

Producing and Re/producing the European University in the 21st century: research perspectives on the shifting purposes of higher education

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Introduction

The paper examines an aspect of current debates about what constitutes the university in the 21st century, notably concepts concerning and different perspectives on the ways in which the idea of a university is being produced and reproduced, with a particular focus on European universities. The extent to which these concepts and debates impact on policy makers and university leaders is also considered. The analysis is based in part on papers presented at two recent international seminar series (2006 and 2007) on universities, globalization processes and ideas, both of which were co-organised by the author, together with colleaguesⁱ at the Universities of Bristol and Cardiff and the University of Wales Institute Cardiff. The paper examines the main arguments made by eight recent contributors to these debates and the extent to which their arguments, key issues and concerns have relevance for Europe's universities. It also asks how policy makers might respond to research and scholarship on producing and re/producing the university, particularly since it is clear that there is (as always) some disagreement amongst the academics concerned and (often) an absence of alternative visions of what constitutes a university.

The main focus in the paper is on the re/production of the idea of the university and what it does, might do and could do in the twenty first century. This is a very long standing debate, as others have noted (Lyotard 1984). There are some classic contrasting perspectives about the purposes of nineteenth century universities in Europe (Weber 1948; Von Humboldt 1970; Newman 1976) which focus on the role of universities in relation to science, rationality, science, teaching, research, academic authority and national culture. There are also a number of twentieth century attempts at the same task, which consider what has changed or is changing in contemporary universities, given the very different

conditions pertaining in the latter half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty first century. These changes include in particular, the global move from elite to mass systems and its effects on the university (Barnett 1990; Scott 1995), the questioning of public expenditure in relation to what many now regard as a private rather than public good (Marginson 2004; Musial 2007), changing ideas about the universality of knowledge and its transmission and application (Barnett 1990; Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott et al. 1994), the rise of the audit culture in relation to evaluating the quality of teaching and research (Brennan and Shah 2000; Strathern 2000; Lucas 2006) and the impact of new managerialist approaches to the management and governance of higher education (Kirkpatrick, Ackroyd and Walker 2005; Kehm and Lanzendorf 2006 ; Deem, Hillyard and Reed 2007). All of these changes have had a profound effect on what universities do and what they are about, including questioning of the very role of research in the contemporary higher education institutions (Deem 2006b).

The late twentieth century and early twenty first century analyses of universities' purposes and roles vary from those at a high level of abstraction, focused on the university as an organisation but often without any significant empirical referent to particular kinds of universities (Barnett 1990; Barnett 1999; Barnett 2003), through a focus on the changing roles of the welfare state ((Kwiek 2005; Kwiek 2006) and the intervention of supra-national organisations (Dewatripont, Thys-Clement and Wilkin 2002) in shaping universities and an emphasis on new technologies (Robins and Webster 2002; Tiffin and Rasasingham 2003) or on globalisation (Scott 1998; Marginson 1999; Kwiek 2001; Mok and James 2005), to those concentrating on a single dimension of higher education change such as gender relations (Brooks and Mackinnon 2001; Sagaria Danovitch 2006). There are also a small

number of quasi-academic books which bemoan what contemporary universities have become (Bok 2004) or suggest how universities might be governed and managed in the future (Clark 1998; Shattock 2003; Shattock 2006). Together, these analyses provide a complex but often contradictory picture of what is happening to universities around the world, including those in Europe. At the same time, policy makers in supra-national and international bodies are also concerned with reshaping and re/producing universities in their own desirable form (European Higher Education Ministers 2005; European Commission 2006; Bassett 2007).

The relationship between recent academic and quasi-academic analyses of the production and re/production of the contemporary and the changes which policy makers and academic leaders are making to 21st century universities is a challenging and sometimes perplexing one (Deem 2006). In general, policy makers don't pay much attention to higher education researchers unless they have actually commissioned them and may even prefer consultants to academics (Saint-Martin 1998). This may also be the preference of university leaders too. Nevertheless, some quasi-academic books have had a significant impact on policy makers and university leaders, for example Burton Clark's 1998 book *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities*, which though ostensibly based on social science research, actually draws on a series of not very critical heroic narratives of a few universities around the world who are alleged to be particularly successful at entrepreneurial activities (Deem 2001) but provides university leaders and policy makers with a series of steps towards creating a steering core for an entrepreneurial university (Clark 1998). I noticed this book on several senior manager academics' desks when researching managerialism's permeation of UK universities in the late 1990s (Deem, Fulton, Johnson, Hillyard, Reed et al. 2001). Clark's book was also one which Kwiek, speaking at the ESRC seminar series

'Geographies of Knowledge; Geometries of Power' in 2006 (Epstein, Boden, Deem and Brown 2006-7) indicated had seemed important in European Commission policy consultations with academics on the future shape of European higher education. Finally, Ordorika has suggested that this book has been influential in relation to national and international policies on producing and re/producing universities in South America, even though in many countries in that continent there is no market for entrepreneurial higher education and nowhere to send the products of university technology transfer offices (Ordorika 2007). Policy makers like simple messages and transferring 'good practice', a policy which sometimes equates to an uncritical policy borrowing rather than providing evidence of a more sophisticated policy learning process (Deem, Lucas and Mok 2006). Most academic analyses of universities are too complex to be used in the 'good practice' game but in addition, they often tend not to go beyond critique and also suggest what universities *could* be like.

Producing and re/producing the university

The paper builds on previous work by the author on the changing purposes and positioning of universities (Deem 2006b; Deem 2007) and also on two current seminar series on higher education involving the author, one funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council on globalisation and universities 'Geographies of Knowledge/Geometries of Power' (also involving Epstein, Boden and Brown) and the other (also involving Wei and Mok) funded by the University of Bristol Institute of Advanced Studies and the World University Network on "The Purposes of Universities: Ideals and Realities'. The papers are available either in book form (Epstein, Boden, Deem, Rizvi and Wright 2007) or electronically (Wei, Deem and Mok 2007). This paper will explore what relationship contrasting research-based contributions on the re/production and

purposes of the university have to the changes which policy makers and academic leaders are trying to make to 21st European century universities. It will suggest that this relationship remains in some tension.

The concepts of producing and re/producing of the university is, like some other concepts used in the analysis of higher education, such as new managerialism, both an idea and a theoretical concept and a taken for granted reality which is an everyday part of the activities and worldviews of some of those who work in universities or who are responsible for higher education policies in particular countries and contexts. This makes its analysis very challenging but also critical to what happens in higher education in the future. The practical elements of producing and re/producing the university include both changes to existing universities and their practices (or to the environments which help shape those practices) and the development of new universities which may be very unlike conventional and historical notions of what a university is (such as corporate universities or virtual universities).

The globalisation of some national economies and of higher education itself are now central elements in explaining what is happening to contemporary universities, although local factors also remain extremely relevant to understanding the characteristics of particular national systems of higher education (Deem 2001; Marginson and Sawir 2005). Three key questions to ask are: Who and what have been involved in the production and re/production of the university in recent decades and in what spaces have they worked? What do we now understand a university to be in the context of a more globalised and interconnected world and how are its purposes changing? What are the consequences of the production and re/production of the university at the present time

for students, academics, knowledge and socio-economic development?

Despite or perhaps because of the historically close linkages between universities and nation states, there has never been a single conception of what a university is and what it is for. There are some long-standing controversies over what the purposes of the university actually are (Von Humboldt 1970; Newman 1976), particularly in respect of the centrality or marginality of both research and teaching, with the Germanic emphasis being primarily on research and the British emphasis, following Newman, much more on teaching and students. From the nineteenth century onwards, as the foundations were laid for the modern and post-modern university, different notions of what constitutes the university have vied for organizational and systemic hegemony and, particularly in the twenty first century, competed for global status and recognition (Marginson 2006; Marginson 2007). How universities should be led, governed and managed and the process of re/identifying their core functions (teaching and research, plus the so called 'third mission' via links to industry and commerce and public engagement with academic research) have also become pre-occupations of both university leaders and policy-makers, as declining public funds for public services encourage questioning of the extent to which higher education is a public benefit or private good. At the same time, international and supra-national bodies like the European Commission and World Bank are replacing national governments as key education and economic policy makers (Bassett 2007 ; Dale 2008) and higher education itself is increasingly seen as an object of world trade, as for example through the General Agreement in Trade (GATS) negotiation processes (Nunn 2002; Verger Planelles 2006). Moreover, the power of multi-national companies (such as the publishing conglomerates) and new definitions of post-school education, such

as life-long learning which embrace but go well beyond higher education), also question the place, power and significance of the university as an institution, as does the possibility that university status can be granted to a higher education institution that does not undertake research (Deem 2006b).

Geographies of knowledge; geometries of power

In this section I examine five papers which were presented at the Economic and Social Research Council funded seminar series 'Geographies of knowledge; geometries of power' at Gregynog, Wales, in 2006 and 2007, for which I was a member of an organizing team led by Debbie Epstein of Cardiff University. All of these papers are centrally concerned with the production and re/production of the university, the forces that might be shaping this and analyzing some of the consequences for those who work or study in contemporary higher education. They also take into consideration a range of spatial and global factors (whilst not ignoring local conditions) and examine some of the critical power relationships that are driving the current production and re/production of universities.

Much of Dale's recent work has been on the policy developments in Europe and how they affect education in national contexts. His paper for Geographies begins by surveying what other writers have said about universities and indeed critiques existing research and scholarship about how universities have changed for often having too much of an institutional rather than a systemic focus, over-emphasising national factors and the significance of nation states and not being sufficiently detached from the academic context (Dale 2007), though this last must be very difficult to avoid. He notes how post World-War 2 universities across the globe have been affected by the separation of the twin trajectories of capitalism and modernity and comments on the extent to which their

reconstitution has been marked, on the one hand, by a managerialist, hollowed-out organisational core concerned with performativity, quality and excellence (modernity), and on the other by an increasing emphasis on their contribution to global innovation and the knowledge economy (capitalism). Dale contends that individual institutions of higher education and higher education systems are now increasingly operating as parallel universes, with the implication that in time they might move in different directions, particularly as concepts of life long learning which need not be delivered in universities at all, come to hold sway in Europe. He suggests that universities' historic attachment to the concept of social, cultural and political emancipation has been tempered by a more recent emphasis on regulation (through the market, states and transnational bodies), albeit often externally imposed rather than chosen. Dale illustrates his arguments by reference to recent European Commission documents which place university reform at the forefront of EU economic strategy and at the centre stage of the new 'Knowledge sector', and EC processes (such as the common Bologna degree architecture) that are already reaching well beyond the geographies and power geometries of Europe itself. Even if many universities in Europe want to ignore the EC, their governments may take a different view.

Kwiek, writing from the perspective of Poland, takes up some of the themes of Dale's paper, discussing the consequences of the extent to which publicly-provided higher education in Europe (particularly that in those central European countries which have recently joined the European Union, the so-called accession countries) and elsewhere, is increasingly in competition for scarce state expenditure with other public services such as pensions and healthcare (Kwiek 2007). The latter often end up with the majority of public funding. This, Kwiek contends, both threatens the traditional uniqueness of universities (since they are now treated

just like any other public service) and also leads to difficult questions about the purposes of higher education and whether it is still deserving of public funding. This in turn is leading to debates about whether all higher education should be funded through student fees or other private means, thus moving from being a public to a private good. The author considers the links between the renegotiation of the foundations of the European welfare and communist/postcommunist states and globalization. He suggests that the reform and re/production of higher education need to be linked to wider issues of the transformation of both welfare and nation states, as well as to the involvement in these processes of transnational bodies such as the World Bank. Kwiek's argument is illustrated by reference to the World Bank's interventions in Poland in the late-1990s. The paper also examines different theory and practice in reforming public services at the global level, in both the established European Union countries of Western Europe and the new-EU (accession) countries of central Europe. In relation to the latter, Kwiek notes that the post communist model of mass higher education has been for underfunded public and private institutions of higher education to exist alongside each other, with the public sector providing both free full time programmes but charging for part time study provided at weekends, so that one way or the other most non-traditional students end up paying for their higher education. Higher education, Kwiek contends, has also become focused on goals of international competitiveness (such as success in league tables) that are new to both institutions and academics, whilst students are increasingly more consumerist in their attitudes and higher education itself is more and more viewed as a private, not a public good.

Fuller has written critically about developments in universities and the trend towards knowledge management elsewhere (Fuller 2002). His paper for 'Geographies' is concerned with examining the

current state of universities (labelled 'Academic Imperialism') and contemporary academic leadership (particularly a variant he terms 'Academic Caesarism') and how these are affecting the re/production of the university (Fuller 2007). He considers the ways in which the university has both paralleled the development of the nation state in its historical acquisition of organisational autonomy and also owes its contemporary existence to actions taken by states to consolidate national identity and train their future leaders. He notes the similarity between the transition of historical nation states from republics (where everyone is notionally equal and leaders have no special or unique qualities) to empires where equality of citizens disappears and dictators make all key decisions. He argues that both the university and the state have been attacked in recent times, particularly by post modernists, for their failure of representation, the state in respect of people and the university in respect of knowledge. Universities have for example, not always recognised the important role of schools in relation to knowledge (rather, they have tried to control school knowledge through the curricula of university courses), even though school education now appears much more central to economic growth (and hence more deserving of public money) than higher education. At the same time, Fuller contends that universities have responded to post modernity by acquiring some of the functions of the state, absorbing responsibility not only for education but for the provision of healthcare and sometimes even domestic security (a process which he calls Academic Imperialism) and also by developing dictatorial forms of leadership (Academic Caesarism), which both seek to protect and limit universities' complex and potentially divisive internal and external constituencies, including students and alumni, academics, politicians and business. The paper sets out some of the activities of Academic Caesars, including distinguishing between institutional and selfish individual values, the upholding of

plural values, maintaining a division between internal and external constituencies and preventing the latter from yielding too much power. Fuller argues that the contemporary university could reproduce (and in some cases has re/produced) itself in a form which is part church (becoming self supporting by ensuring that, as is common in the US, alumni donate money which allows future students to benefit) but also in part, a risk-taking casino which allows a variety of research activities to thrive, even if not all of them achieve significant knowledge advances. Fuller explores how university leaders may be able to uphold the view that some aspects of higher education are still worthy of public finance in two ways. One is by spreading out the risks and benefits of research through cross institutional subsidy, so that neither the highly successful researcher nor the slightly less successful academic are necessarily disadvantaged at any one time (as the fortunes of both may change over time). The second avenue he explores involves maintaining a link between research and teaching, so that all of society reaps the benefits of advances in knowledge, not just an elite or the immediate beneficiaries of research. Fuller suggests that one reason universities have been able to successfully defend their autonomy and traditional role of pursuing truth, despite competition from private sector knowledge managers and other knowledge-producing or transmitting organisations (which may be able to conduct research or train workers in more efficient ways without all the academic obstacles and challenges universities have to deal with) is because they provide an institutional mechanism for ensuring that new knowledge claims and products (even those which do not emanate from universities in the first place) are fully legitimated and shown to be theoretically and empirically valid and reliable. Fuller also argues that universities, by retaining a link between teaching and research, can guard against the development of two knowledge markets which have no connection with each

other, one concerned with technique and the other with technology and also ensure that despite the conditions of post modernism, some societal self-consciousness is retained. Thus Fuller suggests that universities, whilst in some senses producing themselves in new forms, can also retain their historic values and traditions, ironically secured by the activities of the much more recent Academic Ceasars.

Ciancanelli's focus is on the economics of the production and re/production of universities. Her paper examines recent changes in the financial situation of universities, institutions that she argues were once tailored to fit national circumstances but are now subject to the effects and impact of neo-liberalism, globalisation and what she terms 'financialization' (Ciancanelli 2007). She explores how 'financialization' has affected the widely used, long-standing system of scholarly communication in universities which is based on the principle of free exchange of ideas between academics. This exchange has benefited considerably from recent developments in internet and other communication technologies. At the same time, greater commercial involvement in publishing (for profit,) the outputs of research, that are then sold back to the academic community, has tended to thwart the realisation of the emancipatory potential of technologies that could (and arguably should) provide open and free access to all the knowledge that publicly funded universities produce. She notes the striking contrast between journals produced by learned societies or public universities and those produced by the five global publishing conglomerates that now dominate academic publishing. The paper provides a case study of the University of California, demonstrating the extent to which commercially produced-citation indexes of academic work published in journal articles not only increasingly drive where academics publish, their promotion prospects and the national and global status of their universities but also which

journals university libraries purchase and the financial state of higher education institutions. Soon, Ciancanelli contends, even universities in high income countries will be unable to afford the cost of commercial academic journals, which increasingly come in digitised forms (so that back copies of paper journals no longer form a knowledge commons which universities can keep in perpetuity if they wish, although there are ways round this problem such as the UK university libraries LOCKS scheme). Open access journals which are not tied to commercial publishers are growing in numbers but have been slow to gain academic credibility and legitimacy in many fields. Ciancanelli argues that the production and re/production of much new university knowledge is now well outwith the control of any nation state or individual higher education institution and hence brings into question the extent to which higher education anywhere remains a service for public benefit.

Nedeva has an interest in science policy and her 'Geographies' paper focuses on the extent to which global pressures on universities and funding crises, as well as attempts to redefine the role of higher education, have led to the explicit diversification and framing of university missions beyond teaching and 'blue skies' research, into what is sometimes termed the 'third mission' or 'third stream' activities. These may include public engagement in the processes and outcomes of academic research, but are most likely to comprise entrepreneurial activities of many kinds, undertaking applied research for industry, other fund raising pursuits and creating an overt link between universities, society and the economy (Nedeva 2007). Nedeva suggests that greater emphasis on a set of 'third mission' functions is not merely adding to or being absorbed into the existing functions of higher education institutions in an unproblematic way but is significantly changing and deflecting the more traditional core activities of universities and how those

functions are carried out. 'Third mission' activities are, she contends, leading towards a different relationship between universities, societies and their economies, in an increasingly global context. Thus the development of teaching programmes is now more and more concerned with imparting employability and skills rather than knowledge, there is explicit marketing of knowledge 'products' and there is also a trend towards shaping of research problems by what funding is available rather than by academic curiosity. All of these are examples of how a closer relationship between higher education and the economy is transforming and re/producing the university. Comparing two hypothetical cases of universities pursuing different versions of the 'third mission', one a for-profit university and the other a publicly-funded university, Nedeva illustrates how the 'third mission' may lead to some teaching-oriented universities losing public respect, a deflection of the activities of more research-oriented institutions, a re-assessment of how universities' teaching and research activities are organized and funded and whom they benefit, and ultimately the disappearance or diminution of the idea of higher education's provision of research and teaching as a public good.

These papers provide a range of answers to the three questions posed at the start of the paper. They consider both the agents (the who and what) of the process of producing and re/producing the university (from the European Commission and the global publishing industry to governments and universities themselves) and the extent to which all universities in Europe and elsewhere, are becoming isomorphic (DiMaggio and Powell 1991), both in their core activities and organizational cultures and values. Fuller, for example, sees Academic Caesarism as having spread to many universities, though his model is largely based on the USA. What we now understand a university to be is enormously complex and varies both across and within countries, irrespective of the

attempts of the European Commission to encourage common processes of reform and degree architecture. What are the consequences of current processes of producing and reproducing the European university? Some of these consequences are spelt out in some detail by the authors considered so far. Their analyses suggest that the pressures on public expenditure (for publicly funded higher education institutions), the Bologna process of degree standardization (which now reaches way beyond Europe itself, with the USA, Latin America, China and Australia also studying the European model), the emphasis on life long learning and the centrality of research to the Lisbon process, the growth of Academic imperialism and Academic Caesarism, the stress on commercial journal publications and citations (under the auspices of a world wide publishing industry which charges universities to have their own academics' work in their libraries) and the rush to embrace the 'third mission', even if it deflects attention from traditional research and teaching activities, are having considerable effects on universities in and outside Europe. But are they having different effects on different universities and higher education systems? This is something that we can only know from more detailed research. However, what is already clear is that these pressures may be affecting what universities are and how they do things in ways which are irreversible. Finally but importantly, a range of contrasting critiques of the production and reproduction of universities have been reviewed here but are policy makers in Europe listening to researchers on the production and re/production of the university? Alternatively, are they, as Dale's analysis suggests, convinced they know better? Does the very existence of academic debate (and in this case a debate which is not based on pages of statistical data) frighten policy makers looking for a simple solution or way forward? I now turn to a focus on the (changing) purposes of universities, based on an international video-seminar

series that I, Ian Wei and Ka Ho Mok co-organised during 2006 and 2007. These papers, in contrast with Fuller who argues that despite the shift from university as republic to university as empire, it still retains some of its traditional values and functions (for example the validating of knowledge claims from whatever source), suggest that the purposes and values of universities are shifting rather more radically, in response to a range of internal and external drivers. Furthermore, as in several of the papers just examined (Kwiek, Dale, Nedeva), policy makers and institutional leaders are at the very heart of some of the changes considered in these three papers.

The purposes of Universities: ideas and realities

In this section I examine three papers that were presented in the World University Network virtual seminar series entitled 'The Purpose of Universities: Ideals and Realities' in 2006 and 2007. The series as a whole included both contemporary and historical analyses, although here I have drawn only on the latter. The intention of the series was to explore how ideas about what universities are for has shifted over time and how these ideas are linked to what universities as institutions have actually done. The papers selected deal with ideas about re-imagining the university, ideas about the reform of Chinese universities and its progress (chosen because some of the themes resonate with dilemmas and challenges encountered in European universities) and ideas about the notion of the world class university as well as the effects of a quest for world class league table standing on European and East Asian universities and systems. But in addition, each paper also deals, either implicitly or explicitly, with the role of policy makers, something that was only true of Dale's paper in the previous section. The first 'Ideas' paper, by Michael Peters, is on the theme of 'Re-imagining the University in the global era'. Peters' approach in re-imagining the university is to look back at some of the classic dialogues about the modern (historical) university and then to

consider how the post-historical university is developing in the global era (Peters 2007). Peters, drawing on Kantian debates about reason, the Humboldtian concepts of culture and the German idea of *bildung* which focuses on the formation and cultivation of moral subjects albeit within a national context (Von Humboldt 1970), the production of national knowledge through higher education (Readings 1996) and Newman's idea of the transmission of national literature through higher education (Newman 1976), shows how the concept of the historical university embraced the key role of institutions in transmitting national cultures. This is a point also made by Delanty's examination of transitions in the functions and orientation of universities (Delanty 2001). Peters then draws on Lyotard's analysis of the postmodern university to suggest that there has been a significant break in what universities are about and how they perform these tasks (Lyotard 1984) . To this end, he examines two new forms of post historical university that he argues have been shaped by policy makers, the 'global service' university and the 'hollowed-out' university. The 'global service' university is equated by Peters to the UK's higher education systems (particularly that of England), as nurtured and encouraged by the 1997 Dearing Report (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education 1997) which was set up by a Conservative government ostensibly to advise on the funding problems of UK public universities. The global service idea revolves round a notion that the public university, in the face of global changes to trade, technology and travel, has to adopt private sector for-profit characteristics in order to contribute to the growth of the global economy and global corporations (including the production of skilled graduate labour and the operation of technology transfer which involves translating research outcomes into a form useable by industry and commerce). The 'hollowed-out university', Peters suggests, is best illustrated by Australia's higher education system

and is particularly espoused in a report, the 1998 West Report, which advocated a market-led approach to funding higher education based on student demand and fee-paying (Marginson 1998; West 1998). This model is one in which the university's core functions of teaching and research are reduced to a stripped down cost-effective and outcomes-based quality assured version of what the 'market' (students and corporations) requires but also one in which higher education is a product, aggressively marketed to international students (not simply home-domiciled students). But the post-historical university imagined by Peters himself is very different to either of these models. He picks elements from Kant, Humboldt and Newman, amongst others, to construct a new notion of what might constitute the contemporary university, which is distinctive from the 'hollowed out' and 'global service' universities. It would retain a self-critical self-reflective approach consistent with cosmopolitanism (since everyone belongs, Peters argues, in a Kantian sense, to a single moral community), recognise several cultures rather than the one advocated by Humboldt, and reflect the notion of a post-literary rather than a literary culture as discussed by Newman. It would allow for flexible differentiation of different kinds of universities, from elite to community teaching-focused and regional universities and encompass entirely virtual universities as well as those principally focused on campus-based face-to-face interaction. Peters suggests that the re-imagined post historical university is in a good position to provide cultural self understandings and cultural re/production processes which recognise indigenous cultures and traditional knowledges, show an awareness of the 'nation' as a socio-historical concept and accept multiculturalism as a taken for granted aspect of contemporary reality. This is a long way from the 'hollowed out' and 'global service' universities.

Wang's paper considers the current state of higher education in China and is particularly concerned with the impact on Chinese universities of the recent massive expansion in enrolment as well as other aspects of higher education policy reform (Wang 2007). Whilst supportive of the motivations for the expansion in terms of social equity and national competitiveness (an interesting pairing because they are not necessarily connected), Wang raises questions about graduate unemployment and young people in China expressing regrets about having entered higher education. Higher education is far from being affordable for many Chinese young people and their families, compared to the situation in many Western European societies, although Central Europe certainly has somewhat similar problems. Wang draws attention to the possibility that universities in China, whilst experiencing rapid expansion of their intake, have not yet entirely shifted away from their previous existence, practices and cultures as elite institutions. Mass higher education, he notes, leads to real concerns about the quality of the education provided, given funding and other constraints on the infrastructure and staff of institutions. A once every five year inspection, he contends, does not necessarily enquire deeply into what is now defined as quality in universities nor pay enough attention to whether appropriate mechanisms have been found to assess and enhance quality. Furthermore, Wang suggests, there are still several aspects of the nature of higher education in contemporary China and the role of the state within it (including its funding contribution), which remain unresolved and in flux. He goes on to suggest that a four-fold transition is taking place in Chinese universities – the shift from elite to mass, the switch from the client of universities being the state/national economy to one that is focused on a market-led open and export-oriented model, the move of universities from a marginal social status to a more central social status and the change from planned control over

higher education to an apparently higher degree of institutional autonomy over management, governance and core activities. He suggests that the final change is one in which autonomy has not yet yielded many benefits to institutions. In addition, Wang claims, universities themselves have not yet fully adjusted to their new circumstances, either in respect of recruitment from a wider social spectrum or by adjusting their curriculum (and language skills) to the needs of international students. Wang draws an analogy between the heads of Chinese universities in their current situation, who have the rhetoric of institutional autonomy but not the reality and a driver of a car who can start the engine and make the vehicle move but has no control over its steering and direction. Wang argues that four elements of change are critical to the future of Chinese higher education: massification must continue if China is to be a successful society; recognising internationalisation in universities is essential and means re-organising the curriculum, teaching, management and quality assurance: the HE system itself needs to embrace new concepts of knowledge, lifelong learning and networking and finally full legal incorporatisation of Chinese universities needs to become a reality. It is interesting to note both Wang's positive response to the notion of incorporatisation which has been so criticised by academics in the West for its focus on business values but also his desire for stronger forms of quality assurance and control, which have been much resisted in countries like England. However, Wang's plea for university leaders to be given genuine autonomy must be familiar to many in European universities and the problem of international students but without any real changes to curricula or teaching and learning is also a familiar tale in Europe.

Deem, Mok and Lucas's paper examines the notion of a world class university (and what the consequences might be) in the context of Europe and China (Deem, Mok and Lucas 2007). The

notion of world class is a very ill-defined and contested concept but it is often taken as a proxy for a high position in international rankings of universities. Two very recent international league tables established this century (those of the Shanghai Jiao Tong and the Times Higher Educational Supplement) rank universities around the world, though many in the top 100 are North American. The rankings are based on a range of indicators from Nobel prizes and journal citations, to the proportion of international students and staff-student ratios. Whilst Shanghai is focused only on research indicators, the Times Higher covers both research and other student, staff and institutional indicators. The growth of international league tables and some of the methodological issues around their construction and interpretation are considered. The paper also examines the link between journal papers, citation indexes, a major publishing conglomerate (Thomson) and the Times Higher Education Supplement's league tables. As Ciancanelli, in a paper discussed earlier, has noted, financialisation of the publication and dissemination of academic work has many consequences (Ciancanelli 2007) and who gets marked out as 'world class' is one of them. In the Times Higher league tables, reputational surveys of employers and academics account for a fair proportion of the score for each institution but the basis for sampling these groups (and the questions asked) remains opaque. The authors go on to examine how different higher education systems, policy-makers and institutions in Europe and South-East Asia have responded to the world class status quest. Clearly it is a game with a few winners but many losers. Even within those institutions that are successful, winning may mean less to students and to non-academic staff than to academics and senior management teams. Also, the consequences for nationally and locally focused research, for regional research capacity and for the 'losers' are considerable. So far as research is concerned, the focus in league table compilation is

on scientific papers published in English in so-called 'high impact' journals. Publications in other formats (books, book chapters, reports, web publications) and in other languages are sidelined and subjects where the shelf life of a publication is of long duration (such as in the arts and humanities) are not taken into account, as the focus is on scientific papers cited within a fairly short time period. The world class quest, however, is now extremely popular with policy makers and politicians who seek enhanced status and prestige for their higher education systems. In both Europe and Asia, many higher education systems have recently undergone significant reforms that, although arising partly in response to national pressures, also encompass the desire to enhance international competitiveness through higher education growth and improve performance in international league tables. These reforms range from the development of an extensive range of quality assurance mechanisms for research and teaching and the Bologna process in the European Higher Education Area, which seeks to unify degree architecture, ensure transferability of university qualifications and develop common quality procedures, through the granting of institutional autonomy and corporate status to universities, to selected investment in researchers and infrastructure in particular subject areas, the growth of markets in and competition between higher education institutions in the same country and an expansion of international student and academic staff recruitment. Some consequences of the world-class quest include the imposition of an Anglophone culture on global higher education and a focus on those areas of knowledge that are fashionable and likely to attract funding. Students and teaching may be neglected by those chasing world recognition for their research, the opposite of the scenario painted by Fuller (2008) where research trends and fashions are evened out over time in institutions. Although some proxy indicators for teaching quality

are included in some league tables (e.g staff student ratios), the character and quality of the student experience is not included in any meaningful way. Finally, the authors explore the differences between higher education policy makers engaging in uncritical policy copying and policy borrowing from anywhere in the world regardless of local circumstances and contingencies and an approach which uses a notion of policy learning, that pays attention to the local context, and does not seek to uncritically transfer practice from one context into a totally different one.

These three papers are particularly concerned with how the growth of a global market for higher education appear to be encouraging national policy makers to make decisions about how to run their local higher education systems which may be antithetical to local interests. For example, in both South East Asian and European countries, there is pressure to conduct only research of international interest published in the English language, which discourages locally relevant research published in local languages, There is also a focus on academic standards which are achievable only by a few rich and well established institutions. Wang notes that the Chinese government is keen to expand its higher education system to accommodate more students but does not fully take into account the extent to which this creates demands for additional resources and the need for real (not theoretical) institutional autonomy or consider the job prospects for larger numbers of graduates. Peters' exposition of the 'hollowed out' and 'global service' universities demonstrates what happens when economic growth and financial policy considerations start to override the intellectual integrity of academic institutions. In his re-imagining of universities he is able to weave a different concept that is also attuned to moral philosophy, culture, ethics and cyberspace. However, Peters, like Fuller, is able to offer an alternative vision for universities. We have explored at some length different theoretical

and empirical perspectives on the production and re/production of universities which engage with the three questions posed at the beginning. The first of these dealt with who and what have been involved in the production and re/production of the university in recent decades and in what spaces have they worked. Some of the answers to this include university leaders (albeit often under surveillance of policy makers); policy makers; industry and commerce; transnational bodies (such as the EU) and publishing conglomerates. Academics, students and civil society are largely silent or even absent in these processes. The second question was about what we now understand a university to be in the context of a more globalised and interconnected world and how its purposes might be changing. Here the academics whose papers have been reviewed note the rise of 'hollowed-out', 'imperialist', 'global service' privatised institutions, which are focused on regulatory regimes, often steered at a distance, financialised and commodified, possibly losing their uniqueness and certainly having lost any monopoly over knowledge production and transmission. The third question was about what the consequences were for the production and re/production of the university at the present time for students, academics, knowledge and socio-economic development. We have noted that academic critiques talk of the replacement of academic self governance by managerial and evaluative governance, the extent to which students are seen only as material for the labour market, not as individuals engaged in a common pursuit for societal values and knowledge, the commodification and financialisation of knowledge and the extent to which world class status and economic growth override all other purposes of higher education. These critiques are obviously of interest to other academics but what impact do critiques about the purposes of universities have on policy makers? It is to this that the analysis now turns.

Producing and Re/producing the European university – can research play a role?

We have seen that the researchers whose papers have been considered here, on the whole, with the possible exception of Fuller and (with some caveats) Peters, focus only on those processes of production and re/production of the university which either appear to be destroying the university as an institution in the form that we have known it or are shifting and deflecting the functions of universities so much that they are becoming (in the researchers' opinion) institutions which lack moral purpose and are no longer engaged with the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake but rather are interested in knowledge's utility for economic growth and profit reasons. The existence of universities in a parallel universe from transnational policy makers, a significant decline in public funding for universities and a loss of academic control over higher education as participation rates rise and global competitive pressures grow, the financialisation of knowledge by publishers, the advance of the third mission at the expense of the first two, the rise of 'hollowed out' and 'global service' universities and the relentless search for world class status for universities in Europe and South East Asia, regardless of the consequences for local research and teaching, all point to these kinds of changes in universities and their environment. At the same time, the kinds of negative messages sent out by higher education researchers about the present state of universities in Europe and elsewhere (even if based on substantial research and scholarship) are not ones that policy makers or university leaders want to hear. What they prefer is something which sets out in a straightforward way, a series of easy steps about how to make their universities achieve high world ranking, become engines of economic growth and serve as suppliers of skilled labour for the 'knowledge economy'. Hence as Ordorika (2007) notes, there is a strong appeal of books like Burton Clark's

1998 *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities* which provide these forward looking steps, even if, as Ordorika observes for Latin America, the conditions for importing these techniques and strategies are completely inappropriate to the societies for which they are intended and indeed an example of uninformed policy borrowing without proper attention to context (Deem, Mok and Lucas 2007).

The pervasiveness of this notion of policy borrowing is underlined by a plenary speech given at the 2007 Consortium of Higher Education Researchers Conference in Dublin by Patrick Cunningham, Chief Scientific Adviser to the Irish Government, himself a distinguished academic but an agricultural scientist rather than a social scientist. Cunningham spoke passionately about the growth in the size and number of Ireland's universities, the rise in research grant income, patents, journal paper citations, student participation rates, and research students and the benefits to society of all of these (Cunningham 2007). Admittedly he did mention health and quality of life as well as employment and economic growth as part of these benefits but it was interesting to contrast this and Cunningham's faith in measures like growth in the number of PhDs awarded with Kehm's analysis at the same conference of the current state of the doctorate in Europe (Kehm 2007). She spoke of its rapid proliferation of forms, the huge rise in doctorates being awarded and the extent to which its functions and shape are now increasingly determined by policy makers not academics, whilst moving away from the notion of the doctoral dissertation as curiosity-driven research which contributes to academic knowledge, towards seeing the doctorate as a commodified good and a strategic resource for national and transnational economic growth.

In Europe, the policy makers' vision for the production and re/production of universities is much less imaginative than that of

Fuller or Peters and shows that some of the critical analyses of where universities are headed in the twenty first century (including some of the critiques presented here) are well founded. University reform as reflected in recent European Commission documents (European Commission 2003 ; European Commission 2006) focuses mainly on higher education as a vehicle for economic growth and prosperity in Europe and the European Higher Education Area, thinly disguised with references to the 'knowledge economy' and 'life long learning' . The 2006 document on university reform published in May 2006 noted that: ' Universities are key players in Europe's future and for the successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society ... this crucial sector of the economy and of society needs in-depth restructuring and modernisation'' (European Commission 2006). The kinds of reforms that the EC thinks are needed do not focus on how knowledge can be freely communicated, how local research not published in English can be preserved, how to ensure that the 'third mission' of the university does not deflect from research and teaching, or how to place university leaders in full control of their supposedly autonomous institutions, all issues raised by the academic critiques examined here. Instead, the focus is on institutional autonomy but with full accountability (Wang's driver who has no control over the direction of travel), better connections with industry (but not NGOs or public bodies?), producing skills and competences for the labour market (Fuller's point that a private training organisation could do this better?), reducing the funding gap (by charging students fees thus reducing or limiting wider participation?), making more effective use of funding (aiming at world class status?) and facilitating more interaction between society and knowledge (but only on the financialised terms of industries and the publishers?). This reveals the extent of the gulf between European policy makers and researchers in re/producing the European University. Perhaps

then, researchers concerned with the changing purposes of universities and their production and re/production, need to focus not only on their critiques, which are of fundamental importance, but also on developing alternative visions of universities, which explore how some of the problems and dilemmas of contemporary higher education can be dealt with. This would be a different but equally valid way of 'realizing the global university' though it would also need to recognise that not all universities should, or would want to, become 'global'.

Conclusions

The paper has explored the notion of producing and re/producing the contemporary university, with particular reference to European universities but also taking into account developments in other systems, notably East Asia and North America. In so doing it has reviewed a series of recent critiques of and commentaries on these processes presented at two recent international seminar series on universities, globalization processes and ideas. These critiques ranged from the role of the European Commission in higher education reform and growth, the importance of recognising the different position of central and Eastern European university systems and institutions in the face of competing claims to public funding, the growth of Academic Caesarism in contemporary universities with its protection of traditional values of higher education, the financialisation techniques of commercial publishers seeking to profit from the work of academics, the extent to which the third mission of the university may deflect and detract the pursuit of research and teaching, the rise of the post-historical 'global service' and 'hollowed-out' universities, the problem of widening participation and higher education expansion if university leaders have no say in the road map for the process and the ceaseless quest for world class rankings by politicians and policy

makers without regard for the unintended consequences. The paper has also considered what policy makers seek when they search for inspiration for reshaping universities. There is evidently still a huge gap between most higher education researchers and policy makers. One way forward suggested is not to cease the critiques of higher education or to end the theoretical contestation of different perspectives on the production and re/production of the university but rather to develop these critiques and perspectives into imaginative ways forward for universities (as Fuller and Peters have tried to do), recognizing that not all universities are the same and that not all have or need have, the same world conquering ambitions.

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