Institutional Conditions and the Responsibilities of Universities

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Contents

Preface[1]

This paper was written at the Rokkan Centre for two different purposes. Firstly it is part of the research effort carried out in connection with the research project Evaluation of the Quality Reform within the research group Knowledge, Leadership and Working Life. It was first presented at the Annual Conference of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers, Enschede, Netherlands, September 17–19, 2004. Secondly the paper was commissioned by the UNESCO, Scientific Committee Meeting for Europe and North America in Paris, November 4–5, 2004 and is presented there under the title: «Political Dimensions of Evaluation and Managerialism University organization and changing knowledge regimes».

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[1] Prepared for delivery at the Annual Conference of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers, Enschede, September 17 - 19, 2004

Abstract

The focus of the paper is on institutional values and organizational forms in universities. Before starting the analysis, a theoretical framework for understanding institutional change is outlined. It is based on a conception of universities that focuses on the interconnection between organization and social values. In the second part I discuss institutional values, and certain characteristics of organizational forms. The discussion focuses on values with an international reach, and how they relate to specific national experiences of which universities are a part. It gives an overview of different types of institutional ideals and their social and historical underpinnings. One reason why it is important to highlight these values is that they nourish fundamentally different notions about the nature of academic work – about the academic production process, the way in which it needs to be organized and to what extent academics can be trusted to organize their own affairs without outside interference. The third part of the paper focuses on how processes of change play out empirically in different national settings. To what extent can we observe a global process of modernization? To what extent and how do the outcomes, the new organizational forms, vary across nations? To what extent do these forms promote institutional leadership in academia? Finally the paper discusses how different types of knowledge regimes condition different versions of academic leadership.

Sammendrag

Dette paperet retter søkelyset mot institusjonelle verdier og organisasjonsformer i universitetssektoren. Først skisseres et teoretisk utgangspunkt for å forstå institusjonell endring. Det er basert på en oppfatning av universiteter som retter søkelyset mot forbindelsen mellom organisering og sosiale verdier. I den andre delen diskuterer jeg institusjonelle verdier og visse trekk ved organisasjonsformene i sektoren. Diskusjonen fokuserer på verdier med internasjonal utbredelse og på hvordan de forholder seg til spesifikke nasjonale erfaringer som universitetene er en del av. Det blir videre gitt en oversikt over ulike typer av institusjonelle idealer og det sosiale og historiske grunnlaget for dem. En grunn til at det er viktig å belyse slike verdier er at de gir næring til høyst forskjellige forestillinger om det særegne ved akademisk arbeid – om den akademiske produksjonsprosessen, måten den bør organiseres på og i hvilken grad akademikere er i stand til å organisere sitt arbeid uten inngrep fra utenforstående. Den tredje delen av paperet fokuserer på hvordan endringsprosesser utfolder seg i praksis i ulike nasjonale sammenhenger. I hvilke grad står vi overfor en global moderniseringsprosess? I hvilken grad og hvordan varierer utfallene, de nye organisasjonsformene, på tvers av lande-grensene? I hvilken grad fremmer disse formene institusjonelt lederskap i akademia? Til slutt diskuterer paperet hvordan ulike kunnskapsregimer legger forholdene til rette for ulike former for akademisk lederskap.

Introduction

Prevailing ideas about how university institutions should be organized have gone through fundamental changes and are connected with the ways in which values and ideas about knowledge have changed. In the current debate, views about the extent to which recent and ongoing changes are beneficial to universities as knowledge generating and knowledge transmitting institutions differ sharply (Gibbons et al 1994, Readings 1996). Two fundamentally different positions characterize the debate about the nature of the ongoing changes: Defenders of the traditional university stick to the account of decline, and they hold that previously good institutions are turning into bad ones (Nybom 2001). Modernization optimists promote the notion that past tradition is an obsolete guide which we need to leave behind, that the problems of the present are different, that new solutions need to be devised in order to address them, that they urgently need to be addressed and that a promising future awaits in which bad institutions may turn in to good ones, once we embrace modernization. Yet both groups share the assumptions that ongoing or needed changes are radical, drastic and fundamental. In this paper I shall question the shared assumption about drastic change and focus on actual outcomes.

The focus of the paper is on institutional values and organizational forms in universities. Before I start the analysis of change in institutional values and organizational forms, I shall outline a theoretical framework for understanding leadership change. An important point of departure is a conception of leadership developed by Selznick in his path breaking work *Leadership in Administration* (1984) originally published in 1957. By exploring ideas from his work I shall analyze the changes higher education institutions currently are undergoing and some of the implications these changes might have for universities in the future.

In the second part I discuss institutional ideals and values, and certain characteristics of organizational forms. The discussion focuses on values with an international reach, and how they relate to specific national experiences of which universities are a part. What are the traditional values of universities and to what extent were they uniform across countries? What conditions did they offer for institutional leadership? To what extent are the traditional values being replaced by new values associated with mass education and the so-called 'knowledge economy'? Does the spread of these values across nations lead to convergence of the organization of higher education institutions? How does the emergence of these new values affect the conditions for institutional development?

One reason why it is important to highlight these values is that they nourish fundamentally different notions about the nature of academic work – about the academic production process, the way in which it needs to be organized and to what extent academics can be trusted to organize their own affairs without outside interference.

The third part of the paper focuses on how processes of change play out empirically in different national settings. To what extent can we observe a global process of

modernization? To what extent and how does the outcomes, the new organizational forms, vary across nations? To what extent do these forms promote institutional leadership in academia?

Finally the paper discusses how different types of knowledge regimes condition different versions of academic leadership.

Leadership and Institutional Change

In recent years a number of authors have argued for and suggested ways in which new-institutionalist approaches may be reconciled with rational choice approaches in order to better understand or explain organizational change. The call for such integration, based on the empiricist argument that these approaches should be considered as supplementary rather than mutually exclusive, is not new (Becher and Kogan 1992, Bleiklie and Kogan 2000, Greenwood and Hinings 1996, Thelen and Steinmo 1995). In combining the perspectives, Greenwood and Hinings (1996) also suggest to bridge a second separation of inter- and intraorganizational analysis, which often has been criticized for being artificial and detrimental to a full understanding of change processes. Thus they emphasize the interplay between outside pressures, generated by the market- and institutional contexts on the one hand and the intraorganizational dynamics on the other. This combination of perspectives echoes in many ways how an early 'institutionalist', Philip Selznick (1984), proposed to study leadership nearly 50 years ago. His analysis starts from the following premise: Although it is important to regard organizations as instruments in order to handle and understand many day to day administrative and routine concerns in modern organizations, it is not sufficient to understand leadership. The reason is that leadership is about something more than making the organization into an efficient tool. Leadership is a function that is based in organizations that have become institutionalized, which means that they are infused with value, have defined a mission and a role, and have become the embodiment of that role. Leadership is thus about the definition of institutional mission and role, the institutional embodiment of purpose, the defense of institutional integrity, and the ordering of internal conflict (Selznick 1984: 62ff). Institutions are socially embedded 'natural organizations'. Their leadership turns on the dynamic adaptation of the total organization to the internal strivings and external pressures to which they are exposed. One of the failures of leadership occurs when organizational achievement or survival is confounded with institutional success. Whilst an organization such as a university may grow and become more secure if it is efficiently managed, it may nevertheless «fail dismally» if it is lead by administrators without a clear sense of values to be achieved (Selznick 1984: 27).

The need for leadership in the above sense is not constant, but is called for when aims are not well defined, when external support and direction falter, when the organization finds itself in a fluid environment that requires constant adaptation and when goals and values become contested, corrupted or otherwise undermined (Selznick 1984: 119). Institutional leadership is necessary in order to maintain integrity – i.e. the persistence of an organization's distinctive values, competence and role. Institutional

integrity is particularly vulnerable when values are tenuous or insecure. The ability to sustain integrity is dependent on a number of factors. Of particular significance is the relationship between elites, autonomy and social values[2]. Simply put, Selznick proposes that the maintenance of social values depends on the autonomy of elites. The reason is that modern social institutions – such as educational institutions, but also a number of other public and private agencies – are exposed to many demands to provide short-term benefits for large numbers. They tend to adapt themselves to a situation where they cater to large numbers by relaxing the standards for membership. This adaptation makes it increasingly difficult for elites to maintain their own standards, and consequently their particular identity and functions. In the process they tend to lose their 'exclusiveness' which has provided insulation from day to day pressures of outside demands that permits new ideas and skills to mature. Of critical importance to the functioning of elites (in the above sense) is enough autonomy to allow the maturation and protection of values.

The essence of institutional autonomy is therefore not to be found in specific administrative or organizational arrangements, but in its actual functioning with regard to the protection of values. It is therefore a likely proposition that such specific arrangements may vary over time as well as across space, as has been observed in higher education. Within modern universities we can also observe various forms of autonomy operating sometimes together, sometimes in conflict. The forms differ in that they have different collective bases, partly founded in the autonomy of the academic institution, partly in the autonomy of disciplinary and professional communities. In addition autonomy has both a collective dimension as well as an individual one. Whereas the autonomy of social collectivities or social groups provides them with a jurisdiction within which they are free to govern themselves and make decisions without outside interference, individual autonomy provides the individual member of the group with the authority to make decisions concerning how they perform their profession, without interference from their peers or outsiders. Thus individual and institutional autonomy were supposed to sustain one another, and the traditional organizational form through which the potential conflict between collective and individual autonomy has been handled was the collegiate body. Academic institutions – in particular research universities as they emerged in Europe in the 19th century – law firms and hospitals are examples of institutions that in principle have been operated as associations of autonomous individual professionals who govern, within a certain mandate, collectively through collegiate bodies. Such bodies have two main functions. They are vehicles for a) collective decision-making and b) control of professional standards exercised through decisions on admission of new members and sanctions against members who fail to meet the standards set by the collectivity.

Leaders of institutions that are made up and run by collegial peer groups may have a comparatively easy job in the particular sense that goals and values are internalized by the members and often taken for granted. Individual members tend not to distinguish

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[2] The terminology may vary, and the term 'elite' may be substituted by 'profession' or 'professional group'. The important thing is to keep the definition in mind so that whatever term one prefers refers to any social group that is responsible for the protection of a social value (Selznick 1984: 120).

between their personal mission as professionals and that of the institution. The promotion and protection of values is therefore a collective concern. The leader as *primus inter pares* can therefore count on the support of the members of the organization in promoting institutional values. In such a situation leadership is not just easy, it is hardly needed. However, hospitals and universities also make examples of institutions where these structures are undergoing change and where collegiate bodies to varying extent have been replaced by corporate structures, in which decision making bodies are made representative of all categories of organizational members and subject to external control. Modern universities are no longer collegiate bodies of professors where other employee groups and students where excluded from decision making bodies. Since the 1970s they have undergone two important transformations. Firstly they became democratized and decision-making bodies now include all major employee groups. Secondly external interests have in various ways gained a stronger foothold in university governance and are often represented on university boards.

Accordingly two things have happened: On the one hand institutions have been reformed from autonomous collectivities to stakeholder organizations (Neave 2002). One of the major shifts in power relationships in and around universities that follows from this transformation is that universities and the individual academic are supposed to serve the expressed needs of stakeholders for research and educational services. This is a fundamental shift from a situation where their decisions about research and teaching were left to the professional judgment of academics. The current transformation implies however, that the collective and individual autonomy of academics is circumscribed by the needs of others, rather than by their independent judgment as professionals. On the other hand the values of academic institutions have been called into question, and they are often accused of not having clear aims or not being interested in or able to communicate them clearly. Their aims tend to be perceived as not very well defined, and complaints are heard that universities have been poor at defining and clarifying them. External support has faltered as universities are being criticized for being self serving and not useful enough to society. Particularly since the late 1980s their environments have become more fluid than previously as student populations have risen sharply, as funding conditions and funding formulas, legislative conditions and steering mechanisms have changed, as outside demands and internal pressures for organizational reforms have mounted and as internationalization and globalization have created new real of perceived pressures. These developments have in term prompted a series of reform attempts. Universities have tried to adapt themselves through a series of organizational reforms aiming at expanding the capacity for doing applied research, for providing education to a growing and increasingly diverse student body, and for expanding its sources of revenue, organizationally strengthen leadership functions and make their operations and performance transparent to the public. The leadership challenges raised by these circumstances are not necessarily met just by finding the best reform measures that can make universities more efficient or useful, although these are no doubt legitimate concerns. However strongly university reformers emphasize goals of improved efficiency or higher quality, all the changes within and around higher education institutions suggest that a deep value shift is taking place. The problem is that the new values that are supposed to replace the former ones are not clearly identified

and specified. Therefore, universities are not only faced with challenges that raise the need for leadership. The conditions for leadership appear to have deteriorated as the elite autonomy that underpins institutional leadership appears to have been reduced.

This general sketch is not intended as a description of a deep crisis and a sad state for contemporary universities. It is intended as a starting point for an empirical exploration that is based on the considerations that were raised above and that will ask: What are the values that currently underpin university institutions? How are the values promoted and protected? To what extent have values and the arrangements by which they are protected changed over the last decades? To what extent do they vary across nations?

Social Values in Academic Leadership

Institutional values are often packaged within more comprehensive organizational ideals. One way of thinking about such ideals and actual organizational forms is that the former serve as models for the latter; as archetypes or «templates for organizing» (Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 27). The adoption of organizational forms is according to new-institutionalist theory, the outcome of pressures in the institutional environment constituted by organizational fields. For this analysis it is of particularly interesting to look specifically at three phenomena that make important conditions for institutional leadership: administrative ideologies, creation and protection of elites, and the emergence of contending interest groups (Selznick 1984:14–15.)

Before I move on it may be useful to look at some of the organizational 'templates' constituted by the expectations with which modern universities are faced. They originate partly in the different tasks with which a modern university actually is charged, partly in the different ideological conceptions about those tasks and their relative importance. The four templates that are outlined below give different directions for how universities should be organized.[3] It follows, however, as I have argued elsewhere, that the templates are not mutually exclusive ideals, although the emphasis on specific ideals vary in time and space (Bleiklie 1998).

Academic Authority

The first set of expectations is related to *academic authority*. These expectations are closely interwoven with an ideal of the university as a cultural institution the primary task of which is to engage in academic activity based on autonomous research and teaching. This prototype of the research university took shape in Germany and spread to other European countries during the 19th century. The dominant organizational template was the university as a collegium of autonomous chairs with affiliated apprentice students (Neave and Rhoades, 1987: 283ff). The most important expectation of the university as a cultural institution was academic *quality*, in the sense that each one of the chair holders

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[3] This is a slightly modified version of a typology of leadership ideals that I used in a previous discussion of New Public Management ideals in higher education (Bleiklie 1998).

asserts his or her scholarly authority through outstanding research, by attracting talented students and by creating good research environments. The core value fostered by these expectations was one of academic freedom granted to the professors on the basis of academic achievement. Only the professors themselves were entitled to evaluate their own performance as a group of peers. The authority thus rested primarily with «the visible and horizontal collegium» of chair holders.

Today there are few formal mechanisms that emphasize this expectation of individual professors to represent and dominate entire academic fields. Academic authority has traditionally been sustained through representative arrangements that secured professorial power by granting professors exclusive access to positions in the university senate, faculty council and as department chairs (Bleiklie 1994, Daalder and Shils 1982). Although there still remain tasks that are under exclusive professorial authority, the expectation of academic authority is primarily emphasized through formal and sometimes informal ranking of individuals and their academic performance. Most departments are responsible for academic fields that are much too comprehensive to expect any single person to be able to represent the field as a whole. Nevertheless the expectation is still that an academic leader should also be an outstanding academic, and the issue of to what extent decision-making power in university affairs should be based on disciplinary competence is still an important issue. Although the professors have lost their absolute power and even majority on university and faculty boards, positions like department chair, dean, rector, vice chancellor or president are still usually only open to persons who are or have been full professors.

The expectations that face the academic authority are based on the assumption that high disciplinary competence gives the best academic leadership. Beyond the academic status of the leaders the expectations do not specify what the universities are expected to do. This is also an institutional ideal formulated for a situation where little leadership is needed since institutional values are internalized and protected collectively by its members.

Collegial Coordination

A second set of expectations is related to disciplinary *collegial coordination* and characterizes another version of the university as a cultural institution. Here leaders primarily claim authority in their capacity as members of egalitarian and autonomous academic disciplinary communities. These role expectations are related to what we may call «the disciplinary university» modeled on the modern American research university. The term refers to the fact that the disciplines constitute relatively egalitarian communities organized formally within disciplinary departments and with a number of professors in each department. According to this ideal a university is composed of disciplinary communities, run by their members, whether they are admitted on the basis of formal exams or are defined more liberally as any student within the academic field in question.

The ideal is based on the premise that the academic community is granted academic freedom and responsibility for the quality of teaching and research within the discipline.

In post World War II Western Europe disciplinary communities gradually and to varying extent replaced the chair holders as the main academic actors. An important aspect of the democratization process of West European universities during the 1970s has turned on the extension of access to larger segments of the academic community such as academic personnel below full professor level and students to university decision making bodies. The collegial leader is an elected representative of a discipline (whether it be a department chair, a dean or a rector) who is expected to coordinate the activities of the disciplinary community internally and fight for its interests externally. As a colleague and a coordinator he or she is expected to be an accomplished *interest representative* and *politician* rather than a disciplinary entrepreneur.

The expectations directed towards the disciplinary coordination are focusing on the socio-political aspect of organizational arrangments, by concentrating on collegial relations designed to provide protective working arrangements for the academic community and partly securing the flow of resources into that community.

Socially Responsibility

A third set of expectations is related to *the social and political responsibility of universities*. This expectation may vary according to how university systems are organized and coordinated. The extremes may be illustrated by private institutions that define their social mission or «community service» independently on the one hand and institutions within publicly controlled systems that are formally part of the civil service and where the members are considered civil servants on the other. The expectations directed at leaders may thus range from that of an activist who mobilizes support from the environment, to the civil servant who loyally follows up whatever social obligation that is defined by public authorities. Two alternative values may thus be identified in connection with institutional socially responsibilities. One value is *loyalty*, an expectation that is directed by public authorities at universities in public systems. In this case the university demonstrates socially responsibility to the extent that it loyally implements public policies. An alternative version of social responsibility, *community service*, may be illustrated by private institutions that autonomously define themselves as having specific social responsibilities for the local community in which they are located or for the nation state. The specific content of the social responsibilities of higher education institutions may vary from providing society with educated elites, via exploiting efficiently the human capital of a country or actively using higher education in order to reduce social inequality by offering support to youngsters from disadvantaged groups, supporting the spread and development of democratic institutions, to providing the opportunity for the entire population to get higher education as a welfare right regardless of academic qualifications. As public institutions, universities are supposed to somehow assume and interpret their social responsibilities within the framework of national political goals and programs.

The socially responsible university is expected to be oriented towards actions and values that emphasize that it gives something back to society beyond its traditional «output» of education and research responsibilities. The focus is here on the fulfillment

of the expressed wishes of outside constituents, be they politicians, civil service representatives or community members. However, how and to what extent actual universities emphasize social responsibility in the above sense depends on how social responsibilities interact with other expectations to which universities are exposed.

Business Enterprise

The last set of expectations is related to *the business enterprise*. This ideal is based on the notion that the university is a producer of educational- and research services. It is embedded in the set of ideas that come under labels like «The New Public Management» or «Managerialism». These ideas have served as ideological justification for public administrative reforms internationally the last decades and have characterized university policies particularly from the latter half of the 1980s on (Bleiklie 1998, Christensen 1991, Keller 1983, Lægreid 1991, Olsen 1993, Pollitt 1990, Røvik 1992).

Seen as a business enterprise a university consists of a leadership and different functional (academic, technical and administrative) staff groups servicing different user groups in need of the services the enterprise offers. Although *quality* and «quality assurance» are emphasized as fundamental goals, the most important expectation confronting the business enterprise is the *efficiency* with which it produces useful services, in the form of research and candidates, to the benefit of the «users» of its services. The concept of «user» is a wide one, and it may comprise a wide array of groups from the university's own students, faculty and administrators, to employers of university graduates or buyers of research services.

The ideology behind public university reforms the last decades emphasizes the importance of higher education for national economic growth (Bleiklie 1998). Therefore, it has been a major aim to increase the capacity to produce larger numbers of candidates more efficiently. Together with the idea that increased efficiency can be achieved by means of incentive policies and performance indicators, these notions tend to imply that the administrative element in university governance should be strengthened in order to ensure a standardized and controllable handling of the growing burden of teaching and research. The expectation of increased efficiency in the production of research and candidates means that the tasks of formulating production goals and of mobilizing resources and support by means of incentive systems become crucial concerns. The notion, well known from the American management tradition that comes with this ideal is that leadership is a profession in itself. Academic achievement as a condition for influence and leadership positions may be problematic in this perspective since the assumption is that highly qualified academics tend to defend the special interests of their discipline rather that those of the entire institution. This has been one of the justifications for bringing in external representatives and reducing the influence of professors on university boards. Furthermore, since leaders need to be qualified as leaders, leader selection should be based on searches for candidates with leadership qualities rather than academic merits.

   This institutional ideal, particularly as it has manifested itself in universities, directs attention towards instrumental aspects as it focuses on 'bottom line' outcomes and the efficiency with which they are produced.

   From the institutional perspective outline here, it may seem somewhat paradoxical that the calls for stronger leadership has been justified in terms of a leadership ideal that emphasizes efficiency as a general organizational quality and the organization as an instrument rather than some set of institutional values. This fact should not however, be exaggerated without closer scrutiny of empirical evidence. Initially it is important to be aware of the fact institutional ideals come in packages where more than one set of values are bundled together. Secondly, one cannot necessarily deduce actual practices in specific instances from general trends or ideals in policy documents or organizational plans.

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As already indicated the institutional ideals or organizational templates presented here are not mutually exclusive, but as argued above, the degree to which they are emphasized and dominate as templates may vary over time and across institutions and educational systems. Whereas in the 1960s and 1970s it shifted from academic authority towards disciplinary coordination, the emphasis since the late 1980s has (at least ostensibly) shifted towards the business enterprise ideal whilst disciplinary coordination has been under attack as a prime example of 'weak' leadership. However in European public systems the extent to which rhetoric based on the business enterprise ideal have been followed up in practice, varies and exists in a sometimes uneasy relationship with bureaucratic steering and the social responsibility of universities as civil service institutions. One may also ask to what extent one is likely to find additional variation in African, Asian and Latin American countries. These observations lead towards three kinds of empirical questions. Firstly, how have institutional values and organizational characteristics of leadership varied over time? Secondly how do the institutional values and organizational characteristics of leadership vary across nations? Thirdly to what extent have national differences diminished over time as supporters of the globalization thesis argue, or conversely, to what extent do national differences persist in the face of global processes of economic and ideological change?[4] This paper concentrates on some selected European experiences with some reference to the US.

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[4] The globalization thesis applied to our topic would argue that we are headed for a global model of higher education. It is often based on an underlying presumption that there are standardizing forces at work, whether they are based on a Weberian notion of the bureaucratisation of the world (Weber 1978), emergence of world systems of education (Meyer and Ramírez 2000) or notions about globalisation (Berger and Dore 1996) and European integration. These theories make an argument that at face value seems convincing and important because they deal with some forceful processes that contribute to shaping our world. This may be seen in contrast to an alternative perspective that we find in historically oriented studies of state formation where the focus is on how specific national settings shape political processes (Evans et al. 1985).

International Trends and National Variation

The rising influence of the business enterprise model as a template has in most countries constituted an increasing institutional contextual pressure for change over the last decades. Few doubt that the expectations that face universities are changing. A number of processes have been pointed out as drivers behind the changing ideals or values that university institutions are supposed to sustain (Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot 2002). The rise of mass education during the 1980s and 1990s has made higher education and its costs more visible and contributed to a more intense focus on how higher education institutions are organized and managed. New ideas about how universities ought to be managed and funded have altered the political rhetoric and discourse about higher education issues (Neave 1998, 2002). The idea that universities ought to be organized and managed as business enterprises and become entrepreneurial universities (Clark 1998) has deeply influenced the debate about organization and leadership in higher education. Thus enthusiasts who envisage new alliances and forms of cooperation between economic enterprise, public authority and knowledge institutions as necessary and with desirable consequences for academic institutions and knowledge production have coined expressions like 'the triple helix' (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 1997) or 'mode 2' knowledge production (Gibbons et al. 1994). Skeptics of these trends have on the other hand, raised scenarios of how stronger external influence over academic institutions lead to the break down of internal value systems, symbolized by the rise of 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Leslie 1997) and the 'ruin' of the university as the cultural institution we have known until recently (Readings 1996). However enthusiasts and skeptics alike tend to share the assumption that a radical change has taken place and focus on how new ideals and policies based on those ideals change the operating conditions for universities. The implications of such changing expectations are, however, contested issues. At least two questions may be raised in this connection. Firstly, how do social values and institutional ideals change? Secondly, to what extent are changing ideals associated with changes in organizational forms?

The first question raises the issue of the nature of ideological change. Much of the literature on change in higher education focuses on how traditional ideals or 'templates' are replaced by new ones, much as organizations may replace or redefine goals in theories of rational organizational choice. If this is true then universities have undergone a process of radical change. Alternatively one may assume that new ideals are layered on top of existing ones in a process of sedimentation (Bleiklie 1998). Universities are therefore faced with a number of expectations, partly based on traditional and partly on new templates. The need for leadership arises according to the institutionalist perspective adopted here, precisely when new «mixes» of values create uncertainty about the indispensability of previously taken for granted assumptions, established organizational aims and the internal relationship between them.

The answer to the first question therefore, whether it is based on the assumption of replacement of established ideals by new ones, i.e. *radical change,* or on the assumption of

sedimentation or *organic growth* (Becher and Kogan 1992: 176), has implications for our assumptions about the second question. If institutional ideals develop in a goal replacement process one may hypothesize that organizational forms develop through structural redesign processes. This kind of processes renders the impression of well-integrated organizations in which activities and changes in one part of the organization have clear consequences for what goes on in the rest of the organization. If leadership ideals develop in a sedimentation process, then this might also be true for how organizational development is affected by such ideals – i.e. through a process of gradual change in which new structures are grafted onto existing ones. This second process gives the impression of a more complex, loosely coupled organization in which activities and changes in one part of the organization have no or only diffuse implications for activities in the rest of the organization. Traditionally organization theorists have conceptualized universities as complex (Damrosch 1995), multifunctional (Kerr 1995, Parsons and Platt 1973) and loosely coupled organizations (Weick 1976). Indeed, the very ideas of loose coupling and corresponding «garbage can» processes were developed by students of decision making in universities (Cohen et al. 1972). The new trends that face universities may be regarded as attempts at changing the characteristics that used to be regarded as essential. The two perspectives sketched above produce highly divergent expectations as to the likely outcome of such attempts.

Reforms are often presented as radical changes introduced as outcomes of thorough and well-planned structural redesign, and they are based on the assumption that human behavior easily lends itself to steering by changes in formal structures. Actual reform processes, however, resemble more often than not the gradual and organic processes of change which means that reforms, for better or worse, with relatively few exceptions tend to accomplish less than originally announced.

Usually therefore, we expect academic institutions to develop gradually and the introduction of new social values to add to the complexity of rather than radically change the conditions for leadership in periods of change. This does not mean that change cannot take place abruptly and be radical, only that the circumstances under which rapid change take place are relatively unusual and specific. According Greenwood & Hinings (1996) variation in market pressure and intraorganizational dynamics may account for considerable variation in the pace and degree of organizational change. If we interpret the term 'market' in a wide sense to include most of an organization's environment, particularly public policies and funding in public systems, it is worth looking more closely into their proposition in order to understand variation in change processes in academic leadership.

The most influential account of the processes that have affected the conditions for academic leadership over time the last fifty years or so is found in well-known contributions as those of Gibbons et al. (1994), and Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (1997). Starting with the process of massification, it runs more or less like this: Massification, starting in the 1960, with the last wave of expansion during the 1990s, was an international process that affected educational systems and societies, at least in the Europe, North America and Austral-Asia, in a uniform way with respect to a number of general characteristics (Ramirez 2003). Increased participation rates made higher education and research important to steadily increasing population groups, but at the

same less exclusive and less associated with elevated social status. At the same time the number of higher education faculty grew, and university professors in particular have felt considerably less exclusive than before, as they have experienced a declining income in relative terms and a loss of power and influence inside academia in absolute terms. From the 1980s globalization and neo-liberalism have put an increasingly strong pressure on universities to behave like businesses because this will make them more efficient in providing education and research services in large quantities, more competitive on the international market place, and better able to secure outside funding and become less dependent on public support. In order to enable universities to meet these challenges university reformers have set out to integrating universities, tightening the links between the different parts of the university organization in order to make them more efficient, manageable and accountable.

Correct as this argument may be, it is important to keep in mind that universities no less than previously are pursuing multiple goals, serving various constituencies and interest groups. The replacement or addition of new goals, such as efficiency, manageability, accountability and profitability does not necessarily have any direct implications for organizational behavior. For this to happen, two conditions must be met: Firstly leaders and influential (elite) organizational members must embrace and internalize the values implied by the new goals. Secondly they must develop the practical implications of how they want to protect and sustain these values. Teichler (1988) has demonstrated how the exact implications of massification have varied across countries depending on what institutional and organizational patterns were developed in order to deal with higher education expansion. Comparative evidence from countries such as England, France, Germany, Norway and Sweden suggests that the solutions have been contested issues that are shaped by established institutional structures (Kogan et al. 2000, Musselin 1999). In particular the comparative study of university reforms in England, Norway and Sweden during the 1980s and 1990s demonstrates how reforms that apparently are justified in terms of ideals such as autonomy, accountability, efficiency and quality both were introduced in institutional settings that were quite different, but also followed different paths.

The reforms of the 1980s and 1990s signalled new directions in higher education policies in all three countries, but with different emphases. One characteristic that applied to all three countries was that higher education had become more politically salient over the years. Accordingly central government authorities, whatever their leaning, were more concerned about the cost of higher education and more interested in affecting the product of higher education institutions in terms of candidates and research than previously. This meant that although governments might steer in a more decentralised manner than previously, they were interested in steering a wider array of affairs and in this sense power was centralised rather than decentralised.

Traditionally direct regulation by state authorities had been much more salient in the almost entirely state-owned higher education systems of Norway and Sweden than in England, where state authorities hardly tried to wield any authority at all. In the former countries, however, university legislation and other legislative measures determined such important issues as the degree structure, examinations, and the obligations of the academic faculty.

The comparison demonstrates how the general ideological pressure in each country is mediated through specific national policies based on experiences and issues that constitute powerful political, legal and financial operating conditions. These national influences molded and gave shape to the general trends that affect systems internationally. Thus whereas English universities experienced stronger government control and less autonomy, Swedish universities experienced more autonomy, with Norway placed in a middle position characterized by a less drastic and more mixed combination of reform measures.

Formerly, the ideal university leadership was collegial co-ordination where leaders claimed authority in their capacity as members of an egalitarian and autonomous disciplinary community. Institutional leadership, in the new reform setting, however, was seen as a task radically different from research and teaching. 'One of the genuine challenges for any head of institution is to ensure there is a balance between managerial accountability and giving a say to the academic community' (Kogan and Hanney 2000:195). University leaders reported quite mixed experiences regarding institutional autonomy. As for institutional leadership English Vice-Chancellors experienced positively that additional executive powers were vested in them, Swedish Rectors felt unprepared for their new freedom, and Norwegian Rectors and Directors within the traditional dual leadership structure that still existed, again reported mixed experiences and more ambiguity regarding institutional autonomy. However, the link between academic authority at the institutional level and individual authority was challenged in all countries although to varying extent.

There were indications in the three studies that the changed rector's role also had impact on appointment procedures. Criteria for the election or appointment of academic leaders shifted from the procedural ('now it's turn for a person from the Faculty of Law to take over the responsibilities of a rector') towards the more individualistic ('we need a person who is a visionary and strong leader'). The internal hierarchy, based on scholarly reputation, was replaced by a more unofficial institutional hierarchy based on a personal reputation as a dynamic and successful research manager. Such attributes as leadership and management skills were now of at least equal importance as academic reputation and a distinguished appearance.

Compared to the European reform experience reported above, the situation in the USA is somewhat different. Overall, the patterns of higher education organization and leadership seem to be more settled and stable. Among the reasons for this may be the fact that the US system expanded earlier under different economic and social conditions before higher education became 'a mature industry' (Levine 2001); that institutional structures have evolved over time and not as part of a master plan (excepting some systems at state level such as the famous California Master Plan); and that US higher education today is regarded as a model for others to emulate rather than a system that need to learn from others. Finally, one may ask whether the size and diversity of the US higher education system makes it uniquely capable of absorbing growth and change while keeping its basic structural features.

In a comparison of changes in government regulation of higher education in eight countries – Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States – during almost the same period (late 1980s and 1990s), the

comparison found a number of differences that are relevant in out context (Bleiklie et al. 2004). The study looked at the use of four types of government regulation in higher education: oversight, mutuality, competition and contrived randomness. The types correspond roughly to what one might call direct regulation, professional autonomy (by collegiate bodies), competition and random control or inspections. The study revealed the following pattern: The US stood out from the other countries by being less exposed to oversight. The US and the UK where characterized by 'medium' mutuality compared to the rest that were classified as 'high'. As for competition the US scored 'high', Australia 'medium', Japan and the UK were headed towards increasing/growing competition whereas the rest where characterized by 'low', but increasing competition, with the exception of Norway whose 'low'-score demonstrated no significant move in the direction of more competition. Finally, UK stands out as the only country where contrived randomness ('medium') plays a significant role. Thus autonomous collegial decision making still plays an essential role in all university systems, but enjoys a stronger position in continental Europe than in the Anglo-American countries and Japan. Conversely competition plays a stronger role in systems with many and influential private institutions (Japan, the US) and countries that have pursued more radical New Public Management policies.

I shall conclude this discussion by pointing out that the business enterprise template only to a limited extent has influenced the university systems analyzed above. Being affected by common external forces that push all systems in the same direction does not necessarily mean that they are becoming more similar to one another than previously. National distinctive features still exert a heavy influence on the formulation of current reform policies. The findings reported above indicate that national peculiarities have survived and that some of the oft-cited differences between regions such as the Anglo-Saxon world and continental Europe still persist.

Furthermore, we may draw two conclusions about the conditions for institutional leadership. Universities in the countries studied still enjoy considerable institutional autonomy and in this sense conditions for institutional leadership are still present. However, the connection between institutional and individual autonomy has been seriously weakened, if not severed, in many countries. This raises the question about which elites may sustain the autonomy needed to exert institutional leadership. In the next section I shall look at how regional and national organizational leadership configurations may shed further light on the future of academic institutional leadership and the autonomy on which it is based.

Institutional Forms and Emerging Knowledge Regimes

The previous discussion has emphasized how changes in the organization of higher education institutions must be understood against the backdrop of massification, expansion and the need to control costs linked to a more visible and politically salient higher education system. The development described, may be seen as nationally distinct

outcomes of the struggle to define the true nature of knowledge between actors such as states and politicians, institutional leaders and students, researchers and intellectuals, consultants and business leaders. *Knowledge interests* are therefore the key, together with the linked concepts of *knowledge alliances* and *knowledge regimes*. Returning to the Greenwood & Hinings (1996) suggestion that organizational change may be seen as the outcome of market pressure and intraorganizational dynamics, knowledge regimes may constitute the set of organizational conditions that give direction to the way in which these forces play themselves out. In order to understand the different trajectories higher education systems have followed I shall distinguish between a few ideal typical constellations of knowledge regimes and the actor constellations and interests on which they are based.

Modern universities and higher education systems are influenced by a number of developments that have implied a thrust in the direction of an extended concept of knowledge and a stronger utility orientation. In the following I shall argue that the new emerging knowledge regimes may be divided into at least two main groups. On the one hand there is *an academic capitalist regime*, driven by university-industry alliances, economic interests and a commercial logic. In spite of its huge influence on the discourse about higher education and as a symbol of current changes in higher education institutions, the notion of 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Leslie 1997) or 'entrepreneurial universities' (Clark 1998), industry funding is an important source to relatively few top research universities, particularly in the US (Powell and Owen-Smith 1998, Turk-Bicacki and Brint 2005). Public funding and ownership of higher education institutions by national or regional governments is still the dominant pattern. This might be taken as an argument to the effect that stability prevails in the face of all rhetoric about fundamental change. Stakeholder principles according to the business enterprise ideal, however, may support the spread of 'capitalism' and be supported by a combination of public austerity policies and stronger influence by other outside interests financially and through university board positions.

Although universities still are predominantly public in most countries, the way in which public authorities run universities has changed fundamentally, heavily influenced by notions of 'academic capitalism' and 'entrepreneurial universities' which manifests itself in the notion of universities as business enterprises and introduction of quasi-market mechanisms in order to promote competition and cost effectiveness. These *public managerialist regimes* are driven by university-state alliances, political-administrative interests and a semi-competitive logic based on incentive policies where part of the public support depends on teaching and/or research performance. They come, however, in different versions that may be understood against the backdrop of the previous public regimes they have developed from. Comparing the systems of England, Norway and Sweden, Kogan et al (2000) point out that the public regimes that dominated the systems until the 1980s or 1990s were different in important respects. Although they in principle were public, different actor constellations, alliances and interests characterized the regimes.

The English regime was until about 1980 dominated by co-opted academic elites who under state protection could offer considerable autonomy to the universities and where policies contributed to maintaining the elite structure with a few top universities

that stood out from the rest in terms of academic prestige and social standing. The English version of the public managerialist regime that emerged during the 1980s and 1990s was much more centralized than previously. Through centralized competitive evaluation procedures such as the Research Assessment Exercises, the field was in principle opened up for all higher education institutions, polytechnics as well as universities to compete for research funding and academic status. This abolished the binary divide between university and non-university institutions and made in principle possible a more seamless integration of higher education. However, in practice the Research Assessment Exercises have reconfirmed the academic status hierarchy, in which a few top institutions receive most of the public research funding, whereas the other institutions must struggle to fund their research from other sources, focus on applied short term research contracts or devote themselves to teaching. The vice-chancellors had traditionally had a different position from Swedish and Norwegian rectors. They had always been a kind of public notable, and this partly reflected the incorporated or chartered status of the institutions they led. They were also appointed, not elected, until retirement. With the reforms of the 1990s they experienced that their role was further reinforced with executive power and the enhancement of existing privileges of pay, car and house which constituted a definite pulling away from the professoriate. Thus English Vice-Chancellors experienced that the business executive ideal came in addition to, and without necessarily threatening their academic authority. The preservation of the hierarchical and elitist structure of the English higher education system may also indicate that to the extent that institutional autonomy is based on this structure, the conditions for sustaining it are still intact. One important mechanism in this connection is the fact that a considerable proportion of English Vice-Chancellors are recruited from top institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge.

The Swedish regime between 1977 and 1994 had corporatist features, dominated by state authorities and unions and strongly influenced by political priorities. The Swedish version of a public managerialist regime was introduced following a transition from a social democratic to a conservative government and came with a decentralizing move in which central government authorities in the name of institutional autonomy transferred decision making authority to the institutions. At the same time the internal institutional leadership was strengthened and external influence through representation by representatives from outside the university on university boards was established. Faced with the increased authority vested in them, Swedish university leaders seemed to look for directions, and it appears that the previous leadership values based in collegial leadership were perceived as inadequate. Thus Swedish rectors were apparently left to navigate and finding a new balance between expectations of academic authority, executive efficiency and social responsibilities without very clear directions. The attempt to strengthen central leadership structures by increasing the number of central administrative staff and not the least the number of vice rectors to which the rector may delegate tasks, may have been one way of trying to create a more solid leadership base and a basis for an elite on which institutional leadership may rely.

The Norwegian regime was statist, dominated by higher education institutions and the Ministry of education. The Norwegian public managerialist regime has come with a mixture of centralizing and decentralizing moves whereby central authorities have

sought to establish a formal framework that may make Norwegian higher education institutions more efficient, more flexible, more sensitive to students' needs and more open to student mobility across institutions. Activity planning and incentive policies, emphasizing rewarding teaching efficiency and student throughput have been major policy tools. The first major change of the internal governing structure was introduced in 1990 by severing the internal disciplinary chain of representation, whereby elected leaders at lower levels (department chairs and deans) were represented on the governing boards at higher levels, and replace it with a functional system in which categories of employees and students are represented. This system was believed to be better able to address the interests of the institution as a whole and weaken the role of «special interests» among the faculty (Bleiklie et al. 2000). The higher education legislation of 1995 kept the existing dual» leadership arrangements – whereby at all levels of institutional leadership there is an elected office (chair, dean and Rector) and an administratively appointed counterpart (head of office, faculty director, and director general) to all higher education institutions. However the legislation introduced external board representation and reduced academic staff from a majority position to a command of 4 out of 11 seats. The Government has furthermore tried to deal with the leadership issue in connection with the comprehensive reform process («the Quality Reform») that started in 2002. Although it seems to be in favor of introducing a system of appointed leaders, the Government has been reluctant to impose a system that face considerable opposition without thorough preparations and a period of voluntary experimenting. However gradual and slow the Norwegian reform process has been, it raises with increasing force, the question of the basis of institutional leadership and autonomy. Whilst weakening the internal influence and authority of academics, it is not clear by whom institutional values are supposed to be protected. The expectation of executive leadership is less pronounced and less underpinned by organizational arrangements in Norway than in the other countries. Academic authority is rather challenged from the Ministry, and by the expectation of loyalty that is directed towards leaders of bureaucratic agencies within public administrative systems. One possibility is that this may strengthen the «chain of command» from the Ministry down to individual institutions, unless institutional leaders are given space that enables them to modify and defend a new basis of institutional leadership.

Conclusion

These observations suggest first of all that when new knowledge regimes arise, their impact may be partial and vary depending on the conditions with which they are faced. The emerging capitalist and managerialist regimes may be viewed as different responses to a number of general trends such as higher education expansion, the rise of 'knowledge society', and a different understanding of the purpose of higher education and research. What I have called an academic capitalist regime has in many ways become a global yardstick, despised by some, but espoused by many others. It has until now had a stronger impact on ideology and discourse than on the way in which universities are operated and funded. The practical impact of a commercial logic on

Western university systems is still limited and concerns mainly a relatively small number of major research universities. In many public systems in Europe a semi-competitive logic between institutions has been introduced in which they are supposed to compete for students and research funding. This semi-competitive logic may provide an important rationale for academic institutional leadership, and may pave the way for further moves in the direction of 'academic capitalism'. However, the way in which this might develop depends on the extent to which business enterprise ideals are balanced by institutional arrangements that protect academic individual as well as institutional autonomy. It is also dependent on how universities will interpret their social responsibilities. The tendencies over the last decades have been conflation of the value of social responsibility and executive efficiency. This has gradually reduced the alternative idea of social responsibility in which universities are considered providers of welfare and democracy through advanced education and research. It is still early to determine to what extent the competitive or semi-competitive drive based on ideas of the efficient corporate enterprise will affect academic institutions in a uniform way internationally, and until recently the extent to which it had gained foothold varied considerably, dampened by still apparently quite resilient alternative values.

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