



Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
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Universities in the C21: the beginning of ecological leadership, the limits of management

Ronald Barnett, University College London Institute of Education
Guest lecture, Flinders University & The Philosophy Exchange, Adelaide,
Australia, 6 July 2018 www.ronaldbarnett.co.uk

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Higher education amid change

- World competitiveness - and world rankings of institutions
- Demands of society
- Not just economic growth ('knowledge economy')
 - But also societal change
- Demands express themselves on institutions in the form of
 - Equal opportunities
 - Teaching 'excellence'
 - Knowledge transfer
 - Income generation
 - Increased volume of research, oriented towards societal problems
 - Regional development
 - Civic engagement
 - Institutional diversity – mission 'specificity'

The need for management

- Complex set of challenges
- Complex institution
- The idea of complexity
- Open systems
- Generating unpredictable situations
- Causal chain only works backwards, not forwards

Pressing challenges

- Efficiency – ‘driving up’ input-output ratio
- Demonstrable outcomes
- National audits
- World rankings
- Financial security
- Soundness of plant
- Reputation
- Flow and character of human resources
- Accountability generally & governance

Instrumentalism

- Instrumental reason
- Ends are given
- Management – organizing resources to achieve ends (within horizon of known hinterland)
- Management – essential
- & itself complex (in formal terms)

Leadership – first sightings

- Leading managerial responses
- Leading managerial decision-making
- Leading the management of the institution's resources
- 'Management' and 'leadership' become synonyms
- Reduces the meaning of leadership
- An impoverished sense of leadership.

An example – academic restructuring

- Budgetary devolution
- Fewer reporting lines
- More powerful middle managers
- Clearer accountability mechanisms
- Transparent game plan
 - & ‘HR’ implications
- This is ‘leadership’ insofar as senior managers ‘lead’ this major changes
- But what of disciplines, their possibilities, their relationships
 - The epistemic possibilities
 - General’ education/ rels between T&R/ academic development

Learning analytics

LA:

- Data on students
- Their learning movements and interactions
- Gathered numerically
- Assists (?) attrition rates
- Efficiency of teaching function
- In whose interests?
- Ethical dimensions
- Reading of the data – eg library; coursework discussions
- Student ‘engagement’

Inner tensions

- 1 Bureaucratic management and entrepreneurialism (nos of managers, administrators, technicians ...)
- 2 Particularities and universalities ('university')
- 3 From internalist conception to externalist conception of University – but tension as between the economic and the social
- 4 Public and private (in its various manifestations)
- 5 Uniformity (of 'world-classness') and diversity
- 6 Institutional autonomy and state steering
- 7 Student throughput – student development as persons

Management framework – & leadership vacuum?

- The grand picture
 - Dissolving idea of university
 - Emerging of global university as an institution
 - (Corporate university/ entrepreneurial university/ digital university)
 - Global forces – generative deep structures (Bhaskar)
 - So ‘management’ has become a tinkering within this global university envelope
 - A bit more efficiency, a few rungs up the rankings, more digitalisation, diversified income streams ...
 - ‘Managerialism’ – a taken-for-granted *Weltanschauung*, an ideology
- ¹⁰ – Given ends – challenges are those of means

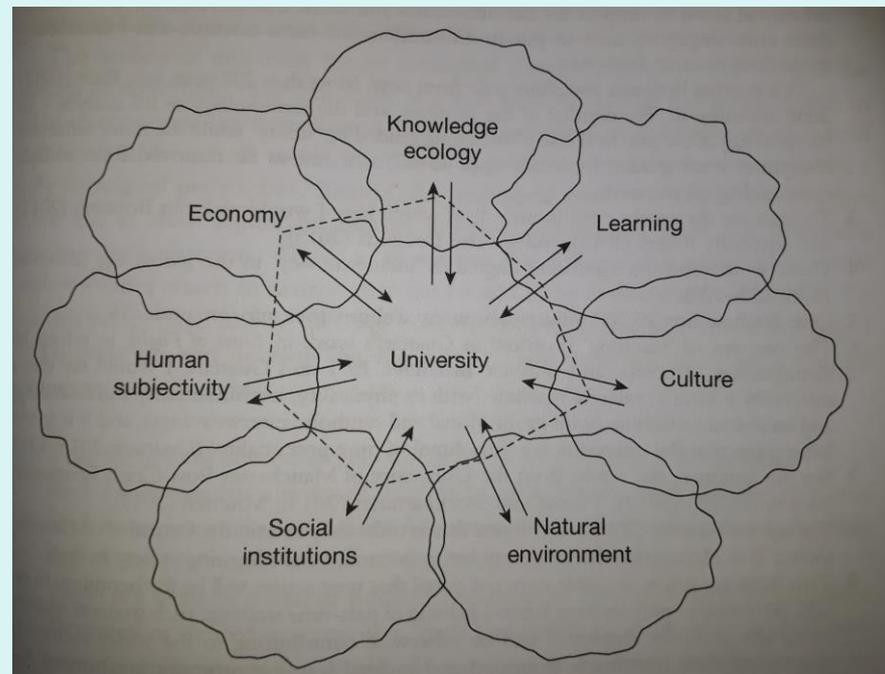
The possibility of possibilities

- The university now has possibilities before it
- The possibility of possibilities
- The idea of the idea gives rise to the possibility of possibilities
- Possibilities – projections; imaginative creations
- Now the university can become itself for the first time
- - and realize its utopian potential
- This is the task of leadership.

An inevitable remainder

- The university is always less than it can be
- Always short of its possibilities
- The concept – now imagined – opens a gap
- Always a beyond
- A double remainder
 - - between 'reality' and idea
 - - between 'reality' and possibilities in the future

Ecosystems of the university



Ecological leadership

- Not just glimpsing possibilities across the ecosystems
- But opening spaces and encouraging a foraging further into and across those ecosystems.
- So widening the university's ecological footprint
- In the cause of improving the world.

Schizophrenic university

- 1st position: The university lives in the space between its facticity and its possibilities (reality and idea)
- 2nd position: its facticity and its possibilities are not separate realms but are part of the totality of the university (its members live their (academic) lives partly through their ideas and hopes of the university)
- 3rd position: The university is both pernicious and ideal at once. The critical university gains its force by being pitted against its opposite ('the entrepreneurial university'; 'the corporate university'; 'the bureaucratic university' ...).
 - position of inherent schizophrenia
 - Not the case that sunny uplands await, if only ...

On living with negativity in the university in (the company of Zizek (and Hegel))

- Zizek's idea of 'an insurmountable parallax gap' – two closely linked perspectives between which no common ground is possible'
- 'a fundamental antimony which can never be dialectically "mediated/ sublated" into a higher synthesis' (TPV, 4)
- 'noncoincidence of a thing in itself' (30)
- 'Universality is not the neutral container of particular formations, their common measure ... but this battle itself, the struggle leading from one particular formation to another' (30).
- '... the Universal names the site of a Problem-Deadlock, of a burning Question, and the Particulars are the attempted but failed Answers to this Problem.' (38)
- 'For Hegel, external circumstances are not an impediment to realizing inner potentials, but on the contrary *the very arena in which the true nature of these inner potentials is to be tested*'. (TwtN, 142)

The antagonistic university

- And so the university is an inherently antagonistic institution
- But what kind of antagonism is this?
- Is it an external antagonism – the university battling against external forces imposed upon it?
- Or is it an internal battle, the university battling against itself?
- For the former, the standard reading, the battle could be resolved one way or the other;
- But for the latter, the more radical reading, (to which I want to hold), the battle is essential; it is part of the university's being
- No internal battle; no university!
- So the problem becomes one of living with this inherent antagonism

Realizing the university's possibilities

- Assembling the resources for answering the question: 'how do we understand the gap between the 'real' university and its possibilities?'
- A shortfall – deficiencies
- The university is always *less* than its possibilities, less than the sum of its parts (negative energies)

University leadership for the C21

- Vision, imagination, institutional energy
- Opening options
- Grappling with conflict
- Seeing under the skin (empirical/ actual/ real)
- Irradicable conflict – esp in a university
- *If management is the art of the possible, leadership is the art of the impossible*
- Struggle for feasible utopias

But which possibilities?

- Competing universalities
- Reason/ equity/ public/ wisdom/ ecology/ growth/ liberty
- But these universals are suspect – the voices of Western democracy/ of stillness and calm
- What of exhilaration/ anxiety/ excitement/ boundary-breaking/ rule-bending/ scariness/ hope?
- And what of those siren voices – those other universals – of power/ competition/ of impact/
- Task becomes that of the adjudication of (such) competing universalities

Conclusions

- Management and leadership are fundamentally different concepts
- Management – the realm of the empirical
- Leadership – the realm of both the (hidden) real and the utopian
- Both are crucial concepts
- But: tendency to collapse the two and
- Diminish leadership, into a adjunct of management
- Instead, leadership should take the palm
- Management on tap and not on top
- Leadership lives amid conflict and ‘being possible’
- It is an impossible and exorbitant demand
- But who said it was easy.



Institute of Education
University of London
20 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AL

Tel +44 (0)20 7612 6000
Fax +44 (0)20 7612 6126
Email info@ioe.ac.uk
Web www.ioe.ac.uk