2.0	2.0	2.8	Spanish			1.0	1.0	1.2	1.4
Portuguese			1.0	0.7	1.5	2.0	Other			1.5	2.7	3.0	5.0	Hebrew				0.7	0.7	0.8
Italian			0.5	2.7	2.5	3.0	Portuguese			1.0	0.7	1.5	1.6	Other				0.3	1.7	2.4
Spanish			0.5	2.0	2.5	2.8	Arabic			0.5	1.3	2.0	3.0	Arabic				0.3	0.5	0.8
Other					0.5	1.4	Hebrew			0.5	1.0	1.0	0.8	Portuguese				0.3	0.2	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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Chapter 11
What Counts as World Class? Global University Rankings and Shifts in Institutional Strategies

Tero Erkkilä and Ossi Piironen

Abstract Global university rankings have emerged as a benchmark of institutional success, setting standards for higher education policymaking and institutional practices. Nevertheless, only a marginal share of higher education institutions (HEI) are in a realistic position to be ranked as a 'world-class' institutions. In the European context, the global rankings have been used to highlight a performance gap between European and North American institutions. Here the focus has been on the HEIs in the top-100 positions, causing concerns over European higher education. This has also become a marker of world-class university. We analyze the strategies of 27 Northern European universities in different tiers to learn how they have adjusted to the reality of ranking. We conclude that the references to global rankings have increased between 2014 and 2018. At the same time, the references to rankings have become more implicit in nature. Nevertheless, we find that the discourse of global comparison and excellence has become more common in the strategies. There are also emerging references to the regional role of universities, which are apparent in the strategies of universities that are clearly outside the top-100 ranked institutions. However, this is also a reflection of the discourse of world-class university.

Introduction

At present, academic institutions' strategies rather universally aim at world-class research and education. Global university rankings have emerged as a benchmark of institutional success, setting standards for higher education policymaking and institutional practices. Nevertheless, only a marginal share of higher education

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_11

institutions (HEI) are in a realistic position to be ranked as a 'world-class' institution. The rankings also have regional implications, as they have been used to highlight a performance gap between European and North American institutions. In the European context, the focus has been on the HEIs in the top-100 positions, causing concerns over European higher education. This has also become a marker of world-class university.

In this article, we analyze the strategies of 27 Northern European universities to learn how they have adjusted to the reality of ranking: how are the international rankings present in universities institutional strategies, and are there differences in approach between universities in different tiers of academic achievement measured by global league tables? Based on our empirical analysis, we conclude that the rankings game is still first and foremost played by those who can use the scores to demonstrate their success or willingness to improve their current position.

However, there seems to be increasing awareness of the pitfalls for trying to set institutional goals based on rankings, let alone gaming them. Moreover, the references to global rankings become more implicit between 2014 and 2018, our two points of analysis. At the same time, we find that the discourse of global comparison and excellence has become more common in the strategies. There are also emerging references to the regional role of universities, which are apparent in the strategies of universities that are clearly outside the top-100 ranked institutions. We nevertheless perceive this as a reflection of the discourse of world-class university, now also involving institutions that are not credibly able to participate in the race.

Transnational Higher Education: Global University Rankings as a Policy Discourse

Higher education policy experts and scholars have closely followed global university rankings (Cheng and Liu 2006, 2007; Hazelkorn 2008; Marginson and van der Wende 2007; Salmi 2009). The academic research on global rankings has largely focused on their methodology (Dehon et al. 2009a, b; Shin et al. 2011). Scholars have also identified the impacts of rankings on higher education institutions and policies (Erkkilä 2013; Hazelkorn 2011; Kehm and Stensaker 2009; Münch 2013). Furthermore, the university rankings have been linked to the global governance of knowledge (King 2010; Shin and Kehm 2012).

As higher education becomes the subject of global comparisons as a result of global rankings, reforms on the national level are increasingly informed by these transnational policy scripts that provide blueprints for policy actions (Schofer and Meyer 2005). Institutional research has drawn attention to discourse in the communication of new policy ideas (Schmidt 2010). The university rankings have come to guide national efforts to reform higher education. This is particularly visible in Europe and Asia (Deem et al. 2008; Erkkilä and Piironen 2013b). In many instances, the impact of rankings is indirect, serving as a new reference point in the reform debates and, as such, used as objective information to back up certain policy positions (Dakowska 2013; Mok 2007; Reinalda and Kulesza 2006).

The discourses on rankings and global higher education also concern the notion of resistance. The global rankings are said to resemble Foucauldian governance at a distance (cf. Miller and Rose 1990), where the reflexivity over the rankings is a mechanism for institutional change—the actors feel obliged to adhere to a perceived norm without questioning it. In a similar fashion, the rankings can be seen to form a Weberian 'iron cage' (Erkkilä and Piironen 2009), where the calculative means of bureaucratic observation leads to instrumental rationality that leaves no room for politics and ethics (value rationality). Similarly, the convergence of institutional forms through diffusion is often seen to come through isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Schofer and Meyer 2005). The global university rankings have come to portray academic activity as global competition, idealizing American top institutions as a model to follow. The political image of competition and the related 'American model' are seldom questioned.

Global University Rankings and 'European Higher Education'

The rankings have caused a particular policy concern in Europe due to the relatively poor ranking of European universities and Europe's diminished role in the global economy. What is interesting about this development is the role of the European Commission, which has been active in drafting policies for 'European higher education', a policy domain that traditionally has not come within the EU's ambit. These initiatives have been closely linked to the EU's economic ambitions. Europe also provides an interesting case for analyzing the perceptions of global university rankings, since they stand in contrast to longstanding academic traditions in Europe (de Ridder-Symoens 2003a, b; Rüegg 2004, 2010).

Global university rankings can be seen as a case of transnational policy discourse on higher education that contains several sub-discourses. Previous analyses have linked the rankings to a specific discourse on economic competitiveness that now covers academic competition and the pursuit of becoming a 'world class university' (Shin and Kehm 2012). The rankings are also part of the EU's 'modernization' agenda in higher education (see the following section), which somewhat paradoxically claims to strive for both 'excellence' and 'diversity' at the same time, even though these qualities are in apparent conflict. Global rankings are also part of a discourse on academic 'quality', serving as evaluative tools.

On a national level, there are various university reforms that include the rankings as a point of reference for certain policy measures. As is typical for transnational policy discourses (Schmidt 2006), there are differences in the domestic discourses about rankings, despite general recurring themes that are part of reform agenda. The way policy problems are framed has power implications, as it often initiates the discussion and blocks other perceptions from entering the agenda (Bacchi 1999). The rankings have helped to frame higher education as an issue of economic competition requiring action at the EU level. On a national level, policy actors have also referred to rankings when promoting reform agendas.

Global university rankings create a political imaginary of competition that has policy implications; the rankings idealize certain models, advancing ideas involving privatization, accountability, (financial) autonomy, and excellence initiatives. Moreover, the rankings have geographical implications, making it possible to identify 'European' policy concerns and leading to attempts to increase EU level regulation of higher education that has previously remained under national control.

The rankings make comparisons seemingly facile. European HEIs are now increasingly being compared to the American and Asian universities. Within Europe, the rankings have shown clear differences between countries and systems, such as the differences between the British, German and French universities, where the top institutions in the UK fare significantly better. One critique of this policy discourse has been that it often overlooks the general institutional context in which HEIs function in a given country.

Moreover, the composition of global university rankings differs in comparison to other global indicators as they rank institutions and not national systems. For example, the OECD PISA, perhaps the best know indicator of education, ranks national systems (and not individual schools), elevating countries such as Finland that have traditionally had an egalitarian approach to primary education, meaning that there are no elite schools. The logic of university rankings is the opposite, as they elevate top institutions but do not consider the systemic context where these exist. Nevertheless, the global university rankings are being used for systemic comparisons, most notably in Europe.

Despite the above limitations, the global university rankings have direct policy implications. They are increasingly being referred to as a motivation for adopting new higher education policies. Often in the background is the hope for economic gains through higher education as an element of innovation. The poor ranking of European universities was framed as a 'policy problem' in 2005 (Bacchi 1999), when the European Commission cites the Shanghai and THE Rankings indicating that European universities fare poorly in global comparisons vis-à-vis universities in the US and Asia (European Commission 2005b). At about the same time, a good ranking in the global assessments came to be coupled with the notion of economic competitiveness (European Commission 2005a).

The rankings also constitute a remedy for the ailing state of higher education in Europe. Since the mid-2000s, the policy documents of the European Commission have named 'accountability' as a driver for 'modernization' of higher education in Europe (European Commission 2005b, 2006), where the higher education institutions now are accountable 'to society' (European Commission 2005b, p. 9), which means HEIs are assigned responsibility for economic growth. The rankings are both indicators of the problems in higher education in Europe, and tools for attaining desired goals, including those set out in the Lisbon Strategy (European Commission 2008, 2009).

Notably, the European Commission here denounces an idea of a single model for excellence in higher education and calls instead for 'diversity': "[T]oo few European higher education institutions are recognised as world class in the current, research-oriented global university rankings. […] There is no single excellence model:

Europe needs a wide diversity of higher education institutions, and each must pursue excellence in line with its mission and strategic priorities." (European Commission 2011, pp. 2–3). But how does diversity match with quantification and the policy problem of too few universities being recognized as 'world class'? In the following, we explore how the international rankings are present in European universities institutional strategies and what differences there are between universities in different tiers of academic achievement measured by global league tables. We first briefly outline certain issues of global university rankings that are relevant for our findings.

Rankings, Models and Institutions of Higher Education

Increasing number of higher education institutions have, in a way or another, internalized into their strategic planning the performance-oriented vision of academic achievement that the rankings carry within their methodology and comparative format. Ellen Hazelkorn's research (2007, 2009, 2011), covering 41 countries and 202 institutions, indicates that rankings are well known to institutional managers, and that institutions commonly react to rankings by adaptation: for example, 63% of institutions in her sample had taken strategic, organizational, managerial or academic action in response to international rankings (Hazelkorn 2011, p. 96). Even more importantly from our perspective, is the finding that over eight out of ten wanted to improve their position in international rankings (Ibid., p. 86). In important respects, the findings of William Locke et al. (2008, especially chapter 4), looking at British institutions (n = 91), paint a rather similar picture.

In conjunction with empirical observations, we were troubled by the growing consensus that the international rankings more than anything else uphold a very particular ideal of institutional success. We (see Erkkilä and Piironen 2013a), and, it would seem, many others (Pelkonen and Teräväinen-Litardo 2013, p. 63; Gornitzka 2013, p. 82; Kauppi 2013, pp. 168–169; Münch 2013; see also Teichler 2011, pp. 64–64; and Morphew and Swanson 2011, p. 187; Olsen and Maassen 2007, pp. 13–17) are inclined to think that the rankings have played their part in raising the U.S. Ivy League research university to a global model. This model has served as an incentive for reforms on national and institutional levels all around Europe with scarce understanding that the Ivy League only marginally represents the totality of the U.S. educational system(s) (Cohen and Kisker 2010).

According to Cohen and Kisker (2010, pp. 435–442), the U.S. system of higher education comprises more than 4000 non-profit institutions, most of which represent lower tiers of academic achievement in terms of research, awarded degrees and average length of enrolment. In 2006, doctorates were awarded by 622 institutions, but half of the PhD's were concentrated in only 60 leading research universities (ibid. p. 453). In addition to the traditional higher education system—"the 4300 nonprofit, degree-granting, public and independent community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities"—"a parallel system of postsecondary for-profit

proprietary schools has grown", some 900 institutions granting degrees similar in the nonprofit sector (ibid p. 456). Nevertheless, the top institutions—being exceptional in terms of wealth and institutional history, but diverging in their size, organization and financial arrangements—are seen as objects of emulation by thousands of less wealthy institutions both inside and outside the U.S.

Focusing directly on rankings, it is problematic that reaching the "top-tier" is virtually impossible for most research institutions, and even more so in a situation where league tables themselves reinforce the prestige and standing of the leaders. Many scholars have observed that—and sought to explain how—rankings constitute a self-fulfilling prophesy by reinforcing the position of top-ranked universities (Kehm 2013; Münch 2013; Nixon 2013; Locke 2011, p. 223; Teichler 2011). According to Morphew and Swanson (2011, p. 191), it is extremely hard to lose institutional reputation once constructed: 'Similarly, the monolithic nature of being an "elite" institution is impressive. For example, in *US News*, the dominant United States ranking guide, only 29 schools occupied the top 25 spots between 1988 and 1998, and 20 institutions never fell out of the top 25.'

Despite the fact that it is extremely difficult for second-tier research universities to break into the elite class, 70% of the participating institutions in Hazelkorn's (2011, p. 86) survey expressed their wish to be counted in top 10% nationally, and 70% of the respondents in the top 25% internationally. There is an obvious discrepancy between institutional aspirations and the real possibilities to break through: only a marginal share of HE institutions are in a realistic position to rank among the best 200 institutions.

Most university rankings only cover some 500–700 institutions, meaning that most of the world's 18,000 academic institutions are left out. Effectively, the rankings come to focus on a limited number of higher education institutions, providing a very exclusive and unrepresentative perspective on what the world of higher education is. A recent comparison of the 2013 results of ARWU, THES and QS shows that they mostly contain North American, European and Asian universities (Erkkilä 2016). In the ARWU ranking, there is a clear predominance of North American and European universities. Among the top 20 ranked universities, there are 17 institutions from North America and 3 from Europe. The North American lead continues in the top 50 and top 100 categories of the rankings. However, the more institutions one includes in the ranking, the less pronounced this standing becomes. When we compare the top 500 ranked institutions, there are more European Universities (200) than North American (173). The THE ranking (2013–2014) provides a similar picture. In the top 20, there are 16 institutions from North America and 4 European universities. North America's lead is clear in the top 100, but already among the top 200 there are more European than North American institutions. In the top-400-ranked institutions, there are 128 North American and 181 European universities, similar to the ARWU. The QS ranking (2013–2014) covers 700 institutions, 162 of which are located in North America and which dominate the top 100 positions. Among the 700 institutions compared, there are 282 European institutions listed. Interestingly, there are also 165 institutions from Asia, slightly more than those from North America. In short, when considering the top-700 positions there are

almost twice as many institutions from Europe as there are from North America (Erkkilä 2016).

Against this background, it is peculiar that the readings of the rankings in the European context tend to focus on the top 100, with little attention to the overall number of universities ranked. This underlines that we are indeed comparing individual institutions and not higher education systems. Moreover, it is highly questionable whether competition in terms of league table standings can contribute to academic knowledge production (see Münch 2013). But the initial framing of the policy problem (Bacchi 1999) of European higher education has come to dominate the debate on the future of higher education.

In our opinion, the way higher education is seen today, partially thanks to the competitive logic of institutional ranking, is overly individualizing (Erkkilä and Piironen 2015). Scientific progress and academic achievement are now seen as aggregations of institutional and individual performance. The systemic outlook on higher education has been weakened by policies that stress organizational autonomy and accountability. Moreover, there is increasing evidence that institutional actors have internalized their role as separate entities or 'managerial competitors' instead of 'academic competitors', to borrow Münch's (2013, pp. 210–214) conclusions and terminology. The individualizing tendencies undoubtedly foster institutional competition between mid- and lower-tier institutions in recruitment of students and staff, attraction of funding and production of research outputs. This is, of course, just what the European policy-makers have intended (see e.g. Olsen and Maassen 2007, pp. 3–22). The problem is that there is no real evidence supporting the belief that increased managerial competition between academic organizations would be beneficial—overall—in terms of scholarly achievement, societal welfare or organizational efficiency (ibid., pp. 13–17).

Based on previous studies (Hazelkorn 2007, 2009, 2011; Locke 2011; Locke et al. 2008), we know that rankings do affect institutions' strategic work, albeit in varying ways, often indirectly and unconsciously, though not uniformly: institutional responses may differ according to ranking position. We see that institutional rankings generally maintain an atomist imaginary, projecting higher education systems as aggregations of unitary actors (i.e. institutions) competing against each other. Moreover, we maintain that most prominent international university rankings are built on an ideal-type construction of a market-oriented, successful U.S. research institution—such as Harvard, Stanford, or M.I.T.—that is now inappropriately projected as a universal model to be imitated by all types of academic institutions all around the globe. This perception seems to be at the heart of the policy problem of 'European higher education'.

In short, we are highly critical towards the rankings for their tendency to maintain a very particular model of the successful research university, based on a one-size-fits-all principle irrespective of contextual variable factors, as well as their tendency to individualize the higher education landscape in constructing a vision of universities as competitive managerial units, composed of an aggregation of unsociable individuals. In the following, we analyze the strategies of European universities to learn how they have accommodated to the reality of ranking: how do

universities in different tiers of "excellence" react to pressures to improve their ranking positions—or even to get noticed? Moreover, we are interested in the universities' positioning in spatial terms—to what extent are they engaged in the global race for excellence, or, if they rather have a more regional focus, whether this would appear to be an alternative to the global models? We are particularly interested in the top-100 as a marker of excellence, reflected in the case selection of our analysis.

Global University Rankings and HEIs Strategies

Universities' strategy work—strategic planning and strategic management—fulfills several demands, both internal and external. The most robust demand comes from governments still influenced by the managerial programme: the new autonomous universities must be capable of long-term planning, set objectives and priorities—define ends and means—and report back on their performance (Hughes 2003). In this case, the function is managerial*:* academic institutions must work as a unity towards a common purpose, and the leadership of the institutions must be emancipated to have the means of steering their ships according to the agreed upon coordinates. The imperative to guarantee both control and results lends not only legitimacy to institutional leadership but also provides them with an effective management tool.

The second important function of strategy work is communicative: strategic plans are intended to fashion impressions and transfer information. Here rankings are seen as strategic resources for bolstering competitive advantage, not simply as strategic objectives or evaluative instruments for management. Internally, strategies can be used to motivate the faculty and students. Externally, they may be used to buttress institutional reputation and gain visibility, which is hoped to support recruitment of students and staff, to increase awareness in various stakeholder groups, and especially to help in attracting potential funders and cooperative partners. According to Morphew and Swanson (2011), rankings provide an efficient strategy for those already at the top. If rankings were seen purely as strategic management tools, we would expect to see references more evenly distributed between top- and lower-tier universities' strategies. If the function were exclusively communicative in nature, we would expect to find celebratory references in the strategies of institutions that perform well while they would be omitted or challenged in the strategies of the less successful.

Case Selection

Our inquiry aims to shed more light on whether (and how) global rankings are present in universities' strategic planning: how are the rankings represented in 27 Northern European universities' primary strategy documents? And how is the predominant focus on the top-100 as a marker of excellence reflected in their reference

to rankings? Moreover, we are interested in whether (and how) institutional ranking position is connected to the way strategies treat rankings: is there a difference in how references of rankings are embedded in the strategy documents of our sample institutions in terms of their ranking performance? While our analysis covers representations of national and international league tables alike, the focus is clearly on the latter. We have analyzed the strategies of universities over two points in time, in 2013 and again in 2018, allowing us to assess changes in the strategy language over time. We have identified references to the regional role of the universities as an emergent theme in 2018.

In the analysis, we observed the following:[1]

1. References to national university rankings: explicitly yes/implicitly yes/none
2. References to international university rankings: explicitly yes/implicitly yes/none
3. Kinds of implicit references to international rankings: how is comparative rhetoric brought in? (e.g. "internationally leading in…", "world-class", "world-leading", etc.)
4. How are international rankings represented in general: in positive, neutral or negative light?
5. How is the institution's current international ranking position dealt with?
   (a) lauded and used as evidence of excellence
   (b) neutrally stated
   (c) its meaning (or that of the ranking as a whole) played down or disparaged
   (d) not mentioned at all
6. Are there references to the regional role of the university?

We explore how rankings and ranking positions represent themselves in the strategies of 27 academic institutions' strategic orientation and whether the ranking position and cultural/political/geographical context is associated with the type of treatment strategy documents give to university rankings. The three countries or 'country blocks' examined are all from Northern Europe, representing three differing higher education landscapes (in terms of culture, legislation, funding mechanisms, function and societal expectations):

- the British,
- the German,
- the Nordic (consisting of Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish universities)

Along with the country-based classification, we selected universities in three "performance categories", using the 2012 Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, the "Shanghai ranking") as a reference:

- close to top universities (50–150)

[1] The framework's guiding questions were constructed in phases taking note to our premises and the example set by Hazelkorn (2011) and Locke et al. (2008); it was then elaborated after the first reading of strategy papers to ascertain its relevancy from the data's perspective (Table 11.1).

- barely listed universities (401–500)
- unlisted universities.

We explicitly excluded the top-50 institutions (on the ARWU ranking), since we presume that these elite universities in many ways fit the model that ranking methodology proxies. We are more interested in the strategies of those institutions close to the top: do the institutions holding the positions from 50 to 150 give the impression that they have a real chance to break into the elite class, and how motivated are they in attempting to do so? And are there differences between the group of the barely listed institutions (ranked between 401 and 500) and those who have not made it to the list? We see references to rankings and especially target setting in terms of rankings in these lower-tier groups as a potential means for the logic of competition to enter university strategies and academic practice.

Our cases are drawn from the European University Association (EUA) member database and its 737 Individual Full Members from over 40 countries.[2] We look at strategies of 27 Northern European universities with equal representation of three country blocks and three performance categories (as described above). We use several pre-determined rules to diminish the initial 737 population to 27 cases—effectively avoiding selecting institutions according to the contents of their strategies. Use of the EUA member database is itself restrictive in the sense that it excludes higher education institutions primarily or exclusively oriented toward education. We further limit the number of institutions by focusing on three country blocks, thus limiting the geographical/cultural variation. For sake of comparability, we excluded from our sample also:[3]

- institutions providing only distance education
- monodisciplinary institutions: an institution is included if it is clearly engaged with more than one field of science (Technology/Engineering, Medicine/Health, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Law, Arts, Business/Economics and Education).
- institutions that do not offer the full range of degrees (BA, MA, PhD)

Table 11.1 shows the selected universities classified according to the country block and performance category. As our primary data, we used the key strategic documents of each of the institutions. As a first observation of our empirical

[2] See http://www.eua.be/eua-membership-and-services/Home/members-directory.aspx (accessed 6th September 2013).

[3] Together with the decision to use of the EUA database these rules guarantee that sample institutions have both research and education functions: for example, the German and Finnish universities of applied sciences are excluded, which is justified because it is evident that international university rankings do not feature in these institutions' strategies. Some additional criteria of exclusion were applied if there were more than three institutions left in an analytical group defined by country group and performance category, namely cases showing considerable discrepancy between the ARWU ranking 2012 and other prominent university rankings, and, as a last resort, if there were still more than three cases per category, the final criteria excluded the smallest institutions (least students).

Table 11.1 Selected universities by ARWU performance group (1 = 50–150; 2 = 401–500; 3 = unlisted) and country block

	UK[a]	German	Nordic
1	University of Nottingham University of Birmingham University of Liverpool	Technical University Munich LMU Munich Heidelberg University	Uppsala University (SWE) Stockholm University (SWE) Lund University (SWE)
2	University of Essex University of Surrey Swansea University	Friedrich Schiller University Jena University of Duisburg-Essen University of Hannover	University of Eastern Finland University of Jyväskylä (FI) University of Tromsø (NOR)
3	Anglia Ruskin Sheffield Hallam Central Lancashire	Saarland University Technical University Dortmund University of Kassel	Linnaeus University (SWE) University of Luleå (SWE) Malmö University (SWE)

[a]All of the sample institutions in the UK block are from England except for the Welsh Swansea University. It is a pure coincidence that Scottish and Northern Irish institutions were excluded in the selection process

exercise, it is worth noting that all of the 27 institutions did have a strategic plan of some sort. These documents, despite a variation of titles—'strategy', 'strategic plan', and 'corporate plan'—and despite the length varying from three to tens of pages, were easy to identify as functionally corresponding. We analyze the data in the original language, but direct quotations are presented from the English-language versions, where available.[4]

The strategy documents had been issued at varied times, and covered a wide range of time periods. We did not systematically analyze the content of institutions' web pages or other official documents (such as performance contracts or financial reports), although our general impression is that references to international rankings are more often and more visibly used as tools for marketing and advertising in the institutions' webpages than in the official strategy papers. Nevertheless, we see that strategies as more often directly tied to corporate management process are of more analytical value.

References to National and International Rankings

In the first instance, we examined whether the strategies withheld references to national and international university rankings: our focus is mainly on measurements related to overall academic (or research) performance. We exclude from the analysis references to specific indicators, for example, employability after graduation, student feedback or environmental sustainability. *An explicit reference* is the use of the word 'ranking', 'ranking position' or 'league table'; or a specific measurement (Shanghai, QS, THES, RAE/REF, etc.). We also counted as explicit references mentions of institutions' current/targeted ranking positions. *An implicit reference* was an indirect utterance that wanted the existence of comparative frameworks and

[4]As method, we applied conventional qualitative content analysis.

information ("…to strengthen its position as a world leading university"). The emphasis, however, is on explicit references to international rankings.

On the whole, our analysis indicates a rather weak association between the performance category and references to *national* rankings: institutions in higher ranking positions have only slightly more often explicit references to national rankings than their less prestigious counterparts. The British block, most likely due to the strong influence of RAE/REF exercise in the UK, behaved uniformly: national rankings were mentioned explicitly in all strategies except for the University of Surrey, which only makes an implicit reference in 2014 ("a leading national and international university"). Anglia Ruskin and Sheffield Hallam make explicit reference to national rankings in 2014, but make no mention of them when analyzed in 2018.

In the Nordic group, the association between table standing and incorporation of rankings discourse into institutional strategy was more as expected: no references—explicit or implicit—to national rankings were made in the strategies of the three unlisted universities in 2014, and only the University of Malmö makes an implicit reference to them. Implicit references were found in half of the strategies representing the two higher performance categories in 2014; the University of Eastern Finland, for example, wanting to be "among the three most important universities in Finland". In 2018, of the ARWU ranked institutions, only the University of Stockholm makes an implicit reference to national raking.

In the German cases, references to national rankings (especially to the CHE ranking) concentrated on the mid-tier institutions in 2014, all three making explicit references to them, while non-references dominated other categories. In 2018, however, there are no references to national rankings, except for Friedrich Schiller University in Jena. This "silence" is interesting, reflecting also the national criticism that the CHE ranking has faced, with institutions even boycotting it in recent years.

The references to international league tables are firmly tied to institutional ranking positions (Table 11.2). While almost all first-tier institutions (except for the German LMU Munich) referred to global rankings—7 explicitly, 4 implicitly—in 2014, only one of the unlisted institutions did so too. But even here the tone was different. While the top-performers were often more specific in their goal setting—for example, the "key ambition" of the Liverpool University proclaiming its ambition to "be positioned in the top 75 of a recognized international league table"—the University of Central Lancashire as the unlisted outlier was merely keen to advertise its recent entry in the 601+ category on the QS ranking. (By 2013, UClan had fallen to the 701+ category.) Perhaps because of the lack of any meaningful national rankings such as those in the UK and Germany, the strategies of Nordic mid-tier universities included references to international rankings, unlike their British and two of their German counterparts.

In 2018, there are only six universities in our sample of 27 that do not refer to global rankings, while there were 13 such cases in 2014. Interestingly, in 2018 the references to global rankings are more implicit, most notably in the UK and German institutions ranking 50–150 in ARWU. In fact, LMU Munich and Heidelberg do not mention rankings at all. Several universities that made explicit reference to their rankings in 2014 now only make only an implicit reference. Only two universities

Table 11.2 References to international rankings in 2014 and 2018

	Country Block	Performance Group	Reference to global rankings 2014 (No/ Implicit/Explicit)	Reference to global rankings 2018 (No/ Implicit/Explicit)
University of Nottingham	UK	1	Explicit	Implicit
University of Birmingham	UK	1	Explicit	Implicit
University of Liverpool	UK	1	Explicit	Explicit
University of Essex	UK	2	Implicit	Implicit
University of Surrey	UK	2	Implicit	Explicit
Swansea University	UK	2	No	Explicit
Anglia Ruskin	UK	3	No	Implicit
Sheffield Hallam	UK	3	No	Implicit
Central Lancashire	UK	3	Explicit	Implicit
Uppsala University	Nordic	1	Implicit	Explicit
Stockholm University	Nordic	1	Explicit	Explicit
Lund University	Nordic	1	Implicit	Implicit
University of Eastern Finland	Nordic	2	Explicit	Explicit
University of Jyväskylä	Nordic	2	Explicit	Implicit
University of Tromsø	Nordic	2	No	Implicit
Linnaeus University	Nordic	3	No	No
University of Luleå	Nordic	3	No	Implicit
Malmö University	Nordic	3	No	Implicit
Technical University Munich	Germany	1	Explicit	Implicit
LMU Munich	Germany	1	No	No
Heidelberg University	Germany	1	Implicit	No
Friedrich Schiller University Jena	Germany	2	Explicit	Implicit
University of Duisburg-Essen	Germany	2	No	Explicit

(continued)

Table 11.2 (continued)

	Country Block	Performance Group	Reference to global rankings 2014 (No/ Implicit/Explicit)	Reference to global rankings 2018 (No/ Implicit/Explicit)
University of Hannover	Germany	2	No	No
Saarland University	Germany	3	No	No
Technical University Dortmund	Germany	3	No	Implicit
University of Kassel	Germany	3	No	No

have changed from implicit references to explicit ones: Uppsala University and University of Surrey. In 2018, many institutions that previous made no reference to the global rankings are now doing it implicitly, for example, the University of Luleå (now listed 801–900 by ARWU), Malmö University (not listed) and Technical University of Dortmund (now listed 501–600 by ARWU).

In short, the global rankings game may still be reserved first and foremost for the few hundred privileged institutions. The discourse of global excellence has become a common element of HEI strategies and the imaginary of competition now concerns institutions of all ranks. The references to global rankings have increased over time, and now involve institutions that do not rank or just barely do so. At the same time, the references to rankings have become more implicit in nature. This shows the difficulty of setting one's goals against them, and perhaps also increasing the awareness of their problems, as discussed below.

Perceptions of University Rankings and Institutional Outlook

Concerning general attitudes towards rankings, we had an initial impression, based largely on a non-systematic reading of institutions' webpage reactions to rankings, that the way rankings are presented (their premises, methodologies, origins) would be tactically oriented. We expected to find a measure of selectivity where the rankings are played down if they show one's institution in an unfavorable light, and celebrated if they show awarding or agreeable scores. More specifically, we were curious to see if there was resistance towards the whole rankings culture, most likely stemming from the unlisted institutions.

The references to ranking results in the institutional strategies generally differed from the institutions' webpage commentaries. Strategies were not used as reactive-tactical platforms: they did not include disapproving remarks about individual rankings or ranking practice in general. In 2014, none of the 16 institutional strategies

that mentioned rankings suggested negative connotations. Thus, evaluative remarks, where present, were rather mundane. They included:

1. positive celebrations of good ranking results (Nottingham, Central Lancashire, TUM)
2. reinforcement of rankings culture: rankings were taken seriously and targets were sometimes set in terms of them.

All in all, national and/or international rankings are present in most of the strategies analyzed. They were treated neutrally, and the impression given was that the scores they produce are credible representations of reality. Only seven of our cases did not include rankings discourse at all, four of them being Nordic. Strategies that ignored (were silent on) rankings altogether could signal negative attitudes or even resistance, but our data is insufficient to lend any meaningful support to such an interpretation.

In 2018, Universität Duisburg Essen shows reflexive insight about the rankings and the possibility of ignoring them. While the strategy first refers to improving the standing of the institution as a sign of improving research excellence (Universität Duisburg Essen 2015, p. 7 and p. 12), there is a full paragraph on the limitations of the rankings: that they overlook complexity and the diversity of their object of measurement, but that due to their effects, the university "cannot afford" to ignore (Universität Duisburg Essen 2015, p. 12).[5] This shows the increasing awareness of the problems related to the rankings. While the universities would like to bow out of the ranking game, their field of activity is already governed through competitive imaginaries that are strongly related to the rankings. The institutions are hence compelled to position themselves vis-à-vis the ranking discourse, while (increasingly) acknowledging its pitfalls.

It was not as common to set clear targets according to ranking results in institutional strategies as we anticipated: still, in 2014, around one third of our sample institutions had done so. In eight strategy papers, objectives were set in terms of international league tables, in 11 the reference rankings were national. More than half of the universities, 15, did not imply that ranking positions had a direct role in their strategic target setting. Moreover, only five of those eight who proclaimed their objectives according to global tables specified the explicit ranking position they were aiming at, and only one of these was an unlisted institution according to the Shanghai list.

[5] "Globale Hochschulrankings markieren durchaus sinnvoll Positionen, suggerieren aber auch die Vergleichbarkeit aller Universitäten weltweit, denn sie reduzieren die Universität und ihre Mitglieder in Forschung, Lehre und Verwaltung auf wenige, leicht handhabbare Parameter. Der Komplexität und Diversität einer Universität wird durch die Platzierung in Rankings zwar nicht Rechnung getragen, doch für die internationale Sichtbarkeit und für die Wahl einer Universität durch Studierende oder Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler kommt der Rankingposition eine immer größere Bedeutung zu. Insofern wird die UDE es sich nicht leisten können, die normative Wirkung von Rankings zu ignorieren." (Universität Duisburg Essen 2015, p. 12.)

Table 11.3 HEIs with explicit references to rankings in their goal-setting in 2012 and their rankings in 2012 and 2018

Institution	Ranking position 2012	Target position	Ranking in 2018
University of Nottingham	86 (ARWU)	Top-50 (ARWU)	101–150 (ARWU)
University of Liverpool	101–150 (ARWU)	Top-75 (ARWU)	101–150 (ARWU)
University of Eastern Finland	302 (QS), 401–500 (ARWU)	Top-200 (not specified)	401–500 (ARWU)
Friedrich Schiller University Jena	401–500 (ARWU)	Top-200 (ARWU)	301–400 (ARWU)
University of Central Lancashire	601+ (QS), unlisted (ARWU)	Top-500 (QS)	801–1000 (QS), unlisted (ARWU)

Table 11.3 shows the difficulty that the universities face when tying their strategic goals directly to university rankings. Of the five universities that had done this, only the Friedrich Schiller University Jena had been able to improve its position in the Shanghai list, though failing to reach its target position set in 2014. In short, none of the universities in question were able to reach their target goal set in 2014. This shows the difficulty of improving one's position in the rankings as well as the ambiguity of it as an explicit strategic goal.

There were also less explicit references to rankings as strategic goals, as the examples below show:

> University of Birmingham: "We have identified five key strategic goals, which will enable us to take our place as a leading global university. […] success in all of these goals will require a step change in our performance, and this will be reflected by a rise in our position in the national and global league tables." (University of Birmingham 2010, p. 8)

> Stockholm University: "Delmål: Universitetets placering på de främsta internationella rankinglistorna (Shanghai, Times) ska förbättras." (Stockholm University 2009, p. 19)

> University of Jyväskylä: "The University's position among the top 3 per cent in the global university rankings will show a continuous rise." (University of Jyväskylä 2010, p. 3)

In terms of country blocks, there was some variation. Most evidently, with Surrey as the sole exception, all the British universities expressed their objectives in reference to national rankings in 2014. In the Nordic universities and in Germany, targeting by national rankings was rather exceptional. If it was generally accepted that institutional performance needs to be improved, it was uncommon to present one's achievement or desired future achievement in terms of ranking results. There were also differences among the three tiers of institutions. In 2014, only one of the lowest tier universities included performance target in terms of *global* rankings, and one can surmise that even this was because the institution in question, University of Central Lancashire, had made some headway on an alternative global league table (QS) and, strictly speaking, was not "unlisted" in an absolute sense. International rankings may not have such influence on the less prestigious institutions, but the game is still reserved for those who make it to the tables.

While we do not find as broad enthusiasm to think in terms of rankings as Hazelkorn (2011, p. 86 and p. 93), it cannot be said that league tables (national and international) had merely imposed "changes to strategies or policies" (Locke et al. 2008, p. 33). But the willingness to play the ranking game seems to be related to the relative status of the university. Our results suggest that enthusiasm to embed international rankings into strategic work is rather weak, particularly in lower-tier universities, which form the majority of the academic world. Nevertheless, it is significant that the global rankings have found their way to many of the "high" and "average" performing universities strategies, even if only implicitly. Such 'selectivity' may highlight the communicative function of the strategy documents: institutions' reference global rankings only if they help to create a positive image.

Comparing the references to rankings in 2012 and 2018, the references to the rankings become more implicit over time. This probably indicates better knowledge of rankings—what is measured—and how difficult it is to game them. At the same time, the underlying rationalities of the rankings and global higher education are inherently present in the language of HEI strategies. The language indicates an imaginary of global competition, where the universities are primarily competing over talented researchers, indicating a tendency toward *individualization* (Erkkilä and Piironen 2015), where the academic performance of institutions is reduced to individual researchers rather than a research collective or organizational culture.

World-Class or Regional University? International Excellence and Regional Needs

As the above discussion highlights, the global university rankings function as a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion for institutions to credibly participate in the pursuit for world-class higher education. But the marker does not seem to lie on the threshold of being ranked, but rather on the already top-100 positions. This indicates the persistence of the policy problem of European Higher Education and its framing: the focus on the top-100 institutions. This becomes particularly visible in the HEIs positioning on their global vs. regional role. In our sample of institutional strategies, 'excellence' was predominantly constructed on global models and benchmarks. As if to compensate this, there were also references to the regional role of the university, catering to local needs particularly present in the strategies of institutions under the top-100.

Though the direct references to rankings might be getting less explicit, there is nevertheless reflection on the global competition for 'excellence' in higher education—the world-class. In the Nordic block, for example, Stockholm University states that "the University's international status, as reflected in rankings and bibliometric surveys, should be monitored and followed up." (Stockholm University 2015, 9). Uppsala University refers to systematic quality assessment through "international comparisons" and aims to strengthen its position as a "leading international

research university" (Uppsala University 2014, p. 4 and p. 9). Malmö University aims for "internationally outstanding research", without specifying how this is to be assessed (Malmö University 2017, p. 4).

There are also more abstract references to world-class: Lund University refers to a world-class university "that works to understand, explain and improve our world and the human condition" (Lund University 2017, p. 4). Uppsala and Birmingham both refer to "world-leading research" (Uppsala University 2014, p. 4; University of Birmingham 2015, p. 4). The University of Tromsø aims to be "a research-driven university with researchers and research groups that are innovative and at the international research frontier in their fields." (University of Tromsø 2014). A similar claim is presented in the strategy of the University of Jyväskylä (Jyväskylän yliopisto 2014, p. 2).

We initially spotted some references to the regional role of the universities in the 2014 sample and, in 2018, there are explicit references to regionalism. This is often seen as a complement to the universities' international role. The international rankings seem to set the boundaries within which the universities imagine themselves as being part of a global higher education. Excellence is something that is constructed and assessed against international benchmarks, but there are also 'regional needs' to which the universities must attend. For example, the University of Anglia Ruskin claims to "focus our investment in people, infrastructure and our research institutes in key areas of *international excellence* and *regional need*, delivering research and innovation of outstanding quality and impact[…]" (Anglia Ruskin University 2017, p. 3, italics added).

As Table 11.4 below shows, the regional focus was particularly visible in the strategies of universities that do not rank (group 3) or just barely do so (group 2), while the institutions that are able to compete credibly for top-100 positions globally (group 1) do not have a strong regional focus, except for the University of Birmingham. In general, the regional focus of the universities is highlighted in the UK context, where six of the nine universities have a strong emphasis on their regional role in their strategies. The remaining three UK universities, two of which are in the ARWU 101–150 category, also mention the regional aspect. Even the German universities mostly referred to a regional role of some sort, while there were differences in the references. The Nordic universities stand out to some extent, as there are institutions in all performance groups that do nor refer to their regional role at all. This does not mean that there is no regional role, however. For example, the Finnish higher education system has got a strong regional focus. But having a regional role does not mean that one has to exclaim it. On the contrary, it seems that the discourse of regional role reflects the world-class discourse, rather than a candid self-assessment of one's regional priorities.

There is a clear tendency for the universities that are globally ranked in top-100 or just below (group 1) not to stress their regional role, but instead to engage in the struggle for 'world-class' status. But moving down the rankings (groups 2 and 3) the strong regional role becomes explicit. We see this as a reflection on the global model of higher education, where the universities are considered "responsible to society" (see above) in terms of their contribution to economic development, but at the same time evaluated against the global blueprint of world-class university. As

Table 11.4 References to university's regional role in HEI strategies (2018)

	Institution	Strong regional role	Regional role mentioned	Regional role not mentioned
Group 1	University of Nottingham		x	
	University of Birmingham	x		
	University of Liverpool		x	
	Technical University Munich			x
	LMU Munich		x	
	Heidelberg University		x	
	Uppsala University (SWE)		x	
	Stockholm University (SWE)			x
	Lund University (SWE)			x
Group 2	University of Essex		x	
	University of Surrey	x		
	Swansea University	x		
	Friedrich Schiller University Jena		x	
	University of Duisburg-Essen	x		
	University of Hannover	x		
	University of Eastern Finland			x
	University of Jyväskylä (FI)			x
	University of Tromsø (NOR)	x		
Group 3	Anglia Ruskin	x		
	Sheffield Hallam	x		
	Central Lancashire	x		
	Saarland University	x		
	Technical University Dortmund	x		
	University of Kassel	x		
	Linnaeus University (SWE)	x		
	University of Luleå (SWE)		x	
	Malmö University (SWE)			x

the non-ranking institutions fail to do the latter, their logical strategy is to highlight the former—they might not be 'world-class', but still major players in their regional context.

The descriptions of the regional role nevertheless draw on the imaginary of global competition. The universities are described as innovation hubs, sources of an educated work force and beacons of the region to the world outside also competing for talent. But the discussion of the regional context differs strongly in the different groups of institutions. In the top-ranking group of our assessment, the LMU Munich presents the city surrounding it as an exciting urban environment that its students and researchers can enjoy. In other words, the city is there for the university. The only institution in the highest performance group to have a strong emphasis on its regional role, the University of Birmingham, sees itself in a balanced relationship with its surrounding region, profiting from it but also giving back:

> The University of Birmingham is rooted in a youthful, diverse and vibrant region. The Midlands is the engine of British manufacturing and export and a magnet for innovation, entrepreneurship, arts, culture, business, science, and technology. At the University we bring together the people and resources to tackle the major challenges of our time, including health and well-being, economic revitalisation, energy and sustainability, climate change, and inter-faith understanding. We draw on and give back to the region through our research, our educational offerings, and our global reach and reputation. (University of Birmingham 2015, p. 2)

In the group of universities that do not rank, the institutions perceive themselves more as contributing to the region than as profiting from it. For example, the University of Saarland presents its regional role almost as its reason to exist, profiling itself as the "innovation centrum" of the region (Universität des Saarlandes 2013, p. 7).[6] University of Tromsø and the University of Central Lancashire both describe themselves as responsible regional actors that are nevertheless internationally connected:

> UiT contributes to knowledge-based development at the regional, national and international level. Our central location in the High North, our broad and diverse research and study portfolio, our geographical breadth and our interdisciplinary qualities make us uniquely suited to meet the challenges of the future. (University of Tromso 2014)

> UiT will help promote economic, cultural and social development in the north through building knowledge and human capital. (University of Tromso 2014

> UiT will strengthen its position and its reputation through good communication, dissemination of its work and a clear profile. UiT will be a driving force for increased innovation and business development in the High North. (University of Tromso 2014)

> Whilst international in reach and outlook, UCLan proudly retains its roots in the City of Preston and the region. […] Preston campus will transform the University as a place to

[6] "Die Universität betrachtet eine an wissenschaftlichen und professionellen Standards orientierte Ausbildung als eine ihrer Kernaufgaben. Darüber hinaus übernimmt sie tragende Aufgaben als Innovationszentrum des Landes[…]" (Universität des Saarlandes 2013, p. 7).

> learn, work and do business; whilst UCLan's commitment to high quality academic provision will be further strengthened by our prestigious undergraduate medical degree and expansion of our engineering delivery to help meet the growing demands of regional employers. (University of Central Lancashire 2015, p. 2)

> The University will be innovative and entrepreneurial in our approach to research and knowledge exchange in order to maximise our positive social, environmental and economic impact locally, nationally and globally. (University of Central Lancashire 2015, p. 3)

> Deep-rooted engagement between our University and the wider communities of Preston, Lancashire and the North West, encouraging the sharing of ideas, knowledge and the spark of learning. (University of Central Lancashire 2015, p. 12)

Here the universities portray themselves as engines of innovation in their given region, primarily responsible to society in economic terms, as depicted by the European Commission. This also echoes the global policy script for higher education and innovation, where the focus is shifting to regional level—local innovation (Erkkilä and Piironen 2018). But while the major research universities certainly have a great impact on their regions, the less prominent institutions now ride on this discourse. Though the regional role of these universities could be an alternative to the discourse of 'world-class', it seems rather to be a reflection of it.

Indeed, the organizational and financial autonomization of higher education institutions has led to increased use of a variety of *ex post* accountability mechanisms in Europe (Boer et al. 2010; also Erkkilä and Piironen 2013b), now also including the international league tables that order academic institutions according to a single aggregate score. Consequently, benchmarking against similar units nationally and internationally has followed. But only a fraction of universities can credibly claim to be part of the global competition for excellence, and the focus on top-100 positions in the European context makes the mark even more exclusive.

In fact, a position in the top-100 now appears to be a watershed for the European universities in our sample: the institutions within or just below this ranking (ARWU 50–150) perceive themselves as comfortably situated in the global model of a world-class university. The institutions ranked clearly beneath this mark (401–500) or unlisted are compelled to frame themselves differently, emphasizing instead their regional role. This is not a true alternative to the 'world-class' model, but rather an instance of the discourse on global higher education, where the notion of regional university appears as a pattern of identity that is acquired and constructed vis-à-vis the world-class 'other'.

Conclusions

Global university rankings have had a fundamental effect on higher education policies and institutional strategies. They have helped to construct a global model of excellence, the world-class university, that is now reflected on different levels of higher education governance. In Europe, the global rankings have been used to

construct a policy problem of 'European higher education', helping the EU Commission become a player in a policy field that is outside its official competencies. The focus on institutions in the top-100 of the prominent rankings in the framing of the policy problem is particularly interesting. It demonstrates an advantage for the North American institutions, but overlooks the fact that there are significantly more European institutions among those ranked overall.

The global ranking game draws attention to individual institutions instead of national higher education systems. This individualization is likely to be counterproductive for national systems that now lack orientation and mounts pressure for strategic reorientation of academic institutions, though most of them have no realistic means to attain a significant position in the global rankings to begin with. Looking at the institutional strategies of European HEIs, several institutions in our sample did express their targets in terms of global ranking positions, indicating an imaginary of global competition, which would have been unthinkable only 20 years ago, and highly unlikely even only a decade ago.

The references to rankings have been downplayed over time, becoming more implicit. But the language of competition and benchmarking is now omnipresent in the institutional strategies analyzed and becoming more commonplace. Excellence is strongly related to the international sphere—the world class model. In principle, this concerns all higher education institutions, but the global rankings function here as a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion, where institutions in the top-100 or just below it can claim to be in the race.

But the global model of higher education now also concerns those institutions that are seemingly excluded from it. We observe a clear trend for claiming regional importance, particularly among those institutions that are below the top-100, the bar set by the European Commission. However, in our analysis, the regional focus does not appear to be a viable alternative to the 'world class university', but rather reflects this global discourse.

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Chapter 12
The State Role in Excellent University Policies in the Era of Globalization: The Case of China

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Abstract In order to obtain considerable amounts of capitalist profit available in a globalized market, individual countries need to enhance their own international competitiveness – a goal that can be achieved through the channel of schools by cultivating human capital. The linear linkage among globalization, international competitiveness, human capital and higher education has convinced many countries to engage in the expansion of higher education institutes. The notion of international competition further generates the idea of university ranking and, in turn, many countries have viewed the world class university as the top priority on the political agenda. As neo-liberalism has become a prevailing new world value, constructed by America, the private sector that addresses efficiency is defined as the best mode of running the higher education market. Therefore, this mode functions as the gateway of achieving this political mission. However, this approach may jeopardize state sovereignty because if the state is unable to balance the relation between capital accumulation and social justice, it cannot win people's trust. The interactive prin-

Some sections of this essay are based on the findings of the research projects financed by the Key Research Base of Humanity and Social Science of the Chinese Ministry of Education (No. 18JJD630004) and the Key Project of Social Science Fund of Jiangsu Province (18GLA 001).

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_12

ciple between social cultures and education policies also rejects the universal practicality of free market logic. In order to overcome these challenges, individual countries may adopt transformative strategies, allowing them to improve the international reputation of their own top universities. This essay sets out to shed some light on this issue through examining the case of the Double-First-Class-Universities initiative in China.

Introduction

Numerous prominent sociologists have highlighted, from a variety of perspectives, the profound influence the State can have on education policy. For Marxists, education functions as an instrument for dispersing ideology or consolidating the cultural hegemony of dominant classes. Scholars influenced by Foucault tend to see the state as a device for producing social discourses that shape people's minds in order to exercise social control. Although Marxists and Foucauldians differ with regard to how they understand means of domination and the exercise of power, they both stress the connection between value and social control, especially as exerted by the state. In contrast to these two schools, the concept of internal rationalization focuses on the positive function of the state—protecting the common good—so that the main purpose of national policies is to create advantages for the majority of citizens.

While integrating these different perspectives would provide systematic insights into the characters of the state, they are not as helpful when considering the impact of globalization on its operations. The theory of isomorphism may be able to fill this gap, through its notion of an institutionalized milieu constantly refabricated by globalization. However, because this theory addresses efficiency that homogenizes configurations and operations of organizations, its converting-led approach, may neglect nuanced variations in different countries' policies. In response to the globalized system, nations may adopt transformative tactics to meet the new requirements brought about by social changes. Furthermore, because such an efficient-based perspective adopts a homogeneous assumption, assuming that all organizational members are selflessly committed to accomplishing organizational goals, isomorphism situates the status of power as neutral. In fact, individual actors have their own subjective intentions, so that the exercise of power may be regulated personal preferences. This principle suggests that the connection between power and top politicians' self-interest appears to reconstitute the performances of the state. The present essay proposes that the beliefs of leading politicians should be seen as the core element in molding the state's role in higher education policies. In recent years, many countries have been devoting themselves to increasing their international competitiveness through the expansion of excellent universities, which are viewed as gateways to improving the quality of human capital (Chiang 2011). As the Chinese government has implemented policies promoting the development of excellent universities for over two decades, changes in these policies provide a typical

case for examining what the role of the state in the higher education policy is, how it performs different roles and the ways in which such changes interweave with the beliefs of top politicians. In short, this essay sets out to discover the correlation between top politicians' beliefs and the state.

The State's Role—From Superstructure to Cultural Hegemony

Sociology has long sought to characterize the features of the state. Marx (1969), for example, portrays the state as an agent disseminating dominant value to control working classes through the exercise of superstructure. This social control mechanism blurs the class consciousness of the working class which, in turn, diminishes social conflict between capitalists and proletarians. For Althusser (1971), the state is comprised of a repressive state apparatus (RSA) and an ideological state apparatus (ISA). The ISA is responsible for the function of value construction and education, which is mainly achieved through a wide range of social institutions, such as family, school, religion, culture, party, medium, union and law. This account of the exercise of superstructure pictures the relation between superstructure and base as unidirectional, largely neglecting the reactions of the dominated groups. Further, traditional Marxists focus only on economic and political dimensions, so that the influence of the cultural dimension of the state is largely ignored. The theory of cultural hegemony, proposed by Gramsci (1971), redresses these weaknesses. For Gramsci, social control is not mainly reliant upon coercive force, the exercise of which is mainly through political society, but upon social consensus, the voluntarism of which can be shaped through civil society in reeducation. In contrast to political society, civil society can generate a more profound influence on the behavior of social members, because when the mainstream social culture is able to transmit legitimate values that drive actions, social cultures embody political functions that serve the interests of the ruling classes. Although cultural hegemony embodies the mechanism of social control, the character of this domination is never static, but always dynamic. When the ruled groups question a popular belief, this will jeopardize the sovereignty of the ruling classes, who then constantly need to employ organic intellectuals to amend the existing cultural hegemony or to construct a new one. This is because unlike traditional intellectuals who hold their own beliefs, organic intellectuals serve the interests of the ruling groups by transforming their ideas into the mainstream social culture. This relation shows how domination triggers resistance and resistance leads to a new stage of consensus/domination. Hall (1993) conceptualizes such dynamic interactions as "moving equilibrium", a notion later utilized by others to examine youth sub-cultures that refuse to be dominated by mainstream social culture. Teds, Lads (Cohen 1971; Hebdige 1979), counter-school culture (Corrigan 1979; Mclaren 1989; Willis 1977), or not acting white (Ogbu 2003) all project resistant actions that attempt to reverse the dominated social status

of certain groups by allowing them to assume the role of master. This rejection of domination enables them to sustain their working-class identity. Cultural hegemony indicates a new mode of domination through the construction of social beliefs that help the dominant group attain social consensus, which is achieved by seizing intellectual supremacy. This political action transforms intellectuals and the state into the agents of construction of popular thought. This is in line with Gramsci's idea that the state functions as educator (Gramsci 1971).

Similarly, Poulantzas (1979) highlights the educating feature of the state by illustrating how it may employ the system of democracy to redefine social inequity. The inclusion of various groups under the state generates "relative autonomy" allowing the state, under the banner of democracy, to transfer social inequity from the domain of social structure to the private sphere. Dominant classes are thus committed to promoting the democratic value of treating individual citizens equally, so that personal achievements are mainly determined by their own intelligence and efforts. Once again, the state here acts as an educator, proactively producing an ideology that rationalizes existing inequities arising from the social structure.

Social Discourse, Internal Rationality and Policy

In a similar vein, Foucault (1972) argues that the state actively creates the value of dominant classes in social discourses. Because discourses are the primary mechanism of social control, power produces orthodoxy. On this account, social discourses function to establish legitimate knowledge, which is justified by reference to the ostensible neutrality of the state. Thus the state as such incorporates and conceals the political goals of the dominant group, which are all aimed at maintaining privilege. According to Foucault (1991), the internalization of dominant values produces docility, since existent social institutions are perceived as natural and inevitable. Social control is therefore no longer reliant upon coercive force; populations are controlled rather by schooling. Social control thus shifts from corporal punishment to spiritual discipline.

In this light, social engineering can thus be conceptualized as the art of 'shaping souls,' functioning to commit the subject to particular values and ways of life. Even when the direct political power of the state over individuals is weak, it can shape citizens' souls by schooling, i.e. by reassembling them in a synthesis of power and duties articulated in the grammar of social necessities (Rose 1999). Because the operation of civil society is based on a voluntarism that fuses individual minds into a social soul, education is the most efficient way to make people think and act in accordance with the goals and ideals of elites (Popkewitz 2000; Säfström 2005). Shaping souls is then a form of social technology, or "governmentality". Examples from education abound: teachers' education that successfully reconstitutes beliefs and pedagogical practices (Popkewitz 1994), and, as suggested by the notion of performativity, teachers' contributions to organizational development are verified

through psychological rewards such as pride, honor and ideas of excellence (Ball 2006).

In defining the state as a political instrument serving the interests of elites, positive functions of the state are largely disregarded. In contrast, integrating Parsons' (1951), discussion of the relation between social systems and functions, and Weber's (1964), examination of the features of bureaucratic rationality, Offe (1985a, b, 1996) articulates the idea of internal rationality to illustrate the positive features of the state. With these works in mind, the state can be interpreted as a device the primary function of which is to protect the common good through the implementation of bureaucratic rationality at the level of the state. On this account, regulations and duties, stipulated by legitimate authority derived from the bureaucratic system as such, can curb the personal impulses and private interests of civil servants, making them loyal in the first instance to that system (the government) and thus, by extension, to the greater good of all.

Working for the welfare of the citizenry, policies would then be designed to protect public interests. Economic activities are normally viewed as the gateway to proceeding social progression. This relation encourages civil servants to introduce more policies contributing to economic development with the feature of capital accumulation. However, if the state inclines to capital accumulation, this situation will deteriorate social justice. Regarding social development, it is the state's obligation to balance the relation between capital accumulation and social justice. If governmental officials fail to implement this collective mission, people will no longer trust in the state, depriving it of the core element that sustains its sovereignty. In other words, in order to win the trust of the people, the state needs to balance the relation between capital accumulation and social justice. Its collective duty is then, among other things, to improve the lives of its citizens through policies that can improve the standard of living of most members of the polity. On such a reading of the functions of the state, it is no longer an instrument for serving the interests of the dominant classes, but a mechanism for stimulating social development.

Isomorphism, Globalization and Higher Education

While Offe's argument fills gaps in the theories of Gramsci and Foucault, his functional perspective is confined to the nation-state. As such, the effects of globalization are generally underestimated. Currently, the globalized market is the main source of capitalist profit, a situation that compels countries to shift their focus from the domestic economy to the global one. International competitiveness is the byword of political economy, diminishing the cause of social justice on the political agenda of many countries (Chiang 2013). Globalization has come to constitute a new form of institutionalized context that places demands for policy modification on many, if not all, national governments. As Meyer (1977) points out, beliefs can generate collective expectations that gear governmental policies, as is evident in the case of education. The public believe that education can increase the chances of upward

mobility among working class students, and this social expectation in turn compels the government to undertake reforms of the education system. The expansion of higher education and the proliferation of its institutions are emblematic for the correlation between social values and institutionalization. According to Schofer and Meyer (2005), many countries used to adopt the elite mode to run the higher education market due to fear of an oversupply of human resources that might engender social and political crises. But this concern was replaced by aspirations, after the Second World War, to make human capital the main resource for stimulating social development. This value led to a dramatic expansion in the number of institutions for higher education. Furthermore, democratic notions and the values of freedom of thought and expression have been embraced by many countries and introduced into their school curricula in an attempt to liberalize society and confer agency to individuals (Lerch et al. 2017). Moreover, globalization has forced many countries to incorporate cosmopolitanism into the school curriculum. At the same time, there is a trend toward isomorphism, i.e. the homogenization of institutional arrangements and their organizational form, structure and operation in education at all levels (Meyer et al. 1997). While the perspective of isomorphism recognizes the influence of globalization on the state, it only addresses the interplay between values and institutionalized settings without including the relation between values and power. This neglect fails to uncover the correlation between power, top politician and policy. Particularly, power can be viewed as the core element in initiating governmental policies. Because power is normally exercised by the elites of a political system, their ideas and goals can accommodate the requirements of globalization into national policies. In this case, the influence of globalization isn't directly imposed upon individual governments but is regulated by the leadership of political elites. As the theories of glocalization propose, the universalism of globalization and the specialization of localism can be integrated (Khondker 2004; Robertson 1992). According to Luhmann (1995), unique functions are the core component of sustaining the independent operation of a system. In order to maintain such independence, individual systems need to proceed with functional evolution. In order to generate the best outcomes, such evolution needs to be based on a principle that individual systems or sub-systems should recognize the new requirements of social changes in their own way and develop creative action schemes based on their advantages. Without such a strategy, it is very difficult for individual systems to evolve their unique functions and this situation will undermine their independent operation. Both the perspectives of glocalization and system individuation highlight how the state may employ an adoptive strategy to maximize its own advantages in an institutionalized milieu formed by globalization. When national policies are conditioned by power, the leadership of political elites is the core element in initiating such an adoption. In other words, their personal conviction may function as the buffer, accommodating the international requirements into endemic features. The transformative role of the state in institutionalized settings created by globalization is also regulated by such commitment.

The operation of a globalized market is largely based upon a consensus within the international community. In advocating the advantages of neo-liberalism, the

US behaves in this context like a transnational corporation creating a discursive environment that promotes its interests (Berberoglu 2003). It performs this role through the actions of international agencies, such as the World Bank, the IMF (Hytrek and Zentgraf 2008; Stiglitz 2002), the WTO (Robertson et al. 2006) and the OECD (Rizvi and Lingard 2006), which it influences through its status as dominant sponsor. Since a number of senior personnel reshuffles beginning in the early 1980s, these international institutes have become committed to promulgating the discourse of deregulation and free trade, and establishing neo-liberalism as both the aim and underpinning of the process of globalization (Heywood 2003).

Most nations have no choice but to join the capital game of globalization, as evidenced by the fact that the WTO's constitution has eroded the control of individual nations over tax policy for imported commodities (Dale 2003). Embracing globalization, however, involves the exercise of national transformative strategies, so that many countries are actively engaged in modifying themselves in order to meet the requirements of the global system (Lingard 2000; Olssen 2006; Rizvi 2000). For such countries, improving international competitiveness to achieve this modification is now regarded as a national mission. With globalization having fused many countries into an interlocking body, the focus of competitiveness has shifted from the domestic to the international level. The OECD has proffered a linear model for the relation between globalization, international competitiveness, human capital and higher education, establishing a new world value that appropriates the higher education policies of many countries, shifting them from an elite mode to a mass one (Morrow and Torres 2000; Rizvi and Lingard 2006). Because free market ideology emphasizes individual choices and personal achievements, personal effort is, on this model, construed as the crucial factor for the achievement of successful outcomes (Blackmore 2006). The combination of individualism and international competitiveness thus evolved into the notion that the provision of education should no longer be classified as a citizen's basic right, but rather as a personal choice, since individual actors can rationally calculate the returns on educational investment. This redefinition abrogates the state's structural constraint of public obligation (McCarthy and Dimitriadis 2006). When personal qualities are held to account for failure, poverty, criminality and inequity, public services are no longer associated with collective interests, but reduced to the outcome of personal preferences and predilections. The new function of the state is now to enhance employability or individual self-sufficiency in its people through education (Lingard 2000). This phenomenon is an important element in national strategies to attempt to improve international competitiveness and acquire a greater share of the global market. This inclination to state capital accumulation occurs, as mentioned, at the expense of social and economic equity (Chiang 2013).

The notion of efficiency, central to neoliberalism, now plays a fundamental role in the administration of higher education. The ideas of free market logic, such as deregulation and privatization, require a drastic reduction in state-funded public services, which are considered monopolies and thus hindrances to competition and thus to efficiency. (Olssen et al. 2004). To the extent that publicly funded education exists, it is to be run according to the principles of New Public Management (Chiang

2016; Olssen et al. 2004; Rizvi and Lingard 2006), implemented through the strategy of devolution—transforming them into independent units responsible for their outcomes. As a result, the entrepreneurial rules of a new model of industrial production have become axiomatic for the administration of institutions of higher education (Bok 2003; Chiang 2014; Currie 2004). Legitimated by reference to the demands of efficiency, governments regularly audit the outcomes of public sector organizations (Ball 2006). Such governmental actions serve, for instance, to justify the status of elite universities; the designation of excellence intensifies mechanisms of entrance selection which may in turn exacerbate the phenomenon of cultural reproduction, since, in comparison to their middle and upper class counterparts, working class students are normally situated in a less privileged learning position due to their practical habitus (Bourdieu 1993) or restricted code (Bernstein 1996). Inevitably, the exercise of international competitiveness may undermine educational equity.

The theory of internal rationality would not then seem to make sense of the state's role in balancing the relation between capital accumulation and social justice. Furthermore, the state may employ international competitiveness to justify cultural hegemony or as a social discourse rescinding its public obligation. Nevertheless, globalization comes to form an institutionalized milieu in which transformative strategies are used to secure the prospect of national development and thus enable the government to handle the tension between capital accumulation and social justice. In this regard, the state does not perform as an apparatus for the production of cultural hegemony or social discourses, but practices its collective duties to win trust from people by improving their living standards. Elite universities can cultivate more highly qualified professionals who can contribute to the prospect of national development due to the close relation between human capital and international competitiveness; the creation of excellent institutes of higher education, therefore, becomes vital. The operations of government necessarily imply the exercise of power, and the intentions of those in power are therefore directly germane to the operations of government. In short, politicians at the top are key agents in the formulation of explicit policy. Even if we grant that self-interest and the seeking of personal advantage cannot be entirely avoided, the legitimacy of governments rests on the attitudes of those governed. The actions of powerful elites are thus always, in one form or another, a response to the collective expectations of civil society. In particular, when social inequity reaches dangerous levels that threaten to tear the fabric of society, the state will be expected to govern, that is, to realize its mission of securing the collective good. This correlation constitutes a mechanism through which public service can trump the temptation for private gain among government officials. For political leaders concerned with social justice, a space is thereby opened to undertake a new higher education policy with the aim of reducing educational inequity. One consideration in this regard is geographical allocations in the expansion of top universities. Chinese culture values collectivism, requiring the national leader to perform as a social guardian, so the Anglo-Saxon paradigm of elite universities would need to be modified to some extent in China. The commitments of the government leadership determine how this modification is conceived

and implemented. In light of these possible formulations, we can now explore how the quest for international competitiveness constantly steers top university policy in China, and why the present national leadership is committed to introducing the Double-World-Class-Universities Initiative and the Excellent Disciplines Plan.

Higher Education Under the Leadership of President Xi Jinping

China has clearly profited from a globalized market, much due to its economic reforms. Since Deng Xiaoping's rise to leadership in 1978, the Chinese government has adopted a strategy that integrates aspects of liberalism with of the teachings of Marxism. National Leader Deng was committed to modernizing China because he believed that improving the living standard of people was the best way of sustaining state sovereignty and stability. This intention generated the philosophy of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, allowing him to import free market logic to improve declining national production. The program of *Gaige Kaifang* (literally "reforms and openness", but often summed up as the *Four Modernizations*) was born in this milieu, and resulted in the initiation of large-scale economic reforms commencing from 1979, resulting in, for example, the creation of Special Economic Zones in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Xiamen and Shantou. In order to participate in the developing global market, Deng further introduced the Open Door policy in 1984, mainly implemented in coastal areas such as Tianjin, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, the Yangtze River Delta, the Pearl River Delta (Deng 2001), and the Financial Zone in Pudong, Shanghai (SCPRC 1990). This free market driven approach proved fruitful. The national statistical data listed in Table 12.1 demonstrate a strong ascendant trend in national economic growth.

While the Open Door policy was mainly exercised in coastal areas, successive national leaders have further expanded economic reform policies to Henan, Anhui, Hubei, Jiangxi, Hunan, Jilin and Heilongjiang, which are geographically adjacent to the coastal areas. The indications are that the Open Door policy was first and most intensively implemented in coastal areas, followed by a more modest promotion in the central region and then by an unsystematic and insufficient implementation in the western region. This gradual trend paints a vivid picture of social inequity related to wealth distribution. While major metropolitan areas have become modernized and wealthy, as marked in the dotted circles in Fig. 12.1, the general impression is that this wealth generation has been concentrated in the big cities in the coastal zone, and decreases progressively from east to west. Therefore, China can be classified into three zones from the perspective of economic development: the coastal areas, the central region and the western region. Figure 12.1 shows how these geographic segments are related to wealth distribution.

In other words, the gap in wealth distribution among those three zones is huge. For example, the wealthiest cities and provinces, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin,

Table 12.1 GDP and per capita GDP in China from 2000 to 2017 in RMB

Year	GDP (unit: 100 million)	Per capita GDP
2000	100,280.1	7942
2001	110,863.1	8717
2002	121,717.4	9506
2003	137,422.0	10,666
2004	161,840.2	12,487
2005	187,318.9	14,368
2006	219,438.5	16,738
2007	270,232.3	20,505
2008	319,515.5	24,121
2009	349,081.4	26,222
2010	413,030.3	30,876
2011	489,300.6	36,403
2012	540,367.4	40,007
2013	595,244.4	43,852
2014	643,974.0	47,203
2015	689,052.1	50,251
2016	743,585.5	53,935
2017	827,121.7	59,660

Data from NBS (2018)

Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Guangdong, are all located in coastal areas. In contrast, most of the western region is economically underdeveloped and even poor, with personal incomes far lower than those in the other two regions. One of the crucial indicators of these differences is annual income per capita. The national statistical data listed in Table 12.2 confirms a vast gap between people living in urban and rural areas.

These gaps show that while the Open Door policy created considerable wealth for the coastal cities, most people in other regions did not benefit significantly from economic growth. While globalization normally generates an uneven distribution of wealth across countries (Chiang et al. 2014), President Xi Jinping, who was elected General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party at the 18th National Congress in 2012 and has been the president since 2013, is determined to reduce this social inequity. Drawing upon the philosophy of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, developed by the former National Leader Deng, President Xi proposed the New Era of China as a vision for the future China at the 19th National Congress of Chinese Communist Party in 2017, which embraces dual forms of governmental obligation, conceptualized as environmental protection and social guardianship. With regard to environmental protection, President Xi has publicly and repeatedly addressed the essential value of environmental sustainability. Inspired by Xi, a Green Movement has gradually spread over China, leading many local governments to become actively engaged in counter-pollution campaigns (CEPO 2018). With respect to the issue of social guardianship, President Xi interprets social equity as the very essence

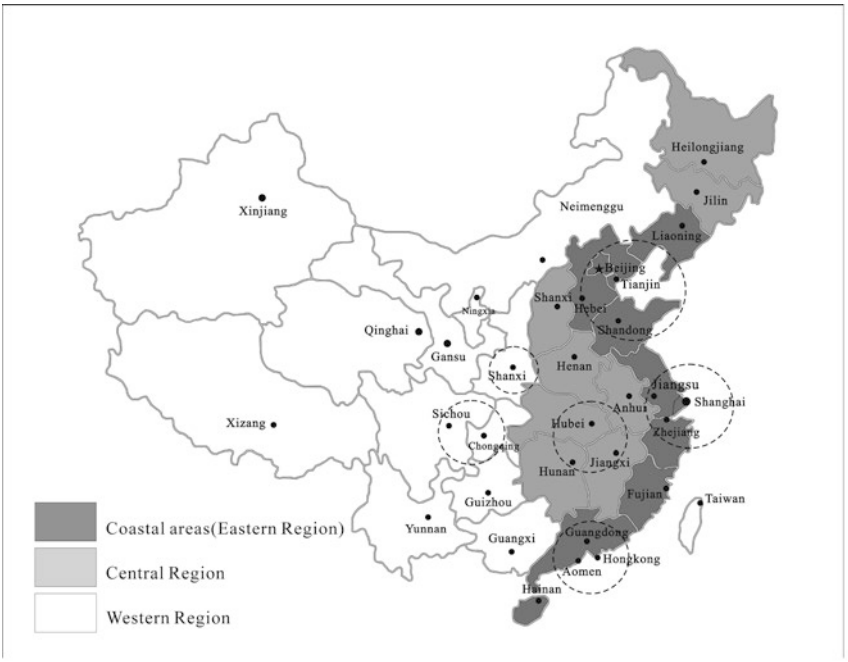

Fig. 12.1 Three zones of economic development in China

Table 12.2 The annual income after tax per capita

Year	Rural	Urban
2013	9430	26,467
2014	10,489	28,844
2015	11,422	31,195
2016	12,363	33,616
2017	13,432	36,396

Unit: RMB, data from NBS (2018)

of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (Wang 2016). He insists that all reforms have to focus on improving social justice and increasing people's welfare, and that the ultimate goal of the Chinese Communist Party is to serve the interests of people (Xi 2013). This argument situates the enhancement of living standards as the top priority on the political agenda. For President Xi, social equity consists of three dimensions—rights, opportunities and rules—which can be practiced by an institutionalized system because it guarantees citizens have equal rights to social participation and development. The government is responsible for the establishment of this system in order to achieve this goal (Xi 2013). His commitment to social equity thus inspired the enactment of the Poverty Alleviation Program, targeting over 60 million persons who belonged to the poorest group (Xi 2017). One of its core goals

is that all children in rural areas shall have fair access to good quality education that helps him or her realize his or her potential (Tang 2015).

The Expansion of Top Universities

As the previous analysis shows, international competitiveness is a crucial element in sustaining the position of a given country in the globalized market. This principle has had a profound influence on how higher education policies have been reshaped in many countries. Although China is no exception, President Xi is also committed to improving educational inequity. Thus the state is confronted with a potential conflict between academic excellence and social equity. For President Xi, accelerating the economic development of the central and west areas will make a great contribution to social equity, and this development requires human capital. Therefore, creating more top universities in these areas is a strategy through which the government may resolve this dilemma. His advocacy of educational equity stimulated the central government to announce the Top Universities and Disciplines Plan in 2015, leading to the introduction of the World Class Universities Initiative and the Excellent Disciplines Program, officially launched in 2017. Before detailing these two programs, it is worth describing the 211 Project and the 985 Program, which were previously implemented in succession with the aim of creating top universities in China. The 211 Project, announced as the national higher education policy in 1993, aimed at raising 100 universities to the level of world recognition by the twenty-first century (MOE 1993). The central government further enacted the Overall Construction Plan of the 211 Project in 1995, which specified the purpose of the 211 Project, focusing on improving the standard of facilities, main disciplines and public services, thus ensuring the qualitative cultivation of human capital (MOE 1995). With a huge investment of extra resources, the 211 Project universities substantially improved their academic performance and therewith their international reputations (The 211 Project Working Group 2007). Because the 211 Project officially recognized those selected higher education institutions as 'top universities', they became more competitive in terms of recruiting excellent academic researchers and students (Cuaa net 2014).

The central government later announced the 985 Program in 1999, targeting the creation of world class universities (CCSC 1999). The 985 Program was initiated by former President Jiang Zemin (1993–2013), who recognized the close connection between human capital and international competitiveness, as reflected in his speech at the ceremony for the 100th anniversary of Beijing University on May 4, 1998 (Jiang 1998). This talk prompted the Ministry of Education to launch the 985 Program, with a clear goal of raising 39 selected universities to the world-class level (MOE 1998). Having acquired official recognition and a sizable amount of extra funding from the central government, these 985 Program universities were designated "the best of the best" (Cuaa net 2014). As these 39 higher education institutions were also on the list of the 211 Project, there was naturally a heavy concentration

of funding allocations to these top universities. However, this concentration of funding greatly intensified the uneven geographic distribution of elite universities, without addressing the problems of education inequity. Furthermore, there was a strong correspondence between the geographic locations of the elite universities listed on both the 211 Project and the 985 Program, and the three zones of economic development. As Fig. 12.2 indicates, the 211 Project universities were concentrated in the coastal zone, with 57.8% (67 out of 116) being located in that region. The western region only included 19.8% (23). This imbalance reappears in Fig. 12.3, which shows that the coastal zone was home to 61.5% of the 985 Program universities (24 out of 39), as opposed to 18.0% in the western region. If we compare Figs. 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3, it is clear that the uneven distribution of top universities corresponds with the segments of the three economic regions. This lopsidedness suggests that excellent universities did not exercise the idea of education equity (Seventh Strategic Research Group 2010). In line with this structural constraint, elite universities tend to be dominated by students from wealthy areas. As economic capital is the basis for creating cultural capital, it is highly likely that middle- and upper-class students predominate at the best universities. A series of studies have documented this possible linkage by pointing out that the implementation of the 211 Project and the 985 Program was based upon an unfair competition (GPW 2015). Specifically, their entrance examination systems disadvantaged students from rural regions (DDP 2011; Southern Weekly 2011). As a result, the number of students from these

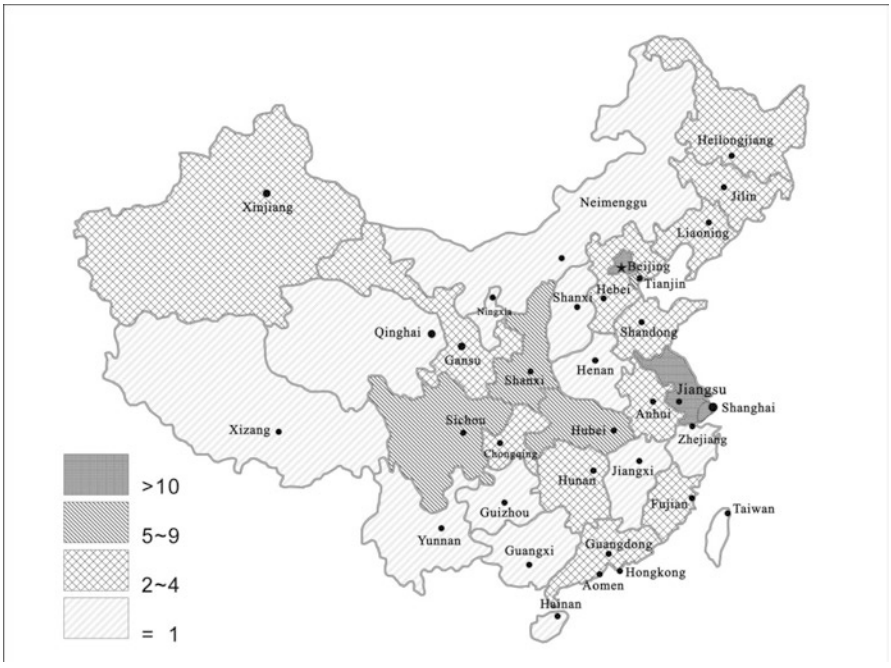

Fig. 12.2 Geographic locations of the 211 Project universities

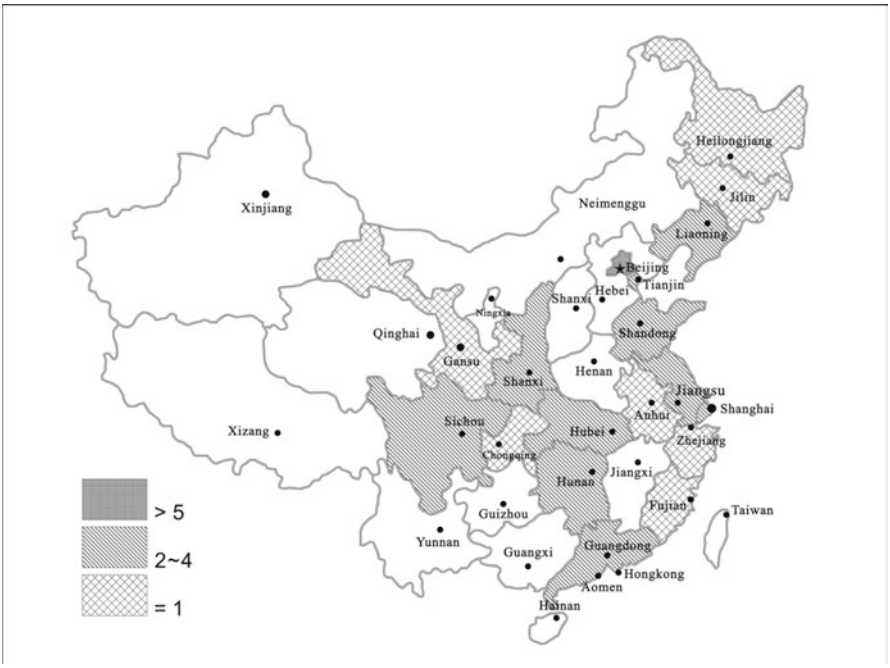

Fig. 12.3 Geographic locations of the 985 Project universities

regions registered at top universities shrunk, as was evident in the case of Tsinghua University, one of the top two higher education institutions in China, where the percentage of students from agricultural areas dropped from 21.7% in 1990 to 17.6% in 2000 (Xinhuanet 2005). A similar picture was found at Beijing University, with one striking finding indicating that this student group had reduced in number from between 20% and 40% from 1978 to 1998 to around 15% between 2000 and 2005 (Liu et al. 2009). Furthermore, the uneven distribution of top universities may impede the economic development of underdeveloped and poor regions insofar as institutions of higher education are the main instrument for the cultivation of the human capital that is the core element of the knowledge economy (Shen and Liu 2008; Tang 2011; Zhao et al. 2007). The examples demonstrate that while the uneven distribution of wealth tends to situate students from rural regions in an unprivileged position, and these students are generally classified as working class in the sociological perspective, the 211 Project and the 985 Program further intensified this connection, and are likely to have contributed to the phenomenon of cultural reproduction.

In response to this educational inequity, President Xi has repeatedly emphasized the notion of social justice. This concern prompted the establishment of a working group in 2015, which designed the framework of the Double World Class Universities Initiative and the Excellent Disciplines Plan. Its report explicitly emphasized the balance between excellence and social justice by proposing that the central

government construct a certain number of world class universities and disciplines, and expand this number by 2020 and 2030 respectively, through the strategy of internationalization. It also addressed the value of differentiated development of top universities and excellent disciplines (GPW 2015; Wu 2017). Based upon these proposals, the central government officially introduced the Double World Class Universities Initiative and the Excellent Disciplines Plan in 2017. In order to balance the relation between excellence and social justice, the Double World Class Universities Initiative includes 42 universities, consisting of the 39 universities of the 985 Program and three institutions of higher education from underdeveloped and poor areas. Specifically, Zhengzhou University, Xinjiang University and Yunnan University are located in Henan Province, Xinjiang Province and Yunnan Province respectively, and belong to the central and western regions of China. Figure 12.4 shows that the Initiative addresses the central government's concern to expand the range of top universities from coastal areas to the central and western regions.

In order to reduce educational inequity, the central government has further included all provinces in the Excellent Disciplines Plan. Furthermore, as showed in Fig. 12.5, there are a considerable number of universities in the central region that are on the list of the Excellent Disciplines Plan.

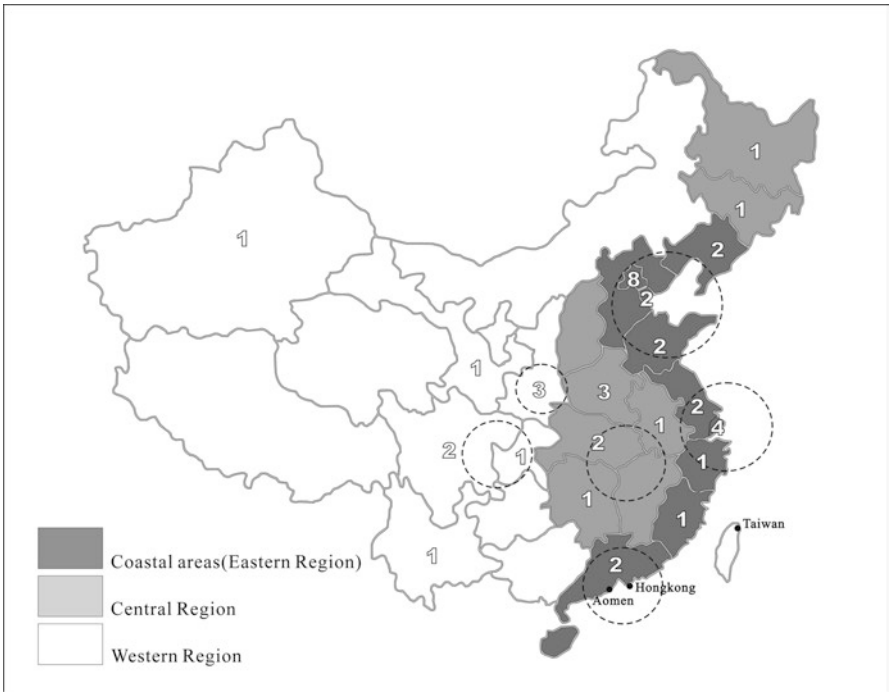

Fig. 12.4 Geographic locations of the Double World Class Universities

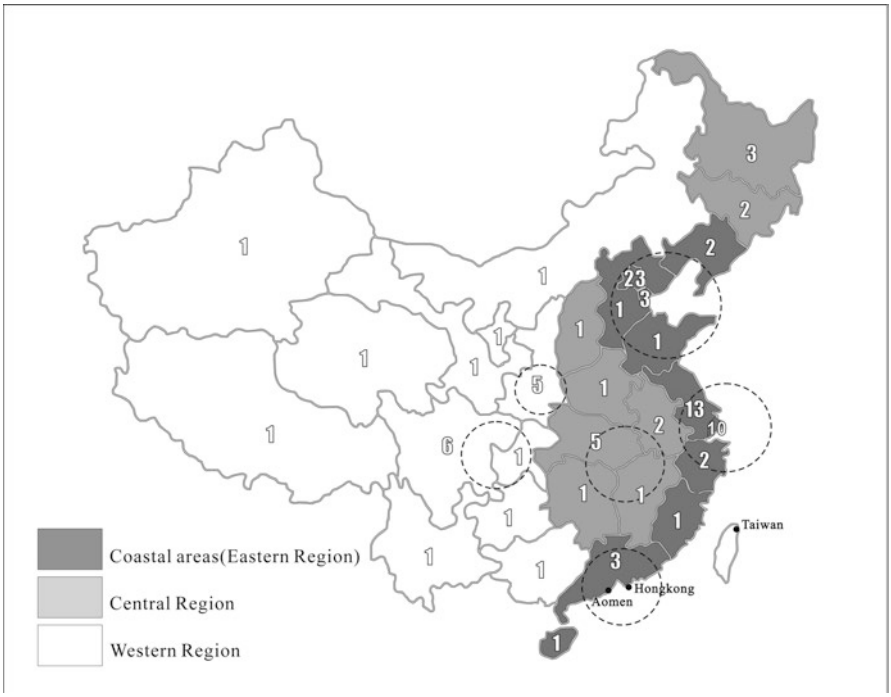

Fig. 12.5 Geographic locations of Excellent Disciplines

Conclusions

In most of the sociological studies that we have reviewed, the function of the state is described either as an instrument of social control or as a guarantor of public good. Both conflictual and functional approaches adopt a fixed characterization without including the dynamic development of the state in different contexts. Although the notion of isomorphism highlights the influence of globalization on the state, it fails to account for the correlation between power and the leadership of top politicians. Therefore, we propose that their commitments should function as the core element in regulating the state's role in higher education. Furthermore, the practice of such commitments should be conditioned by the institutionalized requirements constituted by globalization. This is because international competitiveness demands that its member countries cultivate human capital through the gateway of top university policies. When the state inclines to capital accumulation, the resultant situation may undermine social justice and thus state sovereignty. In terms of reducing the tension between capital accumulation and social justice, individual top politicians may have their own viewpoints. In order to examine this hypothesis, the article set out to explore why the policies of top universities in China change.

Our analysis shows that in order to modernize Chinese society, the national leadership focused on how to profit from the globalized market. Top university schemes, notably the 211 Project and the 985 Program, were viewed as gateways to improving human capital and fortifying China's international competitiveness. An unanticipated consequence was that the uneven distribution of funding was detrimental to social justice, as evident in the segmented distribution of economic development in China. The consequences of the state's orientation toward capital accumulation on a global market can have deleterious consequences for some segments of society and thus undermine popular trust in national leadership. At the same time, this context also provides an opportunity for political leaders to restore social justice. Such a project, however, will be directed by their own convictions. This can be exemplified by the case of the 985 Program, which intensified the phenomenon of cultural reproduction. President Xi has set out to strengthen the role of the state in the effort to restore balance in the tension between capital accumulation and social justice via the implementation of the World Class Universities Initiative and the Excellent Disciplines Plan. The state performs different roles in an institutionalized environment that is being perpetually reconstituted by global trends, including economic globalization. The convictions and commitments of the national leaders are fundamental features of the exercise of power in this context. The global economic system constitutes the basic institutional environment to which the leaderships of individual countries have to adapt in organizing their own agendas to meet domestic needs. The accommodations made will be largely determined by leading politicians, which means that their commitments can and do reshape the state's role in educational policies. The structural constraints of the institutionalized context will necessarily predetermine the space of their operations to some degree, as illustrated by the example of the world class policy that has been formulated and reformulated against the backdrop of international competitiveness. To the extent that political commitments can deflect undesirable consequences of given structural constraints, the state itself can be seen as malleable, its functions evolving with changes in the circumstances in which it operates.

The case of the development of top university policies in China bears witness to this process.

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Part IV
The Future of World-Class Universities

Chapter 13
The Marketingisation of Higher Education

Paul Gibbs

Abstract This chapter does not stress the marketisation of higher education rather focuses upon the way in which this is done; the marketingisation of higher education. I do not deny that widening access to skills that can fuel growth is a logical extension of a consumerist ideology. What follows acknowledges these structural changes and then focuses on how marketing is a consequence and reinforce of such structural change. Indeed there is a substantial literature which addresses it (e.g. Molesworth et al. Having, being and higher education: The marketization of the university and the transformation of the student into consumer. Teaching in Higher Education, 14(3), 277–287, 2009; Brown R, Carasso H, Everything for sale? The marketisation of UK higher education. Routledge, London, 2013). Nor does it support that marketingation has brought no or only limited contributions to higher education. The expansion of the privileges of higher education to the many from the few, the greater governance and transparency of the process and practices of higher education institutions in their compact with society and a clearer ways to evaluate these activities have, to varying degrees, enhanced higher education. These interventions have opened the market for world class universities (WCUs) allowing them global as well as local reach. Yet it is strange that these improvements are consequences of market interventions by Governments, by publishers in terms of league tables, and by employers in terms of preferred (mythical?) skill sets and not for educative purposes. The emergent practices encouraged by these interventions increase the influence of marketing and facilitate a metamorphosis of institutions from educational entities to market responsive service providers whose intent focuses on impact and enhanced return on capital. This leads WCUs into the endless and Sisyphusan striving, often devoid of any ultimate worthy end but ends which are an inevitable consequence of managing rapidly increasing competition and shifting demands effectively rather than educative priorities. The chapter describes and discusses the consequences.

I distinguish here between marketisation (the application of neo-liberal ideology to education) and the marketingisation of higher education. The former is a necessary condition of the latter, as discovered in detail in Brown and Carasso (2013).

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_13

A Framework (Not an Enframing) of the Approach

As a framework for organisational analysis, the model presented by Rämö (2004) can interestingly be applied to the university. He suggests that theoretical activity (*theoria*) results in knowledge (*episteme*), which leads to two forms of practice. The first concerns the process/learning part of practice (*poiesis*), which promotes skilfulness and proficiency (*techne*); and the second concerns the acting part of practice (*praxis*), which in turn promotes wisdom and judgment (*phronesis*). The acting part, he suggests, "is sometimes forgotten among contemporary scholars, whose focus of interest apparently is more on the improvement of skills and proficiency" (Rämö 2004, p. 851). In our context, the first approach to the development of theory manifests itself in new knowledge production, which is accompanied by (as suggested by Ramírez 2017) increasingly sophisticated technologies to measure, classify, track and rank research, researchers and research institutions. In Baudrillard's terms (1998, 2013), this becomes needlessly visible, characterising our modern social-structural processes and forces. It is needlessly visible in that it ceases to have a function dependant on the real but rather it becomes a representation that *precedes* and *determines* the real values in the sense of; its visibility only hides the essence of what it was once meant to represent such as educative value rather than employability. In such a society in which anxiety dominates, categorised by unlimited and insatiable need, there is a constant sense that one does not have enough of consumer goods, academic qualifications, fame or security. We view things for their user value, not for their intrinsic essence. This is a technological 'enframement' of education, manifested in a particular claim of being determined by these strategies to achieve alignment with the metrics, which in turn leads to the quality of things being judged by their availability and manipulability. Heidegger explores these issues, although he does not relate them to higher education, in the Bremen Lectures, specifically in the rewritten lecture on positionality in *The Question Concerning Technology*. Heidegger (2003) suggests that technology is a way of revealing, and within "its domain belong end and means as well as instrumentality. Instrumentality is considered the fundamental characteristic of technology [---] Technology is a way of revealing" (p. 318). As Heidegger suggests in 'Positioning', it is a technological positioning of our being within the world, requisitioning things within it (including potentially ourselves) as technological objects that can be stored and utilised.

Derived from *techne*, technology thus "reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us, whatever can look and turn our now one way and now another" (Heidegger 2003, p. 319). Thus, according to Heidegger, what is decisive in *techne* and the practice that it embodies is the negation of *poiesis*, in that it is not the process that leads to the revealing but the revealing itself; that is, what is the thing not in its essential unconcealing but in its function. As we will see, this thing, say education, is revealed in its instrumentality in the service to others, not for the intrinsic value that it brings to the learned. In this sense, education does not bring forth, in the way of *poiesis*; it takes different forms in practice (as suggested by Rämö, above). Heidegger suggests that education "is a revealing, and not a

manufacturing, that *techne* is bringing forth" (p. 317). In this sense the process, poiesis, is the educative process, and the outcome of this is building knowledge of something that concerns itself in skills and proficiencies. These skills are "a challenging, which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such" (p. 320). It is also claimed by Heidegger to be an expedition directed to furthering things whilst driving "the maximum yield at the minimum expense" (p. 321). This kind of unconcealment orders everything to stand by, to be ready at hand, to be rendered as "standing-reserve," and that which exists as the standing reserve, something to be set upon, no longer exists as that thing but as something at people's beck and call. Yet, as Heidegger points out, humanity itself is within the standing reserve evidence that he suggests by the "current talk about human resources" (p. 323). He concludes that technology enframes humanity, calling upon an ordering of nature as a standing reserve. Importantly, however, enframement "means the way of revealing that holds sway in the essence of modern technology and that itself is *nothing technological* (p. 325, italics added). The concern that should be felt by humanity is how to save itself from becoming no more than the standing reserve itself through careless acceptance of the technological enframement of our world. To save ourselves from such a destiny, whilst not ridding ourselves of technology we must seek to bring forth the essence of things in their own dignified essence. This includes the idea of enframement, and can be achieved through *poiesis*. *Poiesis* brings forth poetic thought through creativity and reflection reveals things in their true essence, while *techne* reveals things as a standing reserve. In term of WCUs, we need to question and reflect on why we encourage them, what their benefits are and they what are doing to our understanding of our being. We should not participate in the enframing narrative of indices through the abuse of a range of mechanisms that function as tools of enframement, concealing what might be revealed through *poiesis*, whereby "what presences come forth into appearance" (Heidegger 2003, p. 332). Although the function of ranking supports the mechanisms that facilitates entrance, participation, segmentation and recognition in the primary educational and employability markets for institutions, it also influences a wider set of stakeholders in its transfer of resources, converted into use when required by society; whereby the university is able to transform efficiently potential intellectual capital into operational capital and to transfer these skills to the workforce for use. In doing so, it constructs the standing reserve of a technological way of being.

Heidegger (2003) offers an alternative. Instead of fuelling the development of WCUs in terms of their use of resources for themselves and for economic reserves, he suggests that we should ponder over what we do and "watch over it" (p. 337). Furthermore, Heidegger offered a response a few years after the publication of the *Question*. In his *Memorial Address* (to Conradin Kreuter), he suggests that it is through poetic and meditative thinking in an inceptual way that we can find a release from the technological way of being. He suggests that:

> Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery belong together. They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way. They promise us a new ground and foundation upon which we can stand and endure in the world of technology without being imperilled by it. (1966, p. 55)

Building WCUs Without Watching over Them—The Technological Enframement as Marketingisation

Altbach and Balan (2007) described "world-class universities" in a more specific way, indicating that the key elements of a WCU are excellence in research, top professors, academic freedom, governance, adequate facilities and funding. University reputation, if based on position in the global ranks, can lead to instrumental development on the basis of correlation metrics that merely meet the institution's requirements. Hou et al. (2012), for instance, suggest a complex strategic approach to how a university can prioritise its resources to gain leverage in four of the most important world ranking indices, but they caution that striving for performance can be improved by a clearer understanding. Knowing more about the features of global rankings is the first step to improving performance and making informed decisions, but:

> On the other hand, it should be noted that a clear vision, institutional features, favourable governance and sufficient resources, which were not taken into consideration in the above model (or in the four global rankings themselves), are all crucial if a university is to rise and stay at the top in the rankings. (Hou et al. 2012, p. 856)[1]

A review of the literature on WCU strategies seems to conclude that, to achieve success, an institution needs to feed the metric of international ranking, to enable progress (defined as upward movement in these rankings), and for its strategies to be fixed on achieving these goals, and any achievement of flourishing should be a by-product of these goals, rather than their core function. Hazelkorn (2009) shows the influence that these rankings have on strategies. She holds that higher education is considered an essential component of the productive economy, and claims that how higher education is governed and managed has become a major policy issue for Europe: global university rankings have "stimulated significant changes in European higher education policy" (Hazelkorn and Ryan 2013, p. 96). The quality of individual higher education institutions (HEIs) and the system as a whole (e.g. teaching and learning excellence, research and knowledge creation, commercialisation and knowledge transfer, graduate employability and academic productivity), provide a good indication of a country's "ability to compete successfully in the global economy" (Hazelkorn and Ryan 2013, p. 94) Hazelkorn (2009) further argues that all institutions are drawn into the entire global knowledge market, not just WCUs, and that "[r]ankings are helping transform HEIs into strategic corporations, engaged in positional competition"(p. 4). However, recent research by Lim and Øerberg (2017, p. 105) suggests that rankings are only a productive entry point to understanding both the multidirectional and multipositional process of higher education reform.

Hazelkorn also identifies that, amongst other things, the ranking measure is of institutional reputation among peers, employers and students, ignoring aspects of

[1] Forster (2018) suggests it is the very lack of these attributes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that prohibits the development of world-class universities.

education such as the student experience. Further, as David (2016, p. 170) suggests, an appearance in league tables misses the notion of quality. In serving local, national and global economic cultural, political and educational needs, quality may not be best measured by citations, reputation indexes, grant income, Nobel Prizes and so forth.

Marketing and Consumerisation—The Concealment of Enframement

Reaching all these stakeholders invokes communication and persuading them of the merits of the institution's production. To achieve recognition, a university needs to promote its image on the basis of its efficiency in the realisation and exploitation of the resources that it utilises, and this requires marketing. Finding any figures for expenditure on marketing for higher education is extraordinarily difficult, so the $1.65 billion spend by US colleges in 2016 (Brock 2017) is only indicative, yet it gives an idea of the investment by the sector. Moreover, this seems to be intra-sector competitive positioning, as it has failed to prevent external influences from changing enrolment, either in the United Kingdom[2] or the United States.

The application of marketing techniques to achieve ranking goals, or the "marketingisation", as I term it, presents the university and its funders with a dilemma: what should they seek? To facilitate flourishing, or to produce utility? Indeed, in their article on WCU practices, Deem et al. (2008) suggest that, at least in China, there is academic malpractice to meet government targets for the realisation of WCUs. Further, in this attempt to mirror the predominately Western position at the top of the world rankings, cultural heritage may be forsaken in what the authors consider to be a process of "re-colonization, resulting in reproducing learning experiences that do not fit the specific cultural and political environments in the East" (Deem et al. 2008, p. 21). This risks turning education into a consumer of resources since it concentrates on the best talent, starving other areas, concentrating power and ultimately leading to academic totalitarianism.

In the development of my critique I do not deny that widening access to the skills that can fuel growth is a logical extension of a consumerist ideology, at the lower levels, and indeed it can fuel the resources needed by the WCU sector. It is when looking at the wider picture, and how the standing reserve metaphor of educational achievement is championed by WCUs and mirrored by those who aspire to arrive and then rise up in the ranks, that an investigation of marketing is demanded and its lack of accountability questioned. It is strange that these improvements are the consequences of market interventions by governments, by publishers in terms of league

[2]As reported by Matthews (2013), "UK universities increased their spending on marketing to potential students by nearly a quarter in the run-up to the introduction of higher fees, a *Times Higher Education* investigation has found, yet suffered a 7.4 per cent fall in applications".

tables and by employers in terms of a preferred (mythical?) skill-set, and not for educative purposes. The emergent practices of this league table culture (Shattock 2017), encouraged by these interventions, increase the influence of marketing and facilitate the metamorphosis of institutions from educational entities to market-responsive service providers whose intent focuses on impact and an enhanced return on capital. This leads WCUs into an endless and Sisyphusan striving, often devoid of any ultimate worthy end. It is an end that is an inevitable consequence of managing rapidly increasing competition and shifting demands effectively, not educative priorities.

The use of ranking in leagues to 'inform' stakeholders in a market for higher education, as Scott (2013) has suggested, has been at the expense of older notions of public service, social purpose and academic solidarity to promote the 'market'. Specifically, he suggests that one "effect of the market has been to encourage greater competition among, between and within universities; another has been to place greater emphasis on marketing techniques[3], including 'playing' the league tables" (Scott 2013, p. 115). League tables, regardless of how sophisticated their underlying measures are, are compelling. They enable simple statements about institutions to be inferred and contribute to marketing messages.

To this end, the marketing of higher education has grown from some information in a prospectus or year book into a range of communicative and relationship communication practices designed to attract students, in the same way as consumers to cars, iPads and foreign holidays. The tangible benefits of fun and the economic promise of a university education have dominated higher education communications. Universities have promoted education as their product or service, offering hedonistic gratification and routes to careers, positioning it as yet one more thing to be consumed (Lawlor 2007). To achieve this they have embraced technology itself. In a recent study, one of many similar commercial reports on digital trends in marketing higher educations, over 75% of respondents say that digital channels are a high priority for their institution. Email, social media, and website design dominate their marketing strategies to recruit students and build brand recognition (Digital Solutions 2016).

In Europe, state-controlled universities have introduced student fees and engaged in institutional marketing to distinguish themselves at a time when higher education has become available to increasing numbers of students. This seems beneficial and what one would expect from institutions that both have internal trust and are trusted by the public (although questioned by Tierney 2006, and Stensaker and Harvey 2011). Yet, in meeting this demand and securing their own financial futures as competition intensifies, institutions are "engaging in professional marketing activities" (Veloutsou et al. 2004, p. 279) rather than, perhaps, enriching the educational and the common good.[4] These activities run the risk of displaying overwhelming

[3] A view similar to that expressed earlier by Marginson (2007).

[4] Hazelkorn and Ryan (2013, p. 84) suggest that this is viewed negatively by European higher education policy-makers.

consumerism (Naidoo and Jamieson 2005). As Gibbs maintains, this "marketingisation" of the university leaves the university and its funders with a dilemma: what should they seek—to facilitate wisdom or to produce utility?

The impact of these changes is summarised by Hassan (2003), who observes:

> the commercialization of the university is primarily an economic and political process of transformation that has little if anything to do with education, knowledge production and the well-being of either staff or students. What is more, these changes are all being refracted through the prism of neo-liberal ideology. (p. 77)

A consequence of the move to the market has been a marketingisation of higher education (Gibbs 2002, 2011; Molesworth et al. 2009; Hemsley-Brown, 2011). There is increasing emphasis by universities on how they promote themselves to potential students. The approaches have not honoured the nature of education as a distinctive, transformative process of the human condition, but have treated it (for the most part) as undifferentiated consumption. They have adopted the marketing used by consumer market, best suited to selling chocolate, aspirin and supermarket discounts, albeit in a highly sophisticated and technical way. As Molesworth et al. (2009) suggest, "many HEIs prepare the student for a life of consumption by obtaining a well-paid job: a mission of confirmation rather than transformation" (p. 278). Moreover, they suggest that this is manifest through a consumer desire of having, rather than being. The anxiety of consumer society was revealed in a study by Nixon and Gabriel (2015). They describe this anxiety among those who sought not to buy as of two types: "moral anxiety, caused by the fear of being compromised or tempted to act contrary to their values, and neurotic, an anxiety that arises from being overwhelmed by their own unconscious desires, emotions and fantasies" (Nixon and Gabriel 2015, p. 48). What is more relevant is the need to be worth something as a resource to other. As previously mentioned, Heidegger recognises the idea of human resource and the development of education in its instrumental form provides just that.

Heidegger talks damningly and directly about how consumerism is abandoning Being, through letting one's "will be unconditionally equated with the process [consumerism] and thus becomes at the same time the 'object' of the abandonment of Being" (Heidegger 1973, p. 107, brackets in original). The real danger, suggest Dreyfus and Spinosa (2003), is not "self-indulgent consumerism but [it as] a new totalizing style of practices that would restrict our openness to people and things by driving out all other styles of practice that enable us to be receptive to reality" (2003, p. 341, brackets inserted).

Heidegger (2003) continues in a prophetic attack on consumerism as the totalising power held by a few globalised leaders to negate our understanding of our being: the "circularity of consumption for the sake of consumption is the sole procedure which distinctively characterises the history of a world which has become an unworld" (p. 107). For example, if learning is consumption and consuming is a never-ending requirement of consumerism, then failing to learn fast is a failure of consumption, and to be feared. However, if failure to learn and understand quickly reveals issues about oneself that can be explored over time, this might bring about deeper understanding or even acceptance that something is personally unlearn-able. Either way, one is content with the educational struggle when one accepts its reality.

Can We Watch over Our Marketing and Enhance Our WCU?

What, then, is marketing of higher education about? Should it be encouraging consumerism, or might it begin to encourage a criticality that questions itself? If it takes the latter route, it does not rely on free gifts such as sports membership or laptops. It finds new ways of presenting higher education to a wider audience. These ways are compatible with the entity that it represents, not one that totalises through both reducing opportunities and hiding the anxiety of consumerism in the hedonism of consumption. In moderation, this may not be harmful. However, when universities embrace consumer techniques of marketing, they risk supporting an ideological norm that is hidden in our everydayness and that needs to be questioned. Williams (2013) suggests an irony here: "whilst the promotion of satisfaction may appear to be a response to students perceiving themselves as consumers, it also enhances trends towards the consumption model and constructs new generations of students as consumers" (p. 101). Moreover, we should question the decision not to query this, or to provide information only on the powerful, rather than powerful information, and often to students who are poorly prepared to make such choices. Questions need to be put by those who claim academic status in making the decisions, as well as those who make statements. Harrison and Risle (2015) argue that the effect of consumerism on the very infrastructure and functionality of higher education activities is that to revive student learning on campus demands us to forego the consumer model. This is because "it diminishes the likelihood that institutions will organize themselves in ways conducive to meaningful curricular and co-curricular educational experiences for students" (Harrison and Rsile 2015, p. 73).

The notion that education as the provision of intellectual and emotional desire satisfaction has tended to become concealed in university strategy. Roberts (2013) writes that education now seems actually to be about promoting desire satisfaction, often in ways that are not implicitly edifying but that create satisfactory, pleasurable and measurable experiences. Satisfaction indicators are used to build reputation, inform educational policy and create conformity in support of this. Moreover, they make the university more marketable and tend to represent an agenda for desire satisfaction that is an extravagant, imagined sea of opportunity where advocates of the credentials of education find the intangibility of educative flourishing processes too difficult to promote. However, the tangibility of explicit 'average' starting salaries are easier and more measurable motivations even though often unreal. Such approaches are counter to a desire for settling oneself achieved through balancing capabilities and potentiality. Indeed, the current context of education seems to emphasise anxiety and fear for one's future. This suggests commitments that form sympathies and commitments to people, principles and projects. It does this through the need to optimise one's investment, to strive always to know enough to make the right decisions and to avoid any idea of sub-optimisation. This, of course, is an impossible task, and in the same class as achieving excellence.

What Might Be Done to Achieve Release from the Technological Control Exerted by WCUs?

Through the normalising notion of consumerism, what is taken for 'good education' is converted into what satisfies the desires of stakeholders, as consumers. These, in turn, are identified not as internal goods of civic responsibility—*phronesis*, *parrhesia* and *dunamis* (of developing the virtues of practical wisdom, truth telling and one's potential axiological becoming—but as 'value for money', cost efficiencies, counts of academic papers per scholar, contact hours, turnaround times and the like. These notions drive, rather than follow, national educational higher education policy[5] and cascade into institutional strategic directions. They are transitory and anxiety-inducing, through creating voids to be filled. They create an ethos of striving—not in the form of settling, but in the sense of Sisyphus.

Higher education is no exception. The claim is that the student is at the core of the consumerised notion of education, and its analytics of performance are indicators of desire satisfaction, prestige and value of the standing reserve that they accumulate. Is it the consumer who is able to decide what is best for her future? Or is it that under the enframing power of our technological ways of being, in terms of the accumulation of skills as resources for employment in a world of complexity, all that is guaranteed is that her fees will be taken and her employment left to an unregulated, uncontrolled marketplace. Under such conditions, education is an expensive gamble where different odds reflect privilege. The bookies (employers) hardly ever lose, because they continually change the conditions of the bet as the value of the resources changes.

Rather than an economic acquisition agenda for higher education, with the continued striving that denies students the potentially valuable educational experiences at its core, a university should challenge students to develop the capabilities to optimise their potential to make responsible, or at least informed, choices as privileged civic partners. This may often be achieved by having more space in the curriculum to 'potter about', to follow the byways of their curiosity and not to worry about learning outcomes or assessment criteria. In reducing the hegemony of learning outcomes and the associated assessment of them for a more flexible system designed to reveal what is chosen to be learnt we offer a different more ontological educative process where the educator is a co-producer rather than a monitor of mandated, predefined outcomes. Furthermore, predetermined outcomes enable a temporal form of competition in which students can compete to see who can achieve these outcomes the quickest (and then move on and be more busy) which creates the urgency of achievement and induces a fear of falling behind and using this 'failure'

[5] For example, "many countries promote their higher education systems through national branding, using logos and slogans, such as Australia's 'Study in Australia' and the United Kingdom's 'Education UK' marketing campaigns" (Singh 2011, p. 5). Also see, for example, Huang's (2015) discussion of the implementation of Chinese national policy to WCU development within that country.

to define oneself. Against this the adventures of ontological education may often be painfully uncomfortable yet, in and of itself, seek to strengthen students' resolve and resilience to create a personal identity within the context of being a member of society of their own determination. As Heidegger (1998) claims, "real education lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it" (p. 167).

Salmi (2009) suggests that there are three complementary sets of factors that strongly influence a WCU:

> *(a) a high concentration of talent* (faculty and students), *(b) abundant resources* to offer a rich learning environment and to conduct advanced research, and *(c) favorable governance* features that encourage strategic vision, innovation, and flexibility and that enable institutions to make decisions and to manage resources without being encumbered by bureaucracy. (Salmi 2009, p. 20)

These features chime with work by Altbach, and with that of Hazelkorn and Shattock (2017, p. 9), who add the age of the institution, its physical location and the existence of an external political climate that gives full licence to free expression and academic freedom. These set up competitive forces. Elite universities are then steered by them, putting to work scarce resources (excluding others from accessing them), for what purpose if not the realisation of economic gains for the few in order to govern the many? In this sense, the notion of common good becomes fragile; and marketing adds to this fragility.

As David (2016) has suggested, even in apparently independent media reporting of the league tables that are used to promote policy initiatives, evidence is lacking to support the media rhetoric. Indeed, as Shattock (2017) suggests, "THE World 2015 Reputation Rankings virtually replicates the 'world class' (p. 10) ranking they produce".[6] Without this balance to promotional claims of WCU, the future for marketing higher education is not to turn education into a marketable entity but to contribute to providing access to education as an edifying and transformative experience. It is, I suggest, its greatest challenge. It is one that, from my reading of the literature, is not being addressed. The edifying experience is being changed, if not downgraded, by marketing to the league tables and by the rather pointless striving to find ways to become a WCU, for the existing system is very stable. Again quoting Shattock (2017), the concept of "'world class' represents mostly a distraction from the issues that affect higher education […] a market dominated by institutional ambition and self-interest may not always satisfy the needs of its customers" (p. 20). Moreover, it is harming our students by inducing anxiety. We are teaching our students not to be resiliently critical but to cope with the anxiety of the market through short-term palliatives. Ultimately, these just contribute to the reproduction of anxiety as the core of consumer culture. In so doing, they create a generation whose anxiety is founded on the guilt of not having been, or being, good enough.

[6] This remains true for the 2018 ranking, with four universities in the world's top 20 for reputation yet whose teaching and research is ranked lower than the top 20: one Japanese; one American; and two Chinese. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/top-50-universities-reputation-2018. Accessed 7 January 2019.

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Chapter 14
Contesting the Neoliberal Discourse of the World Class University: 'Digital Socialism', Openness and Academic Publishing

Michael A. Peters and Tina Besley

Abstract The principal aim of this paper is to contest the neoliberal discourse of the World Class University (WCU). The first section provides an understanding of the concept of the WCU within the context of a global competitive model of the knowledge economy and contrasts it with the social-democratic model based on open science and education that also provides links between new modes of openness, academic publishing and the world journal architecture. The paper makes the case for 'knowledge socialism' that accurately depicts the greater communitarian moment of the sharing and participative academic economy based on peer-to-peer production, social innovation and collective intelligence. It instantiates the notion of knowledge as a global public good. Profound changes in the nature of technology has enabled a kind of 'digital socialism' which is clearly evident in the shift in political economy of academic publishing based Open Access, cOAlition S, and 'Plan S' (mandated in 2020) established by national research funding organisations in Europe with the support of the European Commission and the European Research Council (ERC). The social democratic alternative to neoliberalism and the WCU is a form of the sharing academic economy known as 'knowledge socialism'. Universities need to share knowledge in the search for effective responses to pressing world problems of fragile global ecologies and the growing significance of technological unemployment. This is a model that proceeds from a very different set of economic and moral assumptions than the neoliberal knowledge economy and the WCU.

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_14

Scholars have been discussing alternatives to the reputational race. Hazelhorn and Gibson (2017) mention the 'flagship' university developed 'in explicit opposition to the self-serving WCU' (p. 8), the 'civic' university, and the 'world-class system (WCS). Our suggestion in line with the critique of neoliberalism and a sharing academic economy is 'knowledge socialism'. Universities need to share knowledge in the search for effective responses to pressing world problems of fragile global ecologies and the growing significance of technological unemployment. This is a model that proceeds from a very different set of economic and moral assumptions than the neoliberal knowledge economy and the WCU.

> One can of course see how each kind of society corresponds to a particular kind of machine - with simple mechanical machines corresponding to sovereign societies, thermodynamic machines to disciplinary societies, cybernetic machines and computers to control societies. But the machines don't explain anything, you have to analyze the collective arrangements of which the machines are just one component. (Deleuze 1995, p. 175).

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, the growing impact of global rankings and their use strategically to restructure higher education systems to increase global competitiveness has led to a 'reputation race' and the emergence of the global discourse of 'The World Class University' (WCU), fuelled by neoliberal conceptions of the knowledge economy and led by five main ranking systems that shuffle the pack to reveal the latest annual rankings among the predominantly American and British institutions that comprise the 'winners' overwhelmingly. As universities have expanded and been re-purposed as global market institutions, their traditional liberal missions based on the pursuit of truth and disinterested knowledge for its own sake and the fostering of democratic citizenship based on critical thinking and academic freedom have given away to neoliberal, managerialist, competitive, utilitarian, market-led model creating a form of higher education 'unsustainable for all but a small group of marquee universities' (Mittelman 2017). One major policy strand of this discourse anchored the concept of the WCU in a global competitive model of the knowledge economy promoted by The World Bank (Salmi 2002, 2009). The neoliberal model concentrates excellence and resources in small number of elite universities, creating a greater hierarchical reputational differentiation, often separating teaching and research universities to link resource allocation to institutional profiling or other classification tools informed by rankings; the social-democratic model, by contrast, attempts to balance excellence and equity with an emphasis on horizontal differentiation and a 'good quality' university system across country based on the traditional liberal integration of teaching and research (Hazelkorn 2015).

The discourse of WCU has had a rapid uptake in East Asian countries, with China recently refining its strategy. Under the 'Double First Class' policy, China is rapidly expanding the development of 42 of its universities as 'world class' by 2050

and 95 universities have been chosen to develop world class courses. This initiative follows the '211' and '985' projects launched in the 1990s that aimed to enhance China's global educational competitiveness (Gao 2017; Peters 2017). Scholars have suggested whatever its shortcomings, a discourse of quality has legitimated an inquiry into the characteristics of 'world class' universities, anchoring the idea in popular and political consciousness, and fuelling the scramble to identify the challenge and formula for building world-class universities by listing and analysing its characteristics. The world ranking systems emerging in the mid 2000s have played a major role in legitimating the neoliberal view: they have helped engineer the global obsession with WCU and are engaged in the hugely profitable proliferation of new data sets that endlessly refine regional and discipline groupings. Yet there are many problems with global rankings, not all of which cannot be solved through technical improvements to indicators, including the continued dominance of the elite US-British institutions, the relative neglect of the arts and humanities, the lack of recognition of cultural and indigenous knowledges, the focus on research at the expense of teaching, and the crudeness of rankings and single composite scores that belie the rich complexities of university institutions. The neoliberal model focuses attention on individual institutions rather than collaborative research relations among them. Arguably, a relational focus on the emerging configurations of global collaborative research might make more strategic sense, especially if it was aimed at assisting the bottom half of universities of the 20,000 universities in the world. Such a strategy would probably also do more for issues concerning access to publicly funded research and traditional concerns of equality that motivate social democratic visions. It would also likely embrace more holistically an approach that examines cross-national flows of knowledge, links between new modes of openness, academic publishing and the world journal architecture. Peters et al. have argued that such a model is better placed to accommodate and develop approaches to two of the world's major problems that threaten to engulf us: impending world ecological disaster related to climate change and the social and economic dislocation of technological unemployment (Wals and Peters 2018; Peters et al. 2019).

We have described the model of open science and education in a number of publications over the years (eg. Peters and Besley 2008) and had occasion to talk about versions of it that approximate what we call 'knowledge socialism', the greater communitarian moment of the sharing and participative academic economy based on peer-to-peer production, social innovation and collective intelligence. In 'Knowledge Socialism and Universities: Intellectual Commons and Opportunities for "Openness" in the twenty-first Century" (Peters et al. 2012; see also), we suggested that 'Openness' is a central contested value of modern liberalism that falls under different political, epistemological and ethical descriptions and provided a brief history of openness in education based on the concept of the Open University as it first developed in the United Kingdom during the 1960s, a development we dubbed Open University 1.0. We considered the concept of openness in the light of the new 'technologies of openness' of Web 2.0 that promote interactivity and encourage participation and collaboration, and help to establish new forms of the intellectual commons, a space for knowledge sharing and collective work. We

argued that the intellectual commons is increasingly based on models of open source, open access, open courseware, open journal systems and open science. We called this model Open University 2.0. Where Open University 1.0 is based on the logic of centralized industrial media characterized by a broadcast one-to-many mode, the latter is based upon a radically decentralized, many-to-many and peer production and a mode of interactivity. We looked forward to the possibilities of a form of openness that combined the benefits of these first two forms, what we called Open University 3.0, and its possibilities for universities in the future. The investigation of the political economy of openness as it reconfigures universities in the knowledge economy of the twenty-first century is directed toward a socialized model of the knowledge economy that competes with and replaces neoliberal versions. In this paper, we want to continue to broaden this view by giving a brief account of 'digital socialism' considered in relation to the oligarchy of academic publishing.

Knowledge as a Global Public Good

Knowledge has been defined as a global public good exhibiting the following characteristics: 1. knowledge is non-rivalrous: the stock of knowledge is not depleted by use, and in this sense knowledge is not consumable; sharing with others, use, reuse and modification may indeed add rather than deplete value; 2. knowledge is barely excludable: it is difficult to exclude users and to force them to become buyers; it is difficult, if not impossible, to restrict distribution of goods that can be reproduced with no or little cost; 3. knowledge is not transparent: knowledge requires some experience of it before one discovers whether it is worthwhile, relevant or suited to a particular purpose. An interesting theoretical moment occurred when similar principles were applied to digital information goods insofar as they were seen to approximate pure thought or the ideational stage of knowledge. Digital information goods helped to undermine traditional economic assumptions of rivalry, excludability and transparency, as the knowledge economy was seen to be about creating intellectual capital and the way that information goods differ from traditional goods: digital goods can be copied cheaply, so there is little or no cost in adding new users. Developments in desktop and just-in-time publishing substantially lowered fixed costs. Information and knowledge goods typically have an experiential and participatory element that increasingly requires the active *co-production* of users creating new content, and digital goods can be transported, broadcast or shared at low cost, approaching free transmission across bulk communication networks. Since digital information can be copied exactly and easily shared, it is never consumed. In short, digital goods are non-rivalrous, infinitely expansible, discrete, aspatial, and recombinant (Quah 2003). The 'information revolution' in its successive generations pictured a deep structural transformation from the industrial to the knowledge economy which led to an acceleration of the speed at which knowledge was created and huge decreases in the costs of codification, transmission, and acquisition of knowledge

(Peters 2008). This new understanding dominated the education policy agendas everywhere.

In light of this profound digital transformation, Tapscott and Williams (2007: 1) suggested 'profound changes in the nature of technology, demographics, and the global economy are giving rise to powerful new models of production based on community, collaboration, and self-organization rather than on hierarchy and control'. It was surprising to some that, in middle of the neoliberal restructuring, new, more democratic and decentralized models of production came to the fore. Tapscott and Williams (2007) placed the emphasis on peer-to-peer collaboration and smart new web companies that invented and harnessed digital architectures for collaboration focused on the new ethos of participation and openness, with the aim of realizing real value for participants. They argued that we are entering a new phase of economic participation in the economy, 'where new forms of mass collaboration are changing how goods and services are invented, produced, marketed, and distributed on a global basis' (p. 10). The new information service corporations like Google, Facebook, YouTube, Linux, Wikipedia, Amazon.com and eEBay certainly utilize and depend for business on the principles of mass global participation and collaboration. The new digital economy depended on openness, peering, sharing, and acting globally. The contradiction was that these digital opportunities were the product of the massive information utilities, a group of US corporations each approaching a trillion dollars that represented the leading edge of the information economy. Critics like Fuchs (2008) argued that 'wikinomics' was a form of exploitation of unpaid labour and also an ideology ('digitalism') leading to an increase in precarious and unpaid labour. Mass collaboration has traditionally been associated with socialist self-management. The emergence of the cooperative economy, social media and peer-based commons production transcended 'the instrumental 1ogic of competition and instrumental reason and anticipated a society that is based on cooperation, sharing, and participation' (Fuchs 2008, p. 8). There is a well-established literature now twenty years old that argues for an anti-capitalist or social democratic potential of public goods inherent in the Internet (Atton 2004; Barbrook 1998, 1999, 2007; Benkler 2006, Lessig 2006; Söderberg 2002). Deep in the bowels of digital capitalism was a socialist sharing tendency that gave expression through new technology to the Marxist truism that knowledge and the value of knowledge is rooted in social relations.

This contradiction indicated an ironic turnaround. What started out as neoliberal managerialism that restructured higher education in the name of productivity gains and ruthlessly cut non-productive departments and made staff redundant, became the saviour of the Left by imprinting a form of 'digital socialism'. While the new digital technologies promoted collaboration peer-to-peer production and the production of social goods, the latter did not necessarily flourish in universities, event although the university was traditionally the home of transnational research relationships. New digital applications became highly concentrated in departments of computer science and depended on a new Technorati often recruited from industry and sympathetic to the administration, who managed staff and assisted them to load all courses on new delivery platforms and administered staff and student

management systems. There were large-scale changes in academic publishing especially in online journal systems, digital books and digital library outreach that provided full-text searches of large data bases from the 1990s onwards. Big academic publishers and internet aggregators made available new online journal systems and databases. The big academic publishers were quick to exploit the network effects of online systems and made substantial profits through bundling. Some, like Elsevier, the world's largest scientific journal publisher, were accused of price gauging and became the subject of a boycott organized by the Cambridge mathematician Timothy Gowers in 2012 not to publish or do any editorial work for the company's journals, including refereeing papers.

Digital Socialism

There has been a great deal of discussion about 'digital socialism' that also goes by a variety of other terms: the 'new new economy', 'gift economy', 'open knowledge production', 'peer production', 'collective intelligence', and 'postcapitalism'. These are a few of the more resilient terms to survive in the literature. Yet these terms, while attempting to name the Zeitgeist of the digital age and the form of economy in-waiting, have very different emphases. The extent to which these terms understand that 'digital socialism' is fundamentally an argument about intellectual property and the ownership of the means of digital production is most unclear.

We might accept the principles of the knowledge economy expressed in digital terms as a form of technological utopianism and the basis of a post-capitalist society. The now-traditional argument is that knowledge and information do not behave like other commodities that are depleted when used; rather, in an economy of abundance, information and knowledge goods can grow through shared use and therefore do not suffer the same economics of scarcity that characterized the industrial economy. Based on this simple truth, Paul Mason (Mason 2015a) argues that we are entering the 'postcapitalist era', the sharing economy and new ways of working that arise in a dynamic form from the old capitalist system, which have:

- reduced the need for work, blurred the edges between work and free time and loosened the relationship between work and wages;
- corrod[ed] the market's ability to form prices correctly. That is because markets are based on scarcity while information is abundant;
- led to the spontaneous rise of collaborative production: goods, services and organisations are appearing that no longer respond to the dictates of the market and the managerial hierarchy.

We are told that the signs are there, but you have to look hard for them: new currencies, time-banks, new style cooperatives, local exchange banks, novel forms of ownership and lending, new business models, reinvention of 'the commons', peer production, the production of new social goods and social innovation. Mason refers to Marx's *Fragment on Machines* (http://thenewobjectivity.com/pdf/marx.pdf) that

has inspired a generation of digital theorists from Manuel Castells to Yochai Benkler, who dream of free networked collaborative production of social goods. Marx's 'Fragment on Machines', a section of the *Grundrisse*, has become a crucial text for the analysis and definition of the Postfordist mode of production, especially by those thinkers influenced by the Italian *postoperaismo* conception of capitalism developed by Paul Virno, Hardt and Negri and other scholars (Pitts 2017). Virno (2001) suggests that Marx

> claims that, due to its autonomy from it, abstract knowledge—primarily yet not only of a scientific nature - is in the process of becoming no less than the main force of production and will soon relegate the repetitious labour of the assembly line to the fringes. This is the knowledge objectified in fixed capital and embedded in the automated system of machinery. Marx uses an attractive metaphor to refer to the knowledges that make up the epicentre of social production and preordain all areas of life: general intellect (http://generation-online.org/p/fpvirno10.htm).

Where capitalism was structured around the market that gave us massive and increasing global inequalities, postcapitalism, whose precondition is abundance, is (hopefully) to be structured around human liberation. Mason's (Mason 2015b) *PostCapitalism: A Guide to our Future* records the threat of the digital techno-revolution to capitalism in the tradition of Marx, Kondratiev, Hilferding and Schumpeter as well as Rifkin, Drucker, and Romer. The full vision imagines an information economy where social goods are produced at virtually no cost. Yet some Left critics argue that Mason has mischaracterized digital capitalism, misdiagnosed the inevitable decline of capitalism, overestimated the role of information technology and underestimated the role of finance, and ignores the green alternatives (http://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Main_Page). Yet the concept has taken hold. The full vision is also given expression by the web project 'Envisioning a Post-Capitalist Order' which is

> is a cooperative, nonsectarian venture of left journals, popular education centers, and electronic media. Our goal is to make easily available the wide range of new programs, experiments, and theories analyzing the transition beyond capitalism toward a socialist future, recognizing that "socialism" is a protean concept encompassing many different historical experiences and future possibilities (http://postcapitalistproject.org/about)

In these web pages, Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel's model of the 'participative economy' figures largely as part of the quest for a viable vision to replace neoliberalism. Peter Drucker (1993) was the first to use the term 'post-capitalism'. In an interview with Peter Schwartz in *Wired*, he opined

> International economic theory is obsolete. The traditional factors of production - land, labor, and capital - are becoming restraints rather than driving forces. Knowledge is becoming the one critical factor of production. It has two incarnations: Knowledge applied to existing processes, services, and products is productivity; knowledge applied to the new is innovation. (Schwarz 1993)

Drucker's *Post-Industrial Society*, along with works of Daniel Bell, Marc Porat and Alain Touraine, plotted the shape of post-industrial and post-capitalist society. Some might say it's been a long time coming but the outlines are clear enough and

our grasp of economic and social fundamentals are clearer now than any time in the past. The information revolution in its fifth generation has made the contours easier to understand: a deepening of neoliberal capitalism as a form of financialization—a highly symbolic mathematical game of trading futures with widening global inequalities—as well as an incipient socialization and democratization of knowledge through new brave social experiments involving participation, collaboration, peer production and collective intelligence that characterize the so-called knowledge economy with the capacity to transcend the paradigm of intellectual property (Fig. 14.1).

One savvy tech commentator, Kevin Kelly (2009), the founder of *Wired* magazine, used the term 'digital socialism' to proclaim that a new global collectivist society is coming online and he goes on to list communal aspects of digital culture based on sharing, cooperation, collaboration, and collectivism. He characterizes the differences between the old and the new socialism in the following way:

He provides a history of socialism that begins with Thomas More's *Utopia* in 1516 that, after the *Communist Manifesto* and the Russian Revolution, jumps into the information register by recording the birth of Blogger.com (1999), Google's one billion indexed pages (2000), Wikipedia (2001), Twitter (2006), Facebook's 100 million users (2008) and YouTube's 100 million monthly US users (2008). He is motivated by Clay Shirky's (2009) *Here Comes Everyone* and Yochair Benkler's *The Wealth of Networks*. He ends his brief essay with the following prophetic remark:

> We underestimate the power of our tools to reshape our minds. Did we really believe we could collaboratively build and inhabit virtual worlds all day, every day, and not have it affect our perspective? The force of online socialism is growing. Its dynamic is spreading beyond electrons—perhaps into elections. (Kelly 2009)

Without doubt, there has been massive technological change, but it is unclear to what extent 'digital socialism' has matured or, indeed, exists outside small resilient pockets to create the 'intellectual commons' with its new institutional possibilities. Can it really achieve its potential as a locus of true social and intellectual inclusion, and social and economic creativity? There is a deep transformation occurring wherein the Web has become a truly participatory media; instead of going on the web to read static content, we can more easily create and share our own ideas and creations. The rise of what has been alternately referred to as consumer- or user-generated media (content) has been hailed as being truly ground-breaking in nature. As we mentioned earlier, the contrast is clear in terms of a distinction between 'industrial media', 'broadcast' or 'mass' media which are highly centralized, hierarchical and vertical, based on one-to-many logic, versus social media which are decentralized (without a central server), non-hierarchical or peer governed, and horizontal based on many-to-many interaction. The intellectual commons provide an alternative to the currently dominant 'knowledge capitalism'. Whereas knowledge capitalism focuses on the economics of knowledge, emphasizing human capital development, intellectual property regimes, and efficiency and profit maximization, the intellectual commons, let's call it 'knowledge socialism', shifts the emphasis towards recognition that knowledge and its value are ultimately rooted

The Old Socialism	**The New Socialism**
Authority centralized among elite officials	Power distributed among ad hoc participants
Limited resources dispensed by the state	Unlimited, free cloud computing
Forced labor in government factories	Volunteer group work a la Wikipedia
Property owned in common	Sharing protected by Creative Commons
Government-controlled information	Real-time Twitter and RSS feeds
Harsh penalties for criticizing leaders	Passionate opinions on the Huffington Post

Fig. 14.1 The differences between the old and the new socialism characterized by Kevin Kelly (2009)

in social relations, a kind of genuine knowledge socialism that promotes the sociality of knowledge by providing mechanisms for a truly free exchange of ideas (Peters 2014).

Political Economy of Academic Publishing

Arif E. Jinha (2009) calculates that there are some 50 million articles in existence, the cumulative total since academic publishing began with *Le Journal des Sçavans* and *Philosophical Transactions*, both first published in 1665. He also indicates there were some 23,750 journal titles in 2006. The number of academic journals is increasing year by year. The history of scientific communication, even in the post-war period, is a mammoth undertaking where technological developments and the new paradigm of open knowledge production seem to outstrip our capacity to give an adequate theoretical account of them. There is so much experimentation by way of new electronic journals launched and new projects being established that it is near impossible to document even the range in its diversity, let along theorize its main characteristics and implications for the digitization of scientific communication. One source, perhaps the most comprehensive, provides a bibliography on scholarly electronic publishing that runs to 1400 items in English under such categories as: economic issues; electronic books & texts; electronic serials; general works; legal issues; library issues; new publishing models; publisher issues; repositories, e-prints and AOI (Bailey 2010; see also 2001). The history of electronic scientific communication itself is now nearly twenty years old, if we date the process from the appearance of the first electronic journals. The electronic revolution of those first utopian years in the early 1990s with predictions of the collapse of the traditional print-based system, the demise of academic publishers, and the replacement by electronic journals, has not yet happened.

The history of scientific communication demonstrates that the typical form of the scientific article presented in print-based journals in essay form is a result of development over two centuries, beginning in seventeenth century with the emergence of learned societies and cooperation among scientists. The development of the journal and scientific norms of cooperation, forms of academic writing and the norm of peer review was part of the institutionalization of science. The model of the Royal Society that was emulated elsewhere in Europe and the US, and then later institutionalization, received a strong impetus from the emergence of the modern research university, beginning with the establishment of the University of Berlin in 1810 in the reforms of Humboldt. This institutionalization of science was necessarily also a part of the juridical-legal system of writing that grew up around the notion of a professional scientist and academic, the notion of the academic author, the idea of public science or research, the ownership of ideas and academic recognition for the author who claimed originality for a discovery, set of results or piece of scholarship.

Mark Ware (Ware 2015), in his overview of scientific and scholarly journal publishing, suggests

> There are estimated to be of the order of 5000–10,000 journal publishers globally, of which around 5000 are included in the Scopus database. The main English-language trade and professional associations for journal publishers collectively include about 650 publishers producing around 11,550 journals, that is, about 50% of the total journal output by title. Of these, some 480 publishers (73%) and about 2300 journals (20%) are not-for-profit […]

> There were about 28,100 active scholarly peer-reviewed English-language journals in late 2014 (plus a further 6450 non-English-language journals), collectively publishing about 2.5 million articles a year. The number of articles published each year and the number of journals have both grown steadily for over two centuries, by about 3% and 3.5% per year respectively, though there are some indications that growth has accelerated in recent years. The reason is the equally persistent growth in the number of researchers, which has also grown at about 3% per year and now stands at between 7 and 9 million, depending on definition, although only about 20% of these are repeat authors […] (Ware 2015, p. 6)

He estimates the annual revenues from English-language STM journal publishing are estimated at about $10 billion in 2013, in an industry that employs 110,000 people globally. These figure are now hopelessly out of date. Larivière et al. (2015) investigate 'The Oligopoly of Academic Publishers in the Digital Era'. Analysing 45 million documents indexed in the Web of Science over the period 1973–2013, they show that Reed-Elsevier, Wiley Blackwell, Springer, and Taylor and Francis substantially increased their share of the world's published output:

> Combined, the top five most prolific publishers account for more than 50% of all papers published in 2013.Disciplines of the social sciences have the highest level of concentration (70% of papers from the top five publishers), while the humanities have remained relatively independent (20% from top five publishers). (Larivière 2015, p. 1)

This concentration of ownership and the number journals will be affected by the introduction of AI and deep learning into academic publishing particularly with detecting plagiarism and data fabrication, but also through the use of search engines for published texts and data (https://www.enago.com/academy/artificial-intelligence-research-publishing/). Major publishers are looking carefully at the transformation from publishing to data analytics. WCU depends on citation analysis, a flawed but objective measure that drives rankings of research universities. Quality of teaching is elusive and based on outcomes and subjective reputational measures. Journal impact factors are notoriously fickle and open to manipulation (Davis 2017), but in large measure they determined the research component of most global rankings. To be sure, one of the biggest hurdles to openness and alternatives to rankings are publication paywalls.

Open Access, cOAlition S, and 'Plan S'

As Marc Schiltz (2018) President of Science Europe, argues under the heading 'Open Access is Foundational to the Scientific Enterprise':

> Universality is a fundamental principle of science (the term "science" as used here includes the humanities): only results that can be discussed, challenged, and, where appropriate,

> tested and reproduced by others qualify as scientific. Science, as an institution of organised criticism, can therefore only function properly if research results are made openly available to the community so that they can be submitted to the test and scrutiny of other researchers. Furthermore, new research builds on established results from previous research. The chain, whereby new scientific discoveries are built on previously established results, can only work optimally if all research results are made openly available to the scientific community.
>
> Publication paywalls are withholding a substantial amount of research results from a large fraction of the scientific community and from society as a whole. This constitutes an absolute anomaly, which hinders the scientific enterprise in its very foundations and hampers its uptake by society. Monetising the access to new and existing research results is profoundly at odds with the ethos of science (Merton 1973). There is no longer any justification for this state of affairs to prevail and the subscription-based model of scientific publishing, including its so-called 'hybrid' variants, should therefore be terminated. In the 21st century, science publishers should provide a service to help researchers disseminate their results. They may be paid fair value for the services they are providing, *but no science should be locked behind paywalls*! (Schiltz 2018)

Openness is more than just a notional global public good as 'Plan S' demonstrates: "Plan S is an initiative for Open Access publishing that was launched in September 2018. The plan is supported by cOAlition S, an international consortium of research funders. Plan S requires that, from 2020, scientific publications that result from research funded by public grants must be published in compliant Open Access journals or platforms" (https://www.coalition-s.org/). The main principle is uncompromising: "By 2020 scientific publications that result from research funded by public grants provided by participating national and European research councils and funding bodies must be published in compliant Open Access Journals or on compliant Open Access Platforms (https://www.coalition-s.org/about/). National research funding organizations in Europe, with the support of the European Commission and the European Research Council (ERC), announced the launch Plan S based on ten principles enumerated here:

1. Authors retain copyright of their publication with no restrictions. All publications must be published under an open license, preferably the Creative Commons Attribution Licence CC BY. In all cases, the license applied should fulfil the requirements defined by the Berlin Declaration;
2. The Funders will ensure jointly the establishment of robust criteria and requirements for the services that compliant high quality Open Access journals and Open Access platforms must provide;
3. In case such high quality Open Access journals or platforms do not yet exist, the Funders will, in a coordinated way, provide incentives to establish and support them when appropriate; support will also be provided for Open Access infrastructures where necessary;
4. Where applicable, Open Access publication fees are covered by the Funders or universities, not by individual researchers; it is acknowledged that all scientists should be able to publish their work Open Access even if their institutions have limited means;

5. When Open Access publication fees are applied, their funding is standardised and capped (across Europe);
6. The Funders will ask universities, research organisations, and libraries to align their policies and strategies, notably to ensure transparency;
7. The above principles shall apply to all types of scholarly publications, but it is understood that the timeline to achieve Open Access for monographs and books may be longer than 1 January 2020;
8. The importance of open archives and repositories for hosting research outputs is acknowledged because of their long-term archiving function and their potential for editorial innovation;
9. The 'hybrid' model of publishing is not compliant with the above principles;
10. The Funders will monitor compliance and sanction non-compliance. (https://www.coalition-s.org/10-principles/)

The battle with big academic publishers is becoming more intense. Sarah Zhang (Zhang 2019) asks 'Is this the end of a very profitable business model?', after the University of California broke with Elsevier, one of the world's largest academic publishers. As she indicates: 'The university would no longer pay Elsevier millions of dollars a year to subscribe to its journals. It simply walked away' (https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/03/uc-elsevier-publisher/583909/). She reports:

> Not so long ago, blowing off a publisher as important as Elsevier would have been unthinkable. But academics have been joining in an open revolt against Elsevier's extremely profitable business model. In 2012, mathematicians started a petition to boycott the publisher that has since been signed by more than 17,000 researchers. In December 2016, universities in Germany stopped paying for Elsevier's journals. In 2018, the same thing happened in Sweden and then Hungary.

There is a global push for open access science and that scientific publishers are increasing bypassing publishers (Elliott and Resnik 2019). The Office of Scholarly Communication, the University of California, reports that the Academic Council

> signals its collective and resolute commitment to support UC's negotiating position with Elsevier in order to advance UC's mission as a public institution, make the products of our research and scholarship as freely and widely available as possible, and ensure that UC spends taxpayer money in the most ethically, morally, and socially-responsible way when entering into agreements with commercial publishers.

UC was looking for an agreement where their Elsevier authors would retain their copyrights and articles would become open access. The Council statement goes on to say: 'Most significantly, a successful agreement would align closely with the mission of the University to provide "long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge."' (https://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/open-access-at-uc/publisher-negotiations/uc-and-elsevier/).

While Plan S and journal Open Access do not exhaust the concept of 'digital socialism' or even approximate to a political system of openness, they do provide a powerful working example and a massive historical watershed to academic

publishing in the digital age that threatens to destablise the academic market and the neoliberal idea of the university insofar as it impinges of the paradigm of intellectual property. They check the dominance of big publishers in the West that props up a hegemonic system of an Anglo-American, historically privileged global journal knowledge system. As for 'digital socialism' or 'post-capitalism' more broadly within academia, we might have to wait a while for the main revolution.

With characteristic economic and political insight, Roberto Mangabeira Unger (Unger 2018) sums up the collective promise of the most advanced practice of production:

> A new practice of production has emerged in all the major economies of the world. The simplest and most telling of its many names is the knowledge economy. We might also call it the experimental economy to highlight its most characteristic attitude to its own work. It holds the promise of changing, to our benefit, some of the most deep- seated and universal regularities of economic life and of dramatically enhancing productivity and growth.
>
> Its effects, however, have so far proved modest. Instead of spreading widely, it has remained restricted to vanguards of production, employing few workers. Entrepreneurial and technological elites control it. A handful of large global firms have reaped the lion's share of the profits that it has yielded. It appears in every part of the production system; the habit of equating it with high-technology industry is unwarranted. In every sector of the economy, however, it remains a narrow fringe, excluding the vast majority of the labor force. Even though its products are used ever more widely, its revolutionary practices continue to be quarantined.

The WCU and the global ranking schemes legitimate the discourse and continue to profit from the illusion of an 'implausible dream' (Mittelman 2017). The benefits of open access have yet to spread to the Global South and help to distribute the benefits of the knowledge economy more widely. Scholars have been discussing alternatives to the reputational race. Hazelhorn and Gibson (2017) mention that the 'flagship' university developed 'in explicit opposition to the self-serving WCU' (p. 8), the 'civic' university, and the 'world-class system' (WCS). Our suggestion, in line with a sharing academic economy and the critique of neoliberalism is 'knowledge socialism'. Universities need to share knowledge in the search for effective responses to pressing world problems of fragile global ecologies and the growing significance of technological unemployment. This is a model that proceeds from a very different set of economic and moral assumptions than the neoliberal knowledge economy and the WCU. It focuses on the logic of distribution of knowledge to regions outside the mainstream Anglo-American top 200; it looks to institutional, national and global platforms that operate on the model of collective intelligence and peer production; and, it actively promotes the principles of knowledge socialism.

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Chapter 15
Spaces of Life: Transgressions in Conceptualising the World Class University

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Abstract Beyond knowledge, critical thinking, new ideas, rigorous science and scholarly development, this chapter argues for the university as a space of life. Through the complexities and incommensurabilities of academic life, and drawing on Julia Kristeva's notion of revolt, Emmanuel Levinas' notion of Otherness, and Novalis' concept of Romantisierung, it makes a philosophical argument for recognizing what might appear as uncomfortable transgressions of the marketable, measurable characteristics of World Class Universities. In various ways, the chapter asks where there is space, in the World Class University, for elements which may not overtly align with the neoliberal clamour for international recognition and esteem. In elevating everyday life in the university, the chapter blurs boundaries of the celebrated, strived for rankings with the spaces of life that are dark and heterotopic, messily entangled with histories, polyphonic human and more than human voice, beings and energies, within the university. Revolt provokes a re-turn to re-question the ethics and boundaries of treatments of 'world' and 'class' in conceptions of the World Class University. Here, 'World Class University' is not necessarily a globally streamlined and internationally bench-marked institution, flexing its socio-economic muscles in the face of the world. Instead, it is an institution that speaks for others who have been made silent and deprived of their own critical voice. It speaks for the suppressed and marginalized, and it speaks for the ones who

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_15

are no longer with us, or who have not yet arrived. It speaks for the people and the times yet to come.

Introduction

Original knowledge creation, critical thinking, rigorous science and scholarly development are all elements of world class universities. World class, most often classified as "research-oriented" universities, "are recognized as basic social infrastructure for national development" as Jang and Kim (2013) assert, which is "ultimately, […] a core hub of knowledge creation that determines national competitiveness" (p. 725). Indeed, in their outline of an "ideal emergent concept of world class universities" Rodriguez-Pomeda and Casani (2016) point out the reified position held by research universities, as "the pinnacle of the world's academic systems" (p. 1270). But what inheres in the spaces of those universities, upheld as the pinnacle for knowledge creation and thinking? What kind of a place is it to live in, where 'basic social infrastructure' is developed, sufficient to lead to 'national development', where we write, know, and build university and national competitiveness? Competition is fierce, in the creation of knowledge (Jang and Kim 2013), and "building global research capacity is central to the creation of a world class university" (p. 726).

This chapter investigates what lies behind these 'pinnacles of knowledge'. It takes up Julia Kristeva's (1998) questioning of where we *are*, in our academic space, in our 'core hubs', our 'pinnacles', where we *do* our "thinking-writing" (p. 8), together with Levinas' (2000) proposition that personal growth occurs when the self is somewhat diminished, and Novalis' (1960b) suggestion for a transformative metaphysics. The chapter elevates the complexities of the mysterious. Suggesting that our thinking-writing represents a "passage to the limits of the self, a crossing of frontiers" (Kristeva 1998, p. 8), Kristeva, for instance, helps us to blur the boundaries of the space of the world class university, and our place within it. Conceptualising the world class university, the *where* of such boundary crossings, where we think and write, what we propose here may be akin to what Kristeva calls a "space of life" (p. 8), what Levinas describes as "an ethical language" (p. 94), and what Novalis may be striving for as a site of "free *concatenation*" (Wood 2007, p. 168).

Rethinking the idea of the world class university through various lenses on 'spaces of life' recognises *reverberations*—as people, for example, reverberate with the placefulness of the university. Places and people connect in experiential co-existence, which can result in engagement or estrangement (Gieryn 2000, p. 476). Our thinking-writing-living in this instance arises through our co-existences from our distinct contexts: We are four academics, lecturers, and researchers, at two different universities, *placed* almost as far apart as we could be, in Denmark and New Zealand. As distant as they are from each other, our universities latch on to similar pinnacles, imbued with neoliberal competitiveness, creating knowledge, building research capacity, and 'internationalisation', upholding the values of global esteem,

benchmarks, and international impact factors (University of Waikato 2017). Profit-driven motives risk subjugating academic rigour and critical thought, placing us as academics in this perplexing international realm, where thoughtfulness and local connectedness often become side-lined or relegated to superficiality and marketing speak (Lund and Arndt 2018; Arndt and Mika 2018). Grappling with such conflicting complexities, whilst striving to make meaning of them, our connections across the countries derive from the very issues of concern in this chapter. Our work together is arguably the result of world class university encounters and connections, (collective and individual) otherness, emerging at international conferences and striving for what we may not yet know. Kristeva, Levinas and Novalis invite a distinctly different idea of the university to that driven by globalised instrumental knowledge creation, in the arguments made through this chapter for reclaiming heterotopia, heterogeneity, estrangement and arationality. First, however, we will elaborate our conceptions of space and place in this rethinking of the WCU as spaces of life.

Re-configuring the Space of the World Class University

Being *in* the world and being *a* world simultaneously, the university manifests itself as *location*, *locale* and *sense of place* (Cresswell 2004, p. 7). First of all, the university has a location, some fixed coordinates on the Earth's surface which enable us to find it on a map: it is a specific localisable *where*. Secondly, the university has material form—locale—that enable us to enter and leave it and its offices, rooms, squares and so on: it is an occupiable *thing* through its buildings and campus. Finally, the inhabitants or users of the university might have academic, personal and emotional attachments to the university as a place through its ability to evoke a sense of place: it becomes a habitat through its ability to be a vitalised *body* that creates sense, meaning and belonging.

Besides having location, locale and sense of place, the university can be further characterised as a 'striated' or 'smooth' space (Casey 1997). Striated university space is characterised by being organised by fixed schemata and is 'counted in order to be occupied' as well as assigned determinate values. Such university space is shaped from a fixed point of view—an indifferent *any-where*, *any-thing* and *any-body*—and occupation of such space becomes movement from point to point, from one location to another; it is the university as transitional, universal space or circulation area. It is not a place to find life or become vitalised.

Smooth university places, on the other hand, are characterised by allowing for considerable irregularity and can be "occupied without being counted". They present themselves as heterogeneous and brimming with "qualitative multiplicities". Such places are without external point of view—they are intimate contact points always being *some-where*, *some-thing* and *some-body*. Occupying smooth places requires wanderlust, indwelling as well as embracing diversity and cohesiveness; it is a "polyvocality of directions" (see Casey 1997, p. 303–304).

In striated space the Whole or World of the university is brought to order through an imposed system of interlineation and segmentation of fixed positions. The result is a university as 'space of localities' rather than 'region of sensed places'. Conversely, we can experience dwelling by moving into smooth place—a life of movement in thought, action or being. Such a university as place for *vitalising academic events* require that we view and treat the idea of the university as *placeful smooth architecture*. Through this, the university not only 'takes place' but also 'gives place' by creating room for things to happen:

> We are reminded of Heidegger's emphasis on *Räumen* (clearing space), *Einräumen* (making room) and *Raumgeben* (giving space). Similarly, 'spacing,' a term that persists throughout Derrida's writings, implies the clearing of space for events to happen: spacing is giving them room in which to occur. *Such room is room for place*. (Casey 1997, p. 313).

Off course, it is never the case that *all* inhabitants of a place such as a university feel that they belong or are 'given place.' But if the university does not manifest itself as a smooth, vitalised place, large portions of its inhabitants risk becoming *persona non locata* or 'people out of place' such as refugees, expats, minorities, homeless, displaced or other excluded people. In this way, a home for one group of people to dwell, can cause another group of people to become outsiders or expats if the university is a striated space organised for certain ways of 'being a proper academic' without clearing space, making room or giving place for alternative and potentially 'improper' ways of being an academic (Cresswell 2004, p. 13).

The opposite of the university as 'indifferent striated space' for the passer-by, Bachelard calls 'felicitous place' for the dweller—some-where we can fall into and fall in love with. A 'eulogised place' that fosters 'topophilia' or a 'love of place' (Bachelard 1958). Felicitous smooth places form a university where thinking, doing and being can come alive and grow affectionate bonds through the development of a 'feeling-link' between people and place (Tuan 1997). Through promoting topophilia, the university comes alive as vitalised some-thing—*it becomes a place-world or a world of places* dreamed, imagined, loved, remembered and read (Casey 1997). Universities capable of infusing topophilia in their inhabitants will often emerge in the form of heterotopias rather than utopias:

> Whereas utopias are 'sites with no place' and represent a perfected (and thus radically transformed) state of society [or university], heterotopias are real places that contest and reverse sites within a given society [...]. Each of these heterotopias is at once 'absolutely different' from the surrounding places they reflect—and yet at the same time actually locatable in geographic reality. (Casey 1997, p. 300)

In short, heterotopias consists of architectural spaces that form a some-body configured as a 'diverse us' and that provide heterogenous places for that 'us' to live without emplacing that living. The university as a space of life is configured as a simultaneous dwelling-in and spacing-out, where the 'out' also implies a *trans-* as in transition, transformation and transgression. Consequently, a vitalising university is on the move towards becoming a place—or a space of life—in all its heterotopic imperfection and disrupted transgressions—a place configured as a 'detotalized

totality' or something seizing to be an organised any-where and emerging as a living event (Casey 1997).

Developing the conception of the university as a space of life even further, Lefebvre and his call for movement against the colonization of places to reclaim the places of everyday life comes to mind. For Lefebvre this can be accomplished through insurgent 'counter-discourses' based on new practices of and in 'concrete places'. Concrete place, for Lefebvre, signifies a bottom-up and autonomous reaction to those systems or institutional agents whose dominance have degraded smooth and 'sensed place' to striated and 'abstract space'. To vitalise university space and transform it into a sensed place its inhabitants and users need to challenge the striated space and recapture it as smooth place:

> Places have power sui generis, all apart from powerful people or organisations who occupy them: the capacity to dominate and control people or things comes through the geographic location, built-form, and symbolic meanings of a place. The array of building-types is, on this score, also a catalogue of how places differently become terrains of powers [...] spaces become the focus of government [or institutional] development policies, and control of territory is one measure of effective state sovereignty. Place enables power to travel, to extend its reach over people and territory. (Gieryn 2000, p. 475–476)

Following this, heterotopic place becomes vital for our ability to think, be and do at the university. To be a space of life and have world class, the university needs to reconfigure itself as a vitalised and vitalising place centred around the being-well and well-being of its inhabitants (Casey 1997). The university must be a *friend of being*.

Following this thinking, it becomes clear how engagement or estrangement can be built into the university. Building on Gieryn, the places most conducive to lively academic communities are 'disordered' and 'unpurified' and give the academics a stake in the process of place-making. The places are open-ended, un-finished, multipurpose and non-determined—leaving it up to the inhabitants to shape the space into a lively place that suits their current dreams, needs and aspirations best. This is in opposition to the specialisation of function and stratification of ownership, affiliation and participation in relation to the 'systematised' and 'stratified' university that creates 'enclaves' (see Gieryn 2000, p. 476–478).

The 'striated' university displays an architecture that determines proper academic use and discourages displays of academic resistance, activism, takeover or transgression (see Gieryn 2000, p. 478–480 for a similar account of the cityscape). The *hegemony* of striated institutional space—the system's exercise of repressive power over the university as a Whole or World, as idea and environment—grows from the concurrent instrumentalisation, homogenisation, compartmentalisation, colonisation and 'technical' systematisation of university space. In this neoliberal transformation, striated space is produced and smooth place is eroded. This hegemony of striated space weighs down on academic life—it systematises, unifies and rationalises it on the backdrop of neoliberal institutional logic—in effect flattening the academic sphere and diluting its thinking, doing and being. This is the overall effect of losing lived smooth academic place to abstract striated institutional space.

> Abstract space, the space of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, bound up as it is with the exchange (of goods and commodities, as of written and spoken words etc.) depends on

> consensus more than any space before it [...] So long everyday life remains in thrall to abstract space, with its very concrete constraints; so long as the only improvements to occur are technical improvements of detail (for example, the frequency and speed of transportation, or relatively better amenities); so long, in short, as the only connection between work spaces, leisure spaces and living spaces is supplied by the agencies of political power and by the mechanisms of control—so long must the project of 'changing life' remain no more than a political rallying cry to be taken up or abandoned according to the mood of the moment. (Lefebvre 1974, p. 57–59).

Taken together, to be without life-giving place is to be almost non-existent as a living being, nothing more than a working vessel for the university system. Here, a re-configuration of the university and its conception of world class, through a change in the conceptualisation and construction of university space and place, becomes necessary for the university to obtain 'worldhood' and for academics to feel that they belong in that world (Nørgård and Bengtsen, 2016; Nørgård and Bengtsen, 2018). To do so we must connect what Lefebvre calls 'representations of space' (conceptualising, designing and constructing the university) with 'representational spaces' (inhabitation, practice, experience and lifeworld of the university).

As of now, the university as 'conceived and constructed' is strangely different from the university as something 'lived through'. The way forward, it seems, is to create 'vitalising interventions' by way of re-configuring university space through collective transformation, transgression and production. We need to re-configure the world-class university as place, rather than setting it up as a space of power. To do so, we need a framework for 're-critiquing', 're-voking' and 're-conceiving' the world class university. In the next sections of this chapter we will try to do just that through the thinking of Kristeva, Levinas and Novalis in order to see the university as a heterogeneous space of life of disconcensus, dissidence, disobedience, and even exile.

Re-Critiquing the World Class University

Following the above outline, perhaps, the 'World Class University' is not only a globally streamlined and internationally bench-marked institution, flexing its socio-economic muscles in the face of the increasingly globalised world. Through Kristeva's (2014) notion of revolt, a return to re-question the ethics and boundaries of treatments of 'world' and 'class', in conceptions of the university, and of its worldliness and class is in order. Perhaps, then, this is an institution that speaks for others who have been made silent and deprived of their own critical voice, and perhaps that is what makes it 'world class'? Maybe it speaks from an ethical imperative (Lingis 1998) for the suppressed and marginalized, and for the ones who are no longer with us, or who have not yet arrived, or for the people and the times yet to come.

Whilst potentially viewed as brutal, Kristeva's notion of revolt calls for a cautious approach. It requires the utmost sensitivity, respect and concern not only for

the diverse cultures and individuals involved, but for the past, present and future of their knowledges, languages and ways of being. At the same time it is a call for a certain ruthlessness, for standing up for what is important—for resisting the danger of (re)colonisations in university spaces and behaviours. As with Novalis who, as we shall see, understood all representations as deeply world-entwined acts, thinking with Kristeva (2014) is not a call for a large-scale overthrow of the (university or societal) regime, but rather a deep and critical questioning and thought: a vital and transformative process. Practically and theoretically, revolt calls for constant re-negotiation. In a Levinasian (2000, p. 75) sense too, revolt is a form of anarchy, a goodness that does not hold back but shatters the totality of the fixed, the said, and the hardening and brutality of exclusion. Revolt, is thus the sheer force of vulnerability unleashed. Anarchy, Levinas states, is always 'non-thematizable' and 'metalogical'; it cannot be contained in the logos of reason (Levinas 2000, p. 102). Positing revolt as a disturbance of university agendas, not to argue against them, but to unsettle its spaces and the lives within them, it offers a provocative rupture of dominant orientations towards heterogeneity in the form of cultural Otherness, for example, where revolting might lead to a decolonizing openness. One might imagine a revolting re-orientation—withholding fully seeking to 'know' the Other, as Levinas (2000) warns against—towards the Other, the lost, the academic refugees referred to above, and to what are considered 'improper ways of being an academic' through the normalizing practices of international benchmarks, measuring tools, impact factors and citation levels. In what ways might revolt (re)-elevate diverse academic Othernesses, in the form of 'slow' academia, for example, when all around there is pressure to do more, and to do it faster?

Kristeva distinguishes revolt from revolution, rejection or destruction, and instead sees it as an ongoing questioning, where to "think is to question" and "to question is to revolt" (Roberts 2005). In questioning, revolt elevates the "little things, tiny revolts" that are necessary, in Kristeva's (2002) view, "to preserve the life of the mind and of the species" (p. 5). Rather than being some kind of movement, then, revolt becomes a "temporal disposition of subjectivity" (Sjöholm 2004, p. 84), implicating each of us and our limits, frontiers and boundaries. It follows Kristeva's positing of thought as a 'true' form of dissidence, as we mentioned in the introduction. Countering what Kristeva laments as a dangerous *lack* of revolt in society, universities *should* perhaps be seen not only as spaces of vitalization, but also of heterogeneity and dissidence. Dissident thought in this sense implies a "ruthless and irreverent dismantling of the workings of discourse, thought, and existence" (Kristeva 1986a, p. 299). In terms of the university, this means taking the time to get to know its discourses and to learn about thought and what it means to exist within it. As a space of life, what would it mean, then, for the university to foster revolt "first and foremost" in "opposition to already established norms, values and powers" (Kristeva 2014, p. 4)? Might this opposition cultivate spaces for liminalities, allowing for attitudinal shifts, the ethical and moral, onto-epistemological imperatives, of the university and what it means to exist in 'world class' spaces outlined earlier?

Compelling us in a temporal return, to revolt also invokes pasts, forgotten, perhaps idealised, histories, localities, as well as presents and futures. It compels us to difference, rather than sameness, to recognise and accommodate the foreigner, even when s/he inheres within each of us, as Kristeva (1991) insists, as she urges us "to live *as others* (p. 2), which we find described in Levinas as "finding oneself while losing oneself" (2000 p. 11), which defines our being as a being *for* the other in contrast to the Heideggerian being-*with*. Novalis, similarly, but perhaps more metaphysically, also wants us to question our existence, but now in relation to the living matter of all things in the world—not as complete-Other but as co-constitutive-Other. Rather than offering a solution, revolt and our own Otherness, therefore, alert us to liminal potentialities, of "unique, uncompromisingly questioning *inner* experiences" towards "re-formative" (Kristeva 2014, p. 3) shifts and reconceptualisations of what fundamentally may remain foreign even to ourselves. These rediscoveries of the self, of one's self, beyond frontiers, thresholds and boundaries, lead to re-forming the inner subjective 'I' within our universities' interpersonal, contextual and relational milieu (Arndt 2013).

The 'worldly class' of a university might further tap into the potential of revolt to work actively with our inextricable connectedness and relational interdependencies in times of global scale refugee crises, wars, and anthropocentrisms. Not writing specifically about universities, but of a societal level of perception, Kristeva (2014) notes that "[p]opular uprisings, indignant youth, toppled-down dictators, oligarchic presidents dismissed, hopes dashed and liberties crushed in prisons, fixed trials and bloodbaths" raise the questions: "[c]ould 'revolt', … be—at this digital age—in the process of shaking up humankind of its dream of hyperconnectedness? Or could it just be a trick played on us by the culture of spectacle to last longer?" (p. 1). Within this heightened human implicatedness in ecological and global uncertainties, the possibilities of not-knowing, non-knowledge become elevated as an imperative of the global university, aligning with and forming a bridge to a posthumanist (Braidotti 2013) and vital, or 'new' materialist, thinking (Barad 2003; Bennett 2010). Kristeva's (2014) challenge is whether revolt is "even possible—in our times, where misery is everywhere, debt, austerity and unemployment are endemic, when local wars can turn into global ones and when we run the risk of being flooded by the melting of the icecaps" (p. 1). At the level of the sharp-edged, overly epistemic university, Novalis' (1960a) words, too, foreshadow a current disregard for certain kinds of registers in universities, in favour of heavily demarcated empirical discourses:

> [Shrewder] members busied themselves tirelessly with purging the poetry from nature, the earth, the human soul, and the sciences—eradicating every trace of the sacred, spoiling the memory of all virtuous events and people by sarcasm, and divesting the world of all colourful decoration. Due to its submission to mathematics as well as its brashness, light had become their [those members'] favourite. They delighted in the fact that it would sooner be refracted than play amongst colour, and so their great concern—Enlightenment—became its namesake] (trans. Mika 2013, p. 165).

Reconfiguring our dream of hyperconnectedness may indeed be what is needed to rattle our images of contemporary global concerns and their local implications.

What are the 'culture of spectacle' or the 'virtuous events' and 'colourful decoration' to which Kristeva and Novalis refer in a world class university? Might these be the realisation of Kristeva's argument, that within society today there is a lack of a comprehensive narrative, that the complexity is flattened and histories and stories forgotten? Might they be the narratives of heterogeneous spaces and relationalities necessary in the university that is in dire need of revolt? Revolting against hegemonic cultural expectations and otherness calls for many forms and sensitivities, to (re)insert and (re)validate multiplicities and difficulties, to reveal and value, rather than continue to marginalise, multiple subjugated stories. Revolt pushes us to linger, to ruminate in the liminalities, in what we might call a certain chaos of rethinking the nuances of raw, brute, intimate senses of subjectivities, identities and dignity. It is, in Levinasian terms (2000, p. 47), to resist the 'nominalization' where the identity will be 'congealed' into a particular form, gender, sex, persona, profile, or type. The true responsibility that lies at the heart of revolt is a responsibility for the 'unrepresentable' and the 'irrecuperable' (ibid.).

Revolt then involves a 'patient and meticulous' dismantling of the workings of the university and its culture, and "requires ceaseless analysis, vigilance and will to subversion" (Kristeva 1986b, p. 299), provoking an *attitude* of dissidence as much as *acts* of revolt. New forms of consciousness combine, including the unconscious, with "the pressure of desire" (Kristeva 1986b, p. 307), as we ruminate amongst our university spaces and directives. Revolt, it seems, may bring us closer to accepting the uncertainty of our own and the university's evolving identities. Perhaps through revolt we might shift the (invisible and visible) chaos and displacements of the space and place, of *all* of our histories, situatedness and Otherness, in the 'world class' of the university?

Rather than negating policies aimed at moulding 'world classness' into our universities, increasing openness to the impermanence and fragility, the nuanced, non-static identity of university spaces, implies critical philosophical engagements. Such engagements are likely to expose and unsettle knowledges that represent and create privilege and marginality, through purposeful attention to historical and cultural examinations. We might question knowledge further: to make space for the expected richness that all participants, human and non-human actants, should bring to an educational setting, for example, when dominant conceptions of knowledge alone seem inadequate to render meaningful engagements and 'knowledge production'. Rather than striving for narrowly defined, rankable knowledge, perhaps even a relative state of ignorance, or not knowing, could allow a more open, decolonising orientation towards the enmeshed complexities and uncertainties inherent in experiences of Otherness within the university.

To do this, revolt requires a vital and transformative process of re-negotiation, of our evolving identities, where each of us, like our universities, is rendered, to a certain extent, unknowable. Work is necessary to avoid merely to challenge and question, which only "opens the way to madness" (Kristeva, 1984 p. 145). A critical counteraction to the moral transgression of *non-revolt* turns us to Levinas, and questions of estrangement, or alienation, of and within academia.

Revoking the Tendency to Know the Other

Spaces for life in the university are found, too, in dark and unsettling forms of learning and existing, places that are askew, dislocated, and other. Such forms of learning and being are not always fully lit and possible to detect. Even highly active forms of learning may take place without us being able to register and assess them immediately (Bengtsen and Barnett 2017; Dall'Alba and Bengtsen 2019). New knowledge, encountered through critical dialogue, does not always align well with a student's or teacher's preconceptions, and it may 'cause ontological discomfort' (Barnett 2007, p. 76) and 'displace' them. Becoming aware, through historical studies and revolt, for example, of one's own country's oppressive colonial past may be disturbing, and realising in a critical debate that one's truth claims are not as strong and well-fortified as one thought may be unsettling and leave an imprint of fragility and uncertainty. Through deep learning, students are drawn into alien learning places, which, according to Barnett, is one of the aims of "genuine 'higher' education […]—to displace the student's being into not just new, but strange places" (ibid.). Such places, new and strange, widen the polyvocality of higher education and expand the spaces for life in ways in which experiences of doubt, frustration, and perhaps even anger become part of learning *as* revolt. Spaces for life in the university are not only redeeming and releasing, but may be spaces where our thought and very being becomes 'unhinged' (Sparrow 2013).

Spaces for life may indeed feel alien in their liminality, and they exist at the very limits of order and familiarity. According to Waldenfels (2011), the experience of the alien "emerges in the shape of something extraordinary that cannot find its place in the respective order, and at the same time, as what is being excluded, it is not nothing" (Waldenfels 2011, p. 4). The experience of alien forms of understanding, or the feeling of alienation through critical discussion with peers, takes place on the verge between the known and unknown. Similarly to notions of Other in Kristeva and Novalis above, the "radical character of the alien' is not 'something entirely different from the own and familiar, but at the same time it cannot 'be deduced from the own'" (Waldenfels 2011, p. 35). Novalis also identified this peculiar return to self but also the "sheer otherness" (Kuzniar 2003, p. 435) of the world, including the self. The in-between space, or the "darkness of learning" (Bengtsen and Barnett 2017, p. 123ff.), creates a twilight zone in which it becomes difficult to know what beliefs, thoughts, and realities one should hold on to. In spaces for life, we find a wanderlust, where some students, teachers, and researchers are led astray, perhaps even lured into places of reasoning and critique that are dubious and worrying. Being able to reach such to oneself unfamiliar and uncanny modes of thinking, and to be able to critically resolve them, is indeed a sign of a 'higher' or 'world-class' form of learning. This space for life is found in the very darkness being, where the list of academic allies may run thin, where one's hope may start to flicker, and where the entire project of one's higher education is blurred. This space of life is powerful, yet troubling.

Even though such alien spaces for life may make us feel uncertain, vulnerable, and dislocated from previous knowledge, literacies or forms of behaviour in the university (and beyond), they are central for deep and advanced learning. The notion of the alien differentiates between a learning space, where new knowledge becomes neatly assimilated into earlier preconceptions and worldviews, and places for learning, where a deeper and more profound learning commitment is made possible. The revolt takes place in an alien space for life. To revolt is to welcome the alien, the unfixed, and the unhinged. The vulnerability and openness connected to alien places make a deeper form of belonging to the university possible. As Levinas points out, it is when I "posit myself deposed of my sovereignty" that a more profound opportunity for learning and growth appears, and "[p]aradoxically it is qua alienus—foreigner and other—that man is not alienated" (Levinas 2000, p. 59). As Barnett argues, in line with this point, there is a "[h]ospitality to be found in pedagogies of strangeness" (Barnett 2007, p.76), and through encountering what's alien to us, we not only find our own self in new ways, but we find each other. We learn from being with each other in alien places that "thickets cannot suddenly clear" and that students, and sometimes teachers too, have "to be enabled to live with this sense of being lost" (ibid.). This is an honest pedagogy in the sense that it invites not only the traversing of higher education learning spaces, but to locate, dwell and *be* in its places for learning. Alien places bring out new forms of life.

Spaces of life, then, are places of exile. Deep thinking and learning in the world-class university manage constantly to test and challenge norms for academic thinking, literacies, and even for being. Doukhan (2014) defines exile as "the very breakdown of the social bond in that the exiled finds herself either cut off from her community or alienated and enstranged within a new community, and [t]he exiled is she who never fits a given social consensus (...) and always carries the trace of another world, or another way of life, worldview" (Doukhan 2014, p. 21). To revolt is to move into temporary exile from the status quo. Through critical dialogue, a place of exile is created, where the social and cultural norms for thinking and understanding are suspended and a tremendous and powerful openness manifests itself. Here, the academic confronts herself with utter openness in thought and experience that may pose a real threat to the consensus and norms of the academic tradition or discipline to which she belongs. The process of transformation may, provisionally (and in rare cases permanently), threaten to overthrow the consensus of firmly established norms for academic reasoning, practices, and forms of behaviour.

Paraphrasing Levinas, we argue that through the deep listening involved in critical dialogue we become aware of our interlocutor's otherness and his "exiling of [our own] being" (Levinas 2003, p. 75), and the other person emerges as a 'stranger, destitute or proletarian' (ibid.). The notion of revolt and dissidence thus reveals the very essence of a 'higher' education—to experience what it means to step outside social and cultural norms of understanding and finding oneself, if only temporarily, exiled from a familiar and safeguarded worldview. With Levinas, we argue that in the critical dialogue we experience the other person in his nakedness and "exile which appeal[s] to my powers [and] address[es] me" (Levinas 2003, p. 213). Students who courageously push themselves to the boundaries of coherent thought

expose themselves to possible ridicule from their peers and teachers; however, as Novalis (2005) would have it, these very students are those who understand the will of nature, and its construction of the human self, much more truthfully.

These students also make possible a deeper commitment and a stronger academic bond, which requires a certain exile, as a further form of dissidence. Having experienced exile is central for being able to welcome the other with care and hospitality. Doukhan argues, "the experience of exile paves the way to an ethics understood as a relationship with an other, which welcomes the other's alterity and transcendence" (Doukhan 2014, p. 22). Experiencing exile, if only in glimpses and at somewhat safe distance from more violent social or natural catastrophe, is to experience "a de-centering, a de-positing of itself as center of the universe", which is absolutely central "if an encounter with the exilic dimension of the other to be possible" (ibid.). Contrary to the common understanding, the place of exile may very well open up spaces for life.

In a globalised world, where many countries are confronted with refugees and persecuted groups, the importance of the world-class university becomes ever more significant. The world-class university not only leads understanding into areas of high disciplinary expertise, but also invites its students and teachers to develop a deeper sensitivity to personal, cultural, and epistemic otherness and strangeness, to a certain productive alienation. To think and to be in the world class university is to develop an ability for deep listening to viewpoints and forms of being that are different and even alien to oneself, reconceiving what we mean by 'world' in the world class university.

Re-Conceiving the 'World' Within the World Class University

Revolt is also familiar to the Early German Romantics, who premised their propositions on an onto-epistemological, even metaphysical, critique of dominant perceptions of things in the world. Chief among its members was Novalis, also known as Friedrich von Hardenberg, an ethereal character who, perhaps because of his own asynchronous fit with a world that was becoming ever more empirically focused, wanted to move an individual's encounter with a thing to an arational realm. Novalis does not therefore particularly help the neoliberal's agenda or even ours if we simply want to tinker with knowledge; instead, he wants us to understand phenomena as always already interconnected. It is the first, deep self-ordering of entities that is most at stake for Novalis and *then* our reflection of their arrangement in our utterances and representations. Our appreciation of those deeply co-entrenched phenomena may give rise to a certain kind of knowledge, it is true, but most likely not the kind that is valued in the university of today.

Novalis' philosophies guide us to the following summary: that entities participate in a primordial substance that arranges those things (Stone 2008); that the world is hence self-arranging in an uncertain way (Frank 1997); that the thoroughly foundational 'I', embraced overall by his contemporary, Fichte, but also important

to Kant, is untenable because there is always an excess that cannot be cognitively reached (Mika 2017); and that knowledge is always contingent on primordial Being. Human agency takes place within the arational intrusion of the world: Novalis has no truck with any formal logic that relies totally on human understanding (unless he is seeking to encourage a mutiny against that starkly human obsession).

To represent a thing in the world, the self has to understand that s/he is indeed *presenting* it as a holistic entity. This ambitious tenet, which dethrones the intellect in favour of the All, has mammoth repercussions for education because it signals that the self is materially connected with his/her very language and ideas. Here we first encounter a deep division between the 'muscle-flexing' of current intellectual practice in the university and Novalis, whose work is replete with warnings against, and solutions to, that problem. Whilst not locating his views in the workings of the university—his argument was broader than that—he wants us to understand that the self's distance from a thing, and hence the entirety of the world, is the beginning of all error.

Novalis, we should note, spends roughly equal time commenting on the distance between human self and world and proposing a novel approach. His dual critique/proposition mode comes to the fore in his educational fragment, *The Novices of Sais*, and sets the scene for a dialecticism that reflects the fundamental unknowability of the world. *Novices* revolves around a group of students, based in an esoteric school, and their responses to various scenarios. However, Novalis is at pains, again, to present the totality of the world in any discussion and, in the educational process of the students, "the thousandfold natures" (Novalis 2005, p. 73) speak as much as the humans (students and teacher). Light and shadow—elements of the non-human world—commission themselves to the education of the humans too. Students thus come to understand that there are otherworldly, even imperceptible elements to thinking and knowledge.

Possibly most telling in *Novices* is that Novalis does give a distinctively critical voice to nature. Of humans, nature has this to say:

> The magic of gold, the secrets of colors, the joys of water are not alien to him, he surmises the wonder of ancient stones, and yet he lacks the sweet passion for nature's weavings, the eye for our [nature's] entrancing mysteries …. [f]eeling would bring back the old time, the time we yearn for; the element of feeling is an inward light that breaks into stronger, more beautiful colors. Then the stars would rise within him, he would learn to feel the whole world, and his feeling would be richer and clearer than the limits and surfaces that his eye now discloses. (Novalis, 2005, pp. 71, 73)

We can discern here the following: that humanity relies too heavily on its own apprehension of things; that the fundamental ability to rejoin with the world in a more fundamentally holistic way is not completely lost; and that educational humanity needs to reclaim an aspect of mystery when regarding the world. Here, we find links to Levinas' (2003) descriptions of 'epiphany' and 'exteriority' as accompanying any experience of moving beyond oneself. Growing as a person is responding to a mystery that always escapes understanding. But how can Novalis' attribution of voice to nature, his holistic manifesto and his reconnection of self to things in the world have any bearing on our present dilemma, which shows itself in the

ascendancy of what he calls the "deeply learned" (Novalis 1960b, p. 360) or the empirically driven "numbers and figures" (ibid)? Firstly, we should be aware that Novalis would not concern himself so much with the administrative aspect of universities as with the type of response to the world it encourages. Thus, his critique is both metaphysical—to the extent that he views the first principles of formal logic to constitute a flawed relationship with things in the world and hence to teaching and learning—and ontological, insofar as he wants us to understand things as comprising all other things in the world. Universities, then, should encourage a certain kind of thinking that appreciates the fullness of the world in all things. This kind of uptake of a thing is fraught with mystery and uncertainty, and in the context of our current discussion, students would need to think about and discuss an idea in that vein. To avoid the "superstition and error of all times" (Bowie 1997, p. 66), we would need to always acknowledge the surplus of the All that remains, no matter how hard we try to identify "the symbol with what is symbolised", strive towards "true complete representation" (ibid), in facing the self as Other, for example, or the world as fraught and complex, as raised earlier by Kristeva, or as an experience of excess (Levinas 2000) where coming into contact with the world is also a coming into contact with something more, or otherwise, than being.

Human agency for Novalis (1960c) finds its expression in what he calls 'Romanticising'. The thinking self has an ethical duty to reflect uncertainty in his/her representations and, in that act, both the encountering self and the encountered world are mysterious. Romanticising is that process by which the banal description of things is deliberately changed so that those things are once more unknowable, darkly present and enigmatic. In the university context, instead of simply collecting data at doctoral level, for instance, students would either be encouraged to avoid that gathering act altogether or turn that data into something thoroughly uncertain, through perhaps creating art from them or philosophising on the nature of the connection to the world through the associations that data strikes up for the user. In that latter scenario, such questions might arise: what is the emotional nature of both the voices in the data *and* the written data as it sits on the page (that is, what is the mood that the text of data evokes for the thinker)? The unknowability of the Other, even in oneself, raises Kristeva's (1980) notion of intertextuality, and might ask what aspects of world-fragmentation or –interconnection do the words and their relationship with other terms point to? And when that act of thinking is apparently complete, how does the excess of Being that remains insist on further mysterious thinking of that data?

It is patently obvious that Novalis wrote at a time before the university took its current shape, but his philosophies are particularly salient in an era that values a deeply rationalistic approach to the world. Universities, with their rankings and their pursuit of measurable knowledge, for Novalis would not be fulfilling their ethical duty. We suspect his greatest challenge to the orthodoxy of university rankings and instrumentalism lies in the first instance in some most unwavering and challenging propositions about the world which, regardless of their political context, would insist that universities rediscover "the dignity of the unknown" (Novalis 1960c, p. 545). Kristeva's (1991) idea assertion that "the foreigner is within me"

and thus, "we are all foreigners" (p. 192), and Levinas' (2000, p. 157) accentuation of the 'enigma' as "the dawn of a light" that will not reduce the Other to the same, both bring the knower into a closer touch with the Otherness enveloping and saturating his own identity.

Conclusion: A Space of Life

Unsettling the university space has raised four central principles of 'world-class' universities throughout this chapter. These principles do not align well with current state league tables, excellence tracks, entrepreneurial initiatives, or learning analytics. Nevertheless, drawing on the work of Kristeva, Levinas and Novalis, this chapter has argued that these principles support and promote the 'world-classness' of a university: 1) Heterotopia as the place-ful vitalization of the world-class university; 2) Heterogeneity through revolt-ful world-class engagements; 3) Estrangement of the voiceful otherness of world-class higher education; and 4) Arationality in the magicful world-class things of university thinking.

A university that aspires to become world-class must be willing to embrace what have been posited as the wilder or darker sides of world-class thinking, being and doing. To see itself as being in charge of vitalising lifeworlds, revolt-ful adventures, alien otherness and supernatural enigmas. To be world-class, this suggests, *is* to be a space of life, and to be world-class implicates extensive ethical, relational and existential obligations. Creating a shaky ground makes thinking, being and doing at the university come alive. And ultimately, a university that makes itself into a space of life, gives space to life—however inappropriately, revolting, alien, arational or effervescent that may be.

When the university rises as a space of life, higher education has the potential of embracing and supporting the 'highest' of higher education: Heterotopic spaces, heterogeneous identities, alien thinking and academic magic. In order for this to happen, it is necessary that the world-class university undertakes the ethical responsibilities of 'world-classness' that come with these principles.

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Chapter 16
Realizing the World-Class University: An Ecological Approach

Ronald Barnett

Abstract The 'world-class university' has become a trope of two rivalrous perspectives. On the one hand, it is used by cross-national and national organizations and institutions (and their leaders) to promote global positioning and achievement. On the other hand, it is deployed as a target of critique by scholars, it being observed that the term – 'world-class university' – presses interests, of cognitive capitalism, institutional entrepreneurialism and hierarchy amongst universities. Much less evident in these rivalrous discourses is an attempt to derive a way of holding onto the term – 'world-class university' – that retains links with core values of the university itself, such as those of reason, inquiry, understanding, and learning. I wish to use my chapter to mount such an inquiry and to do so by deploying an ecological approach. The university is interconnected with the world in manifold ways, through multiple ecosystems, but those ecosystems –such as those of knowledge, learning, social institutions, persons, the economy, culture and the natural environment – are impaired. Accordingly, could it not be suggested that a 'world-class university' would be one that draws on its resources in advancing the wellbeing of the major ecosystems of the world? Such a university would be a university in a *class-of-and-for-the-world*.

Introduction

'The world-class university' has become a trope of two rival perspectives. On the one hand, it is used fairly unreflectively by cross-national and national organizations and individual institutions (and their leaders) to promote global positioning and achievement. On the other hand, it is deployed as a target of critique by scholars, it being observed that the term—'world-class university'—presses particular

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S. Rider et al. (eds.), *World Class Universities*, Evaluating Education: Normative Systems and Institutional Practices,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7598-3_16

interests, of cognitive capitalism, institutional entrepreneurialism and hierarchy amongst universities. In other words, universities that sign up to the self-description of 'world-class university' are falling away from the essential interest of the university in pure understanding. For the world-class university, understanding is pursued for external purposes.

Much less evident in this set of rival discourses is an attempt to see whether there just might be a way of holding onto the term—'world-class university'—that, in some measure, retains links with core values and interests of the university itself, such as those of reason, inquiry, understanding, and learning. I wish to use the space of my chapter to mount such an inquiry and to do so by deploying an ecological approach.

This essay, therefore, will amount to an exercise in social philosophy. While sensitive to the empirical situation, I shall attempt to drive through to a particular concept, indeed a new concept of the world-class university, taking advantage of recent work in the philosophy of realism. In doing so, I shall offer hints as to how this new concept of the world-class university might be realised in practice. One example that will simmer here is that of the United Nations' Development Goals, which are already being picked up by some universities as a basis of framing new institutional ('corporate') strategies. But while keen *both* on the contemporary background—which has given rise to the emergence of 'world-classness'—*and* on possible practical ways forward, my target here has mainly to be conceptual and also imaginary. I am interested in nothing less than in imagining, creating and advancing a new concept. What follows, therefore, is a conceptual *argument*.

Fact and Value

The term 'world-class university'—or 'world-class universities'—is fact and value intertwined. It speaks of a university—or group of universities—having a certain place in the world and it is normally invoked to heap implicit praise on any such university. By 'certain place' I mean that in the mind of the user of the term the university in question is felt to be amongst the very best of universities in the world. Probably, if challenged, the speaker would not immediately feel able to pin-point the group of universities that were felt to constitute the 'world-class' group of universities but, for what it is worth, my sense is that it is often accompanied by talk of being in the top one hundred—or top few hundred—universities in the world, as represented especially in global rankings of universities. In other words, users of the term—'world-class universities'—are implicitly wanting to point to features of the world of higher education that are taken uncritically to be present. Immediately, there are all sorts of hares running.

To what extent is it understood by those who resort to this term—'world-class universities'—that, for example, one hundred universities accounts for less than 0.5 per cent of the world's (28,000) universities or that the rankings that serve as the context for talk of world-class universities are highly limited in their messaging systems (Shattock 2017), being based on a small and *contestable* range of criteria

(in which, typically, research is dominant and teaching plays little part (Johnes 2016)? There are also related matters of the idea of world-class universities legitimising a competitiveness and inequalities across the global system of higher education on the one hand, and linkages between world-class universities and the emergence of 'cognitive capitalism' (Boutang 2011) on the other hand. All these are important matters and serve to mark out the empirical context of this essay but they are not our concerns here.

The point of registering those background features is twofold. On the one hand, it is evident that the phrase 'world-class universities' should not be dismissed simply as a trivial idea of the university. It is *conceptually* trivial but it signifies discursive, economic and political power across the world in relation to higher education. Bound up in this phrase, too, are matters of the relationships between states and their higher education institutions, not least as some states strive to secure a goodly number of their universities being recognized as 'world-class' (and so shape their higher education policy frameworks accordingly). The phrase is, therefore, part of a powerful discursive regime that is now present in and across higher education on a global scale. The university is playing a key role in the emergence of cognitive capitalism and the phrase 'world-class universities' bears testimony to this entanglement on the part of universities. The term 'world-class university', therefore, is not only an *empty* signifier; it is much more than a discourse that is sustaining a set of social relations (cf. Laclau 2007), for the social relations in question are ridden with epistemic and political *power*.

On the other hand, however, the sheer registering of these empirical matters as to the way in which certain features are developing in the world of higher education is to open a field in which matters of value also arise. The use of the phrase—as in the ascriptions that 'This university is a world-class university' or 'This country wants at least a dozen of its universities to be recognized as "world-class"'—betoken value elements in the term. The vocabulary of world-classness signifies high value being granted (i) to certain institutions rather than to others, (ii) to the public rankings of universities, and (iii) to a heightened competitiveness among universities. Tacitly, too, there is, in this vocabulary, high value being accorded to the dominant criteria within the global rankings, in which (a) STEM-based research conducted by (b) large universities, each having (c) a global reach are given high marks. In short, the phrase 'world-class universities' is but the tip of a large underlying and emerging *value framework* that has come to possess a global spread.

It is evident, then, that the term 'world-class universities' is the bearer of a 'thick concept' (Williams 2008), with elements in it both of fact and of value. As we have glimpsed, the matters of fact open themselves to a multitude of wide empirical issues. Knowledge hierarchies between the global North and South, differential weightings accorded to disciplines, and relationships between state control and academic freedom are but some of those issues at play here. I can safely put those on one side, leaving them for others in this volume. Here, I shall address matters of value, while keeping in sight this empirical context. However, in this endeavour, I am not interested in critique as such. Perhaps I may be forgiven for suggesting that critique here is easy. The question is: where might we go from here? My aim is

nothing other than to try to drive towards a new concept of the world-class university, that is based upon a value position quite other than—indeed, is opposed to—that which is fuelling the dominant contemporary understanding.

An Ecological Situation

The contemporary university, willy-nilly, finds itself entangled in an ecological situation. It has no option in this, for this is simply a matter of the way matters are. What, though, is meant by an ecological situation? An ecological situation is a situation in which there is present one or more ecosystems. Ecosystems are dynamic—but fragile—assemblages of entities having some unity and sets of interconnections. Further, they have at least the potential to be self-sustaining although, in practice, they are liable to be impaired, falling short of their very *being,* exhibiting a state of wellbeing. Such impairments are characteristically in part the result of human actions, even if unwittingly so. It follows that human interventions can be orchestrated so as to assist the repair of such impaired systems. Further, it is always possible that human action might even bring about an improvement in an ecosystem.

For some time, and quite fairly, much attention has been directed at the ecosystems of the natural environment, amid global warming and so forth. It has been observed that the natural environment constitutes fragile ecosystems, which have been much impaired by human activity. However, over the last three decades or more, it has further been observed that the concept of ecosystem—with the features just specified—has application to a number of other spheres. Guattari (2005) pointed to three ecologies, those of human subjectivity, the natural environment and social institutions. Others have extended the idea of ecology to yet further domains and it is surely apparent that it has wide application to the university, not least in respect of the presence of the knowledge ecology. Indeed, the concept of ecology has to be *radicalised* in this context (Barnett 2018). To cut to the chase, I suggest that there are no less than eight ecosystems in which the university—any university—is entangled, those of knowledge, learning, social institutions, persons, the political sphere, culture, the economy, and the natural environment.

Why pick out the eight ecosystems just identified? Yet others might also come into the reckoning such as the digital environment or the law: surely, the university is entangled with these domains too? I pick out the eight systems just identified because they are necessary features of any higher education system. If others can be shown to possess a status equal to these eight, nothing is lost or much gained. My argument is not dependent on the number of ecosystems in question.

Each of these constitutes an ecosystem precisely in obeying the conditions just enumerated: each has a greater or lesser unity of cognate elements (even if highly fluid), is fragile, and is characteristically impaired in part as a result of human activity. Each such ecosystem is a complex system being open-ended and having characteristics that are not deducible from its parts but which exhibit the quality of emergence, being liable to produce formations that are unpredictable. Such

open-endedness, however, offers potentialities. Human action might be deliberately aimed at repairing any absence or deficiency and even at enhancing or improving each ecosystem.

A final observation in this enumeration of the features of these ecosystems: to say—as I have been doing—that the university is entangled in them is to draw upon the concept of entanglement in a particular sense of its technical meaning. It is to observe that not only is the university implicated in each of them but that this implication also works the other way around. For example, just as we can no longer provide any serious specification as to what it is to be a university in the twenty-first century without alluding to the economy, so we cannot any longer provide a proper specification of the economy without reference to the higher education system. Entanglement cuts both ways. The university is dependent on the economy and the economy is dependent on the university. This reciprocity holds, in turn, for each and all of the eight ecosystems.

It follows, from these cursory observations, that the university—any university—has a complex ecological situation; and it is complex in a number of ways. Any university has dynamic relationships with at least eight major ecosystems. It will exhibit its own ecological footprint, spreading and having impact in its own ways, across each ecosystem. It will have its own relationships with culture, the economy, knowledge, learning and so forth. Furthermore, it possesses its own ecological possibilities in relation to each ecosystem, depending on its own resources—of money, epistemological reach, technologies, personnel and reputational capital—it has options in front of. To what extent might it seek to advance society's knowledge of itself or society's learning systems? In what ways might it attend to its impact upon the natural environment? Might it work towards new clusterings of knowledge so as to address manifest global problems? Tacitly, at least, how might it contribute to the culture of society in, say, its capacities for argument, reasoning and debate?

Structure and Agency

Some large matters arise from this set of considerations. Firstly, to speak of the ecological situation of the university is to point up that this situation is one both of structure and agency. The ecological situation in which the university finds itself is precisely one of structures—in the form of ecosystems—in which and with which the university is entangled. Certainly, the ecosystems in question here—of social institutions, persons, culture, learning, knowledge, the economy, the natural environment and the polity—are each hazy and are yet dynamic formations. They are structures that are never quiescent, always on the move. This is part of the difficulty of being a university in the twenty-first century in that the total environment of any university is unstable, and so decision-making—setting up a new programme of study, establishing a new research centre, reaching out to a new constituency, inviting a speaker onto campus—is fraught with difficulty. But this unpredictability,

which arises out of the open-endedness of the university's situation, presents—perhaps surprisingly—spaces for its agency.

The university is a 'corporate agent' (List and Pettit 2011). In advancing that idea of 'corporate agent', List and Pettit were concerned to establish how it might be that an institution could acquire, in its decisions and action, the attributes of an individual (in her or his decisions and actions) and so exhibit agency. Such characteristics are, for them, dependent on it being manifestly the case that the actions and decisions taken in the name of the organization could be said to carry the acquiescence, if not wholehearted assent, of the majority of the members of that organization. This approach is not unhelpful so far as the university is concerned. We can ask searching questions as to the extent managerial decisions do in fact command the assent of a university's members. (There are, of course, additional questions as to who is to count as a member of a university, but let that pass.) However, this approach is inadequate in itself in giving an account of university agency.

In order to derive a full account of university agency, we have to add the matter of choice: agency only has application in situations of real choice being open to an actor. And just this, I want to urge, is the situation in which most universities across the world find themselves: they have options before them as to which direction to follow, which values to uphold and within which frameworks they might comport themselves. Take the matter of producing a university corporate strategy (or of seriously reviewing and redesigning an existing such strategy). This can be produced in a perfunctory way, remaining within familiar and empty tropes of 'world-classness' or 'excellence' or it can be an occasion for serious identification and imagining of options open to a university. Here, agency interacts with structure and vice versa.

For example, a university might decide, in the wake of its own value position, to deploy its resources to play its part in addressing and realizing the United Nation's Development Goals. But then such a decision has to lead on to a forensic examination of those (17) Goals in relation to the university's resources—its epistemic range, its existing research centres, its portfolio of course, its academic staff and its financial leverage. In such a setting, the university works out and realizes its agency in the context of the structures—local, national and global, and legal, financial, geographic, epistemic and so on—within which it finds itself. Its agency is both task and achievement (Peters 1970), for that agency has to be worked at continually, amid all the constraints and affordances that shape its situation.

But note, too, that there are recursive features of this situation. The structures of this situation are not given either but are, to some degree, pliable in the face of the university's decisions and actions. Through wise and astute actions, the university can, to some extent, modify the situation in which it finds itself. Perhaps it can raise monies, or it may be able to lobby in parliament, or it may be able to reach out to other agencies who can assist it and so on; and such actions can, in turn, alter (if only marginally, but importantly) the structural conditions in which it seeks to develop and realize its corporate strategy. A corporate strategy is, accordingly, a set of hopeful fictions but it is also a set of imaginative and creative aspirations, as it becomes a collective space to imagine new possibilities for the university's agency.

Fact and Value—*Again*

Here, we return unashamedly to the matter of fact and value. I suggested earlier that the trope of world-classness rides on the backs both of fact *and* value. It relies on certain taken-for-granted features of the world of higher education—not least, that rankings reflect real features of the global landscape—and it is a carrier of certain values around hierarchy, power and the global knowledge economy. But this dual nature is shared also by ecology. To speak of ecology is to speak the two languages at once, of facts and of values. It is to point to the world being in such and such a state, and it is—either implicitly or explicitly—to convey a sense that the addressing of that state of affairs is, or should be, accompanied by a set of values. Let me say something about each of these dimensions—of fact and of value—in this ecological context.

Both aspects—structure *and* agency—bring facts into play. The relationship between structures and facts is self-evident. To point to, or to make claims about, structures is in effect to state facts about the world. (There are certainly philosophical issues about the status of facts—for example, as to their being 'pseudo-material correlates' (Strawson 1950)—but we do not need to enter those lists now.) Since ecologies are structures—albeit hazy and mobile structures—it follows that to suggest that universities have their being in an ecological setting is to point to *ecological facts* about universities. So much, so obvious and so uncontroversial.

But I want to suggest that, simultaneously, to claim that universities move in an ecological setting is to bring in a value dimension. This value dimension is not straightforward, for it is at play in two ways. At least in its application to the social world—and arguably even in its original incarnation in relation to the natural world—the concept of ecology seeks not only to point to features of the world but also to import a value framework into the discussion. Characteristically, the use of the term 'ecology' is—as suggested earlier—to summon up a value background (Taylor 1992) to the effect that the world is in a fragile state, and even an impaired state, and that humanity has responsibilities in helping to repair that fragile state; and it may even be the case, in some situations, that humanity has played a part in bringing about that impaired state.

In other words, the language of ecology carries with it strong 'ought' overtones. 'Ecology' is an ethical concept. Not only is it wanting to observe that the world is in difficulty (fact) but that the difficulties are such that they generate (ought) responsibilities to address the situation.

However, as stated, this values dimension is far from straightforward, at least in relation to social institutions and, thereby, in the matter of the university; and we have already glimpsed the necessary twist in the argument. It is that to speak of the ecological university not only (i) opens a space in which we might dwell on the possibilities (structure) and the responsibilities (agency) before it in addressing the malformations of the ecologies surrounding the university (in knowledge, learning, social institutions, culture, the economy, the natural environment and so forth) but *also* that it (ii) opens a space in which we might wonder if the university has not

itself been culpable in bringing about those malformations and malfunctionings of those ecosystems.

In other words, for the university that understands that it stands in an ecological situation, values are a matter of an orientation not only towards the external world but are also a matter of an orientation *towards the university itself*. And by 'university' is meant here both an individual university and universities collectively: a single university has to ('ought to') ask searching questions about its possibly hitherto complicity in bringing about those ecological malformations, and universities collectively (cf. Guatttari 2016) should be asking themselves such questions.

It is apparent that, in these last sentences, we have adopted a prescriptive tone, with 'oughts' and 'shoulds' but, as I have been trying to show, this is entirely warranted, unsettling as it may be to many. As stated, the idea of ecology is thick with value elements. It harbours laments for a lost world, regrets the impairments in the present world, secretes hopes of a better world, and holds humanity to account *both* for its part in bringing about that falling short *and* in having responsibilities for addressing the shortcomings and doing its best to usher in that better world. In short, the idea of ecology is value-laden. And it follows that to speak of the university as standing in an ecological situation is to bring forward the elements of this value framework.

In sum, then, *the ecological university*—as we may term it—is precisely a university that is embedded in a situation redolent of facts about itself and the world *and* of a complex value framework.

The World-Class University: A Barren Idea

Against these reflective considerations, let us now turn even more directly to address our quarry, that of the world-class university. It will be recalled that, earlier, we sketched some of the empirical context in which the term 'world-class' university has emerged—especially of world rankings, but also of a competitiveness across a small fraction of the universities in the world (say around one thousand of the 28,000 universities which might have their sights on reaching the top one hundred). The rankings themselves give priority to a limited range of features, such as the number of papers published in 'world-leading' journals, the flow of doctorate students, and the income attaching to research activity. Simply to enumerate these features seems to imply that the term 'world-class' has substance. It can be cashed out empirically (even if there is some dispute over the criteria on which world rankings are drawn up).

But solely to understand the idea of world-class universities in this way is to give it an unduly narrow treatment. It would be to metricise the term (Fuller 2018), to render it intelligible only in terms of universities' numerical performance against a few criteria. This is not to be dismissed. This approach plays out in the world with massive power.

It is on the basis of such an understanding of *world-classness* that both states and individual universities are making major policy and strategic decisions; for example, whether, and on what basis, (in the case of states) to adopt a highly selective research and institutional funding policy; and whether (in the case of individual universities) to opt for a merger with another university or to close certain departments. The trope of 'world-class', therefore, has come to constitute—in Foucault's (1980) terminology—a discursive regime: it purports to offer knowledge about universities that, in turn, comes trailing major implications of power. The knowledge/power juxtaposition (p. 113) is vividly present here.

But yet, for all these elements of fact, power and knowledge that are circulating in the company of the term 'world-class universities', I want to claim that *it is barren as an idea of the university*. This is not the place for a forensic dissection of the idea of the university, but we may quickly rehearse some elementary matters.

The idea of the university has both historical depth and contemporary breadth. The university began to take conceptual form in the nineteenth century, firstly in the Germanic and philosophical idea of the university of reason and then in the English and more cultural idea of the university as a place of liberal education. That tradition, of the university having value as an end in itself, spread out especially as the twentieth century gathered space, with the idea of the university taking on utilitarian aspects. The twenty-first century has seen this history open to several strands, one that in effect said that the idea of the university was at an end in the wake of postmodernism and the incorporation of the university as an arm of the state and its functioning in support of 'cognitive capitalism' (Roggero 2011; Peters 2013); another that stridently opted for 'the entrepreneurial university' (Clark 1998) and its cognates (not least in academic capitalism (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004); and yet another that sees the university as becoming an element in a global digital machine.

A sketch of this kind has only to be made, however inadequately, for it already to be sensed that, indeed, the term 'world-class university' is barren. Against the background of the movement of the idea of the university just set out, the term has virtually nothing to offer us. It has nothing to say about the relationship between the university and culture, between the university and the state, between the university and the development of mind or of persons, and still even less—if that were possible—about the relationship between the university and spirit (as so many of the forerunner ideas of the university, from Kant to Heidegger, from Newman to Derrida, and from Jaspers to Guattari have suggested). But this observation, as to the barrenness of the idea of the world-class university can be multiplied.

I said a moment ago that the idea of the university has both historical depth and contemporary breadth. I have just tackled the matter of historical depth but what of the matter of contemporary breadth? There is much that could be said here but let me come straight to the point. Many have suggested recently that the idea of the university is at an end, not least because the university is 'in ruins' (Readings 1997). The idea of the university is merely a 'grand narrative' and is now without substance and can be safely consigned to the flames. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are, in fact (and it is a fact), awash with ideas of the university; and these take two forms. We have before us many worked out ideas of the university; for instance,

those of the university of wisdom (Maxwell 2014), of the sustainable university (Sterling, Maxey, and Luna 2014), of the virtuous university (Nixon 2008), of the Christian university (Astley et al. 2004), of the ecological university (Barnett 2018) and of the university in dissent (Rolfe 2013). Elsewhere, I have identified over fifty contemporary ideas of the university (Barnett 2013), and they are being supplemented continually.

But even beyond such worked-out ideas of the university, a quick scrutiny of debates and developments would show that there are many ideas of the university being advanced as a matter of its unfolding praxis; for example, universities are looking to see (as noted) how they might do justice to the United Nations' Development Goals, or are looking to see how they might become exemplars of 'the developmental university' or to renew the idea of the 'civic university' (Brink 2018), or concretely to assist in programmes of national reconstruction or to advance an agenda of social justice and so on and so forth. Developments such as these are especially evident among the developing nations, in Africa and Latin America; but by no means only in those regions.

In short, the idea of the university is enjoying a contemporary breadth globally, in relation to which *the term 'the world-class university' offers us nothing at all*. It follows that, in relation to both the history of the idea of the university and its contemporary situation, the term is virtually empty. It has a rival in conceptual emptiness—as an idea of the university—only in the university of excellence (Readings 1997).

Re-conceiving the World-Class University

It will have been noticed that, in this essay, in speaking of the world-class university, I have referred simply to it as a term—'the term "the world-class university"'—and not to it as a concept; and it will have become apparent why this formulation has been adopted. 'The world-class university' has insufficient weight to allow us to refer to it as a concept. It is lacking in substance, having nothing in the way of a foundation in ethics, epistemology, or ontology. It is simply a term in contemporary policy discourse. Certainly, as acknowledged, it comes trailing components of power, status and judgement. At best, it could be said to be an *aspirational concept*, hinting at the direction of travel of both (some) states and (some) institutions, as they formulate their policies and missions. They may also harbour quite unrealistic hopes, as when a state—currently without any of its universities placed in the top one hundred universities—determines that it will have half a dozen universities in that select group in the rankings within five years. So the idea of world-classness is conceptually empty: what it lacks in substance, it currently makes up for in its force.

How then, if at all, might the idea of the world-class university be put onto a sure footing and given substance? I want to explore the possibility that a way forward might lie in the idea of a university that is in *the class of the world*. And to do that,

we shall need to build upon the background sketched out in earlier parts of this chapter, drawing especially upon the idea of ecology as just elaborated.

A university that is in the class of the world is precisely a university that has a care towards the whole world and strives to situate itself totally as an institution of the world. 'The world' here refers to the totality of entities in the world, from a poem to the superhighway, from the cosmos to nanostructures, from memes to mosaics, and from matters of mind to matters of the natural environment (Harman 2018). In *this* realism, all life is here. And a university that is in the class of the world opens itself to this sense of the world, in its entirety. This moves us towards a worldly context with ontological robustness.

Drawing on our earlier discussion, we may make three further observations. Firstly, a university that is in the class *of* the world understands that it is entangled with the world in manifold ways. And the significant zones with which it is entangled with the world can be understood as ecosystems. In being in the class of the world, a university recognizes that it is entangled with knowledge, social institutions, persons, culture, the economy, learning, the polity and the natural environment, each such zone now understood as an ecosystem.

Certain features of ecosystems will be recalled (from our earlier discussion). Ecosystems are hazy but real conglomerations of entities held loosely together. Left to their own devices, they have self-sustaining properties but they are fragile and have characteristically been impaired by human interventions. They are also complex assemblages in the formal sense: they are open-ended in their interior relationships (DeLanda 2013). One cannot be sure just how they might evolve and nor, by extrapolation, can one be sure of the effects of any action upon them.

Our worldly university—a university that stands in the class of the world—is minded, therefore, to orchestrate its activities so as to play its part in repairing and/or enhancing the ecosystems in which it is entangled. It has a *value position* in doing so. It does not shy away from re-working its corporate strategy or see the task as imposed upon it but does so in a positive spirit. The design of its corporate strategy is a welcome space for it to work out its value position in having a concern for the whole world. This is challenging stuff. For example, it might—as observed—attend to the United Nations' Development Goals and determine to frame its corporate strategy on that basis. But the problems begin at that point. Just which of the (17) Goals might it address especially? Which of the Goals might prompt thinking and imagination about its possibilities? Which resources—epistemic, technological, financial, reputational, institutional (not least in its actual and potential networks)—does it possess that would enable it to shape its strategies around those Goals?

However, to draw even more specifically on our earlier discussion, the challenge arises as to which of the ecosystems with which it is entangled might offer it a canvas on which to play out its ecological possibilities. Might it wish to develop new pedagogical approaches to enhance its students' state of wellbeing and thereby contribute to their personal ecosystems? Might it work more actively in the local community and play its part in developing the ecosystem of social institutions in the region (and perhaps advance social justice or the public sphere)? Might it look seriously at its use of the resources of the natural environment and so help to minimise

eco-degradation there? Might it consider ways in which it can draw some of its research groups together across the disciplines and help to generate new epistemic energies and a more vibrant knowledge ecosystem?

These are merely, as it were, ecological possibilities in principle. The hard work of marrying the United Nations' Development Goals, a university's total resources and a keen analysis of its ecological options, and then bringing to bear on that mix a visionary imagination and practical institutional aspirations and working that through in energetic interactions and practices across the institution, and with third parties, is a formidable set of tasks. There is a 'craft' in such a worldly orientation. (cf. Norgard and Bengtsen 2018) Moreover, any such aspiration and tasks cannot be realised in a short span of time. To the contrary, they provide a continuing and unfolding landscape, not least since the university's ecosystems are always in a state of emergence and so is the university itself. The total interplay of the university—which forms an ecosystem in itself—and its ecosystems supply an unending series of challenges, responsibilities and new options.

To seize, therefore, on the United Nations' Development Goals—and it has here formed but one example of a university in a class of the world—within an ecological setting is to embark on a process of unyielding complexity. And it is a complexity that contains all manner of components, at once lateral (across a region, nation and the world), vertical (from particulars to universals) and temporal (the here-and-now and the long-term).

Space does not allow an examination of those complexities. But I think that we may gather from this example of the United Nations' Development Goals that the university-of-the-world gains its legitimacy in three ways. Firstly, the university that stands in a class-of-the-world does so in virtue not through its imposing itself upon the world but in listening to the world and so acquiring a being as a university that is not only *of*-the-world but *from*-the-world (Barnett and Bengtsen 2017). It owes its being to the world. And it stands in the class of universities that are, therefore, of the world.

Secondly, this is a university that takes the notion of the world seriously. It is sensitive to the whole world and all of its major ecosystems and all of the entities in the world, both natural and non-natural, and both real and abstract, from poems to plasma, from photons to Pythagoras, from Polynices to polyhedra and from puppetry to post-humanism. But it is also a university that notices absences and impairments in the world and seeks to play its part in repairing those deficiencies. It begins from the world and is acutely *of*-the-world.

Lastly, a university that is in the class of the world understands that it is in a class in the formal sense of the idea of class. It simply is a member of a particular class—the class of universities-of-the-world. No hierarchy or status accrues thereby. Hypothetically, *every one of the nineteen thousand universities in the world could stand in this class*. On this basis alone, this understanding of world-classness is marked out as radically different and, indeed, opposed to the conventional meaning of the term 'world-class university'.

Conclusions

The term ‘world-class university’ is just that, simply a term. As a concept, it is virtually empty. That qualifier ‘virtually’ is important. While the term lacks any conceptual substance, it has nevertheless come to acquire certain associated elements of power and status. (These two aspects—power and status—operate independently of each other and, on another occasion, deserve scrutiny.) There is dual power here: ‘world-class’ actually in the world (‘world-class’ as signified) and the power of the very term ‘world-class’ as it operates as a signifier in the world (‘world-class’, indeed, as signifier). So, while conceptually empty, the term ‘world-class university’ doubly denotes power, and considerable power at that. (The power here is not just epistemic power but includes social, economic and cultural power.) Furthermore, the elements of power associated with the term are so pervasive that ‘world-class university’ has, *world-wide*, taken on a binding presence in the discourse of higher education. Ubiquitously, the term is used unthinkingly but with considerable force. It is, thereby, *a very powerful signifier even though it lacks conceptual substance*.

Two questions have arisen, therefore: might there be a reading of the term ‘world-class university’ that gives it conceptual substance and that is free, at least to a large extent, of the state and institutional power and competitiveness currently associated with the term? And might any such reading of the term ‘world-class university’ do some justice to the university’s historical relationships with advancing knowledge and understanding for the wider benefit of the world? I have suggested that there is such a concept of the world-class university that meets both of these challenges, and the tack I have taken is that of situating the term within an ecological context, albeit coupled with the new realisms (of Harman and Delanda). By placing the university in its ecological setting, it being entangled with many major ecosystems, a new concept of the world-class university might be fashioned.

This would be a concept that turns around the relationship between the university and the world. Instead of understanding the university as an institution exerting force and control over the world, the university would be seen as an institution that listens to and has concerns for the total world, in all its ecological diversity. Of course, to accede to this argument and to try to realize its implications in the context of any particular university would be to bring into view huge institutional, judgemental, imaginary, and practical challenges. And such challenges, once taken on, would be recurring. For the ecological university is never off-the-hook, as it seeks to discern continuingly emerging options and to juggle with ever-present value dilemmas. But it would be a university that stands in a *class-of-the-world*. And just perhaps its time is coming.

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