Values and Globalisation

by

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This paper sketches the impact of internationalisation and globalisation on the terrain of values and ethics in higher education. The paper begins with discussions of (1) higher education, and the institutional governance of ethics and values, and (2) globalisation and higher education. Globalisation and the strengthening of executive steering are associated with the partial "disembedding" of higher education institutions from their nation-states; and a pluralisation of their spheres of operation and the range of private goods and public goods they produce, and pluralisation of the "publics" they serve. This raises new questions about the governance and management of the values and ethical regimes associated with global goods, e.g. the obligations of communicability, mutuality, academic freedom and the protection of persons in higher education suggested by cross-border relationships, and the modes whereby these values and ethics are promoted (unilateral? bi-lateral? multi-lateral? via nation-states? separate from nation-states? self-serving? collaborative mutual interest? collective interest?)

1. Values and ethics in higher education

Values and ethics are not disembodied abstractions. They are implicated in practices that have human subjects. This raises the question of what we mean by "higher education", in the context of the determination of values and ethical regimes in higher education.

What makes higher education institutions (HEIs) socially distinctive is that they are self-reproducing knowledge-forming organisations. Because of (and despite) this definition they have multiple and diverse activities, connections, obligations and stakeholders. Under conditions of academic freedom, personnel practice an enormous range of values and ethical regimes, subject to continuous change, a range almost as broad as those of the societies in which HEIs are located that interact with them. However, the values practised by individuals, or by units for teaching or research or institutional marketing, sometimes mutually contradictory, do not necessarily embody the values of the institution *qua* institution.

As institutions, HEIs embody a more limited set of values and ethical regimes deriving from their particular character as social organisations. If they sought to be "communities of the good" in which all staff and students were committed to a universal set of values spanning the full range of human activities, HEIs would be inhibited in the pursuit of edgy, critical, innovative thought, and internal discussion and debate would be constrained, so that they would be unable to fully function as knowledge-forming organisations; or alternatively, amid the tensions engendered by different and competing claims about what constitutes the "good" they would fracture and fly apart, so that they would no longer be self-reproducing.

This suggests that the required agreement should be limited to those values and ethical regimes that sustain HEIs as self-reproducing knowledge-forming organisations. These values and ethical regimes, which might be called the *meta-institutional* values and ethical regimes, constitute the "Idea of a University" in our era. These meta-institutional values and ethical regimes must support (and, ideally, encourage) a plurality of values and ethical regimes, except that they will exclude values and ethical regimes that undermine or are otherwise inconsistent with HEIs as knowledge-forming organisations.

This suggests that the scope of HEIs as institutions, in relation to a common approach to values and ethics, is limited to two domains of meta-institutional practice that are consistent and productive of the distinctive social character of those HEIs:[1]

- *The domain of communicative association*. This embodies liberal human conduct, including the right to speak, and the conduct of dialogue on the basis of honesty and of mutual respect; and intra-institutional and inter-institutional relationships grounded in justice, solidarity, compassion, cosmopolitan tolerance and empathy for the other;

- *The domain of secular intellectual practices*. This includes support for, and freedom for and of, the practices integral to productive intellectual activity, including curiosity, inquiry, observation, reasoning, explanation, criticising and imagining.

The domain of communicative association provides conditions necessary for the domain of secular intellectual practices. Arguably, it is in this second domain, in which new knowledge is formed, that we find the essence of the contemporary "Idea of a University". In forming knowledge we remember what we know, and we think of something new. Then we systematise that something new. This "something new", which is the thing that scholars and researchers seek, emerges in a zone vectored by criticism and imagining. In the absence of this zone, HEIs are no different to other educational institutions, such as schools. Protection and enhancement of this zone within the domain of intellectual practices, located in the different fields of inquiry, should be the central objective of meta-institutional values and ethics.

2. Who decides the *institutional* values and ethics of HEIs?

Value-based determinations in the above two domains are played out in three different spheres:

1. The sphere of self-responsibility, that of individual human conduct.

2. The sphere of bounded democracy, that of communicative relationships within the institution; and between its agents and other agents in the locality, the region, and the relevant administered territories (state/ province, nation).

3. The sphere of global relations, encompassing, on one hand, universal human rights, on the other hand, the protocols for managing cross-border relations based on self-determining identities, including heterogeneity and diversity.

(The last sphere, that of global relations; where the government and management of values and ethics is improvised, rudimentary, or non-existent; occupies the second half of this paper).

In relation to the first sphere, we can require that all individuals and organisational units work within a common set of rules that secures the domain of communicative association and the domain of intellectual practices. In relation to the second and third sphere, which agent or agents in HEI carry responsibility for forming and reproducing the necessary values and ethical regimes? Here I argue that while all agents in HEIs, individual and organisational, should have the freedom to associate and communicate within the

spheres of democracy and global relations – indeed, that freedom is a necessary aspect of secular intellectual practices – the question of who operates on behalf of the institution *qua* institution in these spheres is a different question. This question does not in itself go to core values, it is historically variable, it is a policy question, and we can identify the answers via sociological observation.

Here there are four principal candidates: the nation-state, the governing body of the HEI, the professoriate, and the executive leadership. All have some hand on the problem to some extent. The situation varies from nation to nation and from HEI to HEI. However, we can discern certain lines of development here. The underlying dynamics shaping these changes – and indeed, shaping this conference agenda discussion – are the changing role of government, and the changing personality of institutions *qua* institutions.

Higher education is undergoing a number of distinguishable transformations that vary in form and intensity around the world. These changes are much discussed: globalisation and internationalisation, of which more below; mass participation and vocational credentialing; more diverse institutions with mixed funding; more business-like administration and internal product and performance regimes; quasi-market competition between institutions; the part commercialisation of teaching, research and services. Disciplinary cultures continue as knowledge forming communities, but the student experience has become more regularised (and in some cases shorter) and degree programs rendered homogenous, or at least more congruent, across systems and between nations; through reform, imitation and quality assurance. Generalising, we can say that the main line in government/HEI relations is for government to step back a pace, devolving responsibility and initiative and sometimes devolving institutional identity (if this was formerly determined by government) and mission. Often, governments now prefer to manipulate the outcomes of higher education from the middle distance via accountability, audit and formula-driven incentives. They are lightening their policy/political load, but without vacating the field, or even necessarily withdrawing from micro management.

Meanwhile, institutions, particularly research universities, are becoming quasi-corporations in their own right (Marginson and Considine, 2000). This continues the longer process of evolution of the institutional personality of HEIs. Through much of the twentieth century, the material basis of that institutional personality derived from government funding and policy, at least in the public sector that has constituted the research universities in most nations. At first these fostered a professional bureaucracy and later they foregrounded the institutional executive as the point of accountability, which suited everyone because state sanctions exercised directly over the disciplines had the potential to violate academic freedom. Later, as the volume and range of functions and activities continued to expand, the central offices and services of HEIs assumed more tasks. The outcome is that the institution *qua* institution has probably never been stronger *vis-à-vis* the disciplines and professions, and it has changed.

Perhaps HEIs are no more independent than before – it seems they are accountable to more stakeholders than ever, and often accountable in greater detail to government – but they are more autonomous. The process of "autonomisation" has been guided by nation-states and is consistent with a larger set of changes in public administration and modes of government, but has also been fostered by the more plural activities and associations of HEIs. They have greater responsibilities in self-organisation and self-financing and in some nations more scope to define their mission and chart their strategic course. Inside, executive steering and corporate management have become more powerful than before *vis-à-vis* disciplinary and professional cultures. In the outcome both the growth of government funding and administration, and then the semi-privatisation of funding and the growing weight of activities conducted autonomously of government, have been associated with the evolution of HEIs *qua* institutions and of their executive arms and administrative machinery. Though institutions have more multiple and varied connections that at any previous time, they coalesce at the point of executive steering – necessarily so, because otherwise, deprived of an organisational bottom line, these often immensely complex institutions

would start to fragment and fly apart amid the heterogeneous networks and drivers. Again generalising freely across a highly varied field, the executive is on the whole dominant *vis-à-vis* the governing body; and has strengthened itself *vis-à-vis* the professoriate. The professoriate, less coherent than the executive because of disciplinary differences, and absorbed in the on-going work of research and teaching, finds itself at an increasing disadvantage in relation to professional managers and leaders, especially where the latter exert financial control. It is true that some leading universities are so successful as status engines that they reproduce themselves more or less naturally without much executive steering; Cambridge UK is one cited;[2] but this is not typical of the sector.

One result is that though it is yet to be generally acknowledged, and whether for better or worse (both arguments are made, particularly the latter!), the full-time executive leadership – more than governing bodies or senior professors – regulates the *meta-institutional* practices of values and ethics in this era. The executive guarantees (or alternatively, fails to guarantee) the domain of communicative association and domain of secular intellectual practices. Academic staff pursue those intellectual practices, but on grounds ultimately underwritten by the executive. The executive is the main practical arbiter of institution-wide organisation and (albeit less comprehensively) it provides a framework in which external connections are practised. Disciplinary communities and single researchers continue to dominate within their own intellectual and organisational bounds, and have considerable freedom to operate, especially internationally; though more in some systems than others. But they do not speak for or organise institutions *qua* institutions. The days of institutional government (let alone management) by scholars are numbered. Government also continues to matter in that its practices and requirements can affect communicative association and intellectual practices. However government is optimised in the sphere of bounded democracy, and less effective in either the sphere of the sphere of self-responsibility or the sphere of global relations.

3. Globalisation and higher education

By "globalisation" is meant "the widening, deepening and speeding up of world wide interconnectedness" (Held, *et al.*, 1999, p. 2). Globalisation is a geo-spatial process of growing inter-dependence and convergence, in which worldwide or pan-regional (*e.g.* European) spheres of action are enhanced. In contrast, "internationalisation" is best understood simply as relations across borders between nations, or institutions situated within national systems: *i.e.* inter-national relations. Note the potentially *transformative* impacts of globalisation as compared to internationalisation. Globalisation is a dynamic process that draws the local, national and global dimensions more closely together (Marginson and Rhoades, 2002) and in often unexpected ways. The effects of globalisation may be retarded by nation-states, with some having more power to do this than others, but cannot be completely abolished or evaded. In a networked environment in which every HEI is visible to every other, and the weight of the global dimension is increasing, it is no longer possible for nations or for individual HEIs to seal themselves off from global effects. Those that attempt to retreat from the global dimension pay a price in diminished effectiveness. Internationalisation is a more modest process, open to conventional regulation, and to the policy choice to take it or leave it.

Globalisation in this era is a symbiosis of economic changes and cultural changes. It rests, on one hand, in the formation of world-wide markets operating in real time, underpinned by the first world-wide system of financial capital and exchange, and growth rates in foreign direct investment far exceeding the growth rate of industrial production. On the other hand, it rests on the creation of the first world-wide systems of communications, information, knowledge and culture (which partly take the form not of market goods, but of public goods under-pinned by state investments), whereby the world tends towards a single cultural community as McLuhan (1964) predicted. Guy Neave describes globalisation as "quickening exchange", which is suggestive of both economic and cultural aspects (Neave, 2002, p. 332). Communications and information are at the heart of global economic and global cultural change, and the

junctions between them. It is this element above all which constitutes what is new about globalisation (Castells, 2000). Higher education and research are not far behind. They are foundational to the sophisticated use of technologies and to culturally complex communities, and share with ICTs and media the formation of the global communicative environment. "Although many universities still seem to perceive themselves rather as objects of processes of globalisation, they are, at the same time, also key agents" (Enders and de Weert, 2004, p. 27). Research universities are intensively linked within and between the major global cities that constitute the nodes of a globally networked world (Castells, 2001, p. 225).

Being deeply implicated in global transformations, higher education is itself being transformed on both sides of the economy/culture symbiosis. It is swept up in global marketisation: it trains and resources the executives and technicians of global businesses; the main areas of student growth are in business and computing, the most globally mobile degrees; it is shaped by economic policies that are undergoing global convergence. In higher education itself the first global market has emerged (Marginson, 2006). Arguably, even larger changes are happening on the cultural side, in communications, research and knowledge. In a networked higher education world, every extension of the network adds a larger number of possible connections (Castells, 2000) and there is an almost infinite potential for the formation of intellectual communities across every border. Internet 2 is being developed by a consortium of American universities and companies. Communications and information are revolutionising both science and publishing. Teichler remarks that it is surprising how much of the debate on global phenomena in higher education is focused on marketisation, competition and management. "Other terms, such as knowledge society, global village, global understanding or global learning, are hardly taken into consideration" (Teichler, 2004, p. 23). This is ironic, given that while higher education is a second level player in the circuits of capital and direct creation of economic wealth, it is pivotal to knowledge, standardised language and information systems.

4. Two implications of globalisation

Of the many implications of globalisation for higher education, two are pertinent to this paper. First, globalisation is associated with the partial "disembedding" of HEIs from their national and national governmental contexts (Marginson and Van Der Wende, forthcoming). Beerkens (2004) defines globalisation as "a process in which basic social arrangements within and around the university become disembedded from their national context due to the intensification of transnational flows of people, information and resources". This is happening in several ways. One relates to funding. Increasingly, in many though not all countries, HEIs draw on not just domestic students but foreign students as a source of income. In Australia, 15 per cent of university revenues are provided in this manner, in the UK 10 per cent. This pluralises mission and lines of accountability. Likewise, many HEIs also seek research funding from extra-national sources. A second area is offshore operations, in both face-to-face and virtual modes. Here HEIs are operating in the jurisdiction of another nation, which has limited control over their activities. A third area is accreditation. An increasing number of HEIs are seeking accreditation to operate on the terrain of other nations. In all these examples, HEIs' space of operation is no longer congruent with the regulatory space of national government.

"Disembedding" reinforces the trend to the autonomy of HEIs *vis-à-vis* government, a trend also associated with the growing weight of executive steering and of the institution *qua* institution *vis-à-vis* the faculties. The more the growth of activities in the global sphere, the more the potential for "disembedding", and the more the accumulation of corporate weight and autonomy, creating more space for global activities. The tendencies are self-reinforcing.

The other implication of globalisation is the significant expansion in the potential for global private and global public goods. The global private goods produced and purchased in higher education include degrees obtained when students cross national borders – the volume of world-wide trade is estimated at

about USD 40 billion per annum – and the outcomes of commercial research traded across borders prior to their entry into the public domain. Global public goods are goods that have a significant element of non-rivalry and/or non-excludability and are available across populations on a global scale. They affect more than one group of countries, and are broadly available within countries (Kaul, *et al.* 1999, pp. 2-3). Global public goods in higher education (Marginson, forthcoming A) include both collective global goods, and also positive global externalities, or negative global externalities ("global public bads"). In their positive form, like other public goods global public goods are under-provided in markets.

Collective global goods are obtained by nations and/or institutions from cross-border systems common to the world or a meta-national region, for example regulation, systems and protocols that improve cross-border recognition and mobility; such as the Washington Accords in Engineering, and the Bologna Declaration's higher education space. Global externalities arise when education in one nation affects significant numbers of people in other nations; for better, for example the positive contribution of research flowing across national borders; or for worse, for example the net "brain drain" of national faculty. Cross-border externalities are difficult to regulate. There is no agreed basis for identifying, measuring, costing and financing downstream effects between one nation and another in the sphere of the environment where such effects are acknowledged. In higher education, though brain drain is an acknowledged issue, for the most part cross-border brain circulation and research flows are yet to become the subject of national decision-making or costing, or of multilateral consideration. Like national public goods, global public goods tend to be under-recognised. An additional difficulty, however, is that there is no global state or "global public". Further, while the regulation of private trading goods in education is the subject of WTO/GATS negotiations, there is no equivalent policy space in which to consider global public goods.

5. Globalisation, values and ethics

Globalisation is, above all, embodied in the explosive growth of communicative association on a world scale, and magnifies the potential for secular intellectual practices. Inevitably, it raises new questions about the governance and management of the values and ethical regimes associated with higher education. The longstanding regimes and protocols that have governed liberal association and knowledge formation in the local and national contexts by no means translate into the sphere of global exchange. The conventional values and ethical regimes sit within the governing frameworks of nation-states; and where those frameworks are no longer operative there is potential for destabilisation; more importantly those conventional values and ethical regimes may differ, country by country. This creates the need to reconcile the different national practices; while also devising an additional set of practices for managing communicative association across national, cultural and linguistic divides – practices that both constitute global public good in their own right and provide favourable conditions for other global public goods. Global communicative association generates its own set of specific requirements as to values and ethics, for example, cosmopolitan tolerance becomes more important, as do practices that sustain the cross-border mobility of ideas and people.

However, global exchange in higher education, powered by the flows of people, ideas, knowledge, technologies and money, is by no means symmetrical between HEIs in the different nations. It tends to be dominated by the stronger national systems, and particularly by the English-speaking nations, above all by HEIs from the USA This places in question the values of mutuality and equality of respect that are integral to both communicative association in general, and to secular intellectuality in particular. Among the many other challenges extended by expanding global relations in higher education are the following:

- Protection of the social and economic security of the staff and students of HEIs that cross borders, and forgo the practical rights of citizens on their own terrain, without benefiting from the rights of citizenship in the foreign nation. One difficulty here is variations between nations in

notions of compassion and justice, and of the respective responsibilities of individuals/families, social and cultural groups, and nation-states.

- Variations between nations in the understandings of, extent of and protections for academic freedom and other secular intellectual practices; for example the politeness regimes that govern the extent of curiosity; the modes, registers and targets of intellectual criticism; and the boundaries (if any) of the expressed imagination.

Notwithstanding the many unresolved issues, it is remarkable the extent to which personnel in HEIs in different countries readily establish understanding. There is significant commonality in both institutional and academic practices; and this provides favourable conditions for the negotiation of more formal regimes. Key questions are that of the scale of consideration of the various questions, and the agents who should be at the table. Should negotiations be unilateral? Bi-lateral? Multi-lateral? Via nation-states? Separate from them?

As noted, multilateral forums can directly create collective global goods that advance communicative association and secular intellectual practices, such as world-wide recognition systems and academic freedom protocols. Establishment of a framework for negotiation of externalities is a more complex matter. For example, should nations share the downstream costs of social protections for mobile students? Should these costs all be met by the nation of citizenship? Or should these costs all be met by the education exporter, which is often securing a financial benefit from their presence in the national education system?

Similarly difficult questions arise in relation to the mobility of knowledge. Should we understand the production of knowledge in the USA and its transmission around the world as part of the American contribution to the global public good? And/or does the global public good lie in sustaining and protecting the plurality of knowledge, *e.g.* by foregrounding the contributions of non English-speaking nations (or even by compensating them for knowledge workers lost to the "world graduate school" in the research intensive universities of the USA)? How might the costs of providing for a more cosmopolitan and more balanced set of global knowledge flows be identified and financed? Who would pay? Who would decide?

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1. In thinking about these two domains of meta-institutional practice, and the arenas of practice, papers by Gould (2004) and Marga (2004) were helpful. See also Marginson, forthcoming B.

2. For example see Shattock, 2003.