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The Changing Nature of Academic Work from an International Comparative Perspective

Akira Arimoto*

Abstract. Based on the Humboldtian ideal, a research-teaching-study nexus has been thought to be an ideal in order to pursue academic work. Nevertheless, the pattern of the academic profession's commitment to academic work, consisting of research and teaching, is likely to be shifting to a greater emphasis on a research rather than a teaching orientation. This paper seeks to analyze various factors working behind such a shifting situation in the participating countries to the CAP survey from an international comparative perspective.

Keywords: Humboldtian ideal, social change, higher education policy, academic reform, knowledge reconstruction

Introduction

The fourteen countries (*i.e.*, thirteen countries and one region) participating in the Carnegie International Survey of the Academic Profession (Carnegie survey) conducted in 1992 were categorized into three types with regard to academics' orientation to research and teaching: a German type, an Anglo-Saxon type, and a Latin American type. The German type, included Germany, the Netherlands, Korea, and Japan, and revealed a strong orientation to research. The Anglo-Saxon type, including the U.K., the U.S., Australia, and Hong Kong, revealed an orientation shared equally between research and teaching. The Latin American type, included Chile, Brazil, and Argentina, and revealed a strong orientation to teaching (Arimoto & Ehara, Eds., 1996). On the other hand, in the Changing Academic Profession survey (CAP Survey) conducted in 2007, the German type with its strong orientation to research had become dominant among the participating eighteen countries, while countries in both the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin American groups had decreased the emphasis of their orientation on teaching with the exception of only two countries – the U.S. and Mexico (Arimoto, 2010a).

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According to the Humboldtian ideal, a research, teaching, and study nexus (R-T-S nexus) has been thought to be an ideal since the 19th century in order to pursue academic work (Clark, 1997, 2008; Ushiogi, 2009). Nevertheless, the pattern of the academic profession's commitment to academic work consisting of research and teaching appears to be shifting to one with greater emphasis on research than teaching.

This paper seeks to analyze the various factors behind such a shift in the situation of the participating countries of the CAP survey from an international comparative perspective with a focus on some of the key factors such as social change, higher education policy, academic reform, and knowledge reconstruction.

Internationally, academic reforms have been related more or less to a reconsideration of scholarship, and especially to the involvement of academics by focusing on the relation between research and teaching (*cf.* Boyer, 1990). An emerging universalization stage of the development of higher education has driven academic reforms that stress academics' greater involvement in teaching than in research in the universities and colleges. In this context, reconstruction of scholarship related to academic work has seemingly become one of the most important problems to be resolved as soon as possible.

In the case of Japan, for example, academics have substantially conformed to the German type for almost a century from the pre-war era when it was introduced into the higher education system. This kind of conformity is clearly shown by the fact that in both the Carnegie and CAP surveys, they conformed strongly to a research orientation. However, the nature of academic work is expected to change for various reasons such as the shift of higher education development from a massification to a universalization stage, a corresponding change in higher education policy, and the trend to reconsideration of scholarship. Indeed, higher education policy has actually changed over the past fifteen years to the extent that the national government now legally requires all academics to strengthen their involvement in teaching (Arimoto, Ed., 2008).

In the present situation where almost all academics in the participating eighteen countries of the CAP survey are moving in the same direction of strengthening their research orientation, all the participating countries can be expected to face similar problems to that in Japan and it becomes necessary for us to discuss the problem from an international perspective.

1. Framework of research

(1) Knowledge and academic work

Figure 1 shows a research framework of this paper that focuses on the relationship between knowledge, academic work, and the R-T-S nexus.

First, knowledge is an indispensable base for academic work, by providing its basic material.

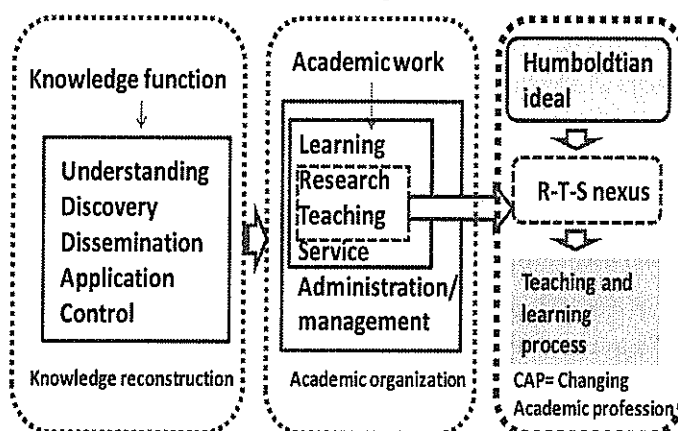
Functions of knowledge are understanding, discovery, dissemination, application, and control, and are identified as the vehicles learning, research, teaching, service, and administration and management, respectively.

Second, among these, research and teaching are thought to be the two most important vehicles of academic work. In fact, academics in pre-modern academia used to undertake academic activities with an exclusive focus on teaching before the emergence of the scientific revolution. However, involvement of academics in post-modern academia shifted to a focus on research when it became institutionalized.

Research and teaching have quite different natures because of their own functions of discovery and dissemination, although both of these functions have the same root bedded in advanced knowledge, and academic disciplines. Accordingly, compatibility of research and teaching is not necessarily realized easily. In practice, the compatibility seems to have been difficult to realize among academics over the past two centuries since establishment of the modern university. In the first stage of the modern university in the 19th century, when the two functions of research and teaching were included together in academic work, the need to extend both functions was achieved only at the expense of their separation and segmentation rather than their integration. As Light has argued, academics' involvement in research in addition to teaching is a necessary condition for defining an academic profession (Light, 1974). This implies that the academic profession could not formally appear before institutionalization of research into academia. It follows that a deliberate linkage and integration of research and teaching are indispensable in modern universities and colleges.

Third, an important point in the framework of integrating research is placed on seeking the ideal and the reality of an R-T-S nexus. In examining how the Humboldtian ideal has been realized in the academic work of academic organizations, we must consider the possibility that there exists a discrepancy between the ideal and reality. The main subject of this paper is to do this on the basis of the CAP survey conducted in 2007.

Figure 1. Framework of research: knowledge, academic work, and R-T-S nexus



(2) Reconsideration of the Humboldtian ideal and scholarship

The Humboldtian ideal, which seeks an R-T-S nexus, professes a vision of the modern university, and predicts conflicts between research and teaching orientations because of difficulty in their realization. Contrary to the ideal, currently a research orientation is prevailing.

Berlin University established in the early 19th century differed substantially from the medieval universities with their focus on teaching. In Berlin University it was thought to be necessary that not only teachers but students should pursue research activities, as its teaching and learning processes in seminar and laboratory sought an ideal of “teaching through research” (von Humboldt, 1910). Burton Clark called this the R-T-S nexus (Clark, 1997, 2008). Naturally, it was demanded that an academic be qualified as a researcher, a scholar and a scientist before being a teacher. From cultivating the frontier areas by original discovery of knowledge, the academic as a teacher was expected to teach the findings to students in the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, students as learners and also researchers were expected to participate in discovery of knowledge just like their teachers. This method, in the newly emerging culture and climate with its orientation to research, was very different from that of the traditional culture and climate developed in the medieval universities.

Elsewhere, universities and colleges retained the traditional mode in which teachers merely read textbooks while students recited them. In Berlin, it was attempted to create an innovative teaching style basically different from the traditional one. Initially, this new form was not extended generally to other institutions even in Germany. Subsequent wide acceptance of the new research paradigm in Germany did not provide integration between research and teaching but rather identified the dominance of research.

The emerging research paradigm ultimately has had a more or less worldwide effect and, as will be discussed later, it has established a trend of academic conversion to a research orientation all over the world. Even so, it is undeniable that a unified mechanism is absent from many individual systems of higher education or even that they possess a working diversified mechanism, although a worldwide trend of uniformity seems to be increasing to a considerable extent. There are some systems that have sought to adopt the Humboldtian concept but also others that have not recorded any attempts to do so. Moreover, the ways the effects have operated differ, even when they exist.

Among these, academics in the U.S. were successful in achieving an integration between research and teaching and, to some extent their counterparts in the U.K. also succeeded. On the other hand, academics in Japan paid much more attention to research productivity promoted in a center of learning in trying to import the research paradigm so as to establish their own research universities. The effects of this kind of movement have lasted until today in many universities that attempted to catch up with the model of the “research university.”

Various kinds of universities, including those in Japan, tried to establish prototypes of the

“research university” developed in Germany. Academics sought to transplant the strongest disciplines and departments developed in more advanced countries. This provides testimony to their fairly accurate insight into the centers of learning existing in the world at that time. For example, in Japan they selected the following disciplines from advanced countries in as early as 1870: from the U.K., mechanics, business methods, geology, architecture, and shipbuilding; from France, law, international law, biology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, and architecture; from the U.S., industrial arts, agriculture, farming, commerce, and mineralogy (Nakayama, 1978, pp.42-43). The national government and academics decided to import scientific knowledge from the West, designating the advanced countries, inviting prominent researchers and teachers, and sending students to these selected countries after asking them to study languages before leaving Japan (Nakayama, *ibid.*, p.45).

Of course, these countries tried to learn from the German model, though there are some exceptional cases (Arimoto, Ed., 1996; Clark, 1995). France, following the Napoleonic model, was hardly affected by the German style so that teaching and research were separated into the university and the academy. Russia and then the USSR was influenced by France and established a similar system. The modern Chinese system followed the USSR in its early stage developments. Latin American countries, which fundamentally succeeded to the tradition of the medieval universities, remained until recently unaffected by the German model for many years.

2. Integration and differentiation of research and teaching: comparison of the 1992 and 2007 surveys

(1) Three different academic types recognized in the 1992 survey

Thirteen countries and one region participated in the 1992 Carnegie survey: Australia, Brazil, Chile, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, South Korea, Sweden, the U.K., and the U.S. (Altbach, Ed., 1996). From the results of the survey, three types of academic awareness could be recognized (Arimoto & Ehara, Eds., 1996). A German type, oriented to research, consisted of six countries, the Netherlands, Japan, Germany, South Korea, Sweden, and Israel. An Anglo-Saxon type, oriented equally to research and teaching, consisted of four countries: Australia, Hong Kong, the U.K., and the U.S. A Latin American type, oriented to teaching, consisted of three countries: Brazil, Chile, and Russia.

The observed trend of the typology over the subsequent fifteen years has shown a shift toward the research type, not to the Anglo-Saxon type as expected to accord with the Humboldtian ideal. To achieve this ideal, both the German and Latin American types might have been expected to converge toward the ideal Anglo-Saxon type. Instead it seems that this hypothesis has been invalidated by the changes of academics' consciousnesses during the fifteen years.

(2) *Concentration on one type recognized in the 2007 survey*

In the CAP Survey conducted in 2007, seventeen countries and one region participated: Argentina (legend: AR), Australia (AU), Brazil (BR), Canada (CA), China (CH), Finland (FI), Germany (DE), Hong Kong (HK), Italy (IT), Japan (JP), South Korea (KR), Malaysia (MY), Mexico (MX), Norway (NO), Portugal (PT), South Africa (ZA), United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (US). Table 1 shows data for participating countries in the CAP survey with the total sampled number of academics responding (23,130) and also the number of responses from each country. Compared to the Carnegie survey, five countries, Chile, Israel, the Netherlands, Russia, and Sweden did not participate, while ten countries, Argentina, Canada, China, Finland, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, and South Africa, were added.

Table 1. Country Samples for the CAP Survey

AR	Argentina	825
AU	Australia	1,022
BR	Brazil	1,197
CA	Canada	980
CH	China	3,507
FI	Finland	1,417
DE	Germany	1,317
HK	Hong Kong	797
IT	Italy	1,690
JP	Japan	1,391
KR	South Korea	900
MY	Malaysia	1,202
MX	Mexico	1,815
NO	Norway	989
PT	Portugal	874
ZA	South Africa	716
UK	United Kingdom	1,356
US	United States of America	1,135
Total		23,130

Source: INCHER-Kassel (2009)

Table 2 reveals an indicator based on the research orientation of academics by country in the CAP survey in 2007. According to the data, the top-ten research-oriented countries are: Norway (0.83), Italy (0.77), Japan (0.72), Australia (0.70), Canada (0.68), South Korea (0.68), Germany (0.67), the U.K. (0.67), Finland (0.65), Hong Kong (0.63). On the other hand, the following countries show a higher teaching orientation: Mexico (0.39), the U.S. (0.44), South Africa (0.47), Malaysia (0.47), China (0.47), Brazil (0.49), Portugal, (0.53).

For the 18 countries in the 2007 CAP survey, the average response rate for the items on professional interests is as follows: *interests primarily in teaching* (10%); *in both, but leaning towards teaching* (30%); *in both, but leaning towards research* (46%); *primarily in research* (14%) . In the

1992 survey, it was as follows: *interests primarily in teaching* (13%); *in both, but leaning towards teaching* (36%); *in both, but leaning towards research* (42%); *primarily in research* (6%). If we compare the relative strength of the teaching orientation (first and second items) and research orientation (third and fourth items) for the two surveys, the result is as follows: in 2007, 40% expressed at least an inclination towards teaching and 60% towards research; in 1992, the inclination towards teaching was 50% and towards research was 51% (Table 3-1, 3-2). Clearly, internationally, the orientation towards teaching has decreased and the research orientation increased during these fifteen years. Thus we find an international trend towards an increased inclination to research even though some mature higher education systems are undergoing a shift from the mass to the universal stage of development (Trow, 1974).

Table 2. Research orientation by country and discipline

Country	Average	Humanities	Social sciences	Natural sciences	Engineering	Agriculture	Health	Teacher training
Argentina	0.57(11)	0.68(6)	0.43(15)	0.66(12)	0.56(13)	0.59(10)	0.62(9)	0.43(10)
Australia	0.70(4)	0.68(5)	0.70(5)	0.74(9)	0.74(3)	0.50(12)	0.67(4)	0.60(3)
Brazil	0.49(13)	0.61(10)	0.44(14)	0.66(11)	0.49(17)	0.50(13)	0.46(14)	0.36(13)
Canada	0.68(5)	0.62(9)	0.70(7)	0.79(6)	0.62(8)	0.31(16)	0.65(6)	0.55(4)
China	0.47(14)	0.41(16)	0.42(16)	0.51(17)	0.57(12)	0.49(14)	0.43(15)	0.30(17)
Finland	0.65(9)	0.50(13)	0.72(3)	0.83(2)	0.61(9)	0.74(5)	0.63(8)	0.38(11)
Germany	0.67(7)	0.57(11)	0.60(10)	0.81(5)	0.61(10)	0.71(7)	0.67(5)	0.43(9)
Hong Kong	0.63(10)	0.65(8)	0.68(8)	0.72(10)	0.74(4)		0.62(10)	0.48(7)
Italy	0.77(2)	0.79(2)	0.75(2)	0.82(3)	0.73(5)	0.80(1)	0.65(7)	0.72(1)
Japan	0.72(3)	0.68(4)	0.71(4)	0.82(4)	0.70(6)	0.75(4)	0.73(2)	0.50(6)
Korea, Republic of	0.68(6)	0.70(3)	0.65(9)	0.76(7)	0.69(7)	0.71(6)	0.71(3)	0.53(5)
Malaysia	0.47(15)	0.38(17)	0.42(17)	0.53(15)	0.50(16)	0.80(2)	0.52(12)	0.34(14)
Mexico	0.39(18)	0.30(18)	0.39(18)	0.53(16)	0.37(18)	0.47(15)	0.31(18)	0.31(16)
Norway	0.83(1)	0.81(1)	0.85(1)	0.88(1)	0.74(2)		0.87(1)	0.66(2)
Portugal	0.53(12)	0.51(12)	0.57(11)	0.62(13)	0.52(15)	0.53(11)	0.48(13)	0.31(15)
South Africa	0.47(16)	0.48(14)	0.53(12)	0.48(18)	0.58(11)	0.64(8)	0.37(17)	0.46(8)
United Kingdom	0.67(8)	0.65(7)	0.70(6)	0.75(8)	0.76(1)	0.64(9)	0.57(11)	0.37(12)
United States	0.44(17)	0.46(15)	0.49(13)	0.53(14)	0.56(14)	0.80(3)	0.38(16)	0.22(18)
Overall Average	0.59	0.58	0.57	0.69	0.59	0.64	0.59	0.41

Source: Daizen (2011)

Note: Estimated by assigning zero points to teaching orientation and 1 point to research orientation for each discipline by respondents to the CAP survey. A large score indicate a higher research orientation.

During the fifteen years, the number of countries showing responses of both Anglo-Saxon and Latin American types has decreased but the number showing the German type has increased. Almost all countries originally conforming to the Anglo-Saxon type, such as the U.K., Australia, and Hong Kong have shifted to the German type; only the U.S. remain unchanged, and reveals even a slightly greater inclination to a teaching orientation. As for the Latin American type, only Mexico has remained oriented towards teaching; Brazil and the new participant Argentina both show a greater inclination towards a research orientation. There must be a universal pressure behind this trend.

Certainly, research-oriented academics have a more positive view of their situation than teaching-oriented academics. Ulrich Teichler estimated that “Altogether, research-oriented and research-active university professors have a more positive view of their situation and are more satisfied with their situation than teaching-oriented and teaching-active research-oriented professors” (Teichler, 2010, p.177).

However, what is the reason for the shift to the German type over the past fifteen years? This question must be worth examining in the context that almost all countries are converging in a direction opposite to the accepted ideal for the modern university, that of integration of teaching and research.

Table 3-1. Preference for teaching vs research (%) 2007

	AR	AU	BR	CA	CH	FI	DE	HK	IT	JP	KR	MY	MX	NO	PT	ZA	UK	US	Average
Teaching	43	30	50	32	53	35	33	37	23	28	32	52	61	17	47	53	33	56	40
Research	57	69	49	68	47	65	67	63	77	71	68	47	39	83	53	46	67	44	60

Table 3-2. Preference for teaching vs research (%) 1992

Teaching	62	46	28	45	59	44	63	50
Research	39	54	72	56	41	55	37	51

3. Background to international change: the case of Japan

(1) Background to the international trend of convergence to a research orientation

The following sections discuss some of the factors that are considered to affect the international trend identified above.

- (i) Phenomena within the realm of the research paradigm that has prevailed since the institutionalization of research in modern universities.

Considering the trend macroscopically according to this premise, we can understand that the current convergence or unification towards a research orientation is not at all surprising. Since the establishment of Berlin University in 1810, research has not only had much weight but also has led to a research paradigm in universities and colleges throughout the world for the subsequent 200 years. In this context, the current phenomenon can be seen as a macroscopic trend that provides a constraint inherent in modern universities and colleges.

- (ii) In view of the actual existence of the three types of academic orientation fifteen years ago, and in spite of their unknown causality, it is necessary to consider the impact of external factors.

According to this premise, there has been no change for those countries that were categorized as

of a research orientation type in the 1992 survey, because they have retained this orientation in 2007. In this respect, there have been significant changes only for those countries belonging to the Anglo-Saxon and Latin American types, where they have been transformed dramatically from a teaching orientation to a research orientation. We have to identify reasons why these changes have occurred. There may well be various causes and backgrounds intrinsic to the countries belonging to these types.

In the U.K. system, for example, we can recognize that it experienced a widened and extended emphasis on research through restructuring and the research assessment exercise starting in the 1990s. Accordingly, the causality of its increased research orientation could be mostly attributable to changes in national higher education policy. In this respect, similar trends may be observed elsewhere, for example in Australia and Hong Kong.

In regard to the Latin American type, we can recognize a rapid development from a teaching orientation towards a research orientation. Here also the reason may also lie in new higher education policies, strengthening the research orientation. In other words, the change could result from national strategies. The basis for these changes would be the perception that enhanced economic growth and national development in advanced countries is attributable to academic research productivity. In fact, European and American countries have been successful in creating centers of learning and national prosperity by enhancing high academic productivities in universities and colleges (Ben-David, 1977).

Historically, advanced countries have always tried to catch up with the more advanced countries. For example, the U.S. tried to catch up with Germany, in the 19th century when the former introduced the latter's research model into its own system. Japan attempted to catch up with advanced countries such as Germany, France, the U.K., and the U.S. from more than a century ago when its modern university system was institutionalized (Arimoto, Ed., 1996; Arimoto, 2010b).

As a result, it is natural to expect that emerging countries will introduce challenging higher education policies in attempts to raise academic research productivity to the level of the advanced systems so as to enhance their own development as well as national economic growth. By introducing a series of higher education policies to stimulate academics' research orientation, many emerging countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa have been intentionally involved in an enhancement of research productivity.

Therefore, in the background of each country's development towards a research orientation, will be causes intrinsic to each country. At the same time, there must be similar intrinsic backgrounds to the great social changes that occurred during the 1990s and the 2000s and became common causes to demand academic reforms worldwide. These social changes include growth of the knowledge-based society, globalization, and a market mechanism orientation, in which the knowledge-based economy has become strengthened and traditional cultures proper to every country have to become unified in an emerging globalization. Academia has been forced to change from a "knowledge community" to a "knowledge enterprise" where academic capitalism is working (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Arimoto, 2010d).

The academic consequences are profound and diverse. Reconstruction of knowledge, rationalization of academic organization and function, the phenomena of head hunting, brain gain and drain, all testify to change in academia. The prominence of academic ranking derives from the worldwide academic marketplace and reveals ranking orders of academics as well as academia. The competition among universities, colleges and academics is quantified by agencies such as the London Times (THES), Shanghai Jiao Tong University and U.S. News & World Report. These phenomena have necessarily begun to influence the various levels of the academic world including systems, institutions, organizations, and academics themselves (Arimoto, 2010b).

For example, we can point to the stratification of systems, institutions, organizations, and academics themselves caused by the THES rankings published in 2009. Examining academic rankings by region, we can observe that the “centers of learning” are monopolized by the West, followed by regions such as Asia, Latin America, and Africa, though these other regions are considered to be peripheral. Among the top 100 institutions, the share of the English speaking region, such as the U.S., the U.K., and Canada, amounts to as much as 67%. Of all the institutions included, 39 are from Europe, 16 are from Asia, of which the Chinese speaking region, including Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong, has 6 (THES, 2009; Arimoto, 2010b). This picture testifies to the extent that the centers of learning that have been formed by some advanced countries in the West over a long period are still strongly evident in the current ranking structure. Further, it is clear that social stratification is observable at each level of the world, region, system, and institution.

Under the effects of the widening differences between the centers of learning and their peripheries, it is inevitable that pressure for a greater research orientation affects academics as well as academia both in these centers and their peripheries.

(2) Background to the American trend

Given such trends, it is interesting to ask why only the U.S. has exceptionally strengthened its teaching orientation.

One reason is perhaps related to the fact that in the U.S. academic reforms have been promoted in order to shift academics’ orientation from research to teaching. Starting from far earlier in the 19th century compared to their counterparts in the other countries, American academics tried to catch up with German universities, which were the established centers of learning with regard to their high level of research productivity. As a result, American academics became involved in a competitive climate of academic ranking. In this competitive climate, research productivity has had greater weight than teaching productivity in the American academic marketplace. This is clearly evident in the fact that the research universities, which number approximately 200 institutions, or 5% of all higher education institutions in the U.S., constitute an upper stratum of the hierarchy in the academic rankings (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1976).

The first explicit academic ranking was undertaken in the U.S. in 1925, ninety years ago, when in a simple form it was started in the field of sociology; this developed further around 1960, half a century ago, when an improved version was introduced (Arimoto, 1981, pp.132-138). A number of factors contributed to the institutionalization of ranking in the academic community (Arimoto, 2010b).

First, the establishment of a research and scientific orientation had already been undertaken to a considerable degree before its introduction. The new emphasis, supporting a research orientation, which had been developed in German universities, was institutionalized in the American academic community in the latter part of the 19th century, replacing the old emphasis on teaching that had existed for almost six centuries since the middle ages. Newly established universities adopted the new values of a research orientation in order to challenge the old hierarchy of higher education institutions with the Ivy League institutions at its top. At the same time, they sought to compete with the German universities as the worldwide leaders at that time by proclaiming their new emphasis.

Second, institutionalization of the graduate school was realized separately beyond the undergraduate college by its connection to the research orientation. The first step of this reform was made in 1876 by Johns Hopkins University, which was successful in forming both a graduate school and a research university, and was followed by Clark University in 1887, and the University of Chicago in 1892. "The establishment of Johns Hopkins was perhaps the single, most decisive event in the history of learning in the Western hemisphere" (Shills, 1979, p.28). Pursuit of a research orientation and the establishment of a graduate school by newly emerging universities gradually resulted in quality evaluation of their research productivity by a process of peer review.

Third, an academic departmental system was developed in order to promote academic productivity. Although it was originally developed on the basis of "departmentalism", in which control of the academic guild was in the professorial German chair (Clark, 1983), the basic unit of research orientation in German universities was an institute in the natural sciences and a 'seminar' in humanities and social sciences still on the basis of the chair system. The counterpart in U.S. universities was a department with a focus on a research orientation instead of the chair system which was not imported into the U.S. Differing from the chair system, the department system permits more flexibility adaptable to a discipline's new developments, and is more appropriate for the discovery of knowledge than the dissemination of knowledge. As a result, it is said that the department system is able to stimulate research productivity better than the chair system (Clark, 1983)

Fourth, based on these trends, competition in pursuit of quality assurance at the level of an individual department was promoted to the extent that the culture and climate for quality evaluation of academics could be encouraged in an individual department. To define the quality of a department, various organizations and methodology were developed almost at the same time: organizations for publication, such as academic journals and the university press; organizations for assessing academic productivity, such as academic associations; and arrangements for promoting publication in terms of economy and time such as sabbatical years (Rudolph, 1962, p.407).

Fifth, we can point to the social climate in the 1880's when Henry Rowland made a comparison of the state of physics in Germany and the U.S., emphasizing the research situation. He proclaimed the need for construction of the best science institutions instead of "a cloud of mosquitoes" type of institutions. "The best science required an institutional pyramid, commanded at the heights by a best-science elite and open to talent at the bottom." (Clark, 1983, p.257).

All these factors are thought to have facilitated the appearance of academic ranking in the U.S. at an early stage of modern university history. In this climate and with the prevalence of a research paradigm, the academic reform of a teaching orientation was proposed and actually started after 1990 when Ernest Boyer published "Scholarship Reconsidered". This launched a trend of academic reform moving from away from the research orientation to this new concept stressing teaching rather than research (Boyer, 1990).

A second reason for the failure of the international trend towards emphasis on research to appear in the U.S. is perhaps a statistical flaw due to over-sampling of the groups of universities and colleges not categorized as research universities. It would not be surprising to find that in the CAP Survey, if the weight of non-research universities in the sample is large enough, it would appear to increase the teaching orientation, since it is clear that academics in the research universities are apt to be more research oriented than their counterparts in the non-research universities and colleges.

(3) Background to the Japanese trend

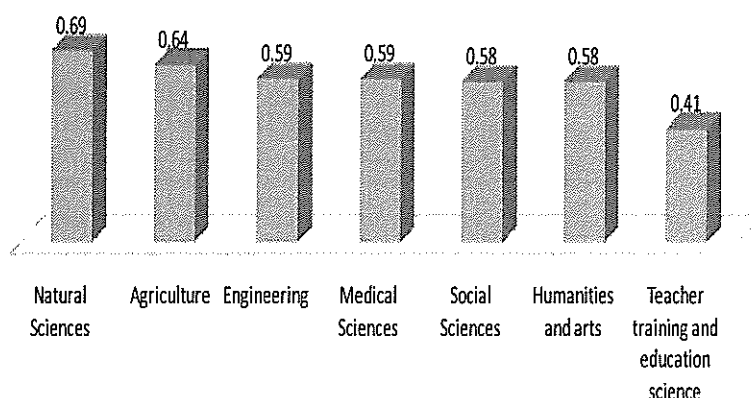
Many academics in Japan still retain a high research orientation. In the Carnegie survey in 1992, they showed a research orientation second only to those in the Netherlands. In the 2007 CAP survey, the ranking of research orientation score by country (and region) is as follows: Norway (0.83), Italy (0.77), Japan (0.72), Australia (0.70), Canada (0.68), South Korea (0.68), Germany (0.67), the U.K. (0.67), Finland (0.65) and Hong Kong (0.63). Japan is ranked third; and as Norway and Italy were not participants in the previous survey, Japan is ranked first among the ten countries that participated in both surveys. Why? Some reasons for it are suggested below.

First, a traditional climate supporting academics' strong research orientation is reflected in the result. There is a historical background that not only in research universities but also in non-research universities academics have demonstrated a research orientation since the research paradigm, originally developed in German universities was institutionalized in the pre-war imperial universities. In the 1992 Carnegie survey, there were few differences with regard to the proportions of research orientation between those in research and non-research universities. A similar result, showing little difference, is also embodied in the CAP survey. Accordingly, it is undeniable that at the level of academics' consciousnesses, a classification of "research" and "non-research" universities has not developed in Japan.

Second, there are notable differences between disciplines (Table 2). The overall international

average is 0.59 but natural science (0.69) and agriculture (0.64) are above average, engineering (0.59), health (0.59), social sciences (0.58), and humanities (0.58) lie close to the average and teacher training and education science (0.41), are below average (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Research orientation by discipline



The fact that each individual discipline has its own different culture and climate is recognizable throughout the world. Similarly, in Japan, each individual discipline generates a different research orientation. In particular, the cluster of natural sciences shows a higher research orientation than the literary disciplines. On this basis, the recent trend towards a higher research orientation is likely to imply a conversion towards the natural sciences' culture and climate.

Why is the sector of natural sciences functioning so strongly in a research orientation? The reason probably lies in the characteristics of the natural sciences through their development of a clear scientific codification as shown by Zuckerman and Merton (1971), for example, in mathematics and physics. From a study of referees' reports they found that there are few differences between several referees in the evaluation of articles in physics with regard to their originality. On the other hand, in the field of humanities and social sciences referees' comments are apt to differ. The natural sciences consist of 'hard' contents, while in the field of humanities and social sciences, their material tends to be 'softer'. Again, in the natural sciences, academics write in English, exchange information in the scientific community worldwide, and evaluate articles by unified criteria. In the humanities and social sciences, academics tend to write in their native languages, and reflect the effects of the traditional culture intrinsic to their countries. They are involved in a sort of "ethnocentrism" (Arimoto, 1994). In this sense, "universalism" operates in the natural sciences and "particularism" operates in the humanities and social sciences.

In the field of natural sciences, academics set up common criteria and standards, compete creatively, and seek competitively to establish priority in discovery. Accordingly, their research orientation increases in accordance with the climate of academic ranking. The result of the CAP

survey revealing academics' research orientation worldwide may indeed imply a widening of concentration on the culture of the natural sciences.

Third, a failure of higher education policy is reflected in the result. During the fifteen-year period, a series of Japanese higher education policies have attached much weight to teaching rather than research, seeking an "educational revolution" rather than an "educational evolution". In 1998, the University Council proposed to institutionalize Faculty Development (FD) semi-compulsorily into all the institutions with a focus on teaching; in 2005, the Central Council of Education proposed to institutionalize FD compulsorily into all institutions regardless of sector and with a focus on teaching. In fact, FD has become a legal requirement since 2007.

Considering the trend shown in the surveys, we can recognize that a teaching orientation has not been strongly internalized into academics' consciousnesses in spite of the national government's intention for its institutionalization in all institutions. On this basis it is clear that the national policy for realizing an educational revolution rather than an educational evolution has not been successful thus far.

Fourth, many more conflicts have affected academics' consciousnesses. Discrepancy between a traditionally sustained culture and a newly introduced national policy in conflict with it has challenged the normative structure internalized by academics. This situation is likely to reinforce the conflicts suffered by many academics. In reality, this is demonstrated by the highest degree of difficulty of Japanese academics to accept the compatibility of research and teaching in the CAP survey (Table 4): Japan (2.66), China (2.80), Finland (2.88), Germany (3.21), Malaysia (3.25), Portugal (3.35), Australia (3.38), Hong Kong (3.41), the U.K. (3.48) and the U.S.A (3.85) (a low score indicates agreement with the statement "Teaching and research are hardly compatible with each other.").

Japan's ranking shows the lowest acceptance of the compatibility of teaching and research overall and maintains this position in almost all disciplines. There are slight differences between the Japanese scores for the cluster of natural sciences (2.75) and the cluster of social sciences (2.50), but even so both of them show far less acceptance of the compatibility of teaching and research than the international averages (natural sciences (3.49); social sciences (3.56)). Germany, like Japan, has a high research orientation but its scores in both natural sciences (3.41) and social sciences (3.13) are significantly higher than its counterparts in Japan, even though both scores are lower than for the overall average scores for academics in all of the CAP countries. This means compatibility of teaching and research for German academics is substantially higher than in Japanese academics. On the other hand, in the U.S., which possesses a high score in teaching orientation, both the average score (3.85) and the scores in natural sciences (3.94) and social sciences (3.87) show substantially higher levels of compatibility of teaching and research.

As far as the score of compatibility is concerned, Japan is far below the U.S. and even below Germany. Thus, it is true to say that across the range of academic disciplines, Japanese academics share similar problems with the incompatibility and that their problems exist in all disciplines. The

level of incompatibility in Japan implies that greater commitment to research implies a lesser commitment to teaching. In addition, the conflict for Japanese academics is increased by the emphasis placed on a teaching orientation by the national government.

Table 4. Compatibility of research and teaching by country and discipline

Country	Average	Humanities	Social sciences	Natural sciences	Engineering	Agriculture	Health	Teacher training
Argentina	4.42(1)	4.42(1)	4.43(1)	4.31(2)	4.42(1)	4.35(2)	4.51(1)	4.48(2)
Australia	3.38(12)	3.27(13)	3.49(11)	3.41(12)	3.44(11)	3.07(13)	3.29(14)	3.45(11)
Brazil	4.42(2)	4.37(2)	4.37(2)	4.52(1)	4.40(2)	4.53(1)	4.35(2)	4.50(1)
Canada	3.72(8)	3.75(8)	3.63(9)	3.83(7)	3.87(6)	3.62(9)	3.57(10)	3.90(4)
China	2.80(17)	2.77(16)	2.82(17)	2.79(17)	2.69(18)	3.07(14)	2.97(15)	2.82(16)
Finland	2.88(16)	2.63(18)	2.91(16)	2.94(16)	2.99(16)	2.94(15)	2.96(16)	2.63(18)
Germany	3.21(15)	3.02(15)	3.13(15)	3.41(13)	3.35(13)	3.24(12)	2.87(17)	3.02(15)
Hong Kong	3.41(11)	3.41(11)	3.35(13)	3.69(8)	3.51(10)		3.43(11)	3.26(13)
Italy	3.92(4)	3.80(7)	3.94(4)	3.87(5)	4.12(4)	3.88(6)	3.88(5)	3.80(5)
Japan	2.66(18)	2.65(17)	2.50(18)	2.75(18)	2.74(17)	2.61(16)	2.58(18)	2.76(17)
Korea, Republic of	3.74(7)	3.82(6)	3.83(6)	3.67(9)	3.69(8)	3.74(7)	3.60(9)	3.69(8)
Malaysia	3.25(14)	3.23(14)	3.20(14)	3.21(14)	3.31(15)	4.22(4)	3.78(7)	3.24(14)
Mexico	4.22(3)	4.27(3)	4.21(3)	4.24(3)	4.13(3)	4.24(3)	4.30(3)	4.33(3)
Norway	3.81(6)	3.89(4)	3.79(7)	3.85(6)	3.97(5)		3.73(8)	3.66(9)
Portugal	3.35(13)	3.32(12)	3.36(12)	3.20(15)	3.52(9)	3.92(5)	3.40(12)	3.32(12)
South Africa	3.66(9)	3.62(9)	3.65(8)	3.66(10)	3.42(12)	3.58(10)	3.93(4)	3.76(6)
United Kingdom	3.48(10)	3.47(10)	3.55(10)	3.43(11)	3.33(14)	3.72(8)	3.34(13)	3.57(10)
United States	3.85(5)	3.84(5)	3.87(5)	3.94(4)	3.79(7)	3.40(11)	3.82(6)	3.74(7)
Total	3.49	3.44	3.56	3.49	3.42	3.58	3.53	3.55

Source: Daizen (2011)

Note: Responses to the CAP questionnaire to the statement that "teaching and research are hardly compatible" were on a 5-point scale from 1, strongly agree, to 5, strongly disagree. A high score indicates disagreement with the statement. Numbers in parentheses indicate relative rank order.

4. Is integration between research and teaching possible?

(1) Limitations of the Humboldtian ideal

The integration between research and teaching identified theoretically in the Humboldtian ideal has hardly been realized at the level of academics or of institutions. There is scant evidence that it can be realized fully at these levels. At the time of the Carnegie survey in 1992, some countries seemed to be able to indicate an approach to the R-T-S nexus but advances since then are lacking. Exceptionally, the U.S. system has established a state of integration fairly close to the ideal, by integrating research and teaching, partly by establishing teaching in the undergraduate tier and partly by establishing research in the graduate school. The latter emphasizes research in addition to liberal arts education at the level of the undergraduate course and the former emphasizes teaching in addition to professional education at the graduate course level. In other words, it means that liberal education

and teaching are located in the undergraduate tier and professional education and research are located in the graduate tier. This system has been successful to the point that the dual structures of undergraduate and graduate tiers can achieve an organic differentiation and integration of the two tiers.

On the other hand, the German system, which tried to establish coexistence of research and teaching in individual members of academic faculty, turned out to cause conflict. As a result, a research paradigm dominates, in which research was incompatible with teaching. The Japanese system has shown a similar result, perhaps unsurprisingly as it also adopted the German type of faculty structure. Although a formally American type of graduate school was introduced in Japan after the war, it was not effectively established until the 1990s due to the continuing existence of the research dominant structure established in the prewar era.

The American model, together with a differentiation and integration of research and teaching has not been realized elsewhere in the world, even though many countries have established a nominally American type of graduate school and have created systems of dual undergraduate and graduate tiers. This outcome is probably caused mainly by the manifest and latent effects of the traditional climate intrinsic to the individual systems.

As it is, the German type, conforming to a research dominance, cannot escape from the binding restraint of its own history; the Anglo-Saxon type, which sought the compatibility of research and teaching, is now almost swallowed by the research paradigm; and the research paradigm, pre-eminent in modern universities, is likely to dominate the Latin American type, which is at last being transformed from a medieval to a modern university model. Thus, it appears that the Humboldtian ideal has failed to be realized in individual systems worldwide.

(2) Pitfalls of the Japanese model

With its pre-war undergraduate system conforming to the German model, post-war Japan adopted a U.S. structure, including provision for a graduate school system. However, in reality, this proved to be a superficial transformation. It constituted a double-bind structure in which it partially conforms to the German type at the level of academics' consciousness and partially conforms to the U.S. type at system level. For the academics' consciousness, research orientation has remained stronger than teaching orientation; but for the system, a stronger teaching orientation was required. The background, which led to this conflict is deeply embedded in the way in which higher education models from the West were imported into Japan and its impact reflects a lack of a middle- and long-term strategy for the construction of a clear vision for the future.

A strategy will need to resolve the differentiation, compartmentalization, and fragmentation that are now evident both in the national system and in academics' consciousness. In particular, there is confusion with regards to the national policy of faculty development (FD) introduced since 1998, in which a "narrow perspective" emphasizing only teaching orientation is strengthened rather than a

“broad perspective” emphasizing integration between research and teaching. Specifically, the University Council defined FD in 1998 as follows: “a practice of organizational research and induction about ideals and goals, and also the teaching contents and methods of universities and colleges” (University Council, 1998). The following policies have adopted this perspective.

FD has become a requirement for all academics in all sectors (national, public and private) since 2007 when it was legally instituted and its content has been defined in line with the narrow perspective. The content of FD programs has been specified as “meetings for newcomer teachers and other teachers, mutual monitoring of teaching in classes, conducting lectures, meetings for reviewing teaching, establishment of centers for the improvement of teaching methods” (Central Council of Education, 2008, p.213). This perspective, emphasizing only a teaching orientation, differs from the broad perspective of emphasis on both research and teaching, which is embedded in the FD concept of Western academia as defined by Cook, “the professional development of academics” (Cook, 2002, p.211). Pursuing an FD policy with such a narrow perspective can be seen to be a primary cause of an anomie of scholarship. The Japanese version of FD provides a unique and deviant type of anomie through a lack of educational norms (Arimoto, 2004a, 2004b, 2005). As a result, academics who internalize norms to conduct their academic work are forced to face value conflicts between research and teaching. As has been argued, such conflicts can be seen in the degree of difficulty with which Japanese academics regard the compatibility of research and teaching.

It is obvious that emphasizing only teaching necessarily sacrifices the important balance of academic work as its essential vehicles consist of research and teaching. In such circumstances, the institutions must either be relegated to the role of schools or restricted to the role of research institutes. Legal and compulsory enforcement of teaching as the function of academics would be equivalent to transforming the role of teachers in the universities and colleges to that of teachers in the elementary and secondary schools. Moreover, in a situation lacking a R-T-S nexus, what remained of university education would be unlikely to be able to assure the quality of students’ achievements.

The education, which is necessary for the 21st century in order to equip students for a knowledge-based society and universalization, is provision of a teaching and learning process for the students that enhances abilities such as creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking. To deliver this, academics have to make a commitment to research in order to enhance their own research abilities. Such research abilities are attained on the basis of formal knowledge but require also tacit knowledge available only through active participation in research. A lack of such research abilities in their teachers naturally erodes the opportunities for students to acquire the abilities, critical thinking and scholastic achievement required for proper social development. If the officially imposed scenario is maintained, there is likely to be a large pitfall inherent in the Japanese form of FD (Arimoto, 2010c).

Concluding remarks

1. The research framework has paid attention to the relationship between knowledge and academic work in discussing the structure of academic work, which includes discovery, dissemination, application and control of knowledge but mainly consists of discovery and dissemination. In the process of pursuing academic work, both research and teaching, as its two principal vehicles, play important roles. In fact, research and teaching have been necessarily confronted with conflicts in modern universities where a research orientation has become institutionalized in addition to the teaching orientation of the medieval universities. As a consequence it has become necessary for modern universities to seek to establish a linkage and integration between research and teaching. The Humboldtian ideal represents a classic approach to such integration.
2. However, the integration of teaching and research is difficult to realize for various reasons. Academia is an institution needing both a teaching and a research orientation. The teaching orientation has mainly flourished in institutions of higher education that continue the functions of the medieval universities; a research orientation has dominated those modern universities that have institutionalized a scientific community and have developed as institutions of modern science. Through the history of higher education, integration between research and teaching has rarely been realized over many years.

In fact, by analyzing academics' consciousnesses, we can recognize various typologies. In the 1992 Carnegie survey, three types, a German, an Anglo-Saxon, and a Latin American type were identified. In the 2007 CAP survey a trend of concentration from three types to one type, *i.e.*, the German type, was revealed. The German type is derived from the German universities, which in the 19th century became the centers of the research paradigm with establishment of modern universities. The Anglo-Saxon type seems to correspond to an integration between a teaching orientation derived from the medieval universities and a research orientation derived from the modern universities. The Latin American type retains the orientation derived from the medieval universities. The CAP Survey shows that academics in countries previously categorized as Anglo-Saxon or Latin American types are now converging on the German type by reducing their teaching orientation. Only the U.S. is exceptional in that it has strengthened its teaching orientation.

3. Why have many academics worldwide shifted their orientation towards research over fifteen years? First, there are likely to be some trends with regard to the shift's worldwide background.
 - (i) Modern universities have been involved in increased research orientation ever since they institutionalized research in the 19th and 20th centuries. More recently, a greater research

orientation has been emphasized over the past fifteen years through circumstances affecting national systems, institutions, organizations, and academics throughout the world.

- (ii) International rankings have become widespread since the early 21st century and have stimulated individual institutions and national systems and their involvements in international competitions in attempts to attain higher positions in the rankings. A series of national movements such as the 21 BK, WCU, 21st century COE program, global COE program, and 198 project have become manifest.
- (iii) Almost all countries have sought to be involved in a worldwide academic ranking marketplace. The market, which had developed domestically for many years in the U.S., has now emerged on the international stage.

Second, we have conducted a case study of the background trends in Japan. As far as academics' consciousnesses are concerned, a research orientation has been retained almost completely intact in Japan. Even so, it is undeniable that the conflicts have been deepened in the midst of a differentiation process at the system level towards research and teaching. The conflicts arise from the fact that while academics' consciousnesses have continued to conform to a research orientation, national higher education policy has become based on a teaching orientation.

4. Can an integration between research and teaching be realized in the midst of a worldwide strong inclination to a research orientation? The Humboldtian ideal is, as it were, an ideal working only as a theoretical concept; no practical method has been found for its implementation. In fact, even in Germany, which exported this concept to the world, for many years academics have been unable to realize it.

The greatest success has been achieved in the U.S. which imported the Humboldtian ideal. Its success there is due to the deliberate and innovative construction of the dual structure of the undergraduate and graduate tiers, in which the undergraduate tier has been successful in assuring teaching and the graduate tier has been successful in assuring research. As a result, an integration of research and teaching has been realized on the basis of this separation. Nevertheless, even in the U.S. system, such a structure falls well short of the Humboldtian ideal and has given rise ceaselessly to many strains and conflicts so that many determined organizational efforts have been needed to maintain a teaching orientation.

In Japan, where a radical transformation from the German type to the Anglo-Saxon type has been sought, there is a limitation of policy to the extent that reconsideration of scholarship has not been pursued sufficiently and this has brought about the pitfall of the Japanese type of FD. In this context, it is unavoidable that the Humboldtian ideal has to be re-examined so as to reconstruct the academic profession creatively.

Note: This paper is based on the paper “The Changing Nature of Academic Work from an International Comparative Perspective” presented to the 23rd Annual CHER conference with a focus on “Effects of Higher Education Reforms”, which was held at the University of Oslo on June 10-12 in 2010.

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Higher Education in Africa: the challenges ahead

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Abstract. After years of neglect and under-funding, higher education institutions in Africa embarked on a major revitalization process from the beginning of the 21st century. Some significant progress has already been achieved but much remains to be done. This paper addresses some of the important challenges that African higher education faces as it moves forward into the 21st century. These include: increasing access and enrolment, considering that tertiary education enrolment in Africa is the lowest in the world; ensuring adequate funding at a time when public funds are scarce and are likely to remain so; improving research output, which again is extremely low compared to other parts of the world; and satisfying quality assurance requirements, now a necessity for all higher education institutions around the world.

Keywords: access, Africa, enrolment, funding, higher education, research, quality assurance

Introduction and historical background

Modern higher education in Africa has its roots in the colleges that were created and affiliated to universities in Europe during the colonial period. Right from the start these institutions were patterned on the European higher education system. They were staffed by Europeans or Africans educated in Europe and their major objective was training of manpower for the public sector. After independence of the colonies in the 1960s, the colleges became universities and again, their academic structure, mode of governance, course curricula and methods of instruction were modelled on European universities. All the institutions used a European language for instruction, giving hardly any attention to local languages. All of them were created in the major cities, meant for the elite of African society and alienated from the rural areas where the majority of the population lived and where the development challenges were greatest. It is hardly surprising therefore that the relevance of such higher education institutions to Africa's development post-independence has often been questioned (Mohamedbhai, 1994).

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For a couple of decades after independence, the African universities thrived as they received generous support from Europe, and they soon developed into centres of excellence as judged by European university norms. This was true for Makerere University in Uganda, University of Ibadan in Nigeria, University Cheikh Anta Diop in Senegal and University of Khartoum in Sudan, to name a few.

Then, in the late 1970s and 1980s, came the difficult years of economic turmoil. The severe deterioration in African economies made it difficult for governments to invest in higher education. There were also budget cuts as a result of externally imposed structural adjustment programmes, and financing of higher education suffered. Around the same period, major national and inter-state conflicts started to take place in Africa. This resulted in poor governance and even dictatorship in some countries, leading to political repression. The ensuing social unrest eventually reached university campuses. Many African universities witnessed the flight of their academics, often persecuted, to countries in the North.

At the same time, output from the primary and secondary education sectors started to increase dramatically as a result of positive measures taken to improve access to primary education. This created huge pressures on African universities to increase their student enrolment, well beyond what they could accommodate.

Another blow to African higher education occurred in the 1990s. Some economists came to the conclusion, which later proved to be erroneous, that the rate of social return on investments in higher education was lower than in basic and primary education. These findings guided donor and development agencies in their support to African governments. The effect of this policy can be gauged from the fact that the World Bank's worldwide education sector spending on higher education, which was 17% between 1985 to 1989, dwindled to just 7% from 1995 to 1999 (Bloom, Canning & Chan, 2006). Hence, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa suffered from abandonment and under-funding. However, despite being neglected by their own governments and in spite of numerous hurdles, African universities demonstrated their resilience and survived, by learning how to do more with the same, or even less. The plight of African universities during this period has been vividly described by three distinguished African academics in a book published by the Association of African Universities (Ade Ajayi, Goma & Ampah Johnson, 1996).

The turning point in their fate came with the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education held in 1998. The declaration from the conference (UNESCO, 1998) emphasised that higher education had an important role to play in finding solutions to the development problems faced by developing countries. The conference called on universities in industrialized countries to assist their sister institutions in developing and poor countries. This created a framework for renewed support to higher education and led to a revitalization of African universities, which effectively started a few years later at the beginning of the 21st century. It is significant to note that development assistance to

post-secondary education in Africa, which averaged US\$110 million per year during the decade 1990-1999, increased to US\$515 million during the period 2000-2005 (World Bank, 2009).

A decade later, in 2009, the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education provided a special focus on higher education in Africa. It noted the progress made since 1998 but acknowledged that there still existed many challenges for the revitalization of African higher education (UNESCO, 2009). This paper will consider some of these challenges as we move further into the 21st century.

Access and enrolment

There is ample evidence now to show the close relationship between a country's economic development and its proportion of skilled manpower. In fact a nation's competitive advantage is no longer judged by its natural resources or the availability of cheap labour, but by its 'human capital' (Bloom, *et al.*, 2006). It must be acknowledged that, in terms of economic development, sub-Saharan Africa has been doing quite well since the beginning of this century. Its annual growth in GDP, which was about 2% during the 1990's, increased to over 6% during the period 2001-2007, outperforming several other world regions. But this is because it started from a very low base. Its actual GDP *per capita* is still very low and has not increased much over the past decades. The challenge is to maintain and even increase GDP growth so as to catch up with other developing regions.

Enrolment

A similar paradoxical situation is observed in student enrolment in higher education in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1970 tertiary education¹ enrolment was less than 0.2 million students; it reached over 4 million in 2007, a twenty-fold increase. Thus, annual tertiary enrolment on average grew by about 8.7% over the period 1970-2007, compared to a global average of 4.6%. A recent survey of seven African universities revealed that the aggregate annual increase in student enrolment in those institutions ranged between 15% and 25% over the period 1996-2006 (Mohamedbhai, 2008a). However, the tertiary participation rate (students enrolled in tertiary education as a proportion of the relevant age group of the population) in sub-Saharan Africa, which was barely 1% in 1970, increased to only around 6% in 2007, whereas the global average in 2007 was 26% (UNESCO-UIS, 2009). For comparison purposes, the 2007 tertiary participation rates in the regions of Latin America and the Caribbean and in South and West Asia were, respectively, 34% and 11%. The enormous challenge facing sub-Saharan Africa is then again to have such a dramatic increase in tertiary enrolment as to

¹ 'Higher education' and 'tertiary education' will be used interchangeably in this paper. Tertiary education is more encompassing and covers all post-secondary education. Higher education normally refers to education leading to a degree. Most of UNESCO's statistics are in terms of tertiary education.

raise its participation rate to match those of other developing regions.

Increasing enrolment, however, should not be viewed simply from a supply point of view. Because of the social and economic benefits that accrue to graduates, the demand for greater access to higher education by the youth in Africa is legitimate. In 2007 the participation rate in upper secondary education in Africa was about 26%, over five times greater than the rate in tertiary education. This will result in large student outputs from the secondary sector in the years to come, and there will inevitably be enormous pressure on higher education institutions to accommodate the increasing demand for enrolment. Because of limited opportunities at home, it is not surprising that a significant number of African students decide to study outside their home countries, both outside and within Africa. In 2007, about 6% of the students enrolled in tertiary institutions in their home countries were studying outside their home countries, a figure that is three times greater than the world average (UNESCO-UIS, 2009). A major consequence of such a situation is brain-drain, which is already impacting negatively on Africa.

Increasing access and enrolment

What strategies then should African countries adopt to meet the challenge of increasing access and enrolment? First of all in increasing enrolment, quality must be ensured. The intake to existing public institutions must therefore be controlled, by taking into account their capacities. The vast majority of public universities in Africa have student enrolments way beyond what they were designed to accommodate. Further enrolment without adequately increasing the infrastructure and other resources can only worsen the situation. This is particularly true for Francophone universities where, in most cases, a successful secondary baccalaureate constitutes an entitlement to admission to a university.

To avoid increasing the student population of existing universities, there has been a tendency in several African countries, for example Ethiopia, to rapidly set up new universities that are almost copies of the existing ones. This, too, is not the right approach, especially as in many cases this results in depleting the staff of the existing institutions through transfers to the new ones. Yet another tendency is to create new universities by upgrading polytechnics and technical colleges without creating new institutions to replace them. Africa needs differentiated institutions, ranging from research-strong universities to polytechnics and technical colleges, as well as diversified programmes within each institution, to cater for different types of learners and needs of the countries.

Africa at present also needs highly-skilled graduates in different areas of science and technology (S&T) to assist in the development of strategic areas such as health, agriculture, water, energy, and infrastructure. There is a lack of capacity in the higher education sector to provide the much-needed skills base in S&T sufficient to promote innovation and increase Africa's competitiveness. The current student enrolment in S&T areas in higher education in Africa is quite low, and in fact seems to

have decreased over the period 1980 to 2004 (Mohamedbhai, 2008b). Governments and higher education institutions in Africa, through appropriate policies, must make a concerted effort to increase enrolment in S&T in higher education. Conscious of this problem, the Division of Education, Science and Technology of the African Development Bank has developed a Higher Education, Science and Technology Strategy to support not only higher education but also the technical and vocational sectors in order to foster innovation and promote the application, adaptation and use of technologies (African Development Bank, 2008). An important aspect of this strategy is to also support mathematics and science teaching at secondary level, in recognition of its importance in promoting S&T at tertiary level. In fact, the importance of mathematics and science at higher education level for tackling many of Africa's development challenges is now widely accepted and has led to the creation of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) in Cape Town, South Africa in 2003 (AIMS, 2010). AIMS has graduated some 300 students from 30 African countries, with 95% of them continuing to complete master's and doctoral degrees. AIMS has also launched the Next Einstein Initiative, which plans to establish 15 AIMS Centres across Africa by 2020, an initiative that fits well into the higher education differentiation strategy for Africa.

As well as increasing access, appropriate steps must be taken to ensure the success of the admitted students. A lack of resources, including faculty, often leads to very high dropout rates, at times as high as 50%. The time to complete a three-year degree programme sometimes takes as long as five to six years. There are known cases where students deliberately plan to stay longer on campus in order to benefit from board and lodging grants from the university. The situation is also exacerbated by frequent campus closures as a result of student unrest. Student unrests have now become a plague on African campuses, causing damage to property and even deaths. They seriously hamper the revitalization initiatives that have started, and they need to be contained. Both national and regional approaches to this problem need to be considered.

Gender equity is another issue to be taken into consideration in widening access. Educated women play a significant role in a country's development, and empowerment of women through education is an important development strategy for sub-Saharan Africa. For cultural and social reasons, women are still under-represented in higher education in Africa, especially in the science and technology areas. A number of African countries have adopted affirmative action to redress this situation. In Kenya, for example, the central Joint Admissions Board, which deals with admissions of students to all public universities in Kenya, lowers the number of points required at entry to higher education for female candidates. As a result, at the University of Nairobi, female undergraduate enrolment increased from 23% in 1991/92 to 34% in 2006/07. Kenyatta University further reduces the entry points for female enrolment in science and technology fields and the overall female enrolment at that university in 2007 was 50%.

Looking at the statistics, it is clear that the increasing demand for higher education in Africa will never be met by traditional face-to-face delivery alone. Other approaches such as open, distance and

online learning will have to be resorted to, especially for continuous adult education and teacher training. This is already happening. The University of South Africa (UNISA) is now a well-established, internationally recognised open university which runs programmes all over Africa. Tanzania, Nigeria and Zimbabwe have also set up open universities. Distance Education Centres are also being set up in traditional universities to complement face-to-face teaching and to increase access.

Private and cross-border higher education

Private higher education institutions started to appear in sub-Saharan Africa about two decades ago and have proliferated rapidly. It is estimated that out of the 650 higher education institutions in Africa, some 400 are private ones (World Bank, 2009). Although most of them enrol small numbers of students, they still account for about 18% of total tertiary student enrolment, a figure that is likely to increase. The nature of these institutions varies considerably: some are for-profit; others, often religious-based, are not-for-profit; some are recognised and registered by public authorities while others operate without any recognition; some function as universities, offering degrees, others are mere colleges running only diploma and certificate courses in commercially attractive subjects. As public funded institutions will never be able to meet the huge demand for higher education, private higher education will continue to expand in Africa. They have an important role to play and must be encouraged, but at the same time they need to be regulated and quality-controlled. Several African countries, including South Africa, Nigeria and Mauritius, have put in place regulatory frameworks to control the quality of private institutions.

With the liberalization of trade in education services (including higher education) through the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization, the expansion of cross-border higher education (CBHE) in Africa has followed a trend similar to that of private higher education. Most of the CBHE emanates from the North and is delivered either by establishing a local branch or satellite campus, by using a local partner, or through distance education and e-learning. While CBHE undeniably helps to increase access, it also has some negative aspects. Many of the providers are profit-motivated, run market-driven courses designed for the global market and hardly undertake any research. The programmes delivered are often not of the same quality as those in their country of origin. Also, CBHE tends to weaken existing local public institutions, which are already facing severe staff shortages, by attracting the best qualified faculty from them or by outsourcing faculty from those institutions on a part-time basis, thus undermining the ability of those staff to be more active in research and development (Mohamedbhai, 2003). Again, CBHE must be regulated and the providers must be encouraged to establish close partnerships with local institutions.

Funding

Although there has been a dramatic increase in student enrolment in higher education in Africa, this increase has not been matched by public funding. Over the period 1991-2006, the annual average increase in enrolment in Africa has been estimated as 16%, whereas the average corresponding increase in public funding was only 6% (World Bank, 2010). Effectively, public expenditure *per* student has declined considerably and this has inevitably led to deterioration in the quality of higher education. The daunting challenge facing African higher education is that student numbers will continue to increase, more faculty will have to be recruited, additional infrastructure will have to be built, and yet the availability of public funds will be limited.

Paradoxically, public spending *per* higher education student in Africa, estimated at US\$2,000 in 2006, is believed to be twice that in other developing countries (World Bank, 2010). This indicates both over-spending and gross inefficiency in the use of public resources in higher education. Reduction in expenditures and promoting efficiency in the institutions should therefore be the first line of approach in coping with the shortage of funds. In most universities in Africa, personnel costs constitute the largest proportion of the budget, sometimes being as high as 75%. This is therefore an area where some economy could be achieved through freezing of staff replacements or laying off or re-deployment of under-utilized or unproductive staff, especially as the proportion of non-academic staff in African institutions is very high. The introduction of performance appraisal for all staff, including academics, could also help in promoting efficiency. The generous social benefits (housing, food, transport) allocated to students in many countries may not be sustainable and will have to be reduced. At the same time the high student drop-out and repetition rates need to be curtailed. Heads of institutions should introduce more financial control and accountability for all expenditures. One way of partially achieving these measures would be to change the method of budgeting in public institutions. Currently, in most countries the annual institutional budget allocated by government to a public institution is determined on the basis of the previous year's budget that is then increased by a percentage depending on the availability of public funds. The use of formula funding based on unit costs of students, student-faculty ratios, output of graduates and faculty research output can stimulate improvement in the institutions and help to achieve more accountability and transparency.

While cost-saving and efficiency measures can no doubt help, they will never be able to resolve the financial crisis of institutions. Ultimately, public institutions will inevitably have to resort to cost-sharing measures, more specifically by charging students tuition or user (registration, examination, library, dissertation, *etc.*) fees if they are to provide quality education. Institutions must, however, recognize that the introduction of such cost-recovery measures is a socially and politically charged issue and they should implement it with caution and after full consultation with their respective governments. It is nevertheless reported that, in 2009, there were at least 26 countries in Africa charging up-front tuition or user fees and that the income from such fees represented, on average,

about 30% of the total income of the institution (World Bank, 2010). In some institutions, for example in Guinea Bissau, the income from fees can be as high as 75%. The danger here, however, is that public higher education then comes to be regarded as essentially a private enterprise, requiring very little contribution from the state. African governments should recognize that higher education is in fact a 'public good', contributing significantly to the economic and social development of their countries and, accordingly, must benefit from state support. While fees should be introduced, they should not be full cost recovery ones but a proportion, say from 25-50%, of the actual economic cost. And it is equally important that the introduction of fees be accompanied by appropriate loan schemes or scholarships for the needy students who cannot afford to pay fees.

In order to overcome the resistance to charging tuition fees, some public institutions (for example in Ghana and Mauritius) charge full economic fees only to foreign students and also for professional programmes such as the LLB, or for some postgraduate courses such as the Executive MBA. Other countries, for example Kenya and Uganda, have resorted to running 'parallel programmes'. In each programme a quota is allocated for government-sponsored, non-fee-paying students who are selected on merit. Additional students are then admitted on the same programme but they are charged full tuition fees. The institution then basically runs two parallel programmes, one for students without fees and the other for students with fees (Mohamedbhai, 2008a) and, in a way, functions in dual mode, partly as a highly-subsidised public institution and partly as a not-for-profit private one. This can dramatically increase the income to the institutions. At Makerere University in Uganda, for example, 80% of the students now pay full fees and only 40% of the budget is financed by government (World Bank, 2010). While such an approach may resolve the funding crisis in the short-term, it can jeopardise quality and create friction between the two categories of students, and even between staff; it should therefore be resorted to with great caution (Mohamedbhai, 2008a).

Most public institutions in Africa adopt various other ways of generating income to supplement their governmental grants, such as renting of premises, consultancy, and sale of publications. What is clear, however, is that such measures, while commendable, do not really make a dent in the institution's financial situation; it is the charging of fees, whether tuition or user fees, that makes a real difference to the institution's budget. One source of funding to higher education that has remained largely untapped in Africa is philanthropy through private donations and foundations. This should be encouraged as the private sector begins to flourish in Africa. It, however, requires appropriate government encouragement and dynamic institutional leadership.

While the income from cost-sharing measures can contribute significantly to the recurrent budget of an institution, it will never be sufficient to cover the huge cost of physical infrastructural development or acquisition of expensive equipment. Capital expenditure funding to a large extent will have to come from government or through government from loans and donor agencies, especially as private sector funding is not always forthcoming in Africa. Some countries, for example Ghana, have used an innovative approach of using a small ear-marked proportion of the national contribution

from the value added tax for funding higher education, especially infrastructural development and acquisition of equipment. Another interesting approach adopted by the University of Ghana is to lease the university's land to private property developers for the construction of students' hostels, which are then privately run (Mohamedbhai, 2008a).

Research

Research is extremely important for the development of Africa and the bulk of the research carried out in Africa is at the universities. Yet, available statistics show that the research output from Africa as a region is very low. For example, the world share of scientific publications from the African region in 2000 was only 1.4%, compared to 3.2% from Latin America and 21.1% for Asia. Also, while the share of world publications had increased for these other regions since 1990, it remained unchanged for Africa (UNESCO-UIS, 2005, September). The African countries that have reasonable research output are Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa, but even so the areas covered are limited mainly to agriculture and health.

The reasons for such a situation are known. First, there is a lack of well-qualified, research-experienced academics. Poor salaries and working conditions have led many of them to emigrate to Europe and the USA. In many departments of African universities only about 20-25% of the staff hold a PhD and the majority lacks the capability of either undertaking or supervising research. Those who are qualified are ageing and are heavily involved in administrative work. Second, because of the large number of students, with staff-student ratios of the order of 1:50 to 1:100, the staff have a very heavy teaching load, leaving them with very little time for research. Third, in order to top up their salaries, many of the staff teach as part-time lecturers in private institutions after working hours, or even undertake non-academic work at the expense of carrying out research. Also, the best qualified staff often give priority to well-remunerated external consultancies to the detriment of their research work. Fourth, there is a serious lack of resources for research: library facilities are inadequate, institutional research funds are nonexistent, ICT infrastructure is poor and, for laboratory-based research, equipment is out of date or non-functional. Finally, there are very few postgraduate programmes in African universities – the only flourishing ones are MBAs.

The relevance of the research carried out is also questionable. Most staff undertake research for personal gain, the aim being to publish in internationally refereed journals for promotion purposes. The chosen topic is often not appropriate to national development – such as achieving Millennium Development Goals or attaining Education For All targets. Most staff do their research as individuals rather than as a team and there is insufficient of the multi- or intra-disciplinary research, essential for solving development problems. Much of the research is externally funded, the topics being determined by the funders and they may not be of direct relevance to national development. As a result, there appears to be a disconnect between university researchers and policy makers, the latter

often preferring to turn to external consultants rather than local academics. The matter is aggravated by the fact that the usual point of contact for universities is the Ministry of Education whereas policy advice is often required by other Ministries such as Planning, Development, Finance, or Industry.

Research publication is another challenge in Africa. Most of the research results are usually on university library shelves in theses and dissertations or in advanced research journals. They are thus inaccessible to nor understood by policy makers or communities and so impede application of their findings. There is a dearth of African research journals; those that are started are often not sustainable in the long-term and eventually disappear.

Several steps need to be taken to redress the situation. Adequate provision should first of all be made for funding research at national levels in Africa. In 2000, the share of world research and development expenditure in Africa was 0.8%, having decreased from 1.3% in 1990. In comparison, that for Latin America was nearly 3% and for Asia over 30% (UNESCO-UIS, 2005, September). The setting up of national research councils can go a long way towards mobilising resources and identifying national priorities for research. At institutional level, universities should incorporate research in their strategic planning and ensure that it is given priority equal to that of teaching. Each university should also set up a central research office to coordinate, promote, facilitate and manage research on the campus. The office should also train young staff in how to apply for competitive international research grants as very often African academics miss out on funding opportunities simply because of their lack of experience in bidding for such grants. Governance and management of research is an area that has yet to be fully developed in African universities. A process of upgrading the research qualifications of university staff, through for example split-site PhDs, is already under way in many institutions and this needs to be maintained and expanded. With regards to accessing publications on and in Africa, efforts should be made for greater online access to research publications and theses in Africa. The Database of African Theses and Dissertations (DATAD) project of the Association of African Universities, which aims at digitalising and placing online masters' and doctoral theses and dissertations in Africa, is a laudable effort.

Quality assurance

Quality Assurance (QA) in higher education has become increasingly important over recent decades and this is equally true for Africa. There are several reasons for this. First, because the dramatic growth in student population has not been matched with the necessary public funding and physical and human resources, there has been a concern that this affects the quality of education provided. There is also the issue of the relevance and employability of the very large output of graduates. Second, because of regionalization and internationalization, there is increasing academic mobility of students and faculty within and outside Africa, and graduates often seek employment in countries other than their own. It has therefore become necessary for the quality of an institution to be recognized in

another country. Third, higher education institutions are increasingly finding that they have to be accountable to their stakeholders – whether it is the state, which provides the bulk of the funding, or the students, who are now being asked to pay tuition fees, or the employers who employ their graduates. Fourth, there are now large numbers and a wide range of providers, local and foreign – from public universities to private and corporate institutions, and from distance learning to purely online learning organisations. Competition among the institutions and commercialization of higher education have made it imperative for quality control measures to be introduced in order to protect students from poor quality education (Mohamedbhai, 2006).

A comprehensive study on the status of QA in Sub-Saharan Africa was carried out by the World Bank in 2007 (Materu, 2007). The study reports that QA in higher education, as it is understood and practised today in universities in the North, is a relatively new phenomenon in Africa, although other forms of ensuring quality, such as the use of external examiners and carrying out internal assessment, have been in existence for decades. Only 16 out of 52 countries in sub-Saharan Africa had national QA agencies and almost all of them were established over the past decade. The reason for setting up the agencies has been mainly to regulate the development of higher education provision, especially by the private sector, rather than ensuring accountability or improving quality. Nowhere is QA linked to funding of institutions.

The main approach used by the national agencies is institutional audit or institutional accreditation. Programme accreditation is conducted in Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa and by the *Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur* (CAMES) for Francophone countries. The methodologies adopted are the same as those in developed countries. For an institutional audit or accreditation, for example, the process involves an institutional self-assessment followed by a peer-review, the findings being then transmitted to the institution as well to the relevant public bodies. The preparation of the self-assessment report invariably helps the institution to collect and analyse data, a practice that otherwise is not very common, which can then be used for strategic planning. The study found that Francophone Africa is lagging behind the rest of Africa in developing structured QA management at national level. Only Madagascar has now made some progress. Most of the Francophone higher education institutions are in the process of undergoing the *Licence, Maîtrise, Doctorat* (LMD) reform following the European Bologna process, and they have linked this to address quality issues.

The main challenges facing QA in Africa, as identified by the study, are: (i) a dearth of adequately trained professional staff in the national QA agencies; (ii) lack of knowledge about the QA process among the staff in the institutions to enable them to adequately prepare the self-assessment report and assist in the peer review; (iii) resistance from faculty, because of their heavy teaching loads, in becoming fully engaged in the very time-consuming process of data collection and processing for the self-assessment report; and (iv) lack of funds to establish QA systems in the institutions. Capacity building and funding are therefore the two main issues that need to be addressed in

promoting QA in Africa.

An important recent development in QA at the regional level has taken place with funding from the World Bank and coordination by UNESCO. Following the trend in regions elsewhere in the world, an African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) has been established with its secretariat located at the Association of African Universities in Ghana. AfriQAN will facilitate collaboration among existing national QA agencies and help countries to establish such agencies. It will also provide assistance to higher educational institutions in setting up their own internal QA systems.

Conclusion

The importance of higher education in the development of sub-Saharan Africa is now unquestionable, especially as its contribution to development goes beyond the short-term, utilitarian role of producing graduates for the labour market; its equally important role is long-term, in the promotion of sustainable human and social development. Higher education must therefore be regarded as a public good and this must be acknowledged by African governments. This does not mean that governments alone should fund the sector, but governments must assume a responsibility for planning, regulating and supporting the sector and ensuring its development.

There is a dire need for expansion of the higher education sector in Africa; how this is done is very important. Rapidly creating additional universities in different parts of a country may not be the right approach. Due consideration must be given to the importance of technical and vocational education, which are equally important for Africa's development. There also needs to be differentiation within the higher education sector itself. Higher education must therefore be looked at as part of the whole education system. Although it appears at the upper echelon of the system, it needs to have linkages with the lower sectors, and this must be recognized by all stakeholders.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing African governments is how to fund the public higher education sector, which is rapidly growing, as public finance is scarce and provision has to be made for funding of other equally important sectors. Cost-sharing through the introduction of tuition fees appears to be inevitable. This has been done already in many African countries in differing ways and has been found to be acceptable, provided adequate safety nets are put in place to protect needy students. At the same time measures should be taken to improve the accountability and efficiency of institutions and all institutions must be subjected to internationally accepted quality assurance procedures.

Some of the challenges faced by African higher education can be dealt with at institutional level, others at national level and yet others require a regional approach. If African governments and higher education institutions are to make headway and meet those challenges, they must be prepared to plan and to innovate. This requires commitment of and collaboration by all the stakeholders. There is no reason why African countries cannot transform these challenges into opportunities to make their

higher education sector a vibrant and productive one.

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The Public/Private Dynamics in Polish Higher Education: demand-absorbing private growth and its implications

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Abstract. The paper discusses expansion of higher education through privatization in the context of fiscal constraints and deinstitutionalization processes in the public sector. Consequences of the unprecedented growth of the private sector in Poland in 1989-2010 are studied, with a special emphasis on the decreasing role of traditional academic institutional rules and norms. A new wave of reforms is viewed as possibly leading to revised patterns of institutional behavior. The overall context is policymakers' emphasis on further expansion of higher education in Europe, in seeking to close the enrolment gap between the European Union and the USA. The paper presents conclusions and identifies directions for further research.

Keywords: Central and Eastern Europe, demand-absorbing growth, educational expansion, equity, external privatization, institutional norms, inequality, internal privatization, Poland, private higher education, research mission

1. Introduction

This paper links several interrelated processes in Central and Eastern European higher education: expansion through two types of privatization external (new private providers) and internal (fees charged in a nominally free public sector), fiscal constraints limiting further tax-based growth of higher education, and the gradual denigration of the research mission of universities caused by almost two decades of continuous focus on their teaching mission and general underfunding of research in the region. Long-term consequences of the unprecedented growth of the private sector in Poland in 1989-2010 are studied, with special emphasis on the consequences of the accompanying processes of deinstitutionalization taking place in public universities: a decreasing role of traditional academic institutional rules and norms and of traditional institutional patterns in Polish universities. A new wave of reforms (2008-2010) is viewed as a reinstitutionalization process, possibly leading to revised

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rules, norms and patterns of institutional behavior. Poland, with 33% of student enrolments in the private sector in 2009 (out of 1.9 million), provides a unique case for study of two decades of demand-absorbing growth of private higher education with all its advantages and, as mostly evident in the present paper, limitations. The overall context of the paper is the emphasis on further expansion of higher education in Europe as argued for by both knowledge economy theories and (repeatedly) by the European Commission, wishing to close the enrolment gap between the European Union and the USA. Finally, the paper presents some conclusions and indicates possible directions for further research.

2. Expansion of higher education through internal and external privatization

The phenomenal expansion of higher education in new EU member states in the last two decades, following the collapse of communism in 1989, needs to be viewed in the interrelated contexts of the political, economic and social processes leading the region towards democratic societies and capitalist economies. Higher education systems under communism were closed and elitist: the massification processes had not started in the region before the 1990s. To show the scale of social mobility enabled by higher education expansion in Poland: the number of students increased from about 400,000 in 1989 to about 2 million in 2006 and beyond; and the share of the economically active population with higher education has increased substantially (from 15.36% in 2003 to almost 25% in 2009), while maintaining one of the globally highest wage premiums on higher education throughout the two decades. A massive expansion of the HE system has increased the gross enrollment rate in Poland in the last two decades from 13% in 1990 to 51% in 2009. The number of graduates in 2010 (440,000) was 10% more than the number of all students in 1989. What is unique to the processes of massification is that the expansion of higher education systems in several countries in the region (Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria in particular) was strongly linked to the privatization of higher education. This theme seems heavily under-researched though, and in particular the systemic consequences of privatization for public sector institutions are neglected. This paper is an attempt to draw a larger picture, with further more detailed research to follow.

From a wider perspective, the knowledge economy seems increasingly to require a more and more skilled workforce. European higher education systems as a whole are assessed by the European Commission to need a further 50% increase in higher education enrolment levels to close the gap with the USA (*i.e.* an increase in participation from 25% to 38%: EC, 2005a, p.11). The European Union is thus viewed as in need of both improving access to higher education and increasing total public and private funding of higher education. But, at the same time, European economies are expected generally to underfund all their public services in the coming decade(s), including continuing underfunding of higher education (see Powell & Hendricks, Eds., 2009; Pestieau, 2006 for public services; Johnstone & Marcucci, 2010; Aghion, Dewatripont, Hoxby, Mas-Collel, & Sapir, 2008 for higher education). Transition countries in the 1990s have been experimenting with the privatization

of various segments of the welfare state, including both cash benefits, such as old-age pensions, and benefits in kind, such as health care and higher education (Barr, 2004, pp.89-92). The traditional welfare state seems to have been 'overburdened' (Spulber, 1997) in the region, operating under increasing financial pressures, with huge consequences for tax-based funding for higher education in the future. Privatization in and of higher education in the region seems to be part and parcel of privatization in and of other public services (Kwiek, 2006, 2007a).

Interestingly enough, and linking the above two processes: experimenting with privatisation in higher education, substantially increasing access to it in the last ten to fifteen years, has been especially strong in Central and Eastern European systems, Poland being the biggest and most notable example. New "public-private dynamics" (Enders & Jongbloed, 2007) have emerged in Europe and this paper focuses on those systems which have used privatisation for the expansion of their higher education in the context of increasingly competitive public funding for all public services, not only for higher education and in Poland in particular. Especially, it seeks to examine the long-term consequences of expansion through privatization for the system as a whole and for the public sector in general.

Privatization in and of higher education in the region has had at least two crucial dimensions: the first is ideological accompanying massive privatizations in the economy, as part of the Washington Consensus and its three neo-liberal guiding principles: stabilization, liberalization, and privatization policies (Orenstein & Haas, 2005, 145ff). The second is financial with severe financial austerity affecting all public sector services. In the 1990s, when privatization in higher education emerged, the financial dimension was certainly the more important; on a policy level it was accompanied by a lack of interest of policy makers in social policies generally, in the midst of large-scale economic reforms. The Washington Consensus "had little to say on social-sector restructuring that was to become such a large part of post-communist transformation" (Orenstein, 2008, p.85). The process of reforming social policies in Central Europe during the post-communist era turned out to be "much longer and much more difficult than most experts anticipated" (Inglot, 2005, p.3). The general lack of reformers' focus on higher education had far-reaching consequences: the policy of non-interference, or leaving reforms for the future was dominant (Kwiek, 2008c). What Bruce Johnstone, a global authority on cost-sharing in higher education, stressed recently on a global scale was valid already in the 1990s in the region: the crucial role in underfunding of universities is played by what he termed "diverging trajectories of costs and available revenues." These trajectories are functions of (a) *per* student costs, (b) increasing participation, often accompanied by population growth, and (c) the steadily decreasing revenues supplied by the government (Johnstone, 2007, p.1). One of the implications of the inability of the state to fund expansion of its higher education system can be growth in privatization of educational services, and this is what took place on massive scale in several countries in the region. The two main types of privatization are external privatization, the new, booming private sector; and internal privatization, fee-paying courses offered in the nominally free

public sector (Kwiek, 2008c). If privatization is viewed as a “process or tendency of universities taking on characteristics of, or operational norms associated with, private enterprises” (Johnstone, 2007, p.1), then the privatization of higher education has been flourishing in several major European transition countries for two decades now. In general terms, privatization is “the transfer of activities, assets, and responsibilities from government or public institutions to private individuals and agencies. Education can be privatized if students enroll at private schools or if higher education is privately funded” (Belfield & Levin, 2002, p.19). Poland provides examples of both processes of privatization: increasing private provision and increasing private funding (Kwiek, 2009a). The emergence of powerful market mechanisms in public higher education and the emergence of a private sector in Poland are viewed here as two different faces of the same process of the privatization of higher education. Both public and private sectors are following the same road (on the marketization of both sectors, see Kwiek, 2010).

A key factor determining a substantial increase in equitable access to Polish higher education documented for the decade of the 2000s was the liberal attitude of the state and its agencies toward the emergent private sector back in the 1990s, following the collapse of communism in 1989. The dramatic growth, followed by consolidation, of that sector was substantial owing to a “policy of non-policy” (Kwiek, 2008c). As Belfield and Levin (2002, p.29) put it, “The first factor to explain privatization in education is simple: many parents want it”. Indeed, Polish students, for a variety of reasons, wanted higher education. The result was phenomenal numerical growth in the private sector: 500 students in 1991, 70,400 in 1995; 445,400 in 2000 and 621,000 in 2005. The growth of the sector slowed but continued until 2009 when, for the first time in its short history of two decades, a sharp decrease in enrollments took place. For mostly demographic reasons, the total number of students in Poland reached a ceiling of about 2 million in 2006 and then gradually decreased in both total numbers and enrollments in the public sector. In 2009, for the first time ever, enrollments in both sectors decreased, reaching 1.900 million: 633,100 (33.3%) in the private and 1.267 million (66.7%) in the public sector (GUS, 2010, p.57).

The Polish higher education market became substantially deregulated in the 1990s: the total number of private higher education institutions in Poland in 2009 was 330, and the share of enrollments in private institutions had been growing every year since their appearance until 2009 when it sharply decreased for the first time, by 10% (GUS, 2010, p.26). Case studies from other European transition countries show a more conventional pattern of strict regulations, underscoring Poland’s exceptionality in terms of its liberal atmosphere in the 1990s allowing increased access to higher education in both sectors through new cost-recovery mechanisms. Also enabling this expansion was the exceptional differentiation of the system, which is also rare in most European transition countries, where elite institutions seemed to have prevailed. A two-tier degree system and a private sector focusing mostly on undergraduate studies leading to BA degrees only, new modes of study (e.g. part-time, weekend-modes), and a large vocational education sector had already flourished in Poland in the

1990s. Fostering this growth were equally liberal approaches to quality assurance mechanisms, licensing, and accreditation that encouraged the nascent private sector during the first decade of its operation (1990s). Growing social legitimacy and public recognition of private higher education was another factor, leading to growing acceptance of graduates from the private sector by the labor market, especially in the 2000s.

3. Further expansion of higher education: how to justify it?

The growth of private higher education in the region does not necessarily mean ‘better’ services, or ‘different’ services: it means most of all ‘more’ higher education.

The third, and most prominent driver of recent growth in private provision consists of institutions that provide *more* higher education and absorb demand that is not met by public providers. ... Usually, governments lack the resources or the responsiveness to fund a massive expansion of the public higher education sector.
(Enders & Jongbloed, 2007, p.20)

The expansion of the Polish system was made possible by its growing external and internal privatization, dual phenomena that opened higher education to market forces. In Poland, two alternative strategies to meet growing demand for higher education were used, both implicitly supported by the state: (a) the emergence of privately owned, teaching-focused, fee-dependent institutions, and (b) the internal privatization of public sector institutions which allowed them to supplement state subsidies by charging fees to (part-time only) students. Both forms of cost-sharing in both sectors were encouraged implicitly by the state. The growing demand was absorbed by both private institutions, called “non-state” institutions in Poland, and weekend-mode studies in the public sector, and both forms of privatization were, to a large extent, driven by academic staff members from the public sector. Hundreds of thousands of students gained access to higher education, which for the first time began to be differentiated sharply by institutional type. Along with the elite public universities appeared private institutions that had the ability to absorb the demand from new, differentiated student populations. Although public sector institutions continued their previous policy of being nominally free, they began to offer fee-based weekend studies, open to those who had not been able to obtain a regular full-time slot. The expansion of the system through this dual form of privatization fundamentally changed access to higher education in Poland. It is an undeniable success access story and also, to a smaller degree, an success equity story. As Morphew and Eckel put it “(A)ccess and affordability are primary factors in discussing privatization. Closely linked to these ideas are the questions who pays, how much, and why” (Morphew & Eckel, Eds., 2009, p.183; see also Johnstone & Marcucci, 2010). An important factor leading to the success of the private sector was a large, and still growing, number of private providers. Academically weak, and generally unable to compete with public sector institutions in research and for public research funding, private

providers emerged in numbers (146 in 1997, 195 in 2000, 252 in 2002, 315 in 2005 and 330 in 2009) which made price competition between them unavoidable and which made studies relatively affordable for lower socio-economic classes).

The growth of the private sector in Poland has not been a geographically isolated educational phenomenon. There is a powerful global trend of growing enrollments in the private sector. For the most part, European Union countries play a marginal role in it, although exceptions include Poland, Romania and Bulgaria in the post-communist region and Portugal in Western Europe. Speaking of the growth of the private sector generally, Levy (2006) notes that the 20th-century norm and persisting public norm is state funding of public universities and, overwhelmingly, private sources of funding for private institutions.

Equitable access and educational expansion became crucial policy terms with which to discuss higher education reforms in Poland in recent years, together with internal differentiation of higher education systems, diversification of funding streams and stratification of student populations. But how is the further necessary expansion (with reference to the education gap of 50% compared with the USA, as highlighted by the European Commission) to be performed with the existing organisational, administrative and especially funding arrangements? And how strong, empirically, is the case for further expansion? In Poland, strong empirical evidence suggests that there is still enough space for expansion as the wage premiums for higher education, at both MA and, surprisingly, BA level, are very high, and not decreasing. Higher education is still a valuable asset on the labor marker and rewarded accordingly (Kwiek & Arnhold, in press). The European Commission links the need for increasing access to higher education to technological change, globalization and new forms of work organization (EC, 2008b, p.23). At the same time, OECD analyses stress that there is no evidence in current data suggesting any "crowding-out effects" of lower-educated by higher-educated individuals: "on the contrary, there seems to be positive employment effects for individuals with less education in countries expanding their tertiary education" (Hanssen, 2007, p.18). Polish empirical data seem to support both arguments.

Higher education systems in Central and Eastern Europe, Poland included, have managed to combine high enrollment growth rates with both internal and external forms of privatization in the context of severe financial austerity: to a large extent, exceptionally in Europe, expansion was self-financed by students through cost-sharing mechanisms. But there are significant limitations to growth through privatization which need to be studied. The limitations, apart from graduates' concerns about the quality of studies, include also the responses of the labor market to the processes of widening access, the continuous denigration of the research mission of the (public) university, and the unwillingness on the part of all the major university stakeholders (state, students, and academic community) to reform public sector institutions. The *status quo*, or the deinstitutionalization processes taking place at public universities, seem to have been widely accepted by all stakeholders, a theme that is developed later in this paper.

The questions are, for instance, whether privatization can be a remedy to attain still higher attainment levels in higher education in those European systems where all traditional, publicly-funded routes of expansion seem structurally difficult to achieve, mostly for financial reasons? If privatization is indeed a remedy to enable further expansion, is it the sort of expansion that European labor markets need? How are graduates from these private, (relatively) new segments of higher education matched to the labor market (as seen through the proxy of their “job satisfaction”), and how do employers view them in comparison with graduates from public institutions? Are the trends affecting public and private higher education institutions isomorphic or divergent? And how is internal privatization of public institutions by cost-recovery mechanisms including *e.g.* cost-sharing in teaching, academic entrepreneurialism in research and third-stream activities, increasing reliance on non-core non-state income *etc.*, transforming their core missions of teaching and research? (Kwiek, 2008a, 2008b)

Global trends show that even in the contexts of wholesale public sector reforms worldwide and general “financial fragility of institutions and systems” (Johnstone, 2008), radical further expansion can be financed by various forms of privatization. Central and Eastern European countries have experienced significant expansion: in three of them, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, the role of the private sector in higher education expansion in 1990-2010 was absolutely crucial, as was the role of privatizing the public sector services in general, far beyond mere higher education, leading to more widespread social acceptance of privatization processes in general. It needs to be stressed, following Daniel C. Levy, that “it is impossible to understand contemporary expansion, including its size and contours and policy dimensions, without knowledge about both [public and private] sectors. It is also important to analyze dynamics between the sectors. What effects does a kind of access through one sector have on the other sector” (Levy, 2008, p.13). In the present paper, we examine the mostly negative effects for the public sector.

An overall approach called the Skill-Biased Technological Change approach (Machin & McNally, 2007; Machin, 2004) identifies new technologies that improve the effectiveness of production process as ‘skill-biased’ – higher educated workers are more able to respond to these new technologies than less educated workers. “This non-neutral technological change makes higher educated workers much more attractive for employers and therefore increases the demand for this type of workforce” (EENEE, 2008, pp.6-7). Powerful arguments for further expansion of higher education systems come from OECD research and analyses, most recently from Stephen Machin and Sandra McNally in their OECD study of education systems and labor markets: they stress, “in no case considered here, can one speak of ‘over-supply’ of tertiary education. The strong, positive and (often) increasing return to tertiary education suggests that ‘under-supply’ is more of an issue and that continued expansion is justified. ... If there were over-supply, relative wages and employment probabilities would fall to the level of their closest substitutes – and that has not happened” (Machin & McNally, 2007, p.3). Neither has that happened in Poland, despite massive expansion.

The labor force in Poland is increasingly better educated and one of the major factors has been the easily accessible and relatively affordable private higher education. The share of an economically active, higher educated population has increased substantially; in the last six years, it has risen from 2.578 million (2003) to 4.306 million (2009), or from 15.35% to almost one quarter (24.7%) of the economically active population. This well-educated segment is the only segment of the Polish workforce which has grown substantially (by 1.8 million, or 67% in the last six years), with the segment with general secondary education increasing only by 20% in the same period and all other segments decreasing. Still, the share of the workforce with basic vocational and lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary education remains considerable at almost 40% (6.799 million, 3rd quarter 2009). For both basic vocational and lower secondary education, there were decreases in 2003-2009 (from 5.766 million to 5.200 million, and from 2.210 million to 1.599 million, respectively).

Compared with major Western European economies, Poland's education gap has substantially decreased in the last decade, owing to high levels of enrollments in higher education. Privatization (both external and internal) played its critical role: between 2000 and 2009, the annual number of students was approximately 1.58-1.95 million, and the number of graduates was about 300,000-400,000 each year. While the overall level of education of the Polish population as a whole is rising steadily, it is still considerably lower than the OECD average; the overall level of education of economically active population is rising much faster. Older generations, with lower average levels of education, are leaving the labor market by reaching the retirement age (still lower than that in the major OECD economies, on average and in practical terms). The domination of the labor force by those with basic vocational and lower secondary, primary and incomplete primary education was still substantial in 2009 – but much smaller than ten years ago. Every year about 400,000 higher education graduates enter the labor market which gradually changes the composition of the labor force. The number of higher education graduates is not expected to continue its annual growth, as the number of students is not expected to be continue to increase (in the last five years, the number of students has remained roughly constant at 1.90-1.96 million).

Transformation towards a better educated workforce is confirmed on the one hand by the increasing share of employees with higher education in the labor force; and on the other hand, by the increasing number of professionals in the labor force. Among newly created jobs in 2008, the number of professionals increased (to 2.031 million) and the number of other workers decreased (from 1.791 million to 1.686 million). Generally, there are more new jobs available for professionals than for other workers.

What is striking, and goes against the conventional knowledge of the economic benefits from higher education, is that bachelors-level higher education seems to be already well recognized in the labor market, and is well rewarded, with salaries for bachelor's degree holders generally, 133.9% of average salaries and 149.3% for men. The economic benefit for men with bachelor's degrees is

higher than the economic advantage for women with master's degrees (135%): men are much better rewarded for their higher education, regardless of the level (bachelors or masters) – by 25-30 percentage points.

Poland (together with Hungary) had one of the highest wage premiums for higher education graduates in the 2000s. With the new methodology of private internal rates of return (IRR) used by OECD recently, Poland still ranks high among OECD economies for rewards from higher education: for males, it is the third best (22.8%), following the Czech Republic (29.1%) and Portugal (23.9%). Hungary is fourth, with 19.8%. In the larger higher education systems, IRRs are below 10% (Germany, France, Spain), with higher levels for the UK (14.3%) and the US (11%) (OECD, 2008a, p.196). With still another methodology (private net present value, NPV) as used by OECD in 2009, Poland is relatively high on the list of OECD economies as well: it was 5th (with the level of \$147,000 at PPP), following only Portugal, Italy, the USA and the Czech Republic, and it is 80% above than the average for the 21 economies studied (OECD, 2009). Unfortunately, international comparative data for OECD countries do not seem to differentiate between bachelors and masters degrees.

Most recent data show that the wage premium for higher education for holders of degrees remain substantial, especially for men: for PhD and masters degrees, the relationship to the average salary is 141.4% (160% for men and 135% for women), for higher education with bachelors degrees, 133.9% (149.3% for men and 119% for women). In comparison for post-secondary education, the relationship to average earning for post-secondary education is 90.2% (91.4% for men and 96% for women), and for secondary vocational education, 74.7% (75.8 for men and only 62.2% for women) (GUS 2009, p.64). Thus employment structure statistics and labor force statistics show that higher education is still highly valued in the labor market and is still highly rewarded in terms of remuneration. Consequently, the expansion has been welcomed by the Polish labor market, and there are, so far, no signs of its exhaustion.

In view of these pressures for further expansion, European systems in the next decade can be expected to experiment widely with the public-private dynamics of higher education systems, including changes in teaching and research funding, in contractual obligations of the academic staff, by blurring boundaries between public sector and private sector organization, administration, management and governance or by changing the teaching/research divide between institutions (the 2010 changes in higher education in England seem to be going in this direction, including the dramatic increase in fee levels). The changes may occur in some countries by increasing the number of private institutions and increasing enrolments in private institutions, in other countries, by changing the legal status of public institutions to that of private or non-state institutions. One such form may involve opting-out of the public system towards a foundation-based institution, as in Germany's Saxony, North-Rhine Westphalia and Baden-Wurttemberg and in Sweden. In still other countries, the introduction of or increase in the level of tuition fees accompanied by loan programs can be expected to take precedence over non-repayable scholarships. As Guy Neave writes, "the signs [in Europe] are

very clear that what began as individual initiatives is on the way to becoming a broader and more general strategy” (Neave, 2008, p.32).

4. “Independent private” higher education as a Central European specialty

The demand-absorbing growth of private higher education, wave III of private growth, different from wave I, Catholic, and wave II, elite, as analyzed for Latin America by the pioneering work of Daniel C. Levy, “a non-elite response to the failure of the public sector to meet the growing demand for higher education. ... *public failure* in the loose sense of avoiding tasks” (Levy, 1986, 59ff.), can also be viewed as a major differentiating factor both among Central European higher education systems and, generally, between Central Europe as a whole and Western Europe. What OECD statisticians call “independent private” tertiary education is, in Europe, only a very specific phenomenon of Central Europe; among OECD economies, in the tertiary-type A category in 2007, Poland had 32.3%, comparable only to a single Western European country, Portugal, with 25%, the EU-19 average being 7.3%. Apart from Poland, the highest enrolments in private higher education in Europe are in non-OECD countries in the region: Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia and Estonia; Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Hungary with enrollment levels of 6 - 9.9% (OECD, 2009, p.306) are exceptions to the general rule that higher education growth in transition countries could be achieved mostly through the growth of demand-absorbing private higher education.

The emergence of private higher education in the region has been “sudden, shocking, and unplanned” and the leap in enrollments in the sector was “meteoric”, as a global leading figure in private higher education research, Daniel C. Levy, put it (Levy, 2007, p.280; see Levy, 2008; Slantcheva & Levy, Eds., 2007; Scott, 2007a, 2007b). The growth of the sector has led to severe legitimacy concerns, though, and it was:

comparatively *easy*, fueled by sudden political and economic change, and because enrollments had been remarkably low. ... This suggests a contrast between growth (as well as other successes) and conventional social legitimacy: contextual conditions may facilitate new institutional growth and achievement even while much of the public, including the higher education establishment, casts a wary eye (Levy, 2007, p.280).

Private higher education is still trying to gain social legitimacy – but after two decades of its existence in the region, the overall conclusion is that it is still a long-term goal.

By comparison, private higher education in other parts of Europe, for instance in Nordic Europe, is exclusively a state-subsidized “government-dependent private sector” (and is not included in studies within European or global research into private higher education, by being of a “mixed” type (Wells, Sadlak & Vlasceanu, 2007); there are no enrolments in “independent private” tertiary education (OECD type-A) in the Nordic countries and have marginal value at the OECD type-B level only in Denmark, at 0.6% (OECD, 2009, p.306). Elsewhere in Europe it is marginal except for systems in

Spain and Italy where it is small (about 10%), and the only comparative point of reference for regional systems in Portugal (steadily declining but still about 25%).

5. The privatization agenda and social inequality

The growth of private higher education raises important equity, affordability and access issues. The standard questions asked globally about its demand-absorbing type are the following: access of whom, access to what, and on what financial conditions, *i.e.* implicitly the social composition of its student body, the academic quality, and the cost-recovery mechanisms in force in the system (fees, loans, and general financial assistance for students).

Empirical studies show that Poland clearly witnessed a decrease in inequality of access to higher education in the last twenty years, in comparison to an increase in inequality in the Czech Republic, as well as potentially in other regional systems (Mateju, Rehakova, & Simonova, 2007; Shavit, Arum, & Gomoran, Eds., 2007). It is possible that Poland is the only system in the region that successfully combines access with equity, with some systemic disadvantages in the denigration of the research mission of Polish universities, and the increasing focus on paid teaching in the last two decades, which has inevitably led to their weak research visibility and low research productivity. The general question is whether a widening access agenda without a system differentiation agenda is leading to an increasingly teaching-focused higher education system, as in Poland today? Is the increasing teaching-focus of higher education, fuelled by low public funding *per* student and low research funding *per* academic, as well as uncompetitive academic salaries compared to other professionals, leading Central European systems, Poland in the forefront, away from the academic center to the academic peripheries (Altbach, 2007)? Probably Central European countries are still in the (relative) academic center – but there has been, and still is, a danger of their falling into the academic periphery, should the financial austerity and “misery for all” policy in higher education continue.

The growth and the possible gradual decline related to powerful demographic pressures of private higher education in Central Europe is a wider phenomenon, related to the privatization agenda in social policy that generally has four main priorities.

(T)he first is the scaling back of direct government action to encourage thrift, self-reliance, and private provision. The second is the expansion of subsidies for private insurance, savings, and charitable activities. The third is increased government contracting with voluntary organizations and for-profit service providers. The fourth and the most ambitious goal is the infusion into established programs of vouchers and other mechanisms that would allow (or require) to opt out of these programs and obtain benefits from private organizations instead. In contrast with radical retrenchment, neither contracting nor opt-out provisions eliminate the government’s primary role. Rather, they shift its emphasis from direct state action to the management and oversight of private actors operating within a new framework of regulatory authority (Hacker, 2002, p.319).

Polish higher education reforms of 2008-2010 include strong elements of the first priority, encouraging financial self-reliance, and the second priority, the possibility of direct subsidies to the private sector *via* contracting educational services from them, on the basis of nationwide bids for educating specific in-quota students in numbers specified areas of studies. Vouchers and related financial mechanisms were not considered in policy discussions, though. The 2008-2010 wave of reforms in higher education – as well as decade-long reforms of Polish healthcare system – can also be viewed as a way of “constructing organizations” out of public services, or as “organizational reforms” (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000). The difference between the state as a single organization consisting of many sub-units prior to the reform attempts (public higher education services, public healthcare services *etc.*) and the state as “a kind of polycentric network consisting of many separate organizations” is becoming clearer.

Whereas relations between public entities used to be characterized by many of the typical attributes of large hierarchies, such as setting rules, giving orders, inspecting and providing information, their interaction now includes features that are more typical of the relations between autonomous organizations, such as competition, collaboration, negotiation, advising, contracting, selling and buying (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000, p.730).

Negotiations, contracting, selling and buying in the healthcare sector following the 1999 reforms are, at least rhetorically, standard practices; the same practices are emergent in the higher education sector together with a new wave of reforms and possibly with new strategies for higher education development.

Polish public universities are certainly not a “closed shop of the middle classes” or “gatekeepers to the elite” (Furlong & Cartmel, 2009, p.17), although precise data on the social composition of the student body in the top universities, and especially in the most lucrative study areas in the top universities, are fragmentary. Nevertheless, in practice, the situation of graduates is not different from what Brown and Hesketh conclude about the UK: “the ‘best’ companies want to recruit the ‘best’ people who are most likely to attend the ‘best’ universities, because they are the hardest to enter” (Brown & Hesketh, 2004, p.11). Polish higher education system is far more open to social mobility than several of the largest Western European traditional systems, *e.g.* the French, German or English systems; historically this can be attributed to the communist period and practically to two decades of existence of easily accessible and relatively affordable private higher education and the legal opportunity of multiple employment of Polish academic staff. Also Polish public universities, from a European comparative perspective, are relatively open to students from disadvantaged social and economic classes, in their first track (tax-based), but especially, in their second (fee-based, part-time) track.

6. “Global scripts”, isomorphic change, and the future of the private sector

One of core areas for a discussion with “global scripts” in thinking about the future of higher education (see Gornitzka & Maassen, 2010; Halliday *et al.*, 2010) is the emergence of (independent) private higher education in Central Europe but in no other parts of Europe. From the perspective of American institutionalism,

Institutional theories, fairly uniquely, predict isomorphism and isomorphic change. This is perhaps the single most important implication arising from institutional theory. If higher education structures, like universities and colleges, reflect common models in national and world environments, they should show unexpected similarities across diverse settings and change in similar ways over time. And by all accounts, the university is indeed a central historic institution, core to the distinctive trajectory of Western and now world society. ... The empirical literature provides clear evidence on this issue. Educational systems are remarkably similar around the world, and increasingly so over time (Meyer *et al.*, 2007, p.193).

The growth of private higher education in Central Europe in general – “private higher education being a Central European phenomenon” (Levy, 2006) – and the relative absence of this sector in other parts of Europe – stand in sharp contrast to the above conclusion and need further elaboration (Levy, 2006, p.144; Wells *et al.*, 2007; Tomusk, 2005). The conclusions need to be empirically-based, though, and the two decades of private higher education growth may be a too limited time-span. It is possible that the Polish (as well as Bulgarian and Romanian) case will be similar to that of Portugal, witnessing a gradual decline of the sector. The future of private higher education institutions depends, to a large extent, on both the future of public institutions and on powerful demographic trends, which are expected to reduce the annual number of candidates for studies from *ca.* 490,000 in 2008 to 260,000 in 2022. Even after the expected reforms and the adoption of the new law of higher education expected for 2011, studying full-time in the public sector will remain free (or tax-based), leaving the future of the private sector fundamentally uncertain; even if the fee-based private sector were to disappear altogether from 2017 onwards, there would still be enough places in the public sector to meet the demand. Consequently, even though the private higher education sector in Poland is the biggest in Europe in terms of its size and share of enrollments, it is currently very vulnerable; it will find it increasingly hard to compete with the tax-based public sector in terms of the quality of education and the diversity of study areas under demographic pressures.

Most recent (2010-2011) policy proposals in Poland potentially include even more financial austerity for public institutions: one of the two higher education strategies under public discussion, in full accordance with ministerial openly expressed intentions and plans, assumes that current public funding allocated to public institutions only will be allocated to both public and private institutions, on the basis of large-scale public bids for teaching services, open to both public and private sectors, leading to even less funding available for public institutions. The basic idea behind the ministerial

proposal is that what really counts is the vaguely expressed idea of inter-sectoral, public-private “competition” that will lead to better services. In fact, it is an avenue to let a large part of the private sector survive in a future for which unprecedented demographic declines are projected. Certainly, with an avenue to increase “financial self-reliance” of Polish universities – the introduction of universal fees in the public sector, the idea of “fees for all” may also be viewed as a support mechanism to let the private sector survive in difficult demographic times. After the introduction of fees for all students in the public sector, the major current difference between the two sectors (for students) will be blurred, which is one of Enders and Jongbloed’s (2007) dimensions of changing public-private dynamics.

And the question of the future of private higher education in the region is much larger, and requires more time-span for research. Are higher education systems in the region “trendsetters” for Europe, or is the significance of private institutions in this part of Europe “a passing phase attributable to the special circumstances surrounding the transition from communist to postcommunist regimes”, a response to particular political circumstances *i.e.* an “internal phenomenon” (Scott, 2007b, p.309)? No final answers are possible today; both demographics and politics will play their substantial roles in the next decade, and the only relevant Western European reference point is Portugal, with its steady decline in enrolments in the sector and which is currently seeking “strategies for survival” (Teixeira & Amaral, 2007).

7. Deinstitutionalization in Polish public universities and its long-term consequences

As Paul Pierson reminds us, “early steps in a process may fundamentally restrict the range of options available at later ones” (Pierson, 2004, pp.133-134), and this may have been precisely the Polish case. The two decades of growth of private higher education would strongly support the path-dependence theory: once the new sector was allowed into the system to introduce competition and increase access, everything else that followed was a mere consequence of this first step. Other options used in other Central European countries, such as gradual growth of enrollments based on gradually increasing the capacity of public sector institutions (such as in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary – as opposed to Poland, Romania and Bulgaria), were no longer available once the sector was emerging and Polish academics from the public sector became eagerly involved in its growth, as its founders, rectors, deans and academics, while still retaining their posts in the public sector.

Processes of deinstitutionalization can be linked to the growth of private higher education in Central Europe.

(T)he case of deinstitutionalization is special in that rules are being abandoned *without* being replaced by some alternative institutional pattern. Social action that used to be governed by binding rules becomes – and is, by some, recommended to be made – a matter of unrestrained, inventive, and unilateral *ad hoc* decision making (Offe, 2006, p.26).

Clearly, it can be argued that once traditional rules of authoritarian higher education were abandoned, there was no alternative set of rules available following the shock of 1989: a normative vacuum appeared in which all sorts of codes of academic behaviors and rules and norms for academic conduct became possible, without the risk of academics of being excluded from the academic community bound by those codes, rules and norms. The dramatic growth of private higher education in the 1990s was possible by this type of deinstitutionalization in public universities. The price of this process for public universities was very high: the highest price to be paid was the gradual institutional denigration of the research mission, and the continuing underfunding of research in universities. Decreasing academic interest in research was accompanied by decreasing availability of research funding.

Claus Offe makes a clear distinction between rules and regularities, and defines institutions in the following manner.

Institutions are systems of *rules* that apply to the future behavior of actors. They constitute actors and pro-/prescribe their scope and mode of action. These rules can be sanctioned through mechanisms that are specified in the charter, or legal specification, of an institution. These rules are, consciously or habitually, observed and complied with by actors who are aware not only of the rules but also of the fact that these rules are being enforced and deviant courses of action sanctioned. Institutions often impose severe constraints on what actors are permitted to do. In contrast, *regularities* are propositions based upon the observation of patterns in past events that do not have, by themselves, normative qualities; neither can they be sanctioned (Offe, 2006, p.10).

In Poland in the 1990s, rules that for years had constituted the heart of the institution of the university were not followed, and this breach of the rules was not sanctioned in any way: dozens of thousands of academics from public universities, especially the most prestigious institutions, and especially in the social sciences and economics, were generally neglecting the traditional research mission of their universities and were engaged full-time in additional teaching in emergent private institutions. The traditional “logic of appropriateness” (March & Olsen, 2006) of the university was not stopping the turning of huge social and academic energy into new profit-driven terrains, and all sorts of explanations and justifications were created on an *ad-hoc* basis. Massive involvement of Polish academics in the development of private higher education, at the cost of gradual denigration of the research mission of their public universities, can also be clearly explained from the perspective of a “logic of appropriateness”,

... action, policy making included, is seen as driven by rules of appropriate or exemplary behavior, organized into institutions. The appropriateness of rules includes both cognitive and normative components. Rules are followed because they are seen as natural, rightful, expected and legitimate. Actors seek to fulfill the obligations encapsulated in a role, an identity, a membership in a political community or group, and the ethos, practices, and expectations of its institutions. Embedded in a social collectivity, they do what they see as appropriate for themselves in a specific type of situation (March & Olsen, 2006, p.689).

The collapse of communism in general, and the emergence of the private sector in higher education in particular made traditional rules appear no longer natural or appropriate. The 1990s was the period of deinstitutionalization in public universities, and processes of reinstitutionalization are only emergent with new reform proposals at the end of the 2000s.

8. The shadow of the denigration of the research mission of the university?

One of the fundamental consequences of the large-scale phenomenon of the growth of the private sector in the 1990s, accompanied by the processes of deinstitutionalization in public universities, was limited academic pressure on reforming public universities, including limited pressure on increasing the impoverished salaries in the public sector. The pact between politicians and academics was that salaries were low or extremely low but holding multiple (sometimes more than two) posts in both public and private sectors would be tolerated. The pact between the major university stakeholders was gradually accepted in society at large, with long-lasting consequences and a resulting shock for academics, when in the last few years, discussions have started about restricting this option of receiving additional outside salaries. For a period of almost two decades, rules were different, and “deviant courses of action” were not sanctioned, these actions were not viewed as resulting from norms alien to the institution. Consequently, whether based on March and Olsen’s or Offe’s definitions of institutions, Polish universities became redefined institutions, with consequences for their mission, public funding, social prestige and for their governance structures. After the initial changes in 1990 there were limited, if any, changes in management and governance structures, and the first law on higher education following the new law of 1990 was passed only 15 years later, in 2005. Lessening of traditional academic norms led to substantial institutional transformations, introducing new institutional cultures accepting actions and behaviors that traditionally would have been non-acceptable.

It might be argued that the single phenomenon with the most far-reaching consequences for public institutions in 1990-2010 and arguably beyond was the form in which the private sector was allowed to appear and grow, in a fully parasitic relationships with the public sector (Levy, 1986, p.312; Breneman, 2006, p.87). Denigration of traditional academic norms and acceptance of new academic codes of behavior led to the phenomenal growth of the private sector on the one hand and, on the other, to the unprecedented decline in performance of the public sector, especially in terms of gradually losing its research aspirations, particularly in “soft” disciplines. As Offe argued,

(T)he productivity of institution may be context-sensitive, with the context itself being formed by other institutions or conditions. In the absence of such favorable context, one particular institution may not yield the benefits that hence are not due to the institutions itself but contingent upon synergetic effects with other institutions (Offe, 2006, p.11).

Consequently, due to the lack of pressures on increasing public funding for university research, the

phenomenon has led to lost research opportunities. Self-imposed decreases in research aspirations have clearly led to context-dependent decrease in research production. No new socially convincing narrative on the mission of universities was produced in the meantime, and the traditional Humboldtian narrative gradually lost its social legitimacy. As Offe explains,

Institutions come with an implicit theory about themselves, an ‘animating idea’ that provides reasons for their support and defense. ... An institution that is entirely incapable of providing widely accepted reasons for itself is, as it were, intellectually naked ... and, for this reason, in a precarious position and vulnerable to challenge (Offe, 2006, p.12).

It is quite possible that the 2008-2010 reforms in Polish higher education are socially feasible and technically possible because there is no socially recognized and commonly accepted grand narrative about Polish universities that could be successfully supported and defended. The academic *status quo* is non-acceptable, and in this particular context sweeping, revolutionary changes are discussed, and the results of the public discussion are unpredictable.

In critical periods, when traditionally animating ideas seem outlived, deeper changes are possible. There is at least a double danger, though: first, too many alien norms may invade the institution, transforming the core of the institution; and, second, a too heavy reliance of reforms on political short-term concerns. As Paul Pierson observes in his criticism of the theory of institutional design.

The question of actors’ time horizons constitutes a central issue for analysts of institutional design. If politicians often have short time-horizons, this has important implications for theories of institutional design and change. Where designers have short time-horizons and the short-term and the long-term effects of institutional choices are distinct, it becomes far less likely that institutions will be designed to achieve functional outcomes over the long term. Long-term institutional consequences may be *by-products* of actions taken for short-term political reasons (Pierson, 2004, p.112).

Institutional and systemic consequences of the *laissez-faire* higher education policies in the 1990s and beyond, including the emergence and booming of the private sector based on its parasitic relations with the public sector—including its academic staff, buildings, libraries, and even its sports halls, are still holding public institutions in their grips. And the current “critical juncture” period in higher education may evoke short-term political solutions which may constrain public institutions for another decade. These are the criteria by which current reform attempts need to be assessed, in view of past experiences. The private sector brought about the massification of higher education and opened the system to new social strata; at the same time, the accompanying long-term costs, especially for public universities, only now emerge to be seen.

9. Conclusions and further research

The growth of the private sector in Poland cannot be easily assessed: different stakeholders may hold

different views. Those of academics may differ substantially from those of students, and may be still different from those of the employers and the state. One thing is certain, though: after two decades, the potential for demand-absorbing growth in both sectors in Poland has exhausted itself and the negative implications of demographics are becoming more important than ever before. Poland is the fastest aging society in Europe, and the decline in enrollments in the next decade may hit hardest the private sector – fee-based rather than tax-based. It is too early to argue whether the growth was indeed setting a trend or was merely a passing phase of development from a larger, European comparative perspective. There are too many variables in force right now, and the outcome of the reinstitutionalization processes is unclear: demography is predictable but politics, as a guide to educational policy is not. Further research should include assessment of the research capacities of public universities and the scope of the impact of the past denigration of the research mission, a study of the survival of the fittest institutional adaptation processes among private institutions negatively hit by demographic trends, and a study of the impact of a new wave of reforms, both with reference to the region and incorporating a wider picture of European integration of higher education.

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Casual Academics: Australia's hidden academic workforce

Emmaline Bexley* and Chi Baik**

Abstract. In the last two decades the Australian academic workforce has become increasingly casualised with a majority of undergraduate teaching now undertaken by casual, non-tenured academic staff. We discuss the extent and nature of this casualisation and examine the key issues and challenges of casual employment for academics themselves, as well as for institutions and the sector more broadly. We conclude by identifying three areas needing careful consideration for the future management and sustainability of the Australian academic workforce.

Keywords: academic work, ageing academic workforce, casualisation, sessional staff, sustainable workforce, tenured staff.

Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a considerable increase in the proportion of casual, non-tenured academic staff in higher education. In most Australian institutions today, a large majority of undergraduate teaching is carried out by casual, non-permanent staff (Percy *et al.*, 2008). These are variously referred to as 'sessional teachers', 'casual staff', 'contingent academics' or 'adjunct faculty' (in the U.S.). Although diverse in their teaching roles, experience and aspirations, they are all members of a group identified by the common characteristic of what they are *not* – that is, they are not tenured or 'regular faculty' (Langenberg, 1998, p.43). In this article, we use the terms 'sessional' or 'casual' to refer to non-permanent academic staff employed on a fixed-term or hourly basis.

The increase in the proportion of casual staff in the higher education sector is indicative of broader trends in employment patterns across the Australian workforce, which has experienced considerable growth in the number of casual employees over the past two decades: 25% of male employees and 31% of female employees are currently casual workers, compared to 13% of males and 28% of female employees in 1990. The proportion is even higher within the higher education sector.

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While precise statistics on casual academics are unavailable, as we explain further below, estimates of 40%-70% of Australian academics being employed on a casual basis seem plausible (Junor, 2004; Coates *et al.*, 2009; May, 2011, forthcoming).

The rise in the number of sessional academic staff is the hidden dimension of the massification and decreased government funding of higher education over the past two decades (Percy *et al.*, 2008). While casual employment arrangements are financially advantageous for institutions and accommodate a proportion of employees who, for personal or professional reasons, prefer (or are only able) to work on a part-time or sessional basis, they raise a number of issues for academics, institutions and the sector as a whole. At the individual level, there are issues concerning working conditions, marginalization, and career development of sessional academics. At the institutional level, there are concerns about the effects of increased casualisation on the quality of teaching and learning, and the student experience. In terms of the sector, there are real concerns about replenishing the ageing academic workforce and the attractiveness of the academic profession to early career (often sessional) academics. In this paper, we discuss these issues and consider the challenges for future sustainability and development of the academic workforce. Before doing so however, we begin with a brief overview of the context and trends in casual academic employment in Australia.

Background: trends in casual academic employment

The increased reliance of Australian universities on sessional academic staff to undertake teaching signifies perhaps the most significant shift in the nature of academic work in recent decades. During the 1990s, the proportion of academic teaching staff on sessional appointments more than doubled, from 10% of the full-time equivalent (FTE) staff load to just over 21%. Yet shifts in the composition of FTE staff load paint only part of the picture. Estimating the number of casual staff in Australian universities, in terms of individual workers, is notoriously difficult, as universities report casual staffing levels to the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) in FTE only, and even the FTE figures are often based on estimates. Junor (2004) and more recently Coates and Goedegebuure (2010) have estimated that around 40% of university staff are casual employees. This compares to an average of around 25% in the overall workforce (Junor, 2004; ABS, 2009). However, new research using the superannuation records of university staff indicates that there are currently 67,000 academics employed on a casual basis, comprising 60% of the academic workforce (May, 2011, forthcoming).

Characteristics of sessional academics

By using the FTE data held by DEEWR, we can derive some basic conceptions about the characteristics of the sessional workforce in Australian universities. Sessional positions are typically

concentrated in the lower classifications: 71% of sessional work is undertaken by employees classified at Level A (e.g. senior tutors or associate lecturers) and 24% at Level B (typically, early career lecturers) (DEEWR selected statistics, 2009). Casual contracts are more common in some disciplines than others, with 30% of FTE staffing in the Creative Arts, Architecture and Education being sessional, compared with 13% in Agriculture and 19% in Society and Culture (DEEWR selected statistics, 2009).

A common assumption among both academics and university administrators is that sessional teaching staff are generally young postgraduate research students earning extra income to supplement a scholarship, or perhaps members of the professions undertaking some teaching as part of their professional obligations. However, recent research by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education indicates that less than half of sessional teaching staff are currently studying: around three quarters already hold a postgraduate qualification, and well over half are over 40 years of age (Bexley, James & Arkoudis, 2011, forthcoming).

While there are obvious organisational benefits offered by a highly casualised workforce, especially in terms of flexibility, there is ample evidence this kind of work is less attractive to many sessional academics than a more secure position would be. A 2004 study found that only 28% of sessional academics agree that sessional work was their first choice as a mode of employment (Junor, 2004); and the recent CSHE research indicates that only 10% undertake sessional work because this is a type of work that suits them. The most common reason for undertaking sessional work found by the CSHE study was that there was no other available academic work – a response given by one in five sessional staff.

Sessional academics: the hidden workforce

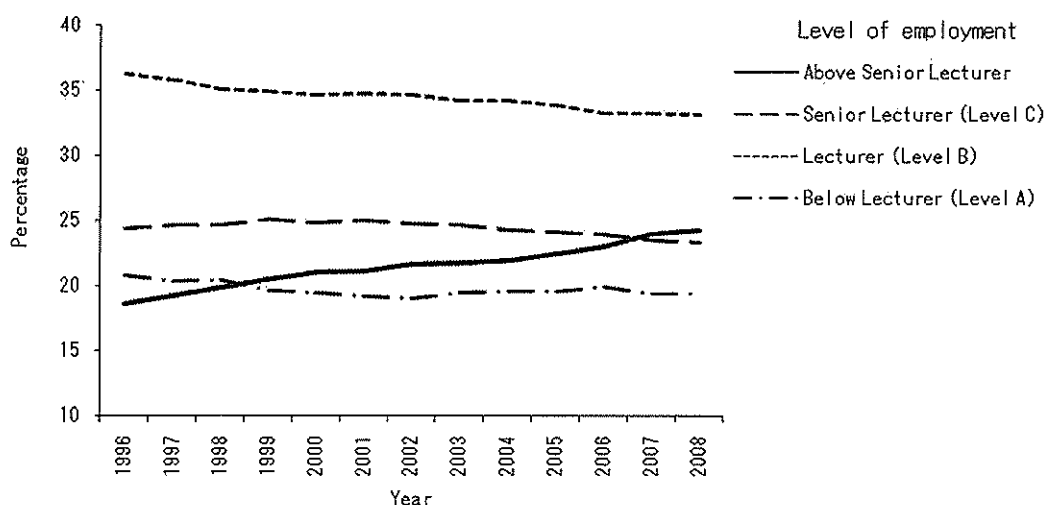
How have universities come to rely so heavily on sessional teaching staff? The answer here is to be found bundled up in the conundrum of the so-called ‘ageing academic workforce’ problem. The ageing of the Australian academic workforce has been well documented (Hugo, 2008; Skills Australia, 2010; Edwards, 2010; Edwards & Smith, 2008; Coates *et al.*, 2009; Hughes & Rubenstien, 2006), and a similar problem is evident in other nations, including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands (OECD, 2008; Huisman, de Weert & Bartelse, 2002). Each nation facing an ageing academic workforce has its unique reasons for finding itself in this position. In Australia, the notion of an ‘ageing academy’ can be traced to the reality of an ageing tenured academy.

The ageing of the academic workforce in Australia has resulted from the fast-paced expansion of the higher education that, as was then the norm, tended to be tenured. This trend continued, with some variation, through the 1980s but ceased with the tightening of funding for higher education in the mid-1990s, since when numbers of continuing and long-contract staff have increased only modestly. Thus, those Baby Boomers employed during the expansion years have largely remained in the

academy and are now reaching the age of retirement. Yet because new staffing levels remained stagnant throughout the 1990s and 2000s, there is a looming shortage of younger academics to take their place.

Where are these missing academics? The concentration of older age groups has also led to imbalances in the strata of professional classifications within the sector, helping us locate this missing generation. As older workers are more likely to hold higher level positions, the classification levels D and E (above Senior Lecturer or Level C) are the only classification groups to have increased their share within the workforce over the period from 1996, by having moved jointly from comprising the smallest percentage share to the second highest (Figure 1).

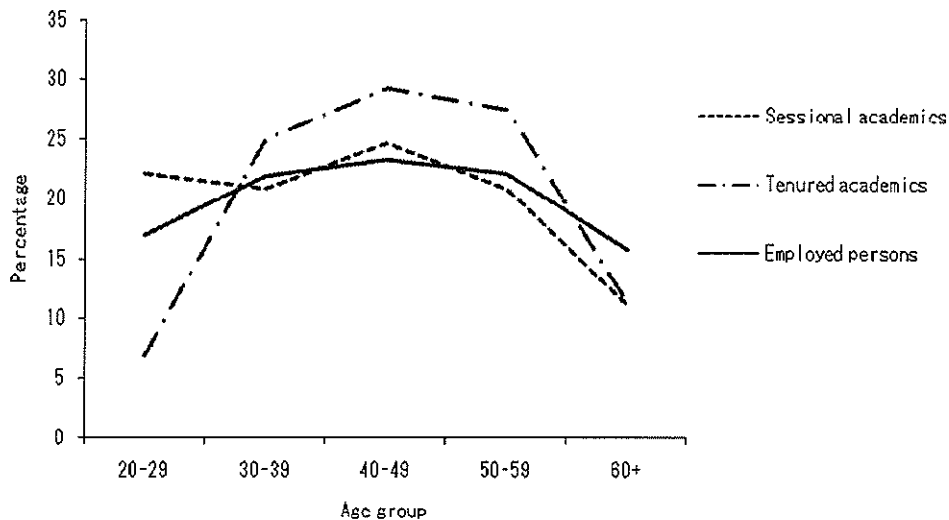
Figure 1. Trends in the proportions of tenured academic staff by classification, 1996-2008



Source: DEEWR selected statistics

When we recall that 71% of sessional work is undertaken by employees classified at Level A and 24% at Level B (DEEWR selected statistics, 2009), it is apparent that these missing academics are, in fact, present: they are simply not part of the tenured workforce reported in the statistics; they are employed as sessionals at lower classifications. Indeed, when we look at the distribution of age groups in the sessional population, compared to the tenured and long-term contract population, the spread of sessional age groups is markedly flatter. When we add the distribution of age groups for the entire Australian working population, we can see that the distribution for sessional staff more closely fits the larger workforce than does that for tenured staff (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Distribution of age groups of sessional academics, tenured/contracted academics, and the overall Australian workforce



Source: ABS; CSHE data; DEEWR selected statistics

The move toward employing university teaching staff on a sessional basis began in the mid-1990s with a tightening of the federal higher education budget. As institutions began to seek income from the more uncertain international student and postgraduate coursework fee-paying student markets, they simultaneously shifted new appointments toward fixed-term and casual contracts, essentially placing the risk associated with the precarious funding environment onto employees who could be more readily hired and let go according to shifts in demand. In 1998, the National Tertiary Education Union responded to concerns about these changes to academic working conditions by bargaining for a Higher Education Contract of Employment Award (HECE). The HECE was intended to ensure that fixed-term employment contracts could not be used in areas of continuing need, but this, rather than shifting fixed-term positions toward ongoing contracts, resulted in an intensification of sessional employment (Brown, Goodman & Yasukawa, 2008). The union response to this, in 2003, was to attempt to limit the proportion of salary expenditure at each institution which could be used to employ sessional staff, but this move was outflanked by the Federal government, who implemented the Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements (HEWRRs), which linked funding levels to the introduction of industrial agreements and left casual employment rates uncapped (*idem, ibid.*).

Key issues and challenges presented by the casualisation of academic work

These unplanned and *ad hoc* shifts in funding, industrial conditions, and student participation rates have occurred against a continuing academic culture that has largely maintained its view of itself as reflecting the 'traditional' norm of tenured work comprised of relatively even proportions of teaching,

research and service. Increased bureaucratic requirements associated with the rise of managerialism in universities, which has occurred largely in response to rationalist government funding metrics associated with performance measurement, has led the old guard of academics to complain of too much time being spent on reporting for metrics, pushing out publications, and competing for grants. It is commonplace to hear complaints of how things have deteriorated, and how the opportunities for younger academics simply are not there any more. Little real action has been taken, however, to protect the employment conditions of junior colleagues most of whom are sessional staff. The working conditions of sessional staff are a key issue for institutions as this has numerous implications not only for their commitment and motivation, but potentially for the quality of teaching and learning and at a broader, sectoral level, for replenishment of the ageing academic workforce. We discuss these challenges in the following section.

1. The impact of casual employment on sessional academics

What kind of impact does this work have on the personal and professional lives of sessional academics? In terms of workplace equity and fairness, one of the most cited inequalities facing sessional staff relates to pay and working conditions. Questions have been raised about whether the rates paid to sessional teachers (usually hourly teaching rates with other duties included), cover all the activities they engage in as university teachers (Junor, 2004). Examples of these kinds of unpaid activities include: student consultation outside teaching times, reading time, time spend printing and photocopying student materials. In addition, the institutional culture can contribute to sessional staff feeling marginalized, or being relegated to, as Gappa and Leslie (1993) put it, “second-class status” (cited in AUTC, 2003, p.7). Sessional staff are often not included in staff e-mail lists, or invited to faculty meetings or curriculum planning days.

In 2008, the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education also highlighted several issues concerning the casual employment of academic staff. The review noted studies showing that sessional staff experience income insecurity, workloads beyond their paid hours, and feelings of isolation from the university community. For example, a large Australian survey-based study of sessional academic staff found that while most sessional teaching staff were enthusiastic about their teaching, many suffer significant stress from the insecurity of their employment and the ‘intellectual marginality’ of their positions in relation to other academic staff. This was particularly centred on the nature of semester-based contracts, which do not offer a continuous source of income (Brown *et al.*, 2008). That study also found that there is a tension between casually employed academics’ actual work and what is stated on the contract of employment, with much of their work unpaid due to the demands of students for frequent meetings and constant email contact. These findings were all confirmed in a recent CSHE study. Many sessional staff in the CSHE study also worried in their written responses to the survey that they were unable to access funding to attend conferences, that their

research and publications went unrewarded, and that there was no possibility for career advancement as they were constantly kept to levels of employment that were below the threshold for automatic conversion to the more secure kinds of work included in universities' industrial agreements.

Studies in Australia, U.S. and U.K. have shown that over-reliance on casual teachers and inadequate support can hinder individuals' commitment and satisfaction as well as educational objectives (Australian Universities Teaching Committee, 2003; Percy *et al.*, 2008). Recent research (e.g. Knight *et al.*, 2007; Smith & Coombs, 2006) reveals that sessional staff, while satisfied with their teaching role, are likely to feel marginalised and poorly treated by their institutions. This results in a lack of commitment and motivation.

Casualisation has also been found to increase the workload of the continuing and tenured academic staff who manage casually employed academics. Coates *et al.* (2009) contend that casualisation has added to the burden on tenured staff, as they must manage the army of sessional staff on top of their other work. Casualisation means that those entering on casual contracts face a far less certain professional future than previous generations of academics, while those who obtain tenure are likely to experience increased administrative workloads. Coates *et al.* (2009) conclude that this tension indicates that "academic work is now being perceived as being less likely to lead to a real career than in the past" (p.53).

2. Impact on the quality of teaching and learning

A main concern raised about overuse of sessional staff relates to the impact on the quality of teaching and student learning. It is commonly argued that that casual staff are often employed 'in haste', and that this results in the employment of inexperienced or unsuitable teachers as well as allowing insufficient time to adequately train new staff (Jacobs, 1998, cited in AUTC, 2003, p.5). Furthermore, sessional staff do not usually have the opportunities to participate in formal professional development opportunities that are available to tenured staff. While student evaluations show that sessional teachers are as effective teachers as their tenured colleagues, in terms of assessment and marking, the lack of training and support given to casual staff is believed to result in inevitable inconsistencies and therefore to student complaints as well as to time having to be spent addressing these concerns (AUTC, 2003).

In addition to the lack of adequate training, several authors argue that the quality of teaching is compromised because of inconsistent management and supervision of casual staff as well as the lack of integration of sessional staff in the faculty or department (Brown *et al.*, 2008; Percy *et al.*, 2008). As Brown *et al.* (2008) note:

The university sector now informally manages one fifth of its full time-equivalent workforce – a situation that would be unacceptable in any industry that prides itself on quality. ... The key site for training, supervision and involvement in decision-making is the

relationship with subject coordinators, but this is not recognised nor actively supported by faculties (p.27).

It should be noted here that in the last decade, particularly since the 2003 AUTC report, Australian universities have invested considerable resources and energy into improving the working conditions for sessional staff that include better procedures for recruitment, training, and provision of ongoing support. For some universities, this has meant the development of specific institutional policies on recruitment, training and ongoing support of sessional teachers. The University of Melbourne's policy for example, outlines a seven-point framework for the training, support and recognition of sessional teachers covering aspects such as recruitment, induction, ongoing professional development, organisational and administrative support, and reward and recognition (Baik, 2008); part of this policy aims for better integration of sessional teachers in the work and culture of their department or faculty. As Knight *et al.* (2007) argue, teachers "need to feel part of the department or team, ... It is not just a matter of better induction and more considerate working practices, but also of learning from their expertise and considering implications for curriculum design" (p.432).

3. Impact on the maintenance and renewal of the academic workforce

The rise of limited-term contracts represents a shift from traditional modes of academic employment, and is a trend that has its greatest impact on early career staff in particular. The use of casual working arrangements, Kubler and DeLuca (2006) assert, "disproportionately affects younger academics at the start of their careers and might serve to discourage young researchers from entering or remaining in the academic profession" (p.67). Indeed, Edwards, Radloff and Coates (2009) pose the concept of the 'post-doctoral treadmill', a long series of short-term contracts that do not guarantee professional advancement or lead to substantive appointments. Dawson (2007) also recounts the growing norm of early career staff moving from one short-term contract to another without being able to secure a full academic position. Studies of the casualisation of the academic workforce in the US also find non-tenured academic staff feel 'expendable' as they undertake a series of short-term contracts (Anibas, Brenner & Zorn, 2009). These studies suggest that the casualisation of the academic workforce has reduced its attractiveness as a profession.

Even when sessional staff are pursuing an academic career, it is difficult for them to break out of the casual employment cycle and secure a more permanent academic position. Sessional teaching work has low status. The real 'action' is where the grants and publications are, for these are the activities rewarded in funding metrics. Yet it is difficult for sessional teaching staff to build a research profile if they are not eligible for funding for conference travel, for space to undertake research, or for internal grants which are aimed at long-term contract and tenured staff. Furthermore, Coates *et al.* (2009) note that their peripheral involvement in institutional learning communities "may inhibit their capacity to develop coordination and management skills" (p.30) – skills that are important

and considered to be necessary for academic positions. Thus sessional academics enter a vicious cycle, where the only way into more secure employment is to perform in ways which are not possible without already having attained a secure position. This leads to a protracted existence on the periphery of academia.

This raises an issue for the future sustainability and development of the academic workforce. Coates *et al.* (2009) argue that there is need for policy development, planning and research on the academic workforce, including an increased understanding of the casual workforce. The central question is "Will the large casual workforce provide replacement for aging and retiring academics?"

Where to from here?

The need to find a way to address the casualisation of the academic workforce is both present and pressing. The Review of the National Innovation System (Cutler, 2008), the Review of Higher Education (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008), and the Inquiry into Research Training and Research Workforce issues in Australian Universities undertaken by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Innovation (2008) all point toward increases in participation in higher education, particularly by students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. The Group of Eight (2010), elite Australian universities, has calculated that, assuming there are no changes in staff/student ratios over the next 20 years, an additional 26,600 full-time teaching staff will be required to meet the growth of the sector, even ignoring replacement of those who retire; if, as the Group of Eight estimates, a further 16,400 staff will be needed to replace those who will retire over the next 20 years, a total of over 40,000 extra staff will be required by 2030. Clearly, the academic workforce will need to grow in order to accommodate projected expansion of student load and impending staff retirements.

Growth in casual staffing has been largely unplanned as an *ad hoc* response to government/sectoral policy and funding. To meet the future needs of the sector and society, a sober and planned response will be needed. Such planning should include provision for more sustainable career paths for young academics, and a shift in staff load away from sessional work and toward more long-term positions. However it is facile and simplistic to respond to the current situation by simply calling for more continuing positions. Long-term policy settings have eroded institutions' ability to be able to respond quickly to the present crisis. The rise of performance-based funding metrics has seen institutions replicate Federal funding models at the institutional level, rewarding areas that perform strongly with increased funding. One effect of this behaviour has been to shift the locus of the financial risks associated with market shifts in student demand and access to research funding to the work unit, or department level. Departments cannot easily shift their staff load toward continuing positions unless institutions take some of the financial risks centrally. Yet institutions are reluctant to do this precisely because it has become rational market behaviour to mimic the Federal performance

metrics.

Below we propose three areas needing careful consideration for the future management of the Australian academic workforce.

1. Gaining a better understanding of the extent of casualisation, and the characteristics of sessional staff

As we have discussed above, the size of the sessional workforce in Australian universities is not presently understood. While some work has been undertaken toward gaining a clearer picture of the characteristics of the sessional workforce (e.g., Bexley *et al.*, 2011, forthcoming) more needs to be done. Accurate figures are not available because of the variations across universities in the way sessional employment is categorized and recorded. There are also limited data on the composition of the sessional workforce, such as the proportion of those on successive short-term contracts, or those who are professional ‘industry experts,’ or who are research students. A related question that has not yet been addressed by existing research is the level of optimal or sustainable ratios of casual to permanent staff. Clearly this will depend on the type of courses as well as institution.

While a more thorough collection of staffing data on casual employees would require increased administrative work by institutions, the effort required would be more than recovered by the savings offered by a more sustainable approach to academic employment on the back of better data.

2. Establishing a more stable policy environment

Part of the problem of undertaking coherent workforce planning in Australian universities, as in those of other nations, is the extent to which the management of higher education adopts the ideology of the government of the day. There is no simple solution here, as changes in government will always result in changes of policy and approach. However, some degree of funding continuity is necessary if the Australian higher education sector is to evolve in a more rational way than has been the case in recent decades.

The recent Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education (2008) has set some clear goals for the future of higher education in Australia. These aims need to be supplemented by a long-term approach to financial planning for the sector. From 2012, funding for teaching in Australian universities will be ‘uncapped’ and government will fund institutions according to their student load. This has the potential to create greater uncertainty within institutions as student demand is likely to shift in potentially irrational ways. It will be vital that institutions are able to manage their financial commitments in ways that will allow work units, departments and faculties to weather small storms in changing demand. Only if great care is taken in providing robust and stable financial planning will continued growth in sessional modes of employment be avoided.

3. Developing a new theorization of academic work

As we indicated, casual academic work is presently defined by what it is not: sessional academics are cast as the 'other' to the traditional, tenured staff. However, the image of an academic work life, comprising scholarly research, research informed teaching, and contribution to the institution through participation in management, has long been outmoded. Our conceptions of the structure of academic work need to shift to meet new realities. Recent CSHE research has confirmed the inadequacy of the traditional notion of academic work as a descriptor for the many distinct work patterns which in reality constitute the academic workforce (Bexley *et al.*, 2011, forthcoming). The disjuncture between the old typology of academic work (tenure, single disciplinary and institutional allegiance, focus on research) and the reality of professional heterogeneity between and within institutions, disciplines and worksites undermines our ability to plan, recruit, promote and organize the profession at institutional and national policy levels.

Diversification of institutional missions, an aging academic workforce, and increased participation by students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds have led to a fracturing of the traditional work roles of the academic. Increased casualisation is only the most obvious example of how a relatively homogenous profession has become more diverse. Other shifts at the institutional level include a growing divergence in appointment levels, with increases in both older, senior staff and young, junior staff and fewer appointments at the middle levels (Hugo, 2008); and a greater tendency for institutional management to be seen as a profession in itself rather than as a part of academic work. Increased participation within the professional disciplines, policy drivers rewarding applied over pure research, and a focus on university education as a practical preparation for the workforce have also imposed diversity at the disciplinary level, such that 'disciplinary mission' might be seen as equally indicative of the heterogeneity of workforce norms between the disciplines as 'institutional mission' is at the sectoral level.

A new theorization of academic work is needed; one which recognizes the diversity of academic work roles and legitimizes teaching-focused and research-focused roles in a way that the present understanding of tenured teaching-and-research roles as 'real academic work', leaving sessional teaching roles and contracted research roles outside the status game, does not. Only when the diversity of academic work roles is recognized and legitimized will the 'cultural' settings within the academy be right for creating sustainable and meaningful academic career paths for 'non-traditional' staff.

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Employability, Equity and Elite Formation

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Abstract. This article discusses research findings from a project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (Morley *et al*, 2006) that set out to investigate employers' needs for information on quality and standards in higher education. The investigation focused on what type of information is currently sought and utilised in the recruitment and selection of graduates (Alpin & Shackleton, 1997). A major finding was the emphasis that employers place on employability skills in graduate recruitment.

Employability has equity implications. Educational experiences and processes can contribute to the development of employability skills and socio-economic privilege can be transferred to the production and codification of qualifications and competencies. One consequence of the emphasis on employability is pressure on higher education to produce an increasing range of desired personal capacities. A further pressure is on graduates to demonstrate a range of norm-related 'soft skills' and dispositions.

Keywords: employability, equality, UK higher education, graduate recruitment

A mass market of knowledge workers

New modes of distinction are becoming increasingly important in a mass market of potential knowledge workers. Student enrolment worldwide increased from 13 million in 1960 to 82 million in 1995 and to 137.8 million in 2005 (UNESCO, 1998; UNESCO, 2006). In 2001, over 300,000 graduates competed for fewer than 15,000 elite jobs in the UK (Brown, Hesketh & Williams, 2003). As more graduates enter the labour market, particularly now at a time of economic recession, the value of academic credentials as screening devices is reduced. New ranking mechanisms have been introduced in the process of differentiating between equally well-qualified individuals and identifying the productive capacity of individuals. There is an increasing view that qualifications, despite signifying a general level of ability, do not necessarily equip individuals with skills necessary for

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particular occupations (Smetherham, 2006). The acquisition of a subject-specific degree is essential for certain types of job where subject knowledge is necessary. However, Raybould and Sheedy (2005) found that the 64 % of vacancies that are on offer to graduates of any discipline suggest that it is the type of transferable aptitudes and skills gained as a result of the higher education process, rather than subject specific skills, that matter for many jobs. The increasing emphasis on a range of employability skills in addition to the degree poses questions about how these skills are conceptualised and assessed. Do employers have a particular analytic disposition that is formed by cultural norms? Are employers' modes and conventions of thinking socially prescribed? Are there socially recognised forms of excellence? In a mass market of graduates, with new student constituencies, is there potential for misrecognition of what counts as evidence of employability skills?

Academic and economic forces exert powerful structuring effects on higher education (Naidoo, 2004). Knowledge acquisition, processing and transfer are given central importance in today's knowledge economy in the belief that the structure and reproduction of personal capacities require permanent updating of the human commodity workforce. A justification for the introduction of employability skills has been the notion of a skills gap between what employers need and what universities are producing (Morley, 2001). Higher education has sometimes been seen as too producer-focused and is now required to reveal its purchasability and its usability. The supply of knowledge workers is increasingly viewed as a core higher education activity. There is considerable pressure on higher education to produce the desired personal capabilities for the labour market.

As economic performance is increasingly associated with a skilled workforce (Sector Skills Development Agency, 2003), employability has received policy attention in UK higher education (Universities UK/CSU, 2002; Yorke, 2009). A relationship between personal performance and national economic performance is being more strongly elided. This elicits concerns about the increasing commodification of knowledge and colonisation of education policy by economic policy imperatives (Ball, 1998). However, employability has been embedded in policies and processes and the employability of graduates emerging from higher education is an external performance indicator in quality audits in the UK (Bratti, 2001; Little, 2001). The requirement for universities to demonstrate the quality of their outcomes and processes has prompted a focus on graduate attribute outcomes and their employability.

The concept of employability has been subjected to considerable critical scrutiny. Questions have been posed about whether it is a normalising power, with homogeneity as a form of control and regulation (Morley, 2001). A further concern has been whether employability relates to individuals or to socio-economic and labour market contexts (Atkins, 1999; Brown *et al.*, 2003; Hillage & Pollard, 1998). It is frequently conceptualized in terms of social capital *i.e.* networks, knowledge and shared norms (Putnam, 2000). The activation of social capital can mean that more socially privileged groups are supposed to understand the links between school achievement, access to higher education and employment opportunities. They can use social capital to decode critical pathways through

education and create their own social capital through acquiring valuable skills and competencies. The valuation of certain skills, competencies and dispositions plays a central part in occupational allocation and opportunity.

Employability is both relative and absolute (Brown *et al.*, 2003). For some, hegemonic norms are treated simply as facts. For example, Hillage and Pollard (1998, p.1) suggest that “employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required”. However, Brown *et al.* (2003) argue that employability is primarily determined by the labour market rather than the capabilities of individuals. They believe that it is a form of victim blaming of those people who are unable to secure employment. It is another example of personalising, individualising or socially decontextualising broader political issues (Clegg & David, 2006). Employability varies according to economic conditions. An individual’s employability will be influenced by how employers view and value credentials, knowledge, skills, attitudes and attributes (Fevre, 1992, 2003), as well as the skill demands of the labour market.

Employers’ priorities

The HEFCE research project (Morley *et al.*, 2006) set out to investigate employers’ needs for information on quality and standards in higher education. The investigation focused on what type of information is currently sought and utilised in the recruitment and selection of graduates (Alpin & Shackleton, 1997). Employers from large, small and medium sized public, private and voluntary sectors throughout England were asked by means of 41 interviews, 3 focus groups and 100 responses to a web-based survey about what information they used in their graduate recruitment practices, and their priorities in graduate recruitment.

Both the interviews and the survey asked employers to rank the importance for recruitment of a wide range of factors. Figure 1 below shows the aggregate scores that resulted when interview informants were asked to rate 12 factors on a 1-5 scale. Thus the highest score of 173 indicates an average of 4.2, and the lowest score of 56 represents an average of 1.37, indicating that almost two thirds of the sample must have given the minimum possible rating.

The web survey examined the skills and competencies in detail, and separated prioritisation during short listing from prioritisation during the final selection of candidates. Most importantly, it sought to get evidence of priorities by using forced choice questions rather than ranking questions. Thus respondents were asked to rank factors in order of importance.

Figure 1. Relative importance of factors in recruitment

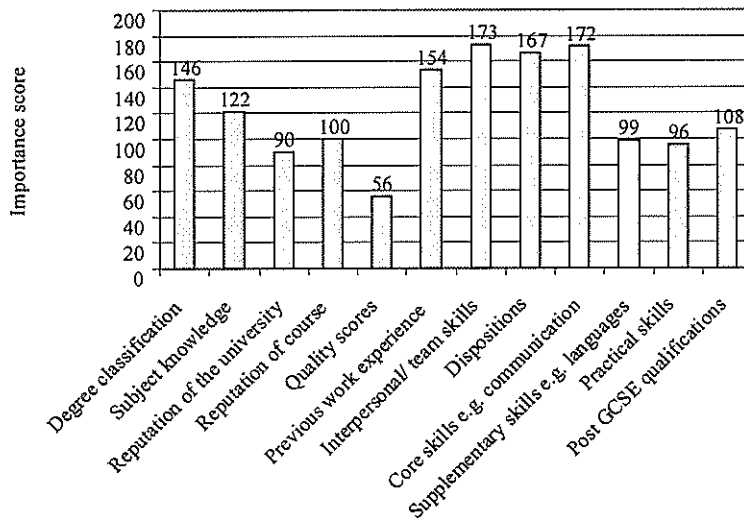
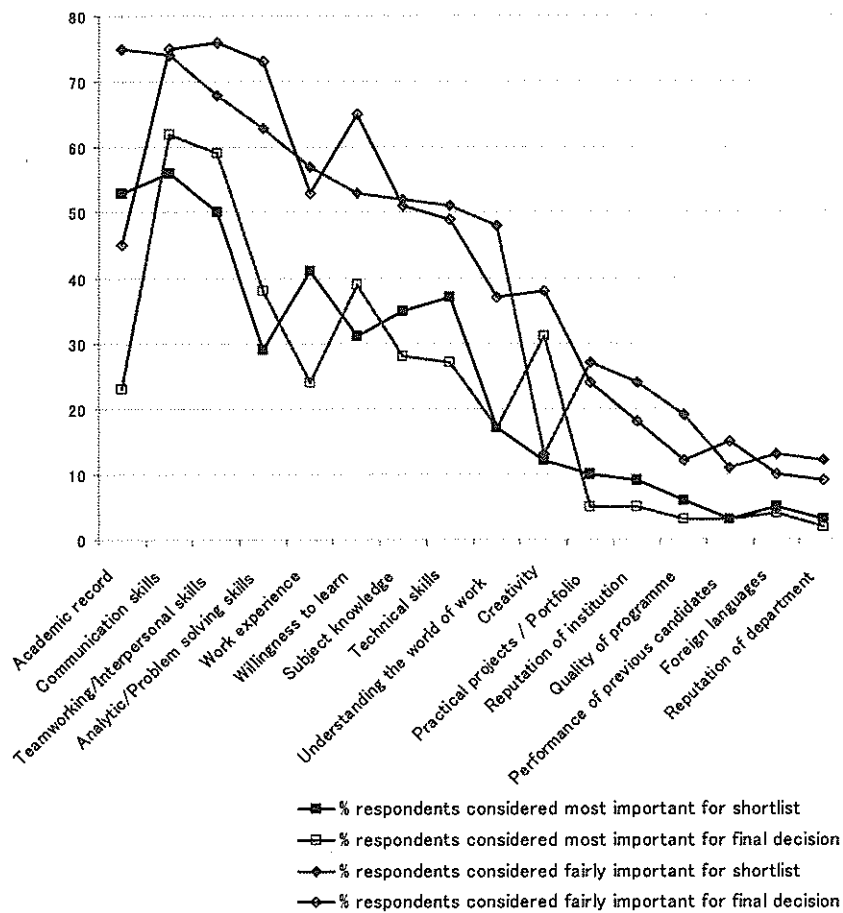


Figure 2. Importance of information used in short listing and final selection



When the interview and survey data are taken together, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- the two most important factors in both graphs are team working/interpersonal skills and communication skills;
- the academic record comes almost as high in short listing in Figure 2 but lower in the final selection;
- subject knowledge and technical skills (or practical skills) come in the middle of the range in both the interview ratings and the web survey.

Some employers in the HEFCE study (Morley *et al.*, 2006) seemed to look for particular attributes, *e.g.* subject knowledge, technical skills and understanding the world of work. Others also appeared to be interested in interactive attributes, *e.g.* communication skills, interactive skills and team-working. These were often underpinned by valuing skills that relate to personal attributes linked to change, intellect and problem-solving, *e.g.* analytical, critical and reflective ability, willingness to learn and continue learning, flexibility, adaptability and risk taking (Universities UK/CSU, 2002). Whatever the configuration, the overall message is that new complex and elusive modes of distinction are constantly evolving in graduate recruitment. The following sections will attempt to offer some explanatory power.

Equalities and employability

The non-transparency and subjectivity of what constitutes employability provide ideal preconditions for the reproduction of elitism and inequalities. It is important to question whether assessments of employability skills are based on normative framings, mutual recognition of social and cultural capital and homogenised signifiers of worth. Graduates need to find new forms of identification and ways of gaining distinction in a world where educational qualifications are no longer sufficient in themselves to guarantee success. New graduates are in complex power relations with each other. They have to self-constitute in difference. In the process of elite recruitment, those with similar forms of capital need to construct particular identities in order to win a positional advantage. The graduate identity is being fragmented or fractured to uncover creative competencies and potential and to identify knowledge assets. People, as well as academic programmes, are being modularised. This is evocative of Giddens' ideas on reflexive modernisation in so far as there is an increasing tendency to self-monitoring, so that 'we are, not what we are, but what we make of ourselves' (Giddens, 1991, p.75). The employable (neo-liberal) 'self' has to be deconstructed and reconstructed into a value-added *curriculum vitae* by graduates entering the labour market. It has to negotiate a series of complex investments and contradictions, *e.g.* between stability and flexibility, competition and collaboration, and public good and private aspirations. From their judicial position and situated judgements, employers decode these personal qualities, as indicators of productive potential (Heath,

2007). A key question is whether social background, gender and educational biography influence the way in which graduates understand and manage their employability (Brown *et al.*, 2003). A further question is whether value is subjective, and if the social location and social and cultural capital of employers influence judgements of worth.

Brown *et al.*'s work on positional conflict theory and the concept of 'the personality package' as a means of differentiating between equally well-qualified groups offers some explanatory power (Brown, 1995; Brown *et al.*, 2003). It is argued that employer demand for high-level skills alongside 'soft skills' – including communication skills, organisational skills, and team working skills – disguise the ranking of individuals in a climate of increased competition. New measures, such as personal attributes and dispositions, are highlighted in an attempt to legitimise the reproduction of inequalities, rather than improve productivity (Brown *et al.*, 2003, p.115).

There is the potential for contradictory policy activity in the higher education sector, as widening participation and employability sometimes collide in application. A hierarchisation of forms of socially constructed competencies could reinforce social distinction. Hogarth *et al.* (1999) suggest that graduate earnings are positively correlated with social background, six months, eighteen months and over three years after graduation: the higher the background, the higher the earnings, on average. Purcell, Morley *et al.* (2002) also found that social background appears to be strongly correlated with employment outcomes, even among graduates. They also argued that causal relationships between socio-economic background and employment are complex as social class tends also to be correlated with the type of university attended and course completed, rather than solely with recruitment practices. Brown *et al.* (2003, p.116) are more convinced about direct connections between employability and inequality.

The problem of employability is presented as a supply-side problem that gives scant regard to the social congestion that characterises the market for professional and managerial jobs in most of the developed economies. It also erroneously assumes that the competition for education and jobs is based on a meritocratic contest that negates class, gender and racial inequalities.

It appears that the graduate premium, or exchange rate of qualifications in the labour market, differs according to the social identity of the graduate. A meritocratic hierarchy is disguising and reproducing social differentiation. It is open to question whether the way in which graduate variables are evaluated, particularly in relation to employability skills, has the potential for deepening inequalities and privilege.

Verbal hygiene in the knowledge economy

The importance of interpersonal/communication skills in selection criteria for new graduates was repeatedly ranked most highly by interview and survey informants in the HEFCE study (Morley *et al.*

2006). The shift in the UK economy away from manufacturing and towards services has produced an increasing emphasis on 'people skills' and dispositions such as the ability to work well as part of a team, and to make a favourable impression on actual or potential customers (Keep & Mayhew, 1999). Emotional intelligence is now a competency (Goleman, 1996), signifying the social, as well as the intellectual, demands of the workplace. Complex links between knowledge, social and emotional capital are often reduced to a hard/soft binary analysis in skills taxonomies.

Social relations in the workplace operate within a logic of hegemony. A more collaborative, team-oriented approach to knowledge production is replacing the image of the lone scholar, expert or entrepreneur. There is now a belief that creativity and innovation are fuelled by social and collaborative relationships (Williams & Dobson, 1997). Network theory has been significantly developed in recent years (Castells, 1996; Latour, 2005). Cooke (2002) suggested that the sources of innovation lie in networks of social relationships, that is, knowledge networks. The network has become a persuasive metaphor, evoking a type of utopian, *gestalt* economy. The image is of a chain of workers who 'get on' in the co-operative sense and also in the profit sense as everyone is deemed to benefit from the exchange of ideas and expertise. There are inbuilt tensions between the economy's need for individuals who are both competitive and collaborative. A negative construction of the network is that it is a ruthless instrumentalisation of others for one's own gain. There is clearly a morality of instrumentalising social relationships and emotional labour for corporate goals (Blackmore, 1996). In this analysis, interpersonal skills need to be developed to disguise or smooth the process of utilising or controlling others. Domination is promoted through communication and communication is performative and commodified.

Networks can be contradictorily feudalistic, generative and mutually beneficial. They can also be non-accountable and non-transparent. There was evidence in our study of networks being used to recruit some graduates without adhering to formalised recruitment procedures. A representative for the science skills sector reported,

We had our favoured universities, we had our universities that we used to work with. ... And we used to offer undergraduates either an industrial year or secondments into the business as part of their degree course, and that was a good way of linking up with undergraduates. And if they met the requirements during the secondment then we always guaranteed them an interview once they'd graduated... We were able to meet some of these students before they'd graduated to see if they liked us and we liked them.

The social fit, described above, often needs to be assessed by means of communication skills.

Brennan, Mills, Shah & Woodley (2001) found that communication skills were rated highly in their employment study. Cameron (2000) noted how a survey reported by *People Management* in 1997 found that oral communication was cited by 91% of respondents as the most important 'soft' skill for graduates. She theorised that universalising of the styles of communication was valued by employers as verbal hygiene. The norms and language values embedded in these skills could pose

equity challenges.

The requirement for high-grade 'soft' skills was ubiquitous in our study. A director of a graduate organisation suggested that this is a priority across all employment sectors.

I don't care what the job is, I don't care if it's an IT specialist role, employers are looking for candidates who have good generic soft skills.

Disciplinary power needs to be enhanced by a type of charismatic authority. The customer care revolution in the UK means that technical services are increasingly being delivered in a social context, as a head of recruitment for a large international engineering consultancy pointed out.

We're a consultancy firm, so our people interface with our clients and have to work collaboratively across the group ... So you can have all the technical skills in the world, but if you can't engage with somebody and you can't communicate with somebody, that does not hold such great weight; so we're a very people-orientated business, and that's quite critical to us for that reason.

Interpersonal skills have a clear economic value. Symbolic power gets collapsed into everyday communications. Sales and service industries paid particular attention to communication skills as a recruitment consultant in the media sales industry explained.

They must be able to communicate effectively. They must be able to communicate with other people, or how are they meant to sell anything?

A member of our Sussex focus group described how communication skills coded as 'personality', were sometimes tested informally through telephone interviews.

Personality is absolutely vital, how we judge it is – that's what our telephone interview is for, right at the start where we actually sift out kind of all that – like one person who we phoned up and he was like, 'all right mate, is that about that job then is it?' and he got sifted out.

As this example illustrates, employability skills can be linked to performativity. The performative self walks a 'knife-edged ridge' (Lovell, 2003, p.1). One mistake and employment opportunities are lost. The classifications of interpersonal skills can give us socio-culturally informed versions of normality and pathology. The open-ended character of speech and language and the interpretive construction of appropriate / inappropriate styles of communication could be an issue of class-based norms involved in the evaluation of effectiveness.

The discourse of dispositions

Employers reported hegemonic beliefs about how they wanted graduates to perform and behave and what attributes and characteristics graduates needed to display in order to be perceived as committed

and competent. Dispositional attributes seemed to be rated almost as highly as academic achievements by some employers. Motivation was often presented as dispositional, when it was often intertwined with factors that would normally be regarded as competencies. For some employers, dispositions were conceptualised as individual attributes unaffected by context, relationships and organisational culture. Furthermore, they were knowable and recognisable, often by speech.

The assessment of dispositions was often contradictory. On the one hand, employers seemed to want co-operation, collaboration and teamwork and on the other hand, they sometimes valued a competitive and individually charismatic approach. A district sales manager for a large international pharmaceutical organisation outlined the combination of factors that influence selection decisions,

What we're really looking for is people who are, can show sort of self-motivation, drive, success, previous success if you like, either throughout their school or university career, in achieving a project, getting involved in a team, competition.

Motivation was frequently mentioned directly or colloquially expressed as a 'can-do' attitude, or a personally empowered person who could navigate complex processes and organisations, as a representative from the engineering industries described.

I think the most important – and I can say this with some authority – for most employers, one of the main considerations is the attitude of the graduate. They want people with a positive, can-do attitude, and that is very, very important. I think they would be prepared to take someone with a lower grade degree but with a very positive can-do attitude rather than someone with a first-class honours degree but with a negative attitude.

A 'can-do' attitude is built on an oppositional dualism, with lethargy, resistance and disruption as the hidden signifiers or alternatives.

For some employers, motivation was written on the body. Speech acts were seen as bodily and linguistic, as a recruitment consultant in the media sales industry suggested.

Just on their motivation, on their enthusiasm, on how they answer questions, on their body language, those sorts of things. I think that somebody who's really hungry to learn is a lot more enthusiastic and a lot more expressive in the way that they approach interviews than somebody who's not.

Like verbal hygiene, there are cultural and gender norms associated with assessing the embodiment of the subject and using body language as a signifier of disposition. This assumes a cultural overlap in interpreting what is expressed verbally and what the body says.

Throughout the study, there was evidence that many employers had deeply held views on what constituted an 'ideal graduate'. The emphasis on dispositions was apparent in traditional and new graduate occupations (Elias & Purcell, 2004). Equity issues can sometimes be turned into quasi-dispositions. An important aspect of the discourse on dispositions is not to use terms that could be

associated with one particular group, *e.g.* young people, able-bodied people *etc.*, as this could be a form of indirect discrimination, as a recruitment manager for a large professional services company explained,

I know (a company) have had a few court cases brought against them because they advertised for 'youthful', or 'young', or 'energetic', and we're going to be more careful for those kind of words.

Flexibility can also be an equity issue. Sometimes, it gets juxtaposed with mobility. A manager for an IT services company suggested that certain dispositions are equated with identity (*e.g.* nationality) or lifestyle choices (*e.g.* marital status),

The key ones are flexibility in terms of their future career because they'll be travelling around and working on customer sites so if they're unable to do that for whatever reason, either visa-wise, or even a personal situation ... if they're married ... we rule them out.

Apart from the fact that these discriminatory practices are potentially illegal, it also suggests that nationality is still a factor in a globalised economy. The power relations embedded in who has easy access to visas and the multiple axes of mobility go unmarked. There is also a further contradiction to be reconciled between stability and mobility.

Learning to labour

The economy of experience (Heath, 2007) is an area of human capital that appears to be of as much importance to graduate recruiters as 'the denomination of academic currency' (Brown *et al.*, 2003, p.120). A representative of the energy industries highlighted the importance of work experience, gained in any form.

Degree classification and reputation are important. But I think also work experience, and I use that term very broadly to encompass whether it's industry or placement, whether they've had ... done specific projects within degrees, which are linked to employment, vacation employment. You know, whether they've had a year out and, you know, followed employment through that year out. So, definitely work experience.

A focus group member suggested that work experience could compensate for a low degree classification in her car hire organisation,

Yes we say a minimum of a 2:2, if somebody's got a third (class degree) and they've got extensive work experience they'll go through.

While employers valued work experience highly, it is pertinent to examine how that experience is gained. Research has found that term-time work, as a consequence of financial hardship, adversely affects the academic studies of many students (Metcalf, 2003; Callender & Little, 2005; Hunt, Lincoln,

& Walker, 2004). The concept of work experience can also apply differently to full- and part-time students. Little (2001) cautioned that any employability performance indicator that relates to the transitions between education and work should be treated with care, as it does not always account for those graduates who are already in the labour market whilst they are studying. Employers' understanding of work experience sometimes presumed a normative framing of the ideal graduate who works selectively and strategically for experiential rather than financial reasons.

Degree classifications¹: measurement or judgement?

The interviews revealed a variety in perceptions of the importance of degree classifications. Of our survey sample, 37% cited the degree classification as the most important source of information about graduates' achievement. In the interview sample, the importance of the degree classification varied according to the type of industry. In some cases, a 2:1 classification was a pre-requisite and those who had not achieved this level were screened out through initial web-based or search agency procedures. Others, such as a representative from the steel industries, believed that the degree classification was only partially significant.

When you see it on paper, it's exactly the same as GCSEs or A levels², ... It is important, it's the first thing you see and look at, and it gives you an impression. ... You might take a 2:2 as a sort of a criteria, obviously within that a first or a 2:1 is going to be more impressive, but you would certainly take the 2:2 if there's some other evidence there of what did they study, what did they get involved in.

Privileging the summative grading can overlook diverse students' starting points. It also invests current classifications procedures with considerable authority. For many employers, the degree classification was simply a matter of measurement, rather than judgement (Knight & Yorke, 2003).

Degree classification also operated as a signifier for a range of attributions. Employers read personality traits and employability factors from numerical scores. For a member of our East Midlands focus group, a good degree classification was indicative of sound disciplinary knowledge.

The core thing is their academic background so we don't look so widely, they've got to have a degree, a good degree from the right place and a very good academic background, so when you're looking at graduates if they haven't got a 2:1 we don't look at them because it just means that...the core subject skills are not there ... and you do need them in order to be successful in business.

For a human resources manager in the leisure industry, the degree classification was a condensed signifier for a range of norm-related dispositions.

¹ Degrees in the UK are classified: first class, second class (upper 2:1, lower 2.2), third class.

² Graded national school examinations

Our view on a First is that the person is likely to be a little too academic for the very practical environment of betting. If I dropped a 2:2 I am probably looking at somebody who our interpretation is 'didn't work very hard' and therefore we need self-motivated people so we stick with 2:1s. If you came with a First we'll include you, we wouldn't turn you down, but we don't target a First. We would specifically target 2:1s ... I currently can go '3 means either was very sick so couldn't turn up, or chose not to turn up', to me 2:2 is probably 'ought to have got much more but spent the time in the pub'. I'm very cynical. 2:1 is 'it's a reasonably independent, self motivated individual' and 1 is somebody who is 'likely to be excellent academically, conceptually but might suffer on the flexibility front'.

It was sometimes assumed that education, already completed to a high standard, indicates the 'trainability' of individuals (Alpin, Shackleton, & Walsh, 1998). This narrative assumes a linearity of careers. Several employers commented that the degree classification was an important indicator of the links between past achievements and a predictor for future development. A recruitment consultant in the media sales industry believed that a degree was an indicator of the ability to learn,

So I think that for me the degree shows that they have the ability to pick up new information and apply it when necessary.

This view implies an automatic and de-contextualised transfer of knowledge and skills which appears to overlook the significance of the learning environment offered by the employment.

Subject knowledge

Of the respondents to our survey, 67% rated programme content as the most important source of information about programmes of study. The emphasis on core skills and the move towards 'knowing how', rather than the 'knowing that' of disciplinary knowledge was not evident in all the employers' priorities. Some of our interview informants reported how the content of the degree was scrutinised to ensure a match of skills and knowledge between it and the job specification. This was often the case in the science-based (STEM) industries where lack of technical knowledge carries a considerable risk, as an officer in a science skills sector council suggested.

I think they need a very clear picture of the core content and degrees to allow them to compare between different offerings, as an example is the person doing Chemistry with Music, getting the same amount of Chemistry as the person doing Chemistry with a Foreign Language. ... There is a potential for employers dismissing students with certain degrees who would be extremely suitable for their organisations... It is sometimes prejudice against a secondary subject.

Responses suggested that traditional graduate professions valued subject knowledge, whereas newer graduate professions perceived degrees from any discipline as indicators of quality (Morley & Aynsley, 2007). A recruitment officer for a large public broadcast service believed that it was the possession of a degree *per se*, rather than the disciplinary content that was important,

There are some areas where I think probably a degree ... would help somebody, but I can't say whether that degree has to be in a certain subject.

However, a manager for an IT services company believed that too many academic qualifications made graduates unfit for the world of work. His organisation placed more trust in assessment centres than in undergraduate university education. This suggests that different forms of knowledge can be objectively assessed as performance.

Everybody is assessed on their own abilities, so it really is on their performance on a three-day assessment, so whether they've had a First in Computer Science or they've been self taught, we'll judge them on their performance then, not on what we see on their CV really.

Recruiters appear to be making much greater use of competency testing in the recruitment process in the last 10 years (Barber *et al.*, 2005; Raybould & Sheedy, 2005). Test use has grown substantially since the 1980s, and is now widespread, especially among larger organisations. However, while tests have the potential to offer a meritocratic form of recruitment, Brezis and Crouzet (2004) found that even meritocratic recruitment could lead to class stratification, as evaluation of merit itself can be class bound.

Conclusion

The evidence from the study suggests that there is an idealised graduate identity and that this is constructed within the skill demands of the current knowledge economy and the changing occupational structure of the UK economy. It appears that employers increasingly want a complex combination of factors, which include academic achievement, and a range of skills and dispositions. A key issue is what counts as evidence for this wide range of desirable attributes, and whether judgements of value are framed in normative terms.

Whereas diversification and expansion have been policy goals of the higher education sector, many employers in this study held hegemonic and situated views about what constitutes an ideal graduate and constructed career trajectories in a linear, traditional way. Many believed that past academic achievement could predict future employment performance. This could have implications for graduates who had followed 'non-traditional' routes through higher education.

Employers' representations of employability skills were often underpinned by classed, gendered and racialised ideological subtexts. While some employers are making strenuous efforts to apply equal opportunities to their recruitment processes (Purcell, Morley *et al.*, 2002), many employers in this study continued to work within traditional paradigms. Socio-economic privilege appears to be transferred to the production and codification of skills and competencies. There are also symbolic profits involved in displaying the 'right' dispositions. Social gifts are treated as natural gifts (Bourdieu, 1971; Heath, 2007), and middle-class educational advantage is thus enhanced and

maintained. Relationships between higher education, society and the labour market incorporate both symbolic structures and social relations. Graduate recruitment can be a relay of power in so far as it reproduces social privilege and domination. Employability, while it is a key policy term, is not a neutral concept. It is another way of creating social differentiation in a mass market of graduates.

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Higher Education Reform in Argentina in the 1990s: paradoxes of government intervention in a minimalist state model

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Abstract. The purpose of this article is to analyze higher education reform in Argentina during the '90s, within the state's neo-liberal reform. Reform of the higher education system possesses particularities if we compare it to the common neo-liberal patterns of privatization and deregulation applied in other government areas. Therefore, the characteristics that shaped university reform in the 1990s are analyzed here through two main axes: the role assigned to the executive in the new agenda for the university sector, and the extent of consensus or dissent with which reforms were applied. These axes are applied in the recognition of four main moments in the reform. The hypothesis that guides the analysis holds that the new agenda for the university sector, with its modernizing and technocratic characteristics, required placing the government in a prominent role; and that its application was top down, with a low level of consensus among the main actors involved.

Keywords: higher education reforms, evaluative state, Argentinean universities, higher education policies, consensus in higher education policies

Introduction

The thorough reform of the state that took place during the 1990s in Argentina had as its pillars the privatization of state enterprises, the deregulation of employment and decentralization from the federal government to the provinces of the state health and education services. This reform had its effects, with its specificities, in the policies directed to universities (Chiroleu & Iazzeta, 2005). Each one of the measures applied regarding universities made up a pattern that pointed to a common aim of the policies: the break with the "benevolent State" (Brunner, 1993), a model of relations between universities and government that had predominated during the greater part of the history of the system and one that was characterized by support from the state for the functioning of public universities, a system whose central attribute was a high degree institutional autonomy.

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The characteristics that shaped university reform in the 1990s are analysed here through two main axes: the role assigned to the executive in the new agenda for the university sector and the extent of consensus or dissent with which reforms were applied. These axes are applied in the recognition of four main moments in the reform. The hypothesis that guides the analysis holds that the new agenda for the university sector, one of modernising and technocratic characteristics, required placing the government in a prominent role; and that its application was top down, with a low level of consensus among the main actors involved.

Brief characterization of Argentinean universities in historic perspective

Universities in Argentina have been characterised throughout their history as constituting a sphere of active political life related to national politics, as well as fulfilling their main function of educating professionals. The political instability of the country systematically affected the functioning of universities, with periods of full autonomy or forceful intervention by national government, depending on the nature of successive governments.

The 1918 University Reform, a student movement with a Latin American reach, introduced a model of functioning that endures until the present day in the biggest universities, and which constitutes one of the main strengths of the system. This model is based on the autonomy of institutions *vis à vis* the national government, with regard to political, academic and economic matters. This has meant institutions have been able to rule themselves, with governance bodies made up of academic staff, students and graduates, with academic freedom in terms of the formulation of syllabuses and courses by teaching staff and with autarchy in administering the resources provided, mainly by government.

In the mid-twentieth century, during the first of Peron's two administrations, there were major changes to the university system. Within a context of strong government intervention, access to university was made universal and without tuition fees. This would change during the military governments of the 1950s and 60s, but this change was undoubtedly largely responsible for an increase in enrolment of 180% from 1947 to 1955.

The 1960s are considered the golden age of the public university, due to the quality of its professors and curricula, in a context of strong institutional autonomy. The professional profile of universities began to be combined with research, generating teams of high scientific standing in various universities. The system expanded and the private sector – relatively small – began to grow. The military coup in 1976 introduced terror inside institutions, and the absolute intervention of its functioning by military vice-chancellors and ideological control of teaching. This led first to a stagnation and then a fall in university enrolment, which lasted until 1983 with the return to democracy.

The first democratic government, welcomed with high expectations of freedom and participation

by the population, placed democratisation of universities as a priority. The government re-established the reformist model that evoked the origins from 1918. Autonomy, democratic government of universities through its three boards, ideological plurality, and access to the system of new social sectors appeared as the main lines of action of the new project; these were encapsulated in the laws of the period. From 1984 to 1990, the number of students enrolled in universities grew sharply, by 65%, (from 443,400 students in 1984 to 679,400 in 1990).

The growth in enrolment generated new problems for the system. Institutions had to expand their staff, and, at the same time, solve infrastructure and building problems to deal with such an increase in new students. The growing pressures on the system coincided with economic problems that became acute during the last phase of the government's term in office.

University reform in the 1990s

Such was the situation when Carlos Menem took office in 1989, with a neo-liberal project oriented to reducing public expenditure, in a context of growing external debt. The main pillars of the project were deregulation, decentralisation and privatisation. The government's agenda for universities included deep reform that will be analysed by distinguishing four periods.

Confrontation and deregulation (1989-1993)

In Menem's first term, there was no explicit policy towards higher education, although there was a will to bring certain themes into the public arena that initiated a debate that would continue during the whole period. The government presented to the public the need to shift the state away from its responsibilities in supporting the university sector. In a context of economic crisis, the need for institutions to find sources of complementary financing other than the state was given prominence. The government proposed university fees – a measure rejected by students – and other ways to generate income, such as service provision to third parties and consultancies to private companies and to the state (Paviglianiti, Nosiglia & Marquina, 1996).

However, a measure that appeared to run counter to the liberalisation of the sector was included in the 1992 budget, where as well as the funding for each university, a budget line with no defined objective was included, to be used by the Education Ministry according to their own criteria. This fund, which would increase over time, meant that the executive could design specific policies and define objectives from central government for universities. The initiative was accompanied by a proposal for a law in Congress for a new financial regime for universities that would introduce fees as a possible source of financing. The proposal included efficiency criteria such as external evaluation, quality control and decentralisation of wages.

This project generated widespread mobilisation of the whole university sector (vice-chancellors

through the National Inter-University Council, (CIN) (in the Spanish acronym¹), students through the University Federation of Argentina (FUA), and staff through the National Confederation of University Teachers (CONADU). They all opposed a measure that made possible arbitrary and discretionary distribution of funding. Even though the initiative did not prosper then, it provided a first step towards policies that would return in the Higher Education Act (LES) approved in 1995.

Ambivalence between government managerialism and deregulation can be observed throughout the period. Another example was the indiscriminate creation of private universities, in numbers as many as had existed hitherto. Between 1989 and 1995, twenty-one private universities were created in a process that mirrored the growing private sector in other areas. From 1989, there was a policy initiative to create public universities, principally in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires, as a way of generating types of programs that differed from those offered by the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA). As a way to attract demand, the new universities were organised on the basis of innovative institutional models that were also distanced from the traditional model represented by the larger universities, which in addition to enrolling most of the students in the higher education system were also oppositional to the national government.

The bases for a system of a national system of evaluation or quality assurance were also constituted. Between 1991 and 1992, a methodology for university evaluation was created, supported by a grant from the World Bank (as part of Subproject 06). This initiative generated opposition from the university sector, which produced documents and organised meetings to generate an alternative proposal.

The coolness between government and the university sector increased as a result of these different official initiatives. This period ended in February 1993, with the creation of the Secretariat for University Policy (SPU). Until then, university business by government had taken place in a Directorate, with less weight, in charge of official approvals and the recognition of qualifications. The importance of this new initiative implied an official decision to carry out, from the executive nationwide, policies for the sector in line with a new model that began to be sketched for the country.

In summary, we can observe the tension between deregulatory policies, reflected in the decrease in state financing, and the push to find new sources of funding, and the creation of private universities. On the other hand, the reforms implied that the government was taking a controlling role, as can be observed in the proposal for external evaluation, and the interference of the executive in matters of university governance and central funding, on the basis of new efficiency criteria.

The way in which reforms were introduced clearly reflected the decision to impose a new agenda, without necessarily seeking the support of the university actors involved. Press coverage at the time, and specific documentation from different sectors, show a significant mobilisation against the initiatives, from students, teachers and governing bodies.

¹ All acronyms henceforth are derived from the original Spanish.

The bases of the new model (1993-1995)

In the context of ministerial reorganisation, the creation of the Secretariat for University Policy (SPU) heralded a new official strategy to define policies for the sector. On the basis of a central team with a markedly technical-political profile, specific policies began to be implemented, through decrees and isolated ministerial resolutions that would become the new legal order in the Higher Education Act (LES). These policies, together, had as a common denominator a new role for the government in university affairs as the leader and supervisor of changes to be implemented. As part of a mediation strategy between the government and the base of the university system, intermediary organisms were created as 'buffers' (Neave & Van Vught, 1994). In 1993 Regional University Planning Councils became spaces for regional coordination, made up of representatives of national and private universities, provincial education authorities and national government. These bodies were used to deal with the fragmentation of the system and the overlapping course offerings, *via* consultative bodies with the capacity to provide recommendations to central government.

Also in this period, the System of Incentives for academics with teaching and research duties was designed and put into practice, as a new mechanism to distribute funding to teachers who accepted having their work evaluated on the basis of academic productivity. The executive sent to Congress a draft bill to modify the financial regime of the national universities, separately and earlier than the Higher Education Bill, which included the possibility of introducing fees for graduate courses and the creation of a general fund for the Ministry of Education to use with different criteria from those used in the historic distribution among universities (Nosiglia & Marquina, 1997).

Some of these measures were negotiated and agreed with the CIN, under conditions of increasing budgets from government. However, the fiscal crisis of 1994 led the government to reduce education budgets, which affected the university sector to the tune of US\$100 million. This measure worsened the financial situation of the sector, as a special funding boost of US\$120 million that had been agreed for that year to deal with urgent issues such as unpaid salaries and maintenance in national universities was vetoed. This critical funding situation reached its peak in 1995, with a 2% cut in the budget line for university staff salaries, which translated into a reduction of pay of over US\$2,000. The dramatic budgetary problems within institutions contrasted with the growing funds that the Ministry of Education had at its disposal to develop specific policies. At this time, the SPU obtained a loan from the World Bank which financed the Reform Programme for Higher Education (PRES), which we will deal with below. Undoubtedly, these cuts contributed to the increased opposition from different university actors to new government proposals.

The lack of funding for the running of universities and the availability of funds for specific government policies was the context in which the government negotiated with each institution individually on conditions for providing fresh funds. For example, given the difficulties they had had in introducing evaluations, government promoted voluntary agreements with individual universities

interested in putting evaluation processes into practice, with state funding.

On the other hand, limits were put on the deregulation of the previous period and in the years before passage of LES, the government decided to limit the indiscriminate creation of institutions that began in 1989. The academic quality and financial requirements by government for private universities authorizations became more demanding.

Finally, another efficiency initiative was the creation of a Programme for the Improvement of the University Information System that allowed reconstruction of quantitative data-sets on students, teaching and non-teaching staff; with data that became known with the publication of the annual statistics of the SPU.

In summary, the creation of the SPU heralded a departure in the style of university policies by government. Until then, the prevailing style had been confrontational, although, at the same time, more rhetoric. From 1993, from this new government body with increasing powers, specific regulations were put into practice that focused on control of the system through the SPU and which then materialised in the proposed law sent by National Executive Power (PEN) to the national Congress. These new regulations, far from counting on the support of the university sector, showed the inequality in power between government and institutions when it came to negotiating and agreeing change.

Debate and passing of LES (1995)

The Bill that the executive sent to Congress in May 1994 was the result of a process of discussions of draft texts subject to long negotiations with different stakeholders, especially with CIN. The changed text attempted to make more ambiguous issues relating to the reduction of university autonomy, either by incorporating more participation of the university sector in the new bodies created, or by reinstituting terms with powerful social meanings, which, in the new context, became increasingly empty.

In Congress, the Executive Project was included in the debate along with four other projects with parliamentary status, both of the party in power and the opposition. The official project showed some novel and some controversial aspects. The proposal included the higher education system in its totality, that is, it included the tertiary non-university sector, making explicit the attempt to overcome the historic distance between both sectors. Another novelty was the nearly equal treatment given to public and private university institutions in relation to issues of autonomy, mission and functions. For the national university sector, regulations were established directed at the problems of joint institutional governance that were seen from government as problems inherited from the 1918 reform model. In sections that were criticised by the university sector as interventionist, the project established that the composition of collegiate bodies in charge of university governance should have a majority from the council of teachers, that student representatives had to have 30% of their

coursework done, and that students had to pass at least two subjects *per* year to continue being enrolled.

There were three controversial issues in the LES, on which most of the press coverage at the time was concentrated. The first had to do with the institutional body that would be in charge of establishing university admissions procedures. It was established that in universities with more than 50,000 students, each department could decide its own admissions procedures. With this clause, which was introduced by government representatives during the debate in Congress, an irreconcilable tension was created between departments and central university authorities in the larger, and more government critical, universities. The disagreements centred on the desire of some departments to leave access unrestricted while others wanted to have an entrance exam, particularly for those courses with limits to accommodating all those who wanted to study, such as in the case of medicine.

The second controversial issue was the possibility for each university to charge fees for students. This issue was based on World Bank arguments that maintained that free universities generated inequality in the education system, considering that this sector concentrates on students that come principally from families with middle to high incomes, in comparison to the rest of the system. This argument, with its significant impact on public opinion, sought to apply a principle of redistributive justice within the education system, by favouring more investment at the elementary and middle school level.

The third issue was the creation of a national system of university evaluation and accreditation to be run by a new state agency: the National Commission for University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU). This body has the responsibility of performing evaluation processes to ensure the quality of institutions, and also of certain programs that were considered in need of 'State regulation' due to their impact on health, security, rights or goods for the population. The government's justification of the official initiative for this evaluation system was that it constituted "a reasonable way to indirectly regulate university autonomy", which, in this new context, acquired the qualifier of 'responsible autonomy'.

To summarise, the central government initiative, either through the Ministry of Education or without its mediation, acquired a decisive role in coordination of the higher education system, in creation of university institutions and in evaluation. In spite of attempts at reaching a last minute consensus between government and CIN, which came to nothing, the unmodified official proposal was approved by the Lower House on June 7th 1995, with an exact quorum of 132 parliamentarians composed only of the governing party and minority party representatives. The rest of the members of Congress participated in widespread mobilisation against the new law, organised by the majority of the university community, as well as unions, students and well-known academics. In spite of last minute attempts to find consensus, it was passed into law by the Senate.

The application of the new model (1995-1999)

In order to work the new government project received the fundamental support of the World Bank. The passing of LES was the condition to activate a previously agreed credit line between the SPU and the World Bank. In the context of a line of thought presented in the World Bank document *Higher Education: Lessons from Experience*, this credit line was earmarked to finance the Improvement Programme for Higher Education (PRES); its explicit aim was to strengthen the legal framework of higher education in order to introduce incentives for efficiency, equity and quality assessment in this teaching environment.

The programme had a budget of US\$273 million. Although in practice this was reduced by US\$30 million due to fiscal adjustments at the time, the ready use of these significant resources contrasted sharply with the crisis suffered by the universities to pay for its mere functioning. In this way, the PRES became a very effective mechanism to push forward reform through its different components; these, in many cases, implied opportunities for national universities to acquire fresh funds, but only in return for changes in accordance with the government's policies.

PRES was scheduled to run for a term of five years, which was later extended to seven years. In that time, a number of instruments were put into practice to implement reforms. All of them signified the presence of government in regulating the university system, a new departure from what had gone before. We now consider some of them.

University quality assurance and CONEAU. University evaluation in Argentina was institutionalised in LES with the creation of CONEAU as the agency in charge of taking forward the different evaluation processes. This new body, with a decentralised and autonomous remit, was connected to the Ministry of Education and was composed of well-known, prestigious academics. The peculiarity of the agency, if it is compared with similar bodies in other countries, lies in the variety of roles that it covers: it coordinates and carries out the external evaluation of institutions every six years, after internal processes of self-evaluation; it gives accreditation to undergraduate programmes considered to involve 'risk' and public interest; it gives accreditation to all graduate programmes; it comments on the consistency and viability of institutional projects, a requirement to set up new institutions; it prepares the reports necessary for the provisional authorisation of definitive approval of private institutions.

It is important to underline that CONEAU is not the body which determines the criteria for the evaluation system, but applies the regulations and standards defined by the Ministry of Education, in consultation with the Universities' Council, the latter being representative of university institutions, both public and private. The evaluations carried out by the agency are not directly linked to funding, even though in the original World Bank documents this was recommended. However, in the last few years programmes have been created by SPU to improve weaknesses highlighted in the agency assessments; for this reason there is a growing interest on the part of institutions and programmes in

participation in these processes.

After more than ten years, it is possible to say that the initial opposition shown by the university community to the CONEAU's assessments has decreased, basically for two reasons: the generalised perception of the need to modernise the university, and the inability of the institutions themselves to define processes of internal change.

The Fund for Improvement of University Quality (FOMEC). One of the main programmes oriented to change in universities during the 1990s was FOMEC. This initiative encouraged university staff to present projects that dealt with departmental improvements. With World Bank funding, the four rounds of funding that took place between 1995 and 1998 directed US\$203 million to financing 472 projects carried out by teams of researchers in national universities. These funds were in the main to buy goods (54.5%) and to finance scholarships in Argentina and in other countries (34.5%) to carry out graduate studies and post-doctorate work. This programme saw the beginning of a policy to assign funds differentially to teaching teams in a direct and competitive way (Fanelli, 2002), a modality that has continued to exist into the present, no matter what the ideological leanings of the governments that have promoted programmes with this rationale. This new way of funding has gradually been incorporated in the academic culture of institutions, generating, in the same way as the evaluation policies, a slow acceptance running counter to the strong opposition shown initially.

The National Agency for Scientific and Technological Promotion (ANPCyT). A modality of these same characteristics, but with resources specifically dedicated to research was implemented by the National Agency for Scientific and Technological Promotion (ANPCyT). It had as an aim to increase the efficiency of the scientific and technological system and its links to the productive economy. The Agency, a body that depends on the Ministry for Science, Technology and Productive Innovation administratively, is governed by a Council made up of nine members with recognised scientific seniority nationally and internationally. Through its different instruments, it has financed more than 2,000 projects, for a sum of nearly 300 million pesos. The greater part of these funds was granted to scientific and technological research projects (PICT) developed by universities, public as well as private. After ten years of its existence, Hidalgo (2005) analysed the implications of public funding policies for research projects, and showed that they have generated "a symbolic and material emptying of the broader local projects and have been differentially favourable to the traditional scientific elites and the most consolidated disciplines".

New funding modalities and the resources allocation model. The use of new policy instruments meant the establishment of a new allocation model from government to universities. The assumption was that resources were inefficiently disbursed, subject to the political weight of each institution, and one that resulted in a distribution of resources that was not connected with the aims and the results of institutional activities. Accordingly, the government changed disbursement of the funds it controlled to financing specific objectives, made concrete in programme contracts between the SPU and institutions.

Another type of financing was geared to the search for an objective formula to allocate running costs for institutions, through a programme called the Resource Allocation Model (AR). The discussion of this formula took ten years, in order to agree objective parameters for distribution of the university budget. CIN was at the centre of the debates and of the gradual agreements that took place on the fine line between political and technical concerns. Consensus was achieved over a model that has an aim to serve as a budgetary tool to detect the gaps between the ideal and existing finances of each university. Although to begin with attempts were made to apply a model of incremental disbursements for under-financed institutions, the urgent demands made by unions in relation to wages made it practically redundant.

University Information System (SIU). With this measure, a process of collection and systematisation of data relating to the university system was designed and put into place; previously this had existed neither in the Ministry of Education, nor in the institutions themselves. Improving this state of affairs meant touching upon sensitive matters related to the true functioning of institutions that could have budgetary implications. After a few years, a system with verifiable data was achieved such as to be able to manage staff, students, libraries, budgets and bookkeeping, student statistics and to establish ways to process this data in order to take decisions. This gradual development was accompanied by the collaboration of an increasing number of institutions. Today it is possible, thanks to this initiative, to know the system, study it, and both universities and the Ministry can draw on this information, which can still be improved, but already provides more precise data for decision making.

Programme of Incentives for Teacher-Researchers. In 1993, the National Programme of Incentives for Teacher-Researchers was created, with the explicit aim of promoting an overview of academic careers, to contribute to the increase of research in universities and to foster a fuller dedication of teaching staff to university activities. In the context of evidently low salaries, this incentive meant an improvement in terms of income for those staff who voluntarily entered into the programme, had the necessarily qualifications and fulfilled levels of output previously agreed. In this way, with the systematisation of information regarding academic activity, the government established a new method of quality control over the activities of a group of teacher-researchers in public universities, whose numbers have varied over the years. Some official studies into the effects of this programme admit that, as well as the expected benefits, some unwanted effects also appeared, such as the development of a research gloss with little real impact, an excess of competitiveness between colleagues and a lack of stability in salary raises (Marquis, 2004). From a more critical standpoint it has been shown that this programme generated competition and rivalry, as well as increasing bureaucratisation. With the incentive of reaching a category or qualification – with which to access higher pay – the Programme would imply a loss of meaning for research and a loss in originality. Currently, with some minor adjustments, the programme continues to run. In terms of material value, it is not as important as it once was. However, there is some symbolic value distributed through this

mechanism, on the basis of the system of categories that are given to individual members of staff as part of academic development, according to the criteria of respected peers.

Conclusions

The reform of higher education that took place in the 1990s was expressed in one measure, the Higher Education Act (LES). This reform was swift and intense, given that it consisted of a wide-ranging spectrum of measures for the sector which became operative immediately. The new model, where the government came to have a central role in defining policies, put specific issues on the agenda through normative obligations and financial incentives. The SPU, created to this end in 1993, was constituted with a leadership capacity to push forward negotiation of strategies and penetration into the base of the system, by a combination of coercion with a search for consensus by groups. Moreover, it had the ideological, financial and operative support of the World Bank, which financed the reform with a loan of many millions of dollars, through the Reform Programme for Higher Education (PRES).

For their part, the institutions and actors in the university sector lacked an alternative academic project to reform objective conditions which needed attention, as the result of the fast and uncontrolled expansion of the system. In this sense, universities showed a lack of political skill to promote their interests through the organisation of the new system, and placed themselves in an oppositional stance that did not stop the powerful impetus of the reform from above. In this way, over a short period of time, the balance of power in the system was changed significantly with the creation of coordinating bodies and the extension of government bureaucracy.

In terms of specific measures, differences were expressed through the creation of university offerings unlike the traditional programmes, in new public university institutions, and privatisation materialised in the creation of a significant number of private universities. A national evaluation and accreditation system was put into place, with the creation of CONEAU, and a system of national incentives for research and university teaching was set up; a new modality of financing by competition for funds was established, by applying for different programmes, one of which was FOMECE; a process to come up with a budgetary distribution system according to objective parameters was established though it took over ten years of discussions in the CIN to do so; the need to restrict university entrance was promoted, as well as the diversification of sources of finance, among which was the introduction of fees for postgraduate courses.

This array of measures was enabled on the basis of the constitution and reorganisation of new and traditional governance and coordination bodies: the Universities' Council, CONEAU, the Regional Planning Councils for Higher Education (CPRES), SPU, and two instances that existed before the reform: the CIN and the Council of Vice-Chancellors of Private Universities (CRUP), whose roles were revised.

In terms of the way they were applied, the reforms were made without the consensus of the

representative corporations of the university sector, nor of those political parties that did not support the project in Congress that opened up the possibility of change. In spite of this, the strong leadership of reformers within government used a combined strategy of confrontation and/or negotiation that was able to overcome the opposition, which lacked an alternative proposal. Slowly, these changes became part of university life, to the extent that they were absorbed by the academic cultures that put them in motion, and today they are hardly questioned, even when there is a new law being considered for the sector in the context of a new political project.

To sum up, the reform of higher education in Argentina followed international trends, with the support of international organisations that brought in a common agenda for the region. In the new configuration of the system, power went from the bases to higher levels, by reducing the scope of action of traditional bodies and actors while creating new spaces of power and negotiation. In this sense, university reform in Argentina in the 1990s has acquired its particular forms given by the strong presence of the state carrying out reforms and as a central actor in the new configuration of the system, in a context of generalised disagreements that were slowly unmade by the forcefulness of the changes.

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