

It is important that we recognize that higher education is not just about formal learning and academic engagement. For young people it is also about independence and becoming an adult and about lifestyle and sexual freedom. Universities should not expect to take centre stage in the lifecourse of young adults or demand that students' commitment transcends the instrumental. (85)

Their final prescriptions echo this injunction. Undergraduate teaching should be 'concentrated in those institutions willing to commit whole-heartedly to the principles of social justice and to explicitly recognize that one of their core missions is to promote social justice'. This will require a curriculum, among other things, promoting 'social mobility and cross-class socialisation' (108). Above all (and following Rawls) 'a socially just system can only be built if all forms of selection are removed' (110).

While acknowledging its strong point of view, I would have no hesitation in recommending this work to students, scholars and policy-makers interested in a deeper understanding of the question of higher education and social justice than that commonly held (not just in the media but also by some who should know better). The comparative analysis of other systems (Continental Europe, Scandinavia, North America and Australasia) is well-handled; the theoretical framework may be relatively narrow, but is well-marshalled; and the thesis is argued with passion and conviction.

Reference

Davie, G. 1961. *The democratic intellect: Scotland and her universities in the nineteenth century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

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International perspectives on the governance of higher education: alternative frameworks for coordination, edited by Jeroen Huisman, Routledge, New York and London, 2009, 278 pp., £22.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-415-98933-6

Governance of higher education has become a major part of the higher education discourse during the past two decades. As the contributions to this volume show it broadly breaks down into two substantive topics: system governance, concerned with the implementation of national higher education policies, and institutional governance, concerned with ensuring that individual universities and colleges are managed effectively and efficiently to meet specified objectives. System and institutional governance overlap because to a large extent the new public management towards which many countries have moved means ensuring that financial and regulatory mechanisms are set up to ensure that the objectives of institutional governance are at least broadly in line with system objectives as perceived by national governments. One of the main underlying drivers of the changes has been that higher education systems have become too large and too diverse for national governments to be able to regulate higher education through bureaucratic control as in most continental countries or through publicly financed *laissez-faire* as was once the case in the UK and Australia.

International Perspectives on the Governance of Higher Education, the latest in the Routledge series of *International Studies in Higher Education*, will be very useful to students of higher education policy and management and ought to be of interest also to university presidents, vice-chancellors and others in the burgeoning senior management teams of the world's universities.

Different countries, while mostly moving in the same direction of more administrative autonomy for universities accompanied by more systematic external evaluation of their research and teaching, are finding different solutions to the problem, depending on their history and political culture.

Ten of the essays in the book describe recent developments in arrangements for higher education governance in particular OECD countries and the descriptions are interwoven with, or followed by, attempts at theoretical interpretations of what has been happening. In Italy for example following various partially successful attempts at reform over the past two decades, what is described as a 'fragmented or pluralistic' supermarket model is appearing. In Germany 'tempered autonomy and competition' is seen to be emerging, though after exploring several theoretical interpretations Orr and Jaegar conclude that 'policy is less driven by theory and many initiatives are based on the consequences and perceived failures of the first stage reforms'. In Austria too Meister-Scheyt and Scott consider that market ideology offers a 'less satisfactory explanation of what has happened' and claim that 'the day to day practice looks more like a struggle between a variety of actors and life orders to determine the actual reform path'. Using three brief case studies from Canada, Eastern Europe and Norway, Padure and Jones find the idea of policy networks the most helpful policy model in offering an explanation of what has been happening. Brown looks at reform in the UK and concludes that 'a competitive market based approach appeared to governments to offer a resolution of an intrinsic conflict between effectiveness and efficiency in higher education'. In the cases of both Australia and the United States the authors believe that 'if there is one storyline emerging... it is the absence of a single compelling storyline'. Coate and Maclaren observed a tussle between academic autonomy and government attempts at regulation. They claim that Irish Universities 'thus far have appropriately managed to resist an erosion of their core scholarly values and more centralised state control'. De Boer comes to a somewhat similar conclusion for the Netherlands, his 'study seems to support professors' excellent record in resisting imposed changes'.

In a wider ranging paper than most Magalhaes and Amaral make the important point that the new public reforms in are not confined to higher education, indeed universities and colleges may have been only bit players in the dramas of the past two decades:

... it is difficult to argue that higher education is playing a front runner role. ... Even if we defend higher education exceptionalism as both social and a research field, there is no evidence that the reconfiguration of governing and governance started or was inspired in higher education. Rather the opposite is arguable.

After reading this book it is hard to disagree with this conclusion. Writers on higher education like to claim that their subject is exceptional as indeed in some ways it is. The workers in the higher education sector are amongst the most intellectually able groups in any society and the most articulate in promoting their interests.

Both Christopher Hood in his foreword and Jeroen Huisman in his introduction draw attention to the great variety of roles higher education plays and the ways it can be organised to perform them. Huisman admits that the volume has not pretended to give answers to existing governance questions. By implication that would be too difficult. However, one issue that might have been given some attention is the composition and terms of reference of institutional governing bodies. To what extent are they agents of government steering universities in directions determined by the state and to what extent is their role to protect university autonomy against the ravages of politicians and populist opinion? In several of the case studies the imposition of new public management is presented as a struggle between the state and the professoriat. It would have been helpful to have had some examination of where the institutions' governors stood in these conflicts.

For a reader who is prepared to accept a functionalist interpretation, the direction of change and its causes are very clear. In all the case studies discussed the emergence of a knowledge intensive economy has both made the knowledge and skills embodied in universities immensely valuable to national states but at the same time it is effectively proletarianising the majority of their workers. Knowledge has become both a commodity to be traded and an important instrument of national policies. Higher education is one industry among many knowledge-based industries experiencing the traumas faced by manual workers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the last analysis it is a question of who benefits and who pays. While governments continue to extract much of the costs of higher education from taxpayers it is not surprising that they consider higher education too important to be left to the professors.

But the differences in detail in the way the problem has been confronted in different countries are intrinsically interesting and the dozen or so stories in this volume are well worth reading. They are all well written and even the best-informed reader will gain something from an appreciation of the different ways the basic story can be told.

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The trouble with higher education: a critical examination of our universities, by Trevor Hussey and Patrick Smith, Abingdon, Routledge, 2010, 168 pp., £19.99 (paperback), ISBN-10: 0-415-87198-0

This book's aim is to discuss some of the problems with British higher education and offer up solutions. The authors identify the main problem as mass higher education and the solution lying in liberal education. Trevor Hussey and Patrick Smith (from Oxford University and Buckinghamshire New University, respectively) are both practitioners with around four decades of teaching experience in Britain and elsewhere. They make it clear that they are in favour of expansion – their argument is with the way in which it has been implemented and managed. They are of the view that mass higher education has been offered at 'as little cost as possible' and those who have suffered most are the students and teachers.

Hussey and Smith have focused their attention on the newer universities who have to compete in the market place for students, and not on the more prestigious universities who can have their pick of students. They argue that the same old elitist system has been 'stretched to suit' (2) through the introduction of modularisation and semesterisation, the rise of managerialism, obsessions with the maintenance of standards, commodification of knowledge, and the increasing marketisation of higher education. Much of this they maintain is borneoed by academics as the 'dispiriting and unrewarding burden of mass higher education' (4), and those who are suffering most are the students with dropout being the main consequence.

The first set of chapters explores these problems in more detail, specifically: the nature and effects of expansion; managerialism, and markets and consumerism; modularisation; students as consumers; learning outcomes. The other set of chapters is aimed at offering up ideas that are more positive, based on the authors' view that liberal education is the ideal form or approach to higher education.

In particular, one chapter is devoted to what the authors think universities should be and why they are valuable. They argue that universities are valuable because they serve a number of functions, which include: allowing individuals to flourish and find fulfilment; furthering society's