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# GLOBALISATION EDUCATION & SOCIAL FUTURES

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Research Network

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Locating universities in a  
globalising world: global  
dynamics/local spaces

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## **LOCATING UNIVERSITIES IN A GLOBALISING WORLD**

GLOBAL DYNAMICS/LOCAL SPACES

Few will disagree that since the 1980s universities and higher education sectors around the globe have faced significant challenges to and undergone major transformations in their missions, governance structures, funding streams, institutional footprints, student populations and relationships to the wider economy and societies they serve (Barnett, 2009; King, 2009). No longer is it a truism that changes in the sector happen at glacial pace. Far from it! Almost overnight, new university infrastructures mushroom; a visible outcome of strategies deployed by respective governments and institutions aimed at creating talented high skilled labour through 21<sup>st</sup> Century knowledge innovations. From Singapore's Global Schoolhouse project (Olds, 2007) to Malaysia's EduCity, Qatar's Education City, Melbourne's Knowledge Index, to more recently, Stanford University's 'Stanford Ignite' offering entrepreneurship courses, Silicon Valley-style to high fee paying students in London (Coughlan, 2015: 1) all suggest institutional ambition, innovation, place and pace are qualities to be harnessed and nurtured.

Cities, too, appear to change overnight, their colour and character an outcome of institutional entrepreneurship, national export strategies promoting education as a profitable services sector, and the investment decisions of aspiring middle class families around their child's, and their own futures. Cities like London, Prague, Sydney, New York, Los Angeles, Auckland and Vancouver have all been transformed by large numbers of largely international students attending education institutions - from language classes and foundation courses to graduate and undergraduate programmes.

Check the websites of the respective institutions, and one is immediately struck by the creative use of a series of reputational devices used in the marketing of the university. One or more of the proliferation of world university rankings is used to promote some quality of the institution, the city as a place to study, the historical significance of the institution, or the articulation of the degree to other opportunities around the world (see chapter by Horseman, this volume). For example, Lingnan University in Hong Kong markets itself as 'A Top 10 Liberal Arts College in Asia' citing the Forbes, 2015 ranking index. By way of contrast, its neighbour - the University of Hong Kong - illustrates its shift up the reputation ladder by referring to its better performance on the Times Higher's world university ranking. New Zealand's universities draw on the government's Brand New Zealand stamp of approval which aims to boost confidence in its quality. Shift geography and we can see that the University of Bologna, in recently setting up an institutional presence in Buenos Aires, Argentina, cited its history – as one of the oldest universities in Europe (founded in 1088) as its unique selling point (University of Bologna, 2015). In doing so, it also joins a

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rapidly growing number of universities with branch-campus portfolios around the world. Macquarie University in Australia markets its programmes as Bologna compliant; a gesture in the direction of its undergraduate and graduate students wanting to ensure that they can parse their qualifications in the global marketplace.

In England, UK, government policy in higher education is being reshaped as a result of responses to local and global dynamics. These include dramatic reductions in funding to drive down the fiscal deficit, the governing of the sector through introducing a more explicit set of policies and mechanisms aimed at unleashing market forces, opening up the sector to for-profit providers, and a shift in the relationship between government and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (Browne, 2010; BIS, 2011a, 2011b; Robertson, 2013). With the maximum under-graduate fee permissible at a state-funded university set at around £9,250 with any increases likely to be linked to the new Teaching Excellence Framework, and the block grant for many subjects receiving funding from the sector's regulator removed (except for science and research budgets), university leaders and managers within the sector are unclear what the long-term future might look like and how best to manage in this very different governance environment (see Chapter XXX)

Adding extra pressure in this already unstable environment are immigration policies that have placed new restrictions on those arriving in the UK to study; the UK has now experienced an ongoing decline in the numbers of international students enrolled in UK universities (BIS, 2014). It is also unclear what the longer-term ramifications – both to government and to student aspirations - as a result of significant graduate unemployment, the introduction of student fees and the spiralling costs of the Student Loan Book. These root and branch changes in the governing of English higher education have created new uncertainties about the future of higher education, and what this might mean for the very idea of the university, as well as for questions of quality, access, social mobility and longer term sustainability (Holmwood, 2012; Reay, 2012; Robertson, 2013; McGettigan, 2013).

One could cite many more examples of the manifestations of changes in the sector, both global and local. However the purpose here is not to provide an exhaustive catalogue of changes, interesting though that is. Rather it is to step back a bit and look at their dynamics so as to understand their nature, scope, scale and organizing logics at work. And if, as Boaventura de Sousa Santos argues, that these transformations are part of a wider 'paradigmatic transition' facing all societies and universities around the world (Santos, 2010: 1), it is important to understand their what this means so as to guide them in ways that are useful for the institutions and for the sector, as well as how best to manage their intended and unintended outcomes. This opening chapter we will also explore some of the key issues and challenges facing the contemporary university, including issues of access, student mobility, the positional good nature of higher education, new pedagogical innovations, expanding institutional geographies of universities, the rise of new players in the sector including for-profits, and the commercialisation of ideas, knowledge and education.

## COMPETITION AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

The challenge facing many higher education sectors and their academic leaders and managers, to broadly realise a new knowledge-based development model, is driven by three logics anchored in what Streeck calls 'capitalism's animal spirit' - *competition* (Streeck, 2009). Streeck describes competition as:

'...the institutionally-protected possibility for enterprising individuals to pursue even higher profit from an innovative manner at the expense of other producers. The reason why competition is so effective as a mechanism of economic change is that where it is legitimate in principle, as it must be almost by definition in a capitalist economy, what is needed to mobilise the energy of innovative entrepreneurship is not collective deliberation or a majority vote but, ideally, just one player who, by deviating from the established way off 'doing things' can force all others to follow, at the ultimate penalty of extinction' (ibid: 242-3).

The rise of recruiters of international students to feed institutional numbers, Australia's rapid development as a highly sophisticated, intelligence-driven, export machinery in higher education, and the emergence and expansion of Europe's Bologna Process to create a European Higher Education Area, are all cases in point. As Sassen (2006) observes, such innovative entrepreneurship (almost unknowingly) sets in train a new way of doing things—or a new logic—so that it is impossible not to respond. In other words, new logics signal a change in the rules of the game. As we know *competition* (wrapped in the rhetoric of access, efficiency, effectiveness and quality), has been on the agenda of a number of governments, as well as influential international organisations, from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to the World Bank. Competition, however, takes numerous forms – each with their own logic. For the purposes set out here in analysing the higher education sector, three logics are analysed that are central to how many universities function today.

## A TALE OF THREE LOGICS POWERING HIGHER EDUCATION IN A GLOBAL WORLD

### *Logic 1: Corporatisation*

The first logic, corporatisation, is anchored in the idea of New Public Management (Hood, 1991) and popularised by highly influential writers such as Osborne and Gaebler (1991) in the 1990s. New Public Management asks: *how can the values of business (competition, frugality, risk, choice, value for money, entrepreneurship) be used in the re/organisation of public services so as to enable those services to be delivered more efficiently and effectively.*

Corporatisation was the outcome of the New Public Management (NPM) which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a way of describing a family of changes in public administration (Hood, 1991; Osborne and Gaebler, 1991) which were globalised. These changes were designed to slow down, or reverse, growth in government spending and staffing. Driven by the 'crowding out' thesis – the view was that by removing government from key areas of activity this would enable the private sector to thrive and stimulate growth and greater efficiencies. In its earlier days, this included the privatisation of a range of university activities, from catering services to cleaning, technology contracts, and publishing. More recently it has included services by firms such as INTO, StudyGroup and Navitas, sometimes in the form of joint ventures, aimed at both recruiting international students into foundation programmes aimed at helping them prepare for university studies, then setting them on their way through undergraduate programmes in the respective universities. Another example is the growth of private providers, many backed by real estate investment trusts (REITs), of student housing on or near university campuses (ICEF Monitor, 2015).

NPM had a major impact on the way in which universities delivered their core mission of teaching and research through the deployment of indicators and targets, the use of explicit standards and measures of performance, and parsimony in the use of resources. As Deem put it in the late 1990s:

Those who run universities are expected to ensure that such value is provided and their role as academic leaders is being subsumed by a greater concern with the overt management of sites, finance, staff, students, teaching and research. Universities are also being exhorted to raise both the standards of educational provision, and the quality of their teaching, learning and research outcomes, whilst prevailing government and funding council policies also require annual so-called 'efficiency gains' to be made, resulting in a declining unit of resource per student taught, less money for equipment and a decrease in research resourcing. At the same time, the emphasis on competition between universities for students, research income and academic research 'stars', has also served to stress the extent to which higher education can be described as operating under quasi-market conditions (1998: 48)

A key cultural shift for universities was therefore the emulation of the core values and practices of business both in the ways in which the university was governed, and the ways in which the university itself governed its academic and non-academic faculty (Deem, 1998; Olssen and Peters, 2005). NPM has dramatically altered the vision and mission of the university, away from that Newman's 'Idea of a University' that had stood as a fundamental anchor for more than a century (Newman, 1910), toward one which is necessarily mindful of the bottom line, and of its competitors – locally, nationally and internationally.

*Logic 2: Comparative Competitivism*

A second logic - 'comparative competitiveness' - arises from the influential work of Michael Porter (1985) and was mobilised by the developed economies as a response to the global crisis for the developed West in the early 1970s, processes of deindustrialization, and the rise of the Asian newly industrializing countries (sometimes deemed the 'Asian Tigers') (Robertson, 2009). Comparative competitiveness asks: *what is it that we can do or produce (trade, or gain a greater market share in), where we have an existing or potential advantage in relation to our competitors?* For countries like the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, one answer was that once public sectors, like higher education, could open up private places to international students and charge full-fees. Over time, these 'service sector' would become a major revenue generator institutions and for governments, and begin to form a major role as part of a new diversified and more globalised services-based economy (Marginson and Considine, 2000; King et al., 2009).

Whilst not exhaustive, the key forms that comparative competitiveness has taken in higher education institutions around the globe include: (i) widening access to help boost the amount and quality of human capital; (ii) exporting education services (recruitment of international students, branch campuses); (iii) teaching in English; (iv) the recruitment of talented students for research and development; (v) the recruitment of world class staff (especially researchers and faculty), and (vi) innovations on curricular and governance. These initiatives have generated a raft of monitoring tools that provide the nation, the institution, the student, the industry and allied associations with key information about the sector. At the same time these increasingly diverse set of actors and activities are constitutive of the sector itself. It alters who does what, and how they see and assess what they do.

Whilst often parsed as the widening participation agenda anchored in social equity arguments, it is also the case that widening access also refers discourses around building competitive knowledge economies measured through the stock of high skill human capital (Marginson and Considine, 2000). A university-level education was thus regarded as a critical investment in the kind of human capital that would stimulate a knowledge economy. Over the course of three decades, many countries have now moved from educating a small elite (4-6%), to educating up

to 50% or more of their eligible population in universities, or some form of higher education. UNESCO Institute for Statistics figures are drawn upon by the British Council chart this huge expansion in numbers globally: from around 13 million in 1960 to 170 million in 2009. Four countries alone have a combined share of 45% of total global tertiary enrolments (UIS, 2012: 4); these are China, India, the USA and Russia (British Council, 2012: 4-5).

In countries like the United Kingdom, this expansion has a definite economic tone, not least because of the growing costs to families, and the need to legitimate families shouldering a growing amount of the burden of this once state-funded investment. The idea of the 'graduate premium' refers to the fact that students undertaking university level studies will – it is argued, over their life-time significantly improve their earnings (Goastellec, 2010) and therefore their route to social mobility, though evidence shows that this has slowed in countries like the UK and the USA (Brown et al., 2011).

For individuals, their competitive comparative advantage is enhanced by university-level education in ways that can be invested in as a 'positional good'. Fred Hirsch coined the concept of positional good in his book, *Social Limits to Growth* (1977) where he argued a positional economy is composed of

*'...all aspects of goods, services, work positions and other social relationships that are either (i) scarce in some absolute or socially imposed sense, or (ii) subject to congestion and crowding through more extensive use'* (Hirsch, 1977: 27).

Having a university qualification when others don't enables the valorisation of that qualification to secure advantages in the labour market that would otherwise be unavailable. The greater the number of others who also hold a similar qualification, then either an even higher level is required (from Masters to Doctoral-level), or some other means of distinguishing reputational value is necessary. Here either personal reputation (prizes and other awards), or institutional reputation in the form of what position in a ranking system, is also used by employers, scholarship allocators, high skills recruiters, to make decisions about individuals their qualifications, employability and financial returns.

Perhaps the most significant of the changes that have been set in train as a result of comparative competitiveness is in international student mobility. For countries like the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, sectors like higher education were reimagined in the late 1980s/early 1990s in government policy as potential exports as part of a services sector. These countries had the advantage of having a mature higher education sector, capacity to expand, they taught in the global *lingua franca* – English, and could use old colonial ties for new purposes. Before long, these early entry entrepreneurs, encouraged by key international organisations (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization)—came to view higher education institutions as producers of education services which could be given an economic value (Kelsey, 2009).

By the late 1980s, aid programmes which had enabled scholars from low-income countries to study abroad had been replaced with *trade* programmes, mostly targeted at the aspiring middle classes in emerging economies like China, Malaysia, Singapore and Nigeria, and more recently Eastern Europe, India and Latin America. A new set of firms also emerged in the higher education sector around these kinds of activity, from those who 'test' the health of the system by gathering the views of graduates and selling the data back to universities (i-Graduate), to professional recruiters of international students such as ICEF (Robertson and Komljenovic, 2016).

The most remarkable of the changes since the early 1990s in the global higher education landscape is the sheer scale of numbers of students studying for either undergraduate or graduate degrees in the country of which they are not a citizen (OECD 2014). The OECD, in its annual *Education at a Glance* shows that in the 1990s, around 1.3 million students were enrolled outside of their country of citizenship. By 2015, and the figure is now more than three times that number – with around 4.5 million students now studying in another country (OECD 2014: 342).

According to some pundits, this figure is set to reach the 5 million mark in the next couple of years (UNESCO, 2014). By anyone's reckoning, this is a very large population on the move, and all the more remarkable because by 2008, 24.4% of this population of international students came from just three countries – China, India and South Korea – with the largest population by far being from China (14.9%).

Taking all these phenomena together, it is clear that a complex combination of dynamics is at work, giving momentum to these flows. It is also important to take notice of the newer players in the sector – such as China, Malaysia and Singapore – not as the major sending countries as they once were, but as increasingly important destinations. The rise of China as a global power and its comparative economic strength (despite recent falterings) in relation to the USA has resulted in a healthy 'study-abroad' programme, particularly for American students now seeking to acquire some understanding of China and engagement with Mandarin as a potential contender to English (UNESCO 2014).

Though the US continues to have the largest share of international students, this has, in fact, decreased with time as newer players have entered. Whereas the US accounted for 40% of all international students in the early 1990s, by the late 1990s this proportion had shrunk to 32% (OECD 2014). The attraction of the United States, of course, is not only its prestigious universities, but it has been a preferred destination for graduate students because of its world class research facilities and its generous scholarship programmes, particularly in the sciences, mathematics and engineering. It also teaches in English and is home to the top science and engineering journals; a litmus test of dominance in global knowledge production (Marginson 2014). Only more recently has the US begun to consider increasing its recruitment of international students into its undergraduate programmes to help manage the financial pressures many of its institutions are now facing – and recent data released by the Institute of International Education (2016) highlight a renewed growth in US international student enrolment levels. In contrast with the US, which has around 4% of international students in its overall student body, Australia has, over the past three decades, built up huge intakes into its undergraduate programs with around 1 in 5 students being an international student, and of this number, 8 in every 10 comes from the Asian region (OECD 2014: 349).

Yet such dependencies also create their own problems. In 1997, the Asian financial crisis had a major impact on the flow of Asian students to New Zealand and Australia creating major institutional instabilities. Similarly, in the UK, increasing government intransigence regarding immigration numbers, with students are also included in these figures, have caused a drop in the numbers of international students and an increasing number feel unwelcome. And despite reports, such as the one by Deloitte's (2015) on *The Value of International Education to Australia* on the contribution of graduates likely to migrate after their studies and who are estimated would improve gross domestic product or GDP per capita by 0.5% per capita or A\$8.7 billion (US\$6.6 billion) in GDP, there is little sign that the UK higher education representatives have had much success in advancing an industry perspective. Add to this picture a volatile political landscape, with the election of Donald Trump in the United States and the United Kingdom set to leave the European Union, and it is evident that the more higher education globalises, the more challenges it faces in terms of national State rather than self-control over its flows of students and the wider policy terrain in which it operates.

Many universities have also begun to establish branch campuses in other parts of the world as a means of ensuring their international futures. Branch campuses are 'off-shore' operations where the unit is operated by the source institution (though can be in a joint venture with a host institution), and the student is awarded the degree of the source institution. In a major report for the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education released in September

2009, Becker noted that since 2006 there has been a 43% increase in international branch campuses, with more host and source countries involved. The number of host countries increased from 36 in 2006, to 51 in 2009 and 217 in 2014 (Olds and Robertson, 2014). Setting up in distant spaces is not for the naïve; they demand considerable local knowledge and an awareness of the complexities of place, culture and politics.

Amongst the host countries, the Arab Emirates has been the leader (Becker, 2009: 7); these initiatives are part of the Arab region's strategy to develop a knowledge-based economy, and to be a provider of education services within the Arab region. However, a new pattern is emerging worth noting. Where higher education capability is built through the establishment of branch campuses, in select cases, these initiatives are then incorporated into, or organised around, a new set of metaphors which are driving these developments, such as hubs, and hotspots (cf. Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong). Once established and embedded, these hubs in act as regional suppliers of education services, generating new regional capacity in higher education. These developments challenge existing patterns of geo-strategic interest as the new regional players seek to gain a competitive comparative advantage in the global distribution of education markets. Recent data on branch campuses has flagged a geographic rebalancing with China now the leading host country (O'Malley, 2016)

The growth in trans-border mobility has been paralleled by governments' trade department efforts to represent the value of higher education as an export sector. Different countries use different means to calculate these figures, but even so, that education is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest generator of GDP behind iron ore, or that the New Zealand government returns more value from education than the wine industry also creates its own momentum, and it is difficult to see how this might be turned back.

The English language, as a medium of instruction and a dominant form of dissemination of research, has been a key lever for advancing a comparative advantage. In more recent years a range of countries, including continental Europe, the Scandinavian countries and Japan, have responded by promoting English as an acceptable medium of instruction so as to develop their higher education systems into more attractive destinations. English has also gained particular prominence as the language of the research community because of its role in scientific dissemination and the largest shaped language of the research community. However, the use of English continues to generate huge debates about the loss of local knowledges and cultures, and what this means long term for the arts and humanities.

The global competition for (fee-paying) international students is nuanced by the global competition for 'talented' students. It is this dimension, too, which has differentiated the USA's approach to international students in comparison to the Australian approach, though this is changing, in both directions (US are now looking for full foreign fee-paying undergraduates *and* talented graduates). After being stagnant for several years, the figures for international graduate students have begun to increase again. The USA has a particular advantage in this area – with large Research and Development (R&D) budgets able to attract Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) students, and sufficiently flexible immigration packages that enable very large numbers to stay on. Indeed, as Douglass and Edelstein (2009) note, these students have been instrumental in enabling the US to build a highly skilled workforce in this area. More recently Canada, 'Europe' and Australia have also sought to secure a share of the talented 'graduate market, with lures like immigration points and residence permits, and organised scholarship programmes like the Erasmus Mundus scheme in Europe, to make the offer more attractive. Europe, however, is particularly nervous of its long term capacity to secure a competitive advantage in R&D because of its changing demographic. Whilst this is not the case in the US, there would need to be a change in

levels of participation in US higher education, particularly the sciences, for the US to secure its future from within its own nationals as opposed to those who come from Asia.

There are also interesting innovations in curricular and governance across the higher education sector. Perhaps the most remarkable of these is the Bologna Process which has been rolled out across Europe now includes 47 countries, involving well over 16 million students (Robertson, de Azevedo and Dale, 2016). The creation of a European Higher Education Area, on the one hand, and a European Research Area, on the other, has been under way since 1999 and 2000 respectively so as to make Europe a more competitive region through the development of a common degree architecture, and through joint research projects. However, recent developments in the United Kingdom around leaving the European Union might well generate major changes to the overall shape of the area if other countries also follow suite. That it will be business as usual according to UK universities might well be wishful thinking by a sector who have been major beneficiaries of research funding and from the presence of European students on their campuses.

The rapid growth in on-line learning by new for-profit providers (though this has recently slowed because of government regulation of the sector) (see Kinser, 2006; Hentschke et al, 2010), and most recently the potentials offered by Massive Open On-Line learning being pioneered by elite US universities (such as Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Yale) are also causing ripples in the governance and curricular of universities. Analysts argue MOOCs could lead to the 'unbundling' of the relationship between teaching/learning credits and credentials, with students potentially being able to engage with a range of different HE providers and turn these credits into credentials using newer kinds of services. Only time will tell as to whether these initiatives cause more than temporary turbulence in the sector.

Logic 3: 'Competitive Comparison'

A third logic - 'competitive comparison' - asks: *how well does this unit (institution/ city/ nation/ region) do in relation to another?* This third logic uses hierarchical orderings (with their implied superior/inferior registers of difference) to generate a social identity (world class, 5\*, enterprising). Comparison acts as a moral spur and defacto form of governance, giving direction to competitiveness through its insistence that if we *aspire* to improve (despite very different resources and positions in the global hierarchy), and that we will make it. These three competitiveness logics give direction, form, content and disciplinary power to neo-liberalism as a political and hegemonic project, as it is mediated through higher education.

Logic 3's competitiveness works in a rather different way. In asking: *how well is one unit doing in relation to another* it assumes a continuum can be developed with labels at each end registering a location on a 'telos' of development. Placing units into a hierarchical ordering along this axis, so that comparison can take place between units, allocating social identities (world class, 5\*). This move gives rise to registers of difference, such as developed/under-developed, superior/inferior. Those doing the assessing, or offering their services to determine our progress, have the power to set and reset the rules of the game sufficiently to ensure a spur to action. This is a moral and status economy, whose symbolic power is the elevation to a space close to god, or in the opposite direction the humiliation of the 'shadow lands'.

A rather different example is the way in which indexes, generated out of a myriad of indicators and other indexes, are used to allocate an identity as a result of comparison, which in turn stimulate activity in the direction of an imagined future is the KAM. The World Bank's KAM (*Knowledge Assessment Methodology*) is an instrument developed to help realise a knowledge based economy. The KAM is an interactive, diagnostic and benchmarking tool that provides a preliminary assessment of countries and regions 'readiness for the knowledge economy' (World Bank, 2007). The World Bank's programme of indicators is based on four pillars:

1. An economic and institutional regime that provides incentives for the efficient use of existing and new knowledge and the flourishing of entrepreneurship.
2. An educated and skilled population that can create, share, and use knowledge well.
3. An efficient innovation system of firms, research centres, universities, think-tanks, consultants, and other organizations who can tap into the growing stock of global knowledge, assimilate and adapt it to local needs, and create new technology.
4. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) that can facilitate the effective communication, dissemination, and processing of information.

The KAM enables countries from around the world to benchmark themselves with neighbours, competitors, or other countries they wish to learn from on the four pillars of the knowledge economy. It is therefore a tool aimed at promoting 'learning' amongst both developing and developed countries about the elements that constitute the Bank's version of a knowledge economy.

*Education at a Glance* is a statistical representation of higher education around the globe by the OECD. First produced in 2000, over time the OECD has collected more and more material on the sector, and uses these representations and implicit comparisons to enable countries to 'learn' about their system and their performance in relation to other systems. The problem with this kind of representation is set out by Cliff Adelman (2009) in his paper on *The Spaces Between Numbers: Getting International Data on Higher Education Straight*. Using graduation rates in the US to make his point, he shows how the OECD report assumes that universities in the US are the only institutions producing higher education graduates. As a result, the numbers are represented as small in comparison to other OECD countries. This of course feeds a crisis mentality in the US. As he further notes:

*'Indicators are the means for fulfilling the challenges of variability in any comparison of multinational inputs: out of complexity, they seek to tell a common story. They find ways to reconcile vastly different systems of accounting, cultural definitions, traditional national reference points, idiosyncrasies of institutions, and nuances of behaviour through common templates'* (Adelman, 2009: p. 36).

A proliferation of quality assurance mechanisms variously directed at teaching, research, and institutional management also work with competitive comparison. In relation to research, governments have become increasingly interested in research output and the development of measures of quality. The UK is an instructive example. Serving multiple purposes, from stimulating research outputs (as one measure amongst others of a competitive knowledge economy to controlling academic work, the research assessment tools in the United Kingdom have been copied in a range of countries. Leaving aside the 'not unimportant' fact that the RAE has consumed vast quantities of staff energy and finance, and shaped the recruitment of staff and their academic labour in very significant ways, it has also privileged the idea of 'international' in what counts as quality research, and more

recently in the impact that research is to have. In the UK the research assessment exercises have deepened the divisions within and between the different kinds of higher education providers around teaching and research through the establishment of league tables. And the impending roll-out of the Teaching Excellence Framework, with its blunt 'Gold,' 'Silver,' and 'Bronze' rankings will be sure to generate even more divisions, in part by enabling new revenue flow pathways.

Since 2003 global league tables, such as the Shanghai Jiao Tong, QS, and the recently revamped Times Higher have also provided policymakers and universities with a new language and set of tools to advance the idea of a 'global' university (Hazelkorn, 2016). The Shanghai Jiao Tong privileges a particular form of knowledge and how it is circulated; this includes disciplines such as science, mathematics and technology, Nobel Prize holders, the presence of international students, and citations. There is considerable concern over the use of the Shanghai Jiao Tong for it significantly privileges US universities, along with the UK's Oxford and Cambridge. Nevertheless, governments and individual institutions have used and so help to legitimate these ranking 'technologies' to advance their own projects and interests, such as leveraging funding, branding their institutions, departments and star performers, as a means of marketing, recruiting staff and students, disciplining staff, and so on.

#### BY WAY OF CONCLUSION: STRONG QUESTIONS IN NEED OF STRONG ANSWERS

One thing academic researchers, policymakers, industry analysts and popular commentators agree upon concerning the higher education sector and that is that universities and institutions of higher education around the world are at a crossroads, as they "...stand on the cusp of profound change" (Ernst and Young, 2012: 4). From new technologies which are transforming where and how we learn, to highly innovative multi-institutional developments aimed at altering the interface between graduate education and the new economy, to players in the sector whose business partners and models are very different from those that have characterised the sector to date, these are challenging our traditional conceptions of what a university is, who it is for, and what it looks like. In the words of Harvard professor Clayton Christensen (in Christensen and Eyring, 2011), these developments are changing the DNA of higher education, and thus demand challenging conversations.

This chapter has detailed some of contours of these changes, arguing that they are being driven by three distinct logics that are having a mutually reinforcing role in creating competitive economies, institutions and individuals. This is a three-pronged epistemology; of creating an organisational infrastructure and orientation that emulates the private sector, of securing an advantage through innovatively using territorial intelligence, material capabilities and new forms of institutionalisation, and using comparison as the tool for generating momentum toward the realisation of this goal in turn gives these tools considerable power.

These logics are changing higher education institutions and changing the nature of strategic planning; away from administering national State mechanisms as a public service and towards competitive and market based models based on the interests of each institution and its participants. Universities are not only a site of human capital formation but increasingly also a business endeavour best organised using the disciplinary values and principles of competitiveness and economic rather than human progress. Together, these two planes offer a limited range of social

identities for institutions. Its moral economy is punitive in that while difference becomes the basis on which social identities are allocated, there is little scope for diversity.

Its development trajectory, of progress away from a relatively autonomous, institution whose social relations are decommodified, toward one where value is in the form of commodities within a knowledge economy, highlights not only a narrowing of what knowledge counts, but the potential to close down space for diversity and responsiveness regarding what forms of knowledge is produced, with whom, and for whom. In the face of global issues of sustainability, and the sustainability of the model based on enrolling more and more international students, it is important academic leaders and planners take the time to assess the development of the sector as a whole and to think more strategically about the short, medium and long term regarding their responsibilities to curate universities in ways that secure a less competitive and more open-minded future for the population as a whole.

Santos (2010) recently argued that what confronts the modern university, and indeed places the modern university at this crossroad, is that it has tended to answer strong questions with weak answers. Weak answers are technical answers devised of the moment. They are answers that focus on the problem as if it were disconnected from wider social, economic and political phenomena. Answers to strong questions must not only have a strong awareness of the context, but have a strong theory about that context as well. Strong answers not only see the importance, and the enormity of the strategic planning task at hand, but take seriously the responsibility to map, make sense of, and advance an agenda and set of strategies, institutionally and sectorally, that seeks to challenge and if necessary change the current state of affairs.

To some extent this also means posing questions that might offer a new ways of thinking about the role of the university in the twenty-first century. Can we and if so how can we reconstruct the missions of our universities (in the current environment) to include social, political and not just (narrow) economic ends? Can we also work to ensure universities address challenging questions that go against the grain of political thought? One year after the 2007-8 global economic crisis, for example, Harvard's President Drew Faust (2009) had this to say:

Universities are meant to be producers not just of knowledge but also of (often inconvenient) doubt. They are creative and unruly places, homes to a polyphony of voices. But at this moment in our history, universities might well ask if they have in fact done enough to raise the deep and unsettling questions necessary to any society.

As the world indulged in a bubble of false prosperity and excessive materialism, should universities — in their research, teaching and writing — have made greater efforts to expose the patterns of risk and denial? Should universities have presented a firmer counterweight to economic irresponsibility? Have universities become too captive to the immediate and worldly purposes they serve? Has the market model become the fundamental and defining identity of higher education?

Or is it possible to have a progressive form of competition, one that takes as its compass the creation of teaching and learning opportunities that give rise to a critical cosmopolitan mind? What might it look like if translated into the kinds of tools which also assesses our activities? What can we learn from others (comparison) that might enable us to reject the narrowness of current models on offer? These are difficult questions for complex times, but if not now, when can and should they be grappled with?

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