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BOOK REVIEWS

Academic and professional identities in higher education: the challenges of a diversifying workforce, edited by George Gordon and Celia Whitchurch, London, Routledge, 2010, 270 pp., £100 (hardback), ISBN 10: 0-415-99090-4 (hardback), ISBN 10:0-203-8652-5 (e-book)

This is the latest in the Routledge *International Studies in Higher Education* series edited by David Palfreyman, Ted Tapper and Scott Thomas, who identify four dynamics for change in higher education: massification; globalisation; widening obligations of HE; and growth in private financing. Those changes have triggered a growing literature about academic identity; with this book George Gordon and Celia Whitchurch extend the boundaries of that literature to include professionals as well as academics operating in what Whitchurch (2008) has called a 'third space' for HE management and practice.

The book has 14 chapters grouped in four parts. Part I, 'Contexts and concepts', opens with a typically elegant, powerful and succinct survey by Mary Henkel, the leading authority on academic identity. Identity development has, she argues, changed from being a process of working towards a stable community membership to a 'continuous process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction… the concept of embedded distinctiveness now competes with the more fluid idea of individual positioning in and between spaces' (10). George Gordon (Chapter 2) surveys the global context, refreshingly avoiding the Anglocentric habit of treating everything as a variant or deviation from US or UK models. Gary Rhoades (3) extends his academic capitalism thesis, arguing that academic managers increasingly exercise the flexibility that once resided with academics, who are now becoming marginalised as 'managed professionals'. Contingent faculty and other professionals are, from a human resource management perspective, 'largely invisible' (38) and the greying of the academic profession is, says Rhoades, ignored. Senior management structures inhibit integrated strategic management, and it is important 'not simply to see the professional workforce in all its diversity, but also to attend to the intersections… of faculty and other professionals' (44). After this Jane Usherwood's Chapter 4 is under-theorised and overstocked with clichés ('Universities are places where knowledge is created and disseminated… People are higher education's major asset'; 55) and anecdotes drawn from the Universitas 21 global network for which she is Secretary General.

In contrast, Gordon's introduction to Part 2, 'Implications for institutions', weaves a stimulating narrative framework greater than the sum of the chapters. Senior university manager Tony Strike (5) draws on his research into changing academic pathways in England, identifying a range of models with 'no obvious correlation to rank orders of universities' (95) which he regards as 'troubling', though some might be reassured at such evidence of flourishing diversity. Academic Jun Oba (6) gives a historical account of university development in Japan, arguing that academic and professional roles are becoming blurred, partly through the development of 'academic support centers' (*sic:* American spellings recur throughout this chapter) providing student services, admissions, teacher evaluation and general education, with the mix varying with type of university. Patricia Smit, a research manager, and Kingston Nyamapfene, a former

deputy vice-chancellor (7), observe the lack of common understandings among South African academics and institutions about what it means to be an academic. They say that the central features of the 'academic' may be familiar but South Africa 'differs in the depth of understanding of academic contexts and cultures' (119). In considering changing academic profiles in France, Christine Musselin (8) describes two models of recruitment – a national competition with homogeneous candidate profiles, and specific recruitment by or within one institution. For this issue to be central is perhaps quintessentially French.

Part 3, 'Implications for individuals', also benefits from Gordon's stimulating introductory mini-survey of the area. Craig Mcinnis (9) cites Burton Clark approvingly: 'The academic profession... is inherently a secondary organisation of persons located in numerous diverse fields' (148), providing an authoritative literature review to support the proposition that institutions and policy-makers must better acknowledge the importance of academic identity. In the same vein, Whitchurch (10) considers convergence and divergence in professional identities, arguing that 'joint working between professional and academic colleagues... is increasingly common... However, such joint working tends to remain hidden from view because it is not easily articulated via formal organizational structures and processes' (167). Finally Derek Law (11) provides a brilliant description and interpretation of the rapidly and vastly changing role of the librarian over the past 40 years: 'What one can see with hindsight is the paradox of an increase in "professionalism" but a loss of public need for the core skills of the profession' (192).

Introducing Part 3, 'Challenging boundaries', Whitchurch deploys the annoyingly popular PriceWaterhouseCoopers (pwc) colour-coded ideal type worlds: blue – corporate capitalism; green – social responsibility; and orange – collaborative networks and the third space. Judith Gappa (12) reprises her 2007 book with its 'Framework of Essential Elements' as a basis for rethinking the academic profession: employment equity; academic freedom and autonomy; flexibility; professional growth; and collegiality. 'These Essential Elements enable colleges and universities to match important academic traditions to the present realities of their faculty members' lives and employment' (216). Robin Middlehurst (13) articulates the concept of 'borderless professionals', also resorting to pwc's blue/green/orange worlds, and asserting (rather worryingly, for this reader at least) that: 'The practice and profession of quality assurance (QA) are definitely "borderless"' (236). Whitchurch (14) provides a final chapter which offers a summary review rather than a framework-defining overview.

The editors' well-chosen diverse perspectives have encouraged many of their contributors successfully to extend their previous thinking about academic or professional identity. Thus the book opens up not the 'third space' but a blended space, in which academic and professional identities can be considered together, illuminating indeed 'the challenges of a diversifying workforce'. This is a worthy addition to the Routledge series, albeit as another high-priced hardback. Even libraries, especially in these straitened times, will jib at a cover price of £100. Wider readership and appreciation will surely flow when the rumoured paperback edition appears.

References

Gappa, J.M., A.E. Austin, and A.G. Trice. 2007. *Rethinking faculty work: Higher education's strategic imperative.* San Francisco: John Wiley.
Whitchurch, C. 2008. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of *third space* professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62, no. 4: 377–96.

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