Chapter 5
Performing Academics:
Return to Meritocracy?

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing number of critics who claim that modern changes of the university, based on the market fundamentalism and performance management paradigm, undermine the academic culture, ethos and trust and weaken the cultural mission of the university. The chapter focuses on a critique of the ongoing erosion of an important cultural function performed until very recently by the Western universities, which is democratization of social life through development of critical thinking, imagination, and through cultivation of social and humanistic sensibility. The main aim of this chapter is to analyze the current state of the corporate university and to reflect on the bureaucracy as a potential solution for the neoliberal limitations.

I would not belong to any club that would have me as a member. (Groucho Marx)

The dilemma that faces companies in the new information economy is that capitalist success is possible only if communism continues to prevail among most researchers. (Pascal Jollivet)

INTRODUCTION

According to some research findings about the consequences of adapting performance management imperative into universities, there is a more and more visible erosion of the social ties at the university, the academic ethos, teaching and research quality, family life and even mental health of academics (Alvesson, 2013; Craig et al., 2014; Izak et. al., in press). What is observed is that – according to the neoliberal pressure – more and more academics in the world conduct research mainly to meet the reporting require-

ments and the excellence ranking lists (Münch, 2014; Tourish &Willmott, 2015). As a result, work at the university – teaching, research, but also administrative work – becomes an autonomous goal in itself and often takes place at the expense of academic values and in accordance with the logic of survival of individuals (Knights & Clarke, 2014; Zawadzki, in press). Should we then return to the bureaucracy? Is bureaucracy a better solution for academics affected by the negative consequences connected with reforming contemporary universities through the New Public Management model?

BACKGROUND

Bureaucracies are not loved, nor are they admired. But they are everywhere, and everywhere they are grudgingly recognized, accepted, tolerated, maintained. Some people didn't like Bush when he was a president, and some do not like Obama when he is. But very few people question the necessity of a president and of a federal administration, i.e. functionaries of a bureaucracy, in the USA. Most people think, or at least have a gut feeling in spite of the easy stereotypes and media-bashing that some bureaucracy is inevitable and desirable if we are to delegate some authority and to monitor the results in a transparent manner. After all, bureaucracy was one of the stepping stones from divine and secular dictatorships to democracy. It reinforced resistance to dictatorships and sustained the egalitarian tendencies towards meritocracy. This is what we like to call a democracy. Democracy is run for all of us and is built on equality, but it gives rise to new inequalities, even if these new inequalities tend to be more local and more transient, more temporary, too. Bureaucratic inequalities are less robust than the other ones. Descendants of the Norman conquerors of England in 1066 may still prevail upon their Anglo-Saxon subjects among students in Oxford or Cambridge, but sons and daughters of prime ministers do not inherit the power positions, Nigela Lawson's celebrity status notwithstanding.

Not that democracy equals equality. All men may be created equal, but some are elected or trained to serve in bureaucracies and then they may sometimes become more equal than the others. The paradox of the marriage of true inquisitive minds (academic community) to multiple bureaucracies (universities, research centers, knowledge intensive organizations, media) lies at the heart of our academic professional lives. We praise merit but we love equality in pursuit of truth, too. What is our academic community, after all? Our academic community is composed of numerous (virtually "clouded") networks floating through knowledge spaces, but always with an anchor ready to be dropped in the home port of our professional bureaucracies (a university, a research institute, an academy of science, a learned society or a media platform).

The paradox of our academic community consists of the fact that we all complain about bureaucracy, but see no better defense against ideological storms of populism, neoliberalism, commercialism, technocracy, kleptocracy and whimsical, cruel tyranny. Bureaucratic routines seem to better protect us from self-exploitation as emergent entrepreneurs in cognitive capitalist societies than ideological sirens, which promise to liberate us from capitalist chains. Bureaucracy is still preferable to a sectarian party seducing us into a collective quest for a holy grail of individual creativity and organizational excellence, even if the latter is fluent in orchestrating spontaneous outbursts of mass anger or subverting the judiciary and terrorizing hostage societies.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER. BUREAUCRACY AND PERFORMING ACADEMICS

Praises of the Bureaucracy

To paraphrase Groucho Marx, we would not like to be members of the bureaucratized academic club, because then we would be defined in bureaucratic terms, but on the other hand we can defy bureaucracy only because bureaucratic due process allows us to conduct a fair trial, an ongoing critical examination of responsibilities and a moral sentencing of power abuses. Bureaucracy is a legitimate daughter of a rational reflection and deserves recognition. This is praise number one: Bureaucracy irritates, but does not close the door to further investigation, which allows to subject claims about responsibility and causality to a standing tribunal of reason.

One may mention Kafka or Zamyatin, Huxley or Orwell as critics of bureaucratic tyranny of imperfect future. But Kafka and Orwell did very well in their respective bureaucratic jobs. They did very well as real life bureaucrats in a Viennese bank and London's wartime BBC. Most of us do fairly well in our academic bureaucracies. Bureaucracy is not incompatible with an open society, and academic bureaucracy is not totally incompatible with intellectual merit, though it may occasionally ally with some of its enemies. Popper's career is a case in point: he could call top biologists on the phone raving about methodological fallacies in their theoretical studies, even though their academic status far exceeded his own. Normal science does not stimulate such behavior, especially if you are about to plan a life-long career in the academia. But dissidence and resistance are not punished with death and imprisonment. Even if power holders can take liberties with truth.

General public gets a glimpse of the liberties academic professionals take with truth through paradoxes. Groucho Marx's one-liners, Kafka's short stories and Heller' s "Catch-22" are the artistic representations of this paradox. They both appeal to the tribunal of reason – a paradox means that a real problem had been encountered and that normal routines fail to address it adequately. Logical paradoxes signal significant problems:

- What do I mean when as a statistician I claim that there are lies, terrible lies and – the worst – statistics?
- Am I telling the truth or am I lying?
- Am I allowing for a criticism of my own professional kin or am I defusing any possible critique by pointing out that we have already become aware of our limitations?

The Left always thought that bureaucracies are bound to be always biased in favor of the ruling classes. Political superstructure is, according to the Marxian view, a sugar coating, an icing on a cake of our societies which had been baked with productive forces and spiced by class struggles. The hip and hippie counterculture of student protesters in 1968 blamed bureaucracies for alienating individuals, and for herding them into slavishly followed patterns of life. Bureaucratic chimneys of upward professional mobility tended to promote the reign of the best and the brightest technocrats – in other words, they facilitated the rise of technocracy, only thinly disguised as a legitimate outcome of educational meritocracy. Equal start and fairness within educational bureaucracies are supposedly the safeguards of a properly functioning meritocracy. A good technocrat was supposed to run Pentagon or General Motors with the same impartial excellence. Hot public debates in the USA around the Vietnam war gave rise to a rival

social imagination and an alternative narration. An alternative to bureaucratic organizations and their matrix-like shaping of a corporate man or woman has been suggested – as being glimpsed in spontaneous self-organization of the protesting young in the late 1960ies. A free community of spontaneous, creative individuals was supposed to usher in an era of an empowered imagination. Hip "hippie communities" were imagined and praised: they were populated by spontaneous, liberated, creative individuals with supposedly little need of bureaucratic organizing, managing, administering. Free individuals in pursuit of happiness through creativity and surfing were in, "squares" from technocratic bureaucracies, narrowly specialized bureaucratic technocrats - were out.

The university bureaucrats were also blamed for subverting meritocracy and securing class power for the managers (of public and corporate bureaucracies) and for the owners (of companies and financial resources). In a neo-Marxist update of the theory of the emergent managerial class, Konrad and Szelenyi had suggested that the educated classes, the intelligentsia of the central and eastern European societies, used the growth of educational bureaucracies as an instrument for capturing new class power, mostly legitimized by meritocratic slogans (see: Konrad, Szelenyi, 1979).When enlightened bureaucrats from Berkeley university decided to convert a park into a parking lot, grass-roots organizing exploded and students started a protest, quickly embracing also anti-Vietnam war slogans. Students have lost in short term. Kent state university and Jackson state university students were shot dead by the riot police in 1970, while Richard Nixon called the former "bums" and kept silent about the latter, adding racial insult to class injury (students shot in their dorm in Jackson were all black[1]). Students had won in mid-terms. War in Vietnam was finally terminated, and generally speaking, universities became less authoritarian and open to more students from lower classes in the 1970ies (this was the second explosion of higher education after GI bill paved the way for the first one after WWII). Nevertheless, students lost even more in a slightly longer term (1968-2008) This last, longer term loss allows the second praise of bureaucracy. Individual creative fulfillment as an ideal of the flower-power generation envisioned the breaking of the bureaucratic chains. But this thrashing of bureaucracy resulted – what an irony of historical fate – in a mutant emergence of far more repressive regimes of corporate HRM (exploiting individual creativity and personal entrepreneurial ambitions) than had been the case in the post WWII industrial democracies. It was precisely the public bureaucracies of the capitalist societies after the 1929 crisis and WWII that had been supported the standardized corporate men and women. These bureaucracies were collectively enabling citizens to enjoy the benefits of a dismantling of monopolies of the gilded age. Individualists won after 1968, but helping curb bureaucracy they had inadvertently paved the way for a much more refined and globalized exploitation in service of an accelerated accumulation of capital. Hippies with flowers in their hair turned out to have ushered in the wolves of the Wall Street, who explore exploiting without bureaucratic control of the bodies, but with virtual control of minds and hearts.

Bureaucracies learned faster than individuals, and top managers of bureaucracies learned faster than most professionals hired by professional bureaucracies, for instance the academic ones. Corporate organization, a semi-divine pattern for business activities, heralded by missionary MBA teachers in all business schools around the globe, is, after all, a professional bureaucracy plus ideological blessing. It replicates in all organized networks the same pyramid structures for:

- Managing production (including the production of knowledge),
- Services (including the educational "sprayers" for disseminating knowledge, often virtual and digital ones) and

- Utilization of research results (which includes matrixes for running both Silicon Valleys and Greenpeace initiatives, Russian secret services and Mexican drug cartels, CERN-like research clusters and cold fusion advanced research projects).

This is the third, qualified praise: resilience of bureaucracy as hierarchic coordination of tasks is a major unexplained but definitely proven fact of social life. Particular bureaucracies are not eternal, but bureaucratic matrix lives on, resurrected and resuscitated at every historical turn. It can survive even the neoliberal diet, which reduces investment in general welfare rather than particular profits. Reformers, dissidents, saviors and revolutionaries emerge, but their legacy survives only in professional hands of dedicated bureaucrats. Why?

Let us note that all three praises are qualified.

Bureaucracy as a Necessity?

First, bureaucracies do not form a happy family. They clash, fight, die, defeat or devour one another. Long before mergers and acquisitions had become a fashion in a business world, bureaucracies practiced the art of shifting the borders of departments or provinces, experimenting with bureaucratic mergers and acquisitions, conquests and spin-offs. Bureaucracies, with their air of competence locked in educated and conscientious officialdom act as sources of legitimacy in organizing and managing (after all, there must be some redeeming value in bureaucracy if it turns out to be so resilient). But they do not always attract respect and acknowledgment.

Second, political bureaucracies of public authorities are openly claimed by political parties which motivate their claims with ideologies and staff them with people whose fidelity to the party bosses trumps their expertise and impartiality. Bureaucracies clearly attract ideological desires and serve as political spoils. That means that legitimacy of some bureaucracies is inflated, while of the others, undervalued. What is the ranking of academic bureaucracy on the stock exchange of social recognition and respect? Our professed pursuit of truth still goes a long way: we are paid more respect than politicians or most businessmen and women. But what happens if we try to form closer alliances either with the public authorities or with the business companies? We have to pay back with some of the credit built by respect and recognition we had accumulated earlier.

Third, in the wake of neoliberal decades (at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries) we had experienced yet another reshaping of bureaucracies. Commercialization of universities is considered contrary to the principle of disinterested pursuit of truth (pharmaceutical companies are a case in point). So is the political obedience to the public authorities, which are deciding about taxpayer's money allocated to academic institutions (the military branch of the public authorities is a case in point).Should we design, create and maintain the institutional watchdogs of our academic purity? This could amount to a creation of yet another bureaucracy, perhaps within bureaucracy, within an even more exclusive inner circle. If so, what about the proliferation of bureaucracies in the name of cutting bureaucracy down? On the other hand, if we are to believe Boisot's and Fiol's *Learning Cube* report on the implementation of action learning in Beijing – bureaucracies of the EU and of the People's Republic of China have actually protected an action learning project, accepting its three tenets, that is addressing the relevant real life problems, respecting autonomy of learner (not to be mistaken for learner's independence)and promoting learning through peer interaction (cf. Boisot & Fiol, 2013, first published in 1987).

Are there too few of bureaucracies after the shrinking of the state administration, or are there still too many left? We do not know. Have they become too opaque, after governments started to produce more classified than accessible information, or are they still more transparent than non-bureaucratic forms of coordination, which may leave less paper or electronic trails, but never allowed a scrutiny to which every candidate for a political position must submit herself or himself? We do not know. What we do know is that on and off Wikileaks meets Google and we glimpse some uncomfortable truths, on and off a miscalculation in public announcement of ACTA or other control measures in information flows provokes a violent storm of political protest. But mostly, most of the time, we do not know. And our not knowing, our knowledge poverty, becomes as untenable, as unacceptable, as the denial of voting rights to the lower classes once upon a time (cf. Innerarity, The Democracy of Knowledge, 2013). All we know is that some bureaucracies are more durable than the others. The Catholic Church springs to mind. So does the army, responsible both for the invention of bureaucracy and for the discovery of an assembly line in French and American arsenals. University could qualify as the third one. While we do not represent the world's oldest professions, (those of a priest and of a soldier), we come close third or fourth, together with:

- Merchants (we trade knowledge),
- Medical doctors (we coach and nurse intellectually, many theories end up as therapies or implemented strategies),
- The artists (we create new ideas and we display them in infotainment hungry media) and
- Political leaders (we have dreams many nights, not only the last one).

This is the fourth reservation: collective and professional maintenance of continuity counts. Facebook or Apple are nice, but Harvard or Stanford, Oxford or Sorbonne are better. As far as our professional role and institutional embedding go, there is a continuity from the first European university in Bologna in the year 1000 AD to the Erasmus University in Rotterdam or Jagiellonian University in Krakow in 2015. This creates a negotiating advantage when institutional reforms or bureaucratic transformations loom large on a social and political horizon. But we are not immortal, institution-wise. Our sustainability, our moral, social, cultural, political sustainability depends crucially on our ability to secure access to knowledge for those, who are excluded from its increasingly sophisticated accumulation and the benefits of a level playing field in a struggle for creative growth of knowledge (A2K for all).

Let us turn to one of the examples of a bureaucracy, which had been thinned down in a very recent past. Trade unions prove that not all bureaucracies can claim that they are so legitimate, that they should not be considered "eternal". From the point of a single individual life or even a generational experience of individuals born within twenty years they loom large as almost eternal, but from the point of a century or two they do not. Bureaucracies of the trade unions, for instance, had been successfully reduced and their ability to mobilize support – diminished. Aren't the academic bureaucracies being reduced in their expert-enhanced prestige and omnipotence? As a Spanish philosopher, basing his remarks on The Eurobarometer survey "Social Values, Science and Technology" (2005) has phrased it:

Science is more trusted than other social institutions, but confidence in the objectivity of scientific experts is a thing of the past (Innerarity, 2013)

Why have the bureaucracies of trade unions been reduced and can the academic ones await the same fate? Why have the elites of the trade union bureaucracies been broken?

First, because their oligarchies were stigmatized more rapidly than those of the corporations and public administration. In other words, CEO's have won, their social partners have lost. Orwell's "Animal Farm" was meant to demonstrate the high-jacking of the shrewd Fordist control instruments by the emergent, ruthless, new political elite of the Soviet Union, which developed a technology of genocide and a network of concentration camps as routine instruments for maintaining power. However, the dystopian visions of "Animal Farm" may also be applied to the nouveau riche bureaucrats of trade unions analyzed by Michels in Germany or Pareto in Italy. Are our university presidents, rectors and deans, perceived as slaves of neoliberal ideology, on their way out as the trade union bosses once were?

Second, because the paradox of the flower power generation is that they advertised ideals of individual, personal growth at the expense of collective class defenses (the Cold War and Iron Curtain imposed by Stalin's Russia on post-WWII world played major role in freezing the class struggle in institutional frameworks of the 1950ies between Korean and Vietnam wars). This growth was supposed to liberate them, to lift them out of the middle class patterns of collective behavior imprinted in families, schools and corporations. The ironic result was that increasingly educated masses had bought into the entrepreneurial gospel and felt that they have no need for collective solidarity with the other underdogs, that each of them stood a better chance of upward mobility on his or her own (Leinberger, 1991):

- This was, in a nutshell, the result of the neoliberal gospel preached under the aegis of the end of Cold War and the end of collectively organized class struggle.

State bureaucracies duly limited their control of market forces, washing hands of the new poor, leaving the immigrants to compete with domestic underdogs and paving the way for financial bubbles (housing, education).

Debureaucratization or Deuniversitatization?

Following Weber the bureaucratic mode is tempting, but once we accept Knightian uncertainty bureaucratic theory cannot be an adequate guide to today's managerial practice. Modern firms align employee's judgment rather than their blind obedience by providing them with a corporate citizenship that echoes but differs from that provided by earlier guilds. The history of managing is of that transition (J.C. Spender, 2015)

Weakening bureaucratic controls and allowing for faster accumulation of capital with more risky strategies and areas produces subsequent crises. Housing and education are cases in point. They demonstrate the importance of bureaucratic controls and the disadvantages of its weakening or loss. Sociologists have been the first ones to notice this paradox of rationalization without rational democratization, though they have been barely noticed by academic community and by broader, civic audiences. George Ritzer wrote about "The Globalization of Nothing" (Sage, 2007), but his warnings against the darker side of Walmartization, LasVegasification, malling (as in shopping mall) and expressing(as in American express) America failed to gain the popularity once enjoyed by "The Macdonaldization of Society". The mainstream communications within the public sphere, stimulated by relevant research of social scientists, found Ritzer acceptable when he had been dealing with the hidden costs of the McDonald's

rationalization and streamlining of efficient fast food restaurants. The same mainstream communications were less receptive, when he had linked the globalization to an increasing exploitation of individuals tethered to artificial, socially empty spaces of airports, shopping malls and the like (the fact that a professional society of East Coast sociologists in the USA invited him to a panel shared with Margaret Archer, Chris Rojek and William Robinson in New York City does not mean that The Atlantic, The New York Times and the CNN consulted him as a knowledge celebrity on a regular basis). Mats Alvesson wrote a passionate pamphlet about "The Triumph of Emptiness. Consumption, Higher Education & Work Organization (2013), but it has not become a focal point of a lively exchange of ideas between members of academic community. Alvesson may be one of the patron saints of the critical management studies, but he is politely ignored in mainstream academic communications. Nevertheless, he had formulated with clarity a vision of a potentially disruptive crisis of higher education caused by its increasing costs. The higher costs of university level education require students to get indebted to a bank (even if soft credits are available, though they have been hardening). But the same educational system, which asks higher fees, fails to channel graduates into real-life jobs, which would enable former students to repay the loans. Hence the looming crisis:

- What happens when a large enough segment of university graduates has no access to jobs, which pay well enough to pay the banks back?

University is an institution with the potential for opposition, whose mission includes:

- Cultural democratization of social life,
- Social solidarity and
- Critical reflexivity (Giroux, 2011; Collini, 2012).

Preparing students as well as academics for the role of critical citizens, and conducting innovative research that goes beyond the immediate market demand, are traditionally the basic functions of universities. In its more than nine-hundred-year history, the university institution had fulfilled such functions with the help of an organization based on collegial democracy, carried out by its members.

The situation began to change in the 1960s – first in the United States and then in Europe – when the so-called "managerial revolution" began in higher education (Amaral et al., 2003) At present, it mostly intensified its forms. It involves adaptation of management methods used in the business sector, to the management of universities. University employees are to be managed and controlled by a small group of professional managers trained in the business studies; they are expected to operate like corporate workers, meeting the standards of economic efficiency. The rationale for such reforms is the increase of the comprehensiveness and the size of the university, due to the growing interest in higher education, and the growing pressure on the accountability towards the outside environment. The ideology of managerialism, which underpins the New Public Management model also envisages control exerted by actors from outside the university who will evaluate its work using externally imposed quality criteria (Chandler et al., 2002; Diefenbach, 2009).

Critics of NPM solutions in academic institutions point out that neither scientific research nor organizational practice clearly indicate that the NPM model of university governance can be an actual answer to the problem of massification of education and the need for transparency and accountability of educational institutions (Alvesson, 2013; Craig et al., 2014). The corporatization of the university

makes its original cultural mission erode (Tuchman, 2009; Magala, 2011; Sułkowski & Zawadzki, 2016): It does not prepare students for the role of critical citizens and it does not generate research that would affect social and cultural changes (Bogt & Scapens, 2012; Münch, 2014).

One of the diagnosed causes of this situation is the progressive loss of the humanistic dimension of academic culture, which is subjected to the pressures of instrumental market solutions and ideology of excellence (Amit, 2000).

Adapting the corporate managerial methods to universities is seen by many as the result of the neo-liberal reforms introduced by contemporary governments (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). These reforms, according to Mats Alvesson are based on the doubtful assumption taken for granted by the market fundamentalists (Alvesson, 2013) – that the role of education and scientific research is to meet the needs imposed by the labor market and that the market provides the best solutions for organizational problems. Adapting corporate management to universities, based in the use of quantifiable performance indicators and resulting in the projectification of research (Fowler et al., 2015), forces academics to focus on selfishly defined achievements, at the expense of social ties at the university, the academic ethos, teaching, family life and even mental health (Gill, 2009; Knights & Clark 2014). More and more academics seem to conduct research mainly to meet the reporting requirements and the excellence as defined in the ranking lists (Tourish & Willmott, 2015). As a result, work at the university – teaching, scientific, but also administrative work – becomes a goal in itself and often follows the logic of the individual survival (Zawadzki, in press). As Pierre Bourdieu said already in 1988, there is an increasingly visible "ritualization of the appearance" of the functioning of the university (Bourdieu, 1988). Research and teaching without internalized humanistic values become merely a technical activity designed to meet the requirements of the instrumental audit culture (Power, 1997) which constitutes, as some of the critics observed, academic panopticon (Shore & Roberts, 1995) or even a psychotic university (Sievers, 2008)

The market model of university reform is entangled, as Alvesson also observed (Alvesson, 2003), in the trap of educational fundamentalism, in accordance with which it is acknowledged that higher education allows growth of the educational level of society and thus contributes to the development of the economy and economic growth. According to this ideology, receiving a higher education increases the probability both of finding work, and of an increase in social satisfaction. In addition, within the market model of the university lurks the trap of market fundamentalism, which is connected with the neoliberal belief that the market provides the proper model for reforming the university, constituting the proper regulator of changes taking place in the sector of higher education.

The false assumption connected with the educational fundamentalism is that the main role of the university is preparing students to function in the job market. Thus, universities are confused with technical schools without noticing that the market always works short-term, whereas the role of a university is to function long-term and develop cultural competence in the students that will allow for civil action regardless of market or social changes and needs (Giroux, 2011). The mission of the university is to democratize societal life through by preparing students for participation in symbolic culture, which makes possible the development of critical thinking, societal imagination, and humanistic sensitivity that will enable them to care for other human beings - not solely to prepare people to take on occupational roles. Seducing students with the vision of the university as a technical school is another source of disillusionment for them, as they point to the lack of practical application of their studies. On the part of the administration this generates the desire to lead the university further in the direction of technical school in order to satisfy its clients. The problem is that this "occupationalizaton" in the market model does not go hand in hand with the possibility of receiving an education, only a diploma (Alvesson, 2013).

Advocates of the market model of the university do not take into account the fact that the university will lost its identity through primitive management models that draws on over-economized business solutions (Zawadzki, 2015).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The forthcoming crisis of higher education, which is already discussed in the USA and reaches the European Union, has already happened. Students start occupying the university building in the center of Amsterdam, which had been the site of battles against the police during the 1968 protests. London has also witnessed student protesters nick-naming LSE – a London School of Exploitation. The housing bubble had burst already in 2008 and the crisis was subsequently solved with political intervention of the public authorities using the taxpayer's money to save the financial institutions, though not the house owners. The dramatic breakdown of the housing market had been caused by a sequence of processes, which had started with a political promise (even if one is a relatively poor citizen, one still can buy into the American dream by acquiring a house of one's own). This political promise had been kept – and the price was paid by the financial institutions, which supplied mortgages, even if the repayment of this housing credit was not very probable. The financial institutions had kept their supply of mortgages open, but asked for a reduction of public controls. This, in turn, facilitated repackaging the "bad" loans. Politics obliged. Financial institutions were free to compensate for expected losses with sales of new derivative financial products, in which the bad loans had been carefully "smuggled" to the assets of other financial institutions. Should we brace up for a similar bursting of educational bubble, with the diploma holders trying desperately to cash them in by finding suitable jobs?

Not necessarily, because knowledge is much more productive and mobile than real estate. Moreover, as Boisot had duly noticed in 1994:

The second half of the twentieth century will be remembered as the period in which information came to replace energy as the central fact of life in post-industrial societies. (Boisot, 1994)

But differentiated access to knowledge coupled with educational meritocracy as a legitimate instrument of social differentiation - produces more risks. We do not necessarily see them, because artificial ranking of educational institutions does not necessarily reflect the real rate of dissemination of knowledge and the real levels of access to knowledge (A2K). The (re)production and improvement of "knowledge capital" of our societies (which is much higher and much less predictable than reported in our statistical data) is accelerating, with unexpected results. Last not least, sharing knowledge makes it more, not less valuable (contrary to the tacit assumptions of the copyright defenders and political lobbying for ACTA) and so the more "communist" we act in sharing knowledge the higher the capitalist profit this knowledge can generate[2] (Spender, 2013). Moreover, the "capitalists"(represented by the corporate leaders as Erik Schmidt of Google) are looking for inspiration to contemporary stigmatized and criminalized "communists" of knowledge-based societies (Asange, Snowden).

What is to be done with the 99% movement of those who are gaining access to knowledge through the increasing levels of politically guaranteed and socially acknowledged education? The Left, sentimentally dreaming of lost allies in public authorities keeps silent about bureaucracy, afraid of tarnishing past dreams and of antagonizing future potential allies in turning back the neoliberal policies of the past

decades. This means leaving public officials at the ideological mercy of the Right. Bank CEO's raise their salaries and bonuses scot-free. Public CEO's fear exposure and firing. Their excesses are viewed with a more critical frame of public opinion. From the point of a democratically minded citizen - Vive la petite difference. But has the Right any right to finish new public management off, as a stranded whale, bleeding cut funding, while leaving corporate bureaucracies off the hook, as too large to judge, fail, sentence (in courts)?Republicans in the US and Neoliberals in Europe should finally, after all this neoliberal jazz, be challenged by the Left, while the neoliberal lowering of the wage levels and sabotage of civic solidarity should be clearly condemned[3]. This means defending the bureaucrats as the most transparent, responsible and accountable managers of public projects, which goes against the grain of old and new left bias, but helps in restoring the balance of the public sphere, dominated by corporate interests. Public authorities are more responsive to their constituencies as managers of education and they can become the most cherished allies in a class struggle against growing inequalities. Same applies to the necessity to address politically and ideologically the new Populists (Tea Party in the US, national fronts in Europe); they can be kept in check and their mobilization of resentment against the former Third World migrants neutralized. They have no divine right to stand for the underdogs, especially after disappearing so many of them from the list of legitimately angry fellow citizens, whose anger deserves political articulation (most notably of the immigrants, additionally scapegoated and stigmatized with racial and religious prejudice).

So what, specifically, can and should be done in the belly of educational bureaucratic Leviathans? Let's go ballistic – with bullet points.

- Wikipedias Must Reinvent Encyclopedias

We must keep negotiating and renegotiating knowledges and access to them. Encyclopaedias grew and changed when our knowledge progressed and new knowledge made it possible to revise ideas accepted in earliereditions. Wikipedias not only grow and change faster, they also spawn Wikileaks and will generate more of leak-like processes in future. Reverse engineering should be encouraged – it is already happening in physics and astronomy. Ludwik Fleck's brilliant analysis of a scientific community, Andreski's criticism of social sciences as a sorcery and ambiguous lessons from Kuhn and NASA's Singular University all point out towards a more open negotiation of knowledge production and access. Lanier has phrased it very succinctly: "Who Owns the Future?" The answer to Lanier's question should be – us.

- Wikileaks Must Reinvent and Redesign Google

Democracy is hard to achieve, but it's subversion is harder to bear. Erik Schmidt must convince the White House, Pentagon and the Congress that Asange should be praised, not hunted down. Huge data farms of Google and their *dangerous liaisons* with state agencies cloaked in secrecy have to be opened to public scrutiny. A2K means also access to knowledge which might be imprisoned as proprietary or locked as classified. Let us follow Julian Asange's dialogue with Erik Schmidt in "When Google Meets Wikileaks" (OR Books, New York & London, 2014) to deconstruct and understand the logics of closure and opening of A2K.

- Knowledge Should be Shared, not Fenced off with Copyrights as Mickey Mouse

Cultural wealth of us all grows if we share, not hoard. Not all forms of property are theft, but copyrighted proprietary knowledge often is. Education is the test case in copywrong/copyright point. The more teachers share, the more they accumulate. The more students win, the more they can share with the others. Follow Gorz (The Immaterial, Seagull Books, London, New York, Calcutta, 2010, first French edition 2003).

- Or Better Still-Follow yourself

Evolution is a civic duty, not a media imprinted matrix of a cultural dope. But remember, that a good citizen also takes care of a responsible bureaucracy, which leaves paper and digital trail, which in turn makes it easier to pick up threads lost or in need of repair. Follow Graeber ("The Utopia of Rules. On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy", Melville House, 2015).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The main conclusions from a balanced scorecard for a professional bureaucracy, including the academic one, is thus a cautious and conditional "pass" (yes, we can live with it) with at least three evolutionary reservations. You may call it a suspended sentence. All three reservations result from applying the self-reflexive principle of the evolutionary change process to the very thinking about evolutionary realities of our professional interactions and communications, which we had honed into academic meta-principles of professional conduct. Interactions and communications are intertwined processes in a flow of events, which we separate artificially for convenience' s sake into societies and cultures, or society and culture tout court. These labels stand for some temporarily isolated aspects of processes (of histories, of evolutions, of reality as an ongoing flow of events). History of academic bureaucracies is a history not only of teaching but also of learning societies and of the evolution of their professional cultures (in popular parlance a university had the same name in 1000, in 1900 and in 2015, but the evolution went rather far).

First reservation is that if facing a threat to the purity of research on the one hand and a threat to the free flow of knowledge and access to it, we should choose for circulation and exchange, for traffic rules, not for stabilizing restrictions. Diffusion, absorption and impacting must be stimulated and self-reflectively monitored. Since our professional specialization tacitly promotes restricted competition for the sake of mythical excellence or quality (do we really believe that a handful of ranked periodicals secures a monopoly on quality research?), we should counter it with interdisciplinary correction.

- Disseminate,
- Trade,
- Circulate.

If one limits those three principles of increasing access, evolution slows down and inequalities threaten to strangle creativity. Let's evolve together, even if it means crushing copyright extravaganza of obsolete business models. If this reservation is met, academic bureaucracy may pass some tests.

Mandarins hoarded books on islands, but lost against anticlerical readers of prints with vernacular Bibles. European blasphemous upstarts tearing the Bible apart, rewriting university rules fast and accelerating personal mobilities, won the undeclared competition for the fastest learning organization.

European religious sects and Protestant rebellions won against harmonizing, civilized, erudite mandarins, who imposed dogmatic rules on access to their class and preached harmonization rather than fighting the conflicts out. What should we learn from this singular historical comparison of learning processes? Can we trace the track of thoughts and deeds, words and interacts from the point of view of social learning?

Second reservation is that correcting for underdogs we should not forget about placing the protected minorities on their way to an equal treatment in a comparative perspective in order not to overdo it. Compensating is ok, overkill is not. For instance, liberating the industrial workers of core capitalist countries can help enslaving the non-industrial or non-core labor forces. Another case in point:

- Does legislative attention to gender or sexual minorities serve to side-track legitimate but older and more traditionally articulated class or race concerns in "societies"?
- And does legitimate concern for the restoration of biology and history their proper place in the house of scientifically validated knowledge does not mask the lack of a self-reflexive redesign of natural sciences and of the mathematical games we play in order to formalize our traffic in information space?

If this reservation is met, academic bureaucracy can pass some tests.

Last not least. The third reservation is a warning that our progress and upward mobility within academic professional community should be accompanied by our moral growth and cultivation of moral sensitivity (empathy is not born out of a spirit of narrow specialist competition within the silos of isolated tenure tracks). This makes examples of craft guilds and bureaucratic competence less appealing and calls for creativity in piecemeal organizational and cognitive engineering, re-engineering and re-design – even re-imagining of our knowledge and out learning processes, which are closer to the core of knowledge than its materialized, objectified symbols and objects. Our scanning of realities, our codification of methodologies and our abstractions which help us streamlining our cognitive communications in a more elegant, brief and parsimonious way deserve to be liberated from ideological constraints of even the most tempting neo-neo-positivist ideologies.

CONCLUSION

Protecting the academic staff's dignity, consisting of humanistic norms and cultural values, including:

- Democratic social relations,
- Humanistic ethos of academic skills,
- The ability of critical discussions with authorities and tradition,
- The ability to act for the common good and
- The ability to think critically –

is a prerequisite for the development of higher education, and the key factor enabling scientific progress and ensuring an adequate standard of education that enables graduates to take on roles of citizens and the acquisition of professional, academic skills. Humanistic academic culture requires moving away from the formal, quantitative evaluation of research and teaching in favor of alternative models of assessment based on qualitative criteria, the most important of which is the quality of research and teaching output based

on the capacity for deep reflection and critical reasoning and the ability to deliberate with authorities (Nussbaum, 2010). They can enable the execution of the primary objective of the university as a public institution, being the social and cultural responsibility for the quality of society democratization. Only highlighting and integrating humanistic values and standards of organizational culture that promote the dignity of academics and make up the academic culture can lead to a real improvement of the quality of education and research at the universities, which may enable their public mission to be carried out.

Public spaces are expressions of higher education's best democratic values - free exchange of ideas, thoughtful discussion, appeal to evidence, and respect for different perspectives. Such spaces can engage people's private interests and identities - "private worlds" of personal stories, subjective experiences, identity politics and the like - and bring them into a larger public context. They also can engage the public world of "Big Data" and "evidence-based solutions" in ways that ground such knowledge production in relational public cultures, transforming detached informational cultures based on abstraction about human beings which have come to dominate in expert systems (Harry Boyte, "Universities, public spaces, and the democratic way of life", 2015)[4]

Well, indeed, let us hope that we, academic bureaucrats, really can. That we are a grand evolutionary data cracking engine that could.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Audit Culture: A culture of doing research and teaching without internalized humanistic values which become merely a technical activity designed to meet the external requirements.

Bureaucracy: A prevailing formal organization of professional activities based on a hierarchic differentiation of the levels of command and control and on a legal definition of rights and responsibilities connected to each individual slot in the bureaucratic structure. Academic bureaucracies usually belong to the public management driven or professional research driven type and are subjected to ongoing power struggles.

Corporate University: The most popular model of the contemporary university which assumes the sensitivity to customer needs, a flexible structure and becoming an efficient organization capable of competing on the ranking lists by successfully responding to the changing market demands.

Cultural Mission of the University: The main mission of the university which includes democratization of the social life through by preparing students and academics for participation in the symbolic culture, which makes possible the development of critical thinking, societal imagination, and humanistic sensitivity.

Educational Fundamentalism: An ideology in which it is acknowledged that the higher education allows growth of the educational level of society and thus contributes to the development of the economy and economic growth.

Market Fundamentalism: An ideology in which it is acknowledged that the role of education and research is to meet the needs imposed by the labor market and that the market provides the best solutions for organizational problems.

New Public Management: A significant model used in reforming contemporary public services, including higher education, which contains introduction of market-driven mechanisms and audit systems, including performance management to monitor the efficiency of the public organizations.

Performance Management: A part of the managerial and the New Public Management ideology introduced into the contemporary university, which includes instrumental style of managing the organization through using a performance indicators as a main tool to evaluate academic work.

ENDNOTES

[1]   It is a meager consolation, but young student rebels were so busy opposing academic bureaucracies, for instance occupying Sorbonne or Columbia, that they forgot about gender inequalities and the equal footing of their female companions in arms, focusing instead on global capitalism, university managers and riot police.

[2]   J.C. Spender reminds us that Boisot placed data in a triangle data, space time, and energy. "Today's profligate use of energy to cope with our space-time activity is untenable. We might learn better practices by seeing how past re-conceptualizations of data enabled mankind to move forward into novel social arrangements or modes of governance, something more obvious today as we stagger under the social, political and economic impact of total surveillance and social media" (Spender, 2013)

[3]   Martin Parker had just started this process discussing the neoliberal media show around the remnants of Richard III, the last English king who had died in battle, found at the Leicester university.

[4]   Blog for Huffington Post, https://www.academia.edu/11704209/Higher_education_public_spaces_and_the_democratic_way_of_life?auto=download&campaign=weekly_digest