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Commentaries

“Tell us what you want, what you really, really want.”

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A recent issue of *Australian Universities Review* offered a critical appraisal of the central role that communication and information technologies (CITs) play in West's (1998) account of how universities in Australia should develop, change and be funded (Cunningham 1998; Flew 1998). I want to take out one strand from that discussion to reflect on the effects of incorporating new technologies into my teaching. Initially, I made these comments in response to an invitation, from a conference of service providers training clients in the area of communication and information technology, to 'tell us what you want'. What I really want is for students-who-do to stop ripping off material from the net and then claiming, by incorporating but not acknowledging that material in their assessable essays, that it is their material.

I couldn't teach either the medieval or film units I offer without CITs — due to institutional restructuring, funding cutbacks and reduced library resources. My medieval units are, by and large, traditional courses of study, in that they are heavily text based. The film units, which include theory and criticism as well as some technical aspects of the film process, are more obviously suited to CITs, in that the texts are more modern and are designed for modern technologies. I also teach a unit called 'The Legend of King Arthur' which traverses that range: it's a Cultural Studies unit that begins with medieval texts and then moves on to film and computer games. So the CIT resources I regularly use and prescribe for use by students in my units include websites, search engines, on-line journals, on-line texts and images, critical essays, discussion groups and virtual events, such as conferences and bulletin boards from conventions. Students in my medieval units are downloading Middle English texts and images, using search engines and data bases for critical study and following the global conference circuit just as frequently as the film students are logging onto the Internet Movie Database, subscribing to film-philosophy, surfing heavily-constructed sites such as the Media Studies site and wandering around film salons.

To date, though, I have not offered on-line teaching. That is, the mode of my teaching practice has remained that of seminar, lecture and tutorial: face-to-face teaching of the kind for which Australian universities have developed a reputation for excellence. Teaching of the kind that is traditional and by now an expectation of students enrolling at university. So my pedagogical mode is, in a sense, mixed: face-to-face teaching with CIT research tools. I think this is a very common practice in universities throughout Australia. While flexible delivery does and will continue to have real appeal, increased by the potential offered by the Web, face-to-face mixed mode teaching will remain more common. The distinctions between these modes are narrowing and will continue to narrow — as for instance parts of courses delivered face-to-face are made available from a lecturer's website — but, as students themselves put it, 'students like to be taught by people.'

The kind of training my students are getting via CITs and from support service providers relates primarily to information search and retrieval and research techniques. They have access to technical domains of knowledge far removed from those that my generation experienced as undergraduates, at a time when photocopiers were only just becoming common (Burnett 1998, pp. 46-50). But they are also experiencing the effects of changes in the culture of learning and of knowledge acquisition — the bit that's about being part of an intellectual or academic community. As Yoni Ryan points out, 'it is impossible to alter the learning environment without also altering the objectives and therefore the assessment' of that learning environment' (Ryan 1998, p. 16). Because this is what I have done in teaching my discipline via communication and information technologies. In directing my students to surf the net, to access Internet resources, to engage with the constantly changing and rapidly escalating amount of knowledge produced and published on the net, I have — for good or for ill — changed the environment in which they and I are

learning. I have changed the basic assumptions about the process of learning and I have changed the culture in which that learning occurs. I'll deal with one practical instance of this: my reaction, as a teacher who uses CITs, to students who rip off material from the net and then claim it as their own.

The word traditionally used for this process is plagiarism, but I'm not entirely sure that this actually is the correct term. And this is part of the problem. Plagiarism means using material that is unacknowledged and claiming that it is your own. The test used to be and still is, via university statutes of discipline and conduct, that the material could be located in the source that hadn't been acknowledged. The point is that now this is no easy matter. If the test is comparison with the source, then retrieving the source is the key. But material published on the net doesn't remain there indefinitely. Search engines are of various kinds and will produce varying results. No-one has the time to search through all the entries that a search engine will throw up. And URLs are easy to disguise and easy to get rid of. The problem, in other words, is that the statutes and disciplinary codes which regulated what we call plagiarism were developed in and for a different — an older — academic culture which operated under different conditions.

This is potentially a legal problem for universities. We all deploy professional judgement in order to make decisions about the authenticity of students' work. That judgement is informed — by consultation with other colleagues; comparison with previous work and perhaps the student's entry score; consultation with other departments; analysis of the argument and elements of style; use of foundational concepts and terminology; accuracy and structure of citation and reference and so on — but it does not, apparently, stand up in a legal context. Universities are, understandably, not only reluctant to address the problem in the public domain but also unlikely to run a test case through the courts where the reputation and standing of all parties would come under intense pressure and the likelihood of collateral damage would be significant.

My concern is that I am now teaching in a different cultural environment in which my students can get increasingly ready access to material which they can rip off. And this in turn creates the anxiety in me as a teacher that I can't trust my students. This is actually not the same situation that worked with hard copy texts. Yes, there would always be students who worked harder, who read more articles, who followed up leads. What has changed are the conditions under which that material can be verified. Those conditions of learning include seriously increased numbers with a consequent blowout in staff-student ratios. There is more pressure now on academics to teach more students in less time. While CITs are increasing our resources, face-to-face contact as a re-

source is diminishing. There is more pressure from students due to the cultural shift that has made them 'clients'.

The technology of CITs is seductive. It is tremendously exciting to be able to get knowledge — a text, an article, an image, a discussion — that, in the past, would have been prohibited by all those reasons which made, for instance, being a medievalist in Australia a difficult and expensive matter. But the ease with which material can be published on the Web means that anyone can put anything out there. Students have access to the good, the bad and the god-awful. The kinds of filters and processes of legitimation which publication of an article in a refereed journal involves are bypassed, so students are led to assume that if it's on the Web, then it's all the same. This doesn't produce scepticism; it fosters uncritical acceptance, or a sense of triumphant street-smart in which you win because you can find something that none of the other losers can find. (Though it's probably more to do with social privilege and its link to the level of technology you can access: see Thomas, Meredyth and Blackwood 1998, pp. 34-40 and Emmison and Frow 1998 pp. 41-45.)

There is a sense in which the value, to use an old-fashioned - but in this case accurate - term, of the degree is undermined by this kind of street-smart. Students who complete university degrees enter a highly competitive and highly credentialled employment market. Their expectation is that the degree for which they have paid or will pay HECS and for which they have worked — often juggling one or more part-time jobs or a job and family in the case of many part-time students — is valuable. That is an absolutely reasonable expectation, just as it is reasonable for students to expect the staff of a university to accept responsibility for maintaining the value of the credentials it confers upon its students. In other words, it's part of my job to ensure that the assessment in my units is earned rather than ripped off. It's at this point that I differ from the view that says that universities are service providers and students are clients. Universities are highly differentiated environments and that means, I think, that there's no rationale for one model to dominate all aspects of the institution. Nor do I think I'm alone in thinking, as an academic, that I'm not providing a service: I'm teaching and researching in an environment, an institutional culture, which deals fundamentally with knowledge production and consumption but which takes as one of its primary functions the issuing of valuable credentials.

Stories have begun to circulate in universities that students are accessing companies that will produce an essay, complete with characteristic foibles, for the exchange of a credit card number. I don't know how extensive this practice is. But I can tell you that the level of paranoia among university teachers about the extent

to which students will go to get an essay; the ease with which they can do it; the security they have in doing it, is producing serious damage to the culture of university teaching. Recent discussion with academics from other universities confirms what I think will prove to be a common reaction and that is a return to traditional forms of assessment, including the closed-book, three-hour examination in which students have access only to the texts. This is clearly an attempt to control the conditions in which assessment is being made — and that is not necessarily a bad thing. My point is that it is a return to a form of assessment that has been debated and rejected. It's also a move which opens up a significant gap between the mode in which teaching and research is being done and the mode of assessment that is being used to evaluate the student's learning performance. I say this knowing that there are many options for assessing students' learning. There are also many students to be assessed and there has to be a trade-off between what is possible and what is desirable.

I'm not against the idea of dismantling the prevailing concepts of ownership over knowledge. If I didn't believe in the political and economic value of disseminating knowledge I wouldn't teach in a university. Nor am I asking for a utopian situation in which no-one ever plagiarises. That's neither a logical possibility nor realistic. But I'm asking for help with this one from the people whose job it is to educate my students in the CITs. We might consider exposing the operation of the credit card essay, or designing a small neat manageable unit about ethics, co-operating on a list of most-popular sites, or on ways to track student questions and behaviours. These strategies might or might not work, but we need to get

the issue out into the public domain. Universities are reluctant to address the matter publicly and you can understand that, but every academic assessing essays does so with the possibility of ripping off at the back of her or his mind.

I raise this issue **not** to victimise students or to add to a culture that disadvantages and denigrates youth. My point is that what I really want is an acknowledgement that accessing the Web, using communication and information technologies, is intimately related to the processes and culture of learning in which all of us — students, academics, service providers — have a stake. The communication and information technologies have already impacted on the culture of teaching and learning and that culture will continue to change. We need to open up a dialogue to deal with the effects of cultural change: a dialogue in which we can all learn.

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An evaluation of the desirable characteristics of a supervisor*

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Abstract

In this paper we propose a model of postgraduate supervision which broadens the traditional focus on “expertise” to include support for the student and the capacity to balance creativity with criticism in supervision. Based on this model, we report results of a survey of postgraduate students in the Faculty of Agriculture at UWA investigating the desirable characteristics of a supervisor. We find that students clearly rank non-expertise-related characteristics of supervision which provide support and which balance creativity with criticism as more important overall than expertise-related characteristics. We use these results to argue for staff development opportunities to be enhanced to enable academics to receive training in these areas of supervision competence which are ostensibly unrelated to expertise.

Introduction

How do we determine the competence of an academic to supervise a postgraduate student? In most cases the answer would probably be “expertise in the area of research”. And by “expertise” would be meant one or more of a range of things such as: being up-to-date in the research area; having an active research programme in the area; having a track record of research output in the area (including having done a PhD in the area); having a network of colleagues in the area; and having a track record as a research supervisor in the area.

But is “expertise” enough to determine competency for supervision? Our view is that “expertise” is an important contribution of an academic to a student-supervisor relationship, but that there are at least two other components of the supervisor’s contribution which are also important and for which academics usually have no particular training in providing. Moreover, we report evidence from a survey of postgraduate students regarding desirable characteristics of a supervisor which supports our view that students desire much more from a supervisor than “expertise”. We then use this evidence to argue for enhanced opportunities for academics to

broaden their supervision skills beyond the confines of “expertise”.

SECTION 1: A Model of Supervision

Our model of supervision has developed from our appraisal of recent literature in the area of postgraduate supervision (Cullen, Pearson, Saha and Spear, 1994; Hall, Coates, Ferroni, Pearson and Trinidad, 1997; McCormack, 1994; McMichael and Garry, 1994; Parry and Hayden, 1994). It represents the contribution of an academic to the supervisor-student relationship as having three main components:

(i) expertise in the research area

As outlined in the Introduction, expertise can mean a range of things that could typically be characterised as one or more of the following: knowledgeable; specialist; teacher; influential; co-ordinator.

(ii) support for the student

There are times, particularly in the early part of the research, when the supervisor may need to build and support the student’s self-confidence as well as to reassure and motivate the student (Delamont, Atkinson and Parry, 1997). Support for the student also covers a range of other characteristics such as: enthusiastic, available, helpful, involved, attentive, caring.

Moreover, we think there are three key phases of a research project, and that the significance of the various types of support changes between these phases:

(a) settling-in and getting going

In this phase it is important to make the student feel confident that they have the intellectual capacity to complete the project (enthusiastic, involved).

(b) maintaining the impetus

In this phase students often suffer a “relapse” of self-doubt. They need to be reminded of all they have achieved already, and helped to develop a clear

vision both of what remains to be done and of how to achieve it (helpful, attentive).

(c) finishing-off

Students are often distressed at the prospect of having their writing criticised and having to rework chapters at a point when they feel intellectually exhausted. It is important to try to rearrange and rebuild their work rather than knock it down, so that they can see their efforts have not been wasted and feel that they have the stamina to finish after all (available, caring).

(iii) balancing creativity and criticism

In the "getting-going" phase a supervisor should contribute ideas to the project so that the student can clearly see their commitment (stimulating, active). In the latter phases the supervisor should shift more and more towards the critic. Here the student is typically developing their own ideas about where to go and what to do and it is the supervisor's job to react constructively (critical, objective). Therefore, "both advice and criticism need to be managed in order to encourage the competent student to develop sufficient self-confidence to embark on and sustain several years of demanding independent work" (Delamont, Atkinson and Parry, 1997).

SECTION 2: The Survey

For the survey, we made use of the list of twenty-two supervisory characteristics developed by McMichael and Garry (1994). In addition, we allocated each of the characteristics in the list to one of the three main components of the supervisor's contribution according to its best fit in our judgement. On this basis we allocated seven characteristics to "Expertise" (E), nine characteristics to "Support" (S) and six characteristics to "Creative/Critical" (Cr). Finally, we established a 1 to 5 scale between "Undesirable" and "Highly Desirable" for the students to evaluate each of the characteristics, and presented the survey to thirty-two Faculty of Agriculture postgraduates.

In evaluating the results of the survey, those characteristics which achieved a mean score from the student responses of 3 or more qualified as "desirable". This meant the exclusion of three characteristics: Detached (S: 2.22); Director (E: 2.56); and Passive (Cr: 1.72). Of the remaining nineteen, six were classified as "Expertise", eight as "Support" and five as "Creative/Critical". However, when grouped into those characteristics which scored 4 or more, and those which scored between 3 and 4, the general pattern of results was clear: the majority of the desirable support and creative/critical characteristics achieved a score of 4 or more, while the majority of desirable expertise characteristics achieved a score of

between 3 and 4. Moreover, desirable support characteristics not only dominated the set of characteristics achieving 4 or more (six of the ten), but also ranked as three of the highest-scoring five characteristics (Enthusiastic (S: 4.81); Helpful (S: 4.53); Attentive (S: 4.47); Knowledgeable (E: 4.47); Stimulating (Cr: 4.47)).

SECTION 3: Assessment of Implications

On the basis of the results of our survey, we can draw either of two possible inferences:

- (i) the students clearly view non-expertise-related characteristics as more desirable in a supervisor than expertise-related characteristics

or

- (ii) the students took the occasion of the survey to express their relative satisfaction with the expertise-related characteristics, and their relative dissatisfaction with the non-expertise-related characteristics, of their supervisors.

If we take the position that the students responded in a detached way to the survey, then in our view the main implication of our research findings is that the traditional focus on expertise as the determinant of supervision competence is too narrow. In particular, students clearly rank non-expertise-related characteristics which provide support and which balance creativity with criticism as more important overall than expertise-related characteristics. Consequently, given that academics typically have no explicit training in providing support to students they are supervising or in balancing creativity with criticism in their supervision, it would seem appropriate for staff development opportunities to be enhanced to cater to these needs. Gaining skills to supervise effectively has benefits for both the students and the supervisors (Graham and Grant, 1997). In particular, inexperienced supervisors will benefit from training opportunities as often supervisors are not adequately prepared for being supervisors.

If, alternatively, the findings of our survey are restricted to the Faculty of Agriculture, then the above comments still apply in this context. However, the need then arises to extend our research into other discipline areas in order to determine the robustness of our results. Recent anecdotal evidence from broadly-based student support activities at the University of Western Australia suggest that this is likely to be the case.

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Footnotes

1 Full details of the results of the survey are available from the authors on request.

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The Master/apprentice model for the supervision of postgraduate research and a new policy for research education

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This paper is based in part on an address I gave in 1998 to the Quality in Postgraduate Research Conference in Adelaide. By chance the Adelaide conference came just a few days after the release of the West (1998) Review's Final Report which contained a controversial proposal for student centred funding or 'vouchers'. Minister Kemp subsequently responded to this controversy by announcing a no vouchers policy and an initiative in the area of university research and research education known as the Research Green Paper.

At the time of writing the Green Paper is still to be released. However, prior to its release DETYA, apparently taking a lead from West (1998), has attempted to construct a highly negative impression of research education in the areas of:

- enrolment growth (which is portrayed as excessive);
- completion rates;
- employment outcomes; and
- employer perceptions of graduates.

It is feared by the author and CAPA that the Green Paper process will see research studies being exposed to the radical free-market policies already visited on postgraduate coursework studies. In particular research studies could become the test bed for the above mentioned vouchers proposal and/or the transfer of university research funds to industry.

What then does all this have to do with postgraduate pedagogy in general and the supervisor student relationship in particular? Well, either via the policy (not so) quick fix of the Green Paper or via more reasoned processes of research and discussion, research education and supervision will remain under considerable scrutiny. In this paper I argue that the very nature of the research supervision model which applies in Australian universities militates against a programmatic discussion of research education by those who have the greatest stake in it – supervisors and students – and yet, despite

the fraught policy environment for such a discussion, it is increasingly urgent.

A pedagogy of privacy

One of the few things Australian universities' regulations make clear about research candidature is that the research student must be attached to a principal supervisor (the Master). This supervisor is then assumed to be responsible for most aspects of the student's candidature. The student (the apprentice) is obliged to attend usually private meetings with the supervisor, provide written work, and to carry out a program of research.

However, even university or faculty codes spell out the responsibilities of the student and the responsibilities of the supervisor, the university does little or nothing to check on what actually occurs within the supervisor/student relationship. To this extent it is the private and individual nature of the supervisor/student relationship which is a predominant factor in the Master/apprentice model.

One of the key reasons that the supervisor/student relationship is resistant to both external observation and institutional control is the requirement for a PhD to be in some sense original. This requirement is still explicitly reflected in university rules governing research studies and PhD candidature in particular. In the Master/apprentice model this requirement translates to a rite of passage where the gifted student passes through the PhD process and becomes an autonomous researcher. There is a structural tension here between the role of the supervisor as Master and the requirement of the student to be original. At its extreme the symptoms of this tension are expressed in the form of obsessive behaviours displayed by PhD students.

Not surprisingly such a relationship also carries with it a not always healthy relationship of power. Green and Lee (1995) in reporting on a public exchange between Frow (the supervisor) and Giblet (the student) argue that the imbalance of power which this exchange demonstrated is, 'a structural one, built into the very received

model of postgraduate studies' (Green and Lee 1995, p.44). This relationship of power when overlaid with the privatised and unknowable nature of the supervisor/student relationship and further overlaid with the requirement that the student is to produce an original contribution to knowledge leaves the student floundering between the irreconcilable poles of pupil and independent researcher.

One outcome of this process of floundering is the creation of tension between supervisor and student. On the other hand, the lack of an overt curriculum can allow for innovation and flexibility in both teaching methods and in the type of research which can be conducted. To the extent that the Master/apprentice model allows the student's research education program to be a matter for negotiation between the student and supervisor, the student's studies can be insulated from the dictates of centralised authority within the faculty, university or national funding body. A factor essential not only to academic freedom but also to real innovation and discovery.

The individualised and privatised aspects of the Master/apprentice model also lead to the reproduction over time of both bad and good supervisory practices. Until very recently the process of teaching supervisors how to supervise has not been the product of any formal training process but one of transmission down the generations of Masters and apprentices. This means that poor practices can continue unquestioned because they are part of research culture and that innovations and improvements are not broadcast to other areas.

The Master/apprentice model and education policy

The Master/apprentice model of supervision has proved remarkably resistant to change despite massive upheaval in the university sector. To some extent research studies represent the last bastion of the pre Dawkins era. Kamler and Threadgold have commented on this in reference to the examination of PhDs. They argue that, 'no one seems to have noticed that it is no longer British boys who are writing doctoral theses' (Kamler and Threadgold p 12).

Until very recently this also applied at the level of national policy making and performance measurement. For example, despite the development of quality measuring tools under Labor, the nature of supervisory practice remained largely unquestioned. For example, the Quality Review process was established primarily to review the quality review processes used by universities (CQAHE 1995 a,b) while the ARC have concerned themselves with a sort of black box approach which seeks to measure and reward according to inputs and outputs but not the process by which these are achieved.

By contrast, the final report of the West Review of Higher Education Financing and Policy has brought the

Master/apprentice model directly to bear on the policy process. The Review argues, in a manner not dissimilar to the recent pronouncements from DETYA, that the number of postgraduate research places has grown alarmingly and that the research 'training' now being carried out across the unified national system is of dubious quality. To remedy this perceived situation the Review proposes a new method for allocating research places and scholarships, essentially a voucher style system, which would see them clustered even more predominantly in the great eight group of universities than they are now. The Review also calls for the number of postgraduate research places in total to be reduced quite drastically (West 1998 pp 149-166).

In its quest to both contract the number of research students and concentrate them in fewer institutions, the West Review mobilises the language of the Master/apprentice model arguing that research studies are about selecting an elite to undertake further study. Research graduates are seen to 'use' their research degrees only when they enter narrowly defined 'research careers'. The Review departs from convention to an extent by proposing that this elite is to be selected on a national basis.

This proposal is predicated on the assumptions that research students should be young, recent first class honours graduates who are geographically mobile. While this does not fit particularly well with the facts about the demographics of the current cohort of research students, it does fit with a conventional reading of the Master/apprentice model. The West proposals are about selecting a small elite of bright young undergraduates to go into research careers in the same way as this Master/apprentice model is about selecting the bright few to continue the intellectual life of the discipline.

Under a West style regime, with much fewer places, a continued increase in undergraduate numbers, a national ranking system which discriminates against students from non 'group of eight' institutions and the transfer of research funds from non-priority disciplines to priority disciplines, reality will be brought sharply into accord with this particular articulation of the Master/apprentice model. Or to put this another way, the recent growth in 'non-traditional PhD' candidates, particularly women and older students with work or other experience, is likely to be reversed under this regime.

Thus West, by associating quality with reduced student numbers, has mobilised the Master/apprentice model to justify large cuts to postgraduate research. A rigorous pursuit of these agendas will see the winding back of the clock on post-Dawkins Universities and the excision of research from parts of others to create a vast array of teaching-only faculty across the nation. Research education will remain only for a super elite both in terms of student numbers and geographic concentration. Yet such an outcome is by no means inevitable. If nothing

else, West's vision for postgraduate research has highlighted the extent to which a range of policy ends can be articulated through the Master/apprentice model. What is currently overdue is the public articulation of alternative visions which can speak through (and hopefully transcend) the Master/apprentice model and at the same time speak in defence of research.

This is particularly necessary in the current environment where reducing government outlays is always seen as desirable and criticism of research education and university research can easily form the pretext for further cuts to funding for this area. Thus arguments for improving supervision need to be framed in a positive context. One such context is the production of new knowledge and original thinking. New knowledge is now increasingly seen as the only source of the future wealth of nations. It is also essential to a properly informed discussion about the many problems society must solve if the future is to be worth inhabiting. Cutting back on research studies assumes a reduced national research effort and a reduced role for research educated graduates which will lead to a decline in Australia's capacity in innovation and original thinking.

One strategy for launching such a re-articulation would be for supervisors and students to work together to present an alternative vision for research studies which shows both ways of improving current practices and the benefits of such improvement. To do so is to move beyond the pedagogy of privacy by making public both innovative solutions to old problems in the practice of research education and the real social benefits of research education and university research.

A Platform for Debate

I have argued in this paper that it is equally possible to recruit the Master/apprentice model of supervision to arguments in favour of contraction and concentration of research places and to those in favour of expansion and diversity. While the latter case has much to offer both staff and students it is largely unarticulated. Such a case could be most effectively mounted jointly by supervisors and students. This strategy would attack an agenda of contraction and concentration at its weakest point if it made public the diverse nature of research studies and the impact research and research graduates have had and should continue to have on the daily lives of all of us. It would also help improve supervision by making public a national catalogue of effective and less effective practices.

In this context staff/student departmental and disciplinary fora with a dual role of improving supervision and of articulating the benefits of university research could be implemented. National organisations like CAPA, the NTEU and others could play a facilitating role in such a process by working to promote such fora and by

bringing cases from these local fora into the national policy debate.

Endnotes

1 One of the commissioned papers contained in the West (1997) Review's discussion document states that, 'Vouchers are a particularly appropriate method for funding the base level government component of postgraduate teaching and research training' (Williams 1997, p. 26).

2 See DETYA (1998) and Gallagher (1999). Lawson (1999), and Clark (1999) provide counter arguments. The ARC have made similar criticism to DETYA, see Brennan 1996.

3 Brown (1999) has already detected such a trend in higher education research funding.

4 The ARC have initiated a significant research project to monitor research graduate outcomes and two independent ARC funded projects are examining postgraduate pedagogy in the humanities and the conditions for good postgraduate education respectively.

5 CAPA is currently investigating more proactive approaches to this problem to use in conjunction with 'The CAPA Model Code for the Conduct of Postgraduate Research' (CAPA 1998).

6 Linda Conrad described a range of such symptoms in her address to the CAPA Research Officers' Conference Brisbane 1996.

7 In an unfortunate minority of cases this leads to a breakdown in communication between the student and the supervisor. Here the private nature of the supervisor/student relationship can mask the absence of any sort of relationship for such great lengths of time that redressing a problem that may once have been fairly easy to fix becomes impossible simply due to this delay. This phenomenon is often encountered by caseworkers at postgraduate associations.

8 The actual practices of supervision have not been particularly well documented until quite recently. Furthermore, such investigation has been initiated from the margins of PhD education. Thus, Sheely (1997) finds cause to investigate what constitutes a PhD as a point of comparison to the professional doctorate. Similarly, Pearson and Ford (1997) are seeking to compare conventional PhD teaching to 'open and flexible PhD study and research'.

9 I am indebted to my colleague Dani Brown from the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association for this turn of phrase.

10 See also the CAPA response to the West Review (Frankland and Thorpe 1998) and Philips (1998).

11 A similar argument was recently put by Aitkin (1999).

12 Though such selection may be contained within the boundaries of a broadly defined discipline if not a department.

13 See for example DETYA Selected Higher Education Student Statistics 1998, Table 7, p. 23.

14 It is salutary to note that despite the much trumpeted growth in research places the proportion of research places to total university places has remained constant, see DETYA (1999) p. 124.

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Articles

Diversity and convergence in Australian higher education

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Questions of diversity between higher education institutions, and the other side of the coin which is convergence between institutions (sameness, homogeneity), are tricky but important. Diversity and its absence are difficult to define and measure. Yet they shape the potential of the student experience, and the limits of innovation in research and teaching.

In an era in which student-centred learning has been foregrounded, the question of the range of educational choices should be of central interest to policy makers. The conventional view is that following the deregulation of missions and course mix, now determined by universities themselves, and with the growing role of market mechanisms such as tuition fees and competition, institutions are being rendered 'naturally' responsive to students. Diverse student needs will become matched by diversity in provision, so that over time a greater variety of higher education will emerge. As Meek and Wood put it:

Every official statement on higher education since the Green Paper has stressed the need for a more diverse and responsive set of higher education institutions. Competition in a deregulated environment is seen as a key factor in accomplishing this goal, and the commitment to competition has not changed even if the government has.¹

The assumption that market deregulation is automatically associated with greater educational variety and choice is supported in some of the academic literature.² But has it really happened? There is also the question of the end of the binary system, which is still discussed a decade later. Has the abolition of the colleges of advanced education led to more diversity, or less? Where are we heading now: towards greater diversity between institutions, or less? What kinds of diversity are desirable? What kinds should disappear?

To answer these questions requires a method which is at the same time conceptually rigorous, data-based, and policy-based. We need to define what we mean by diversity, recognising there is more than one kind of diversity at stake. We need to make judgements about which kinds of diversity are desired. And we need a statistical fix on the variations between and within institutions in the present, and trends in those variations over time.

There has been little solid research on these topics in Australia. Rhetoric about diversity is abundant, especially in university marketing departments of individual universities, which all claim that *their* institution is unique - while at the same time assuring prospective students that their institution can do everything that its competitors do, only better! But individual universities rarely support system-level research. Where they do gather data on the broader picture, it mostly takes the form of targeted bench-marking exercises centred not on the system as a whole but the interests of the institution concerned: that is, research that is Pre-Copernican rather than Copernican in outlook, as if the system revolves around themselves. Such an approach to research is consistent with the dominance of the marketing outlook.

Nevertheless, there have been two recent studies of diversity in Australian higher education conducted from a system vantage point, both financed by the Higher Education Division of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA).³ Governments have biases, too, but is to the credit of the Higher Education Division that it benefits from reflective research on the sector, and commissions academic studies which raise sometimes uncomfortable issues. (How much of this research actually informs Howard/Kemp Government policy is a moot point, but that is another story).⁴

This article begins by assessing the two recent DETYA-financed studies of diversity, and then takes the issues

further. First, it examines definitions of inter-institutional diversity and convergence, and the purposes of diversity. Second, it theorises the dynamics of trends to diversity and sameness. Third, it briefly examines some data on diversity in Australian higher education, and reaches tentative judgements about the main trends.

The focus in this article is on inter-institutional diversity, rather than diversity within institutions or across different fields of study. Recent policy attention has been focused on change in system organisation and at the institutional level. The research study from which this article was drawn was focused explicitly on institution-level analysis.⁵ A focus on trends in diversity within institutions might reach different conclusions. For example, are the growing differences in the financing arrangements governing the student experience – HECS places, various scholarships, part fees, full fees – associated with differences in educational services? The question is interesting, but outside the boundaries of this article.

Data on diversity

DETYA's *The characteristics and performance of higher education institutions* (1998) is mostly about 'characteristics' rather than 'performance'. It is in two parts. First, it compares 40 different funded institutions or parts thereof,⁶ drawing on the annual DETYA-produced statistics and the Graduate Careers Council surveys to list student numbers, ages, forms of enrolment, discipline spread, characteristics of staff, sources of financing, research outcomes, institutional assets, and so on. Performance measures include research funding, retention and completion rates, employment rates, starting salaries and student satisfaction as measured in the Course Experience Questionnaire. Though the data are all available elsewhere, compiled in a succession of single indicator tables of all institutions, in ladder format, they make compelling reading, albeit individualistic in form. The reader tends to spot for her or his own institution: the overall picture is not so clear.

The other part of the DETYA study is less satisfactory. It is a prolonged attempt to develop a system-level overview of diversity and convergence by isolating different groupings of institutions according to type, such as strong research universities, internationally-focused universities and so on. Unfortunately, it uses solely statistical techniques with no discussion of the dynamics of diversity. In the absence of any history or sociology of the system or its institutions, the method is still-born, explaining nothing, but it does help us to identify certain institutions which do not fit the most common models.

For example, there is a small group of institutions with a pronounced skew to external enrolments, including New England, Deakin, Southern Cross, Charles Sturt, Central Queensland and Southern Queensland. These

institutions also tend to have high student-staff ratios, high proportions of non-school leaver entrants and relatively weak research (though UNE is stronger in research than the others). Taken together these are signs of a mode of provision distinct from the comprehensive metropolitan research universities.

The data also spotlight the unique characteristics of the ANU, due to the presence of its large research-focused Institute of Advanced Studies; and the multiple nature of Monash, spread between more institutional types than other universities. Monash is at one and the same time a research university, a school-leaver university, a regionally-based multi-campus university with a large mature-age component, a globalised university with the only Australian university off-shore campus (Kuala Lumpur), and a distance specialist.

The second study, by University of New England scholars Meek and Wood (1998), is one of the more insightful papers on Australian universities since the Dawkins reforms. It does not completely nail the difficult problem of diversity. Meek and Wood are stronger on the international academic literature than in their empirical study of the Australian system, and they duck the question of hierarchy between institutions, a salient aspect of diversity. Nevertheless, their study is a fine basis for further research, and should be widely read.

Meek and Wood begin with a discussion of definitions and concepts of diversity, and a review of trends in Australian higher education policy. In their second section questions of diversity and competition are examined from differing perspectives by Jill Maling and Bruce Keepes, Peter Karmel, Russel Blackford of the Australian Higher Education Industry Association, and myself. Space prevents a discussion of these papers but it is worth looking at Karmel's. He makes his now predictable case for a voucher system, and fails to confront those arguments which suggest that markets encourage convergence rather than diversity – a view prominent in some European literature on higher education⁷ - but on the way he makes some sharp, insightful comments about the dynamics of diversity.

After the contributed papers Meek and Wood examine statistical variation between institutions, including fields of study, mode and type of attendance, course type, forms of user charges, and access of under-represented groups; and review case study material from three institutions: Macquarie, Southern Cross and the University of South Australia. They consider the management of diversity/convergence in relation to responses to the external environment, in the internal ordering of institutions, and in teaching, research and the organisation of academic units. The concluding section returns to policy questions.

The conclusion is less than conclusive. The authors are sceptical about the claims made about market reform

and diversity, especially regulated reforms in which mechanisms such as Quality Assurance tend to encourage convergence not diversity. They leave an opening to the claim that a 'true' (i.e. unregulated) economic market in higher education *would* stimulate greater diversity, but provide neither a theorisation nor empirical evidence to substantiate this. In relation to sectoral differences, they rightly note that a return to the binary system would be absurd, while leaning to the argument that governments can encourage diversity between institutions by creating different institutional environments, for example through funding policies. However, there is little discussion of TAFE or of cross-sectoral issues, though TAFE is the key example of an environment different to universities.

Definitions of diversity

Nevertheless, the benefits of the Meek and Wood study lie not so much in the unsatisfying conclusion to the journey, as in the journey itself. Their careful scholarship pays dividends in an excellent discussion of concepts of diversity. Adapting from that discussion, and from other work,⁸ we can understand the relevant terms as follows:

- *diversity*: variety of types, the presence of different types
- *horizontal diversity*: differences with no necessary implications for status/resource ranking
- *vertical diversity*: distinctions of rank between institutions (or between fields of study within institutions)
- *systemic diversity*: different types of institution within the one system, for example universities and CAEs in pre-1988 Australia, or in America the doctoral universities, four year colleges and community colleges
- *programmatic diversity*: variety in programs or services, whether between institutions or within an institution
- *differentiation*: the emergence of a number of parts which taken together form a unified whole
- *market differentiation*: the effects of market competition in creating vertical diversity

Equally important is the other side of the coin – the tendency to convergence between institutions, the decline of variety and difference. The key concept here is 'isomorphism':

- *isomorphism*: imitating behaviour, the mimicking of one institution (or program) by another institution (or program)

Desirability of diversity

Though people speak about diversity in higher education as if it is an unambiguous good, like 'freedom' with which it is often identified, by no means all forms of diversity between institutions are desirable. An argument for greater diversity needs to be carefully grounded. Some forms of isomorphism are almost universally supported, such as the spread of rights of access to education, certain kinds of financial accountability, a greater transparency in management and governance, and at least minimum standards in teaching and research.

As noted, one argument for diversity is that students have diverse needs, and a diverse set of providers can better match those needs. This argument is often displaced to another: students have varying abilities and a system with different levels of institution can better match those abilities to the map of provision. We should be wary of assumptions that different students have different potentials. Not only can different student needs be catered for within the same institution, rather than serving as a basis for system ordering, measures of static 'ability' tend to correlate closely to prior social inequalities. In this context, an argument for a hierarchy of provision is all too neatly fitted to existing social inequalities, and becomes in effect an argument for replicating and reproducing those same inequalities.

In meta-level policy circles such as the OECD and the World Bank, the American system, with its range of institutions – doctoral universities with their differences in wealth and prestige, four year colleges, community colleges - is held to be a model of inter-institutional diversity. It is argued that a system in which marked differences in functions, costs and prestige are joined to mechanisms for upward movement provides for broader opportunities, while also sustaining the quality of elite institutions. However, the argument is weaker than its frequency of presentation suggests. Though upward movement occurs, not many students pass from bottom to top, and a hierarchy of institutions does not really expand choice. Few have the money or marks to 'choose' elite institutions, while the wealthy and successful are unlikely to choose low status alternatives. In such a system the quality of the elite institutions and the educational advantages enjoyed by their clients are secured specifically by subordinating other institutions and their clients.

This is how markets normally function. Yet there are other options. In Australia in the years 1960-1990, the non-market era in which most of the local system was built, it was a basic assumption of policy that *all* universities should be world-class doctoral universities. This did not diminish the leading institutions, at least until public money began to decline.

Another and stronger argument for diversity associates variety between institutions not with differences in their funding system, cost, accessibility or prestige, but with differences in the educational and research programs themselves, and in the organisational settings in which higher education is provided. This kind of diversity is associated with a spirit of self-confidence and originality. Karmel refers to 'the desirability of escaping from the straight-jacket of uniformity so that progress can be achieved through experimentation, change and the adoption of successful practice' (p. 46).⁹ The significant factors here are an institution's mission, values and goals, the kind of cultural climate and human relationships that it fosters, and its strategies in course provision, services and research development.

This kind of diversity, focused on educational benefits, has more policy beef than the others. One danger of institutional isomorphism, whereby universities move towards a common model of good practice drawn from the management textbook, or Ivy League academic practice, is that it can suppress the capacity for educational variety and creativity.

Dynamics of diversity

In the academic literature on diversity in higher education, debate at the meta-theoretical level is divided between those who argue that the dominant tendency is towards increased diversity, and those who focus on homogenisation and mimicking. Levy rightly urges us to be open-minded and case-by-case in approach, focusing on the empirical data:

*The balance between isomorphism and diversity depends largely on where we look. But the conclusion here is not that the isomorphism-diversity dichotomy is pointless, much less that isomorphism reigns. What is required in the face of the coincidence of isomorphism and diversity, of a complex and evolving mix of these broad and consequential tendencies, is that we identify the conditions under which each gains strength and that we try to understand those conditions as much as possible.*¹⁰

The present environment has potential for both greater diversity and greater sameness. Globalisation brings universities into contact with a wider variety of higher education and foregrounds cultural diversity, which is increasingly important in creating variety. At the same time, in the context of market competition, globalisation strengthens the power of a small number of institutional models drawn from the peak Anglo-American universities, and global agencies such as OECD and the IMF are encouraging national systems to imitate the American system. More generally, globalisation is associated with the spread of a world-wide culture of the form in which other institutions with different traditions, such as hos-

pitals and churches and universities, are adopting common corporate practices.

Governments can create variation through systemic diversity and by deliberately funding experiment and variety. Or they can encourage convergence between institutions, through such mechanisms as the relative funding model, competitive bidding for funds, quality assurance, fee systems, standardised measures of research activity, and reports such as Hoare (1995) and West (1998) which expect universities to behave like corporations. On the whole, it has been the standardising face of government that has been uppermost in recent years, but policy could readily move in the reverse direction.

Markets also have contrary potentials. They can facilitate small specialised institutions and niche courses, providing the framework of regulation permits. At the same time, competition is a powerful driver of isomorphism at every level. For example, international marketing encourages convergence around a small number of standard courses.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that though markets have contrary potential, unregulated markets' potential for diversity is *not symmetrical* with their potential for sameness. There is an exciting range of possible alternatives that could be provided in higher education, but are excluded by the economic bottom line which dictates only proven risks and saleable goods are acceptable, and tends to empty out quality along with cost. Given this, it is the homogenising aspect of markets that is more important. Another way to state it is that markets encourage convergence between producers overall, while multiplying the variations within a narrowing range of market-viable activity. Above all, market competition is strongly associated with isomorphism in management strategy. Karmel notes that in a competitive system there is an *inherent* incentive to imitate:

*There is another factor that can work against differentiation in spite of autonomy. It is the tendency for institutions to copy other (especially neighbouring) institutions. There are a number of examples of duplication of specialist programs unrelated to the demand for their products on the principle of 'anything you can do, I can do better'. This tendency is exacerbated when there is keen competition among institutions, particularly for students. It is a force against diversity... In this situation some degree of central regulation may, perhaps surprisingly, be the best means of preserving a degree of diversity.*¹¹

It is a crucial insight into competitive behaviour. Competition involves 'othering', yet in a process of mutual convergence the 'other' becomes more like the self. Indeed, the game logic of competition demands this. If institutions were sufficiently different to each

other than their diverse missions, profiles and outcomes could scarcely be compared, competition would become meaningless. Since the 1988 White Paper government has set out to shape higher education in Australia as a system-managed competition. Such a competition is impossible unless a certain level of sameness is factored in from the start. Karmel draws attention to the way this level of sameness tends to grow over time.

Isomorphism is academic as well as managerial. The status of key scholars and leading departments sustains world-wide imitating behaviour. Sometimes the leading institutions are on the cutting edge, sometimes not, but their example always matters. In the Sandstone universities, academic and managerial isomorphism tend to reinforce each other, producing that odd combination of cautious creativity, in which Sandstone control over the definition of innovation is combined with the guarding of Sandstone reputation.

On the face of it, it might seem surprising that new universities do not attempt something radically different, for example in research. There is no real prospect that the adoption of isomorphistic strategies can overcome their historic disadvantages. Why then do new universities use imitating strategies? It is because in a market, emulation, rather than originality, is the quicker route to legitimacy and to a limited kind of success. When allocating scarce resources to investment in new research programs, the Unitechs and the New Universities are constrained by the quantum formula for maximising outcomes, which privileges the dominant applied science-based approaches to organising research activity, and peer-driven isomorphism in the assessment of proposals for ARC grants.

Where new universities do attempt to develop niches, the need to minimise the width of the band of risk encourages voluntary conformism in other areas. They 'copy in all ways other than the particularly distinguishing one' as Levy puts it.¹² It is not that competition inhibits *all* forms of innovation in universities. Rather, innovation safe within the terms of market competition is encouraged, while more far-reaching innovations in education and research are not. New competitors find it hard to change the rules of the game.

Above all, isomorphism is about reducing uncertainty in a competitive situation. By adopting the same innovations as competitor universities, isomorphs ensure that even if those strategies fail, the relative (competitive) position of the institution will not decline.

Yet isomorphism is not something that universities confess to. As noted, university officers and marketing departments always talk about being 'distinctive and innovative'. The two strategic imperatives of marketing taken together – the drive to maximise total market share, and the drive to differentiate from competitors – readily lead to aggressive image-making that is com-

bined with educational conformity.¹³ At worst, *all* innovation becomes concentrated in periodic 'reinventions' of the university by the marketing department, and that department secures a veto power over educational initiatives.

Has diversity increased?

What are the main forms of diversity between higher education institutions in Australia? Has diversity increased or decreased since the abolition of the binary system?

In examining the answers, reference will be made to the categorisation of institutions in Table 1, based in historical distinctions. The Sandstones are the oldest universities in each State, founded before world war one. The Redbricks were created in the 'second wave' after world war two, and grew quickly to become as strong, or nearly as strong, as the Sandstones. The Gumtrees began between 1960 and 1975. The Unitechs grew out of the large institutes of technology. The New Universities were also founded in the last decade. (The categories were discussed in a previous *Australian Universities' Review*).¹⁴

Diversity between institutions will now be briefly examined in nine areas: institutional size and type, the character of the student catchment, mode of enrolment, mode of entry and other aspects of the composition of the student body, field of study provision, research higher degrees, research funding, incomes and assets, and education and research.

In terms of **institutional size and type**, Australia has a system that by world standards is relatively uniform in character. The private sector remains weak and very small overall, enrolling less than 1 per cent of students. With the exception of a handful of specialised institutions, all higher education is provided in comprehensive public doctoral universities in the size range 4,000-40,000 students. There are no mega-institutions of 100,000 or more like some American universities, and no undergraduate only institutions. There are no great distance education or broadcast providers such as the 157,000-strong UK Open University or the 530,000 strong China TV University System.¹⁵ There is less diversity than before 1987 when there were 19 universities funded for research, and 46 colleges of advanced education with very varied sizes and functions. There are no longer specialised media, arts and agricultural institutions (except for the publicly funded private Marcus Oldham Farm Management College), and most smaller universities would grow larger if they could. While systemic diversity has declined, diversity *within* institutions has risen. Though the focused intimacy of small institutions is missing, in a unitary sector of relatively large institutions many students have a wider range of courses and subjects to choose from.

Table I Australian Universities by Segment				
Sandstones	Redbricks	Unitechs	Gumtrees	New Universities
U. Sydney	Aust. National U.	UT. Sydney	U. New England *	U. West. Sydney
U. Melbourne	U. NSW	RMIT	Macquarie U.	Charles Sturt U.
U. Queensland	Monash U.	Queensland UT	U. Newcastle	Southern Cross U
U. West Australia		Curtin UT	U. Wollongong	Victoria UT
U. Adelaide		U. South Australia	La Trobe U.	Swinburne UT
U. Tasmania			Deakin U.	U. Ballarat
			Griffith U.	Central Qld U.
			James Cook U.	U. Southern Qld
			Murdoch U	Sunshine Coast
			Flinders U.	Edith Cowan U.
				U. Canberra
				Nthn Territory U.
				Batchelor College.
				Aust Catholic U.

U indicates University of, UT indicates University of Technology. RMIT means Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Bold italics indicates universities that do not share all characteristics of others in the group.

* the University of New England was founded in 1954, pre-dating Monash, but was not given a Medical faculty and has always been confined by its regional role. It shares some characteristics with the older Gumtrees, some with regional New Universities, and some with other distance education specialists.

In terms of **student catchment area**, there is considerable variation. Sandstones and Redbricks lead the competition for well qualified school-leavers in each State/Territory, and some such as Melbourne are developing a larger national role. Unitechs and some Gumtrees take in most of the rest. While the Sandstones, Redbricks, Unitechs and certain Gumtrees have metropolitan-wide and State-wide catchments, others are strongly regional, including James Cook, Central and Southern Queensland, Sunshine Coast, Southern Cross, New England, Newcastle, Charles Sturt, Wollongong, and Ballarat. Deakin, La Trobe and Monash include a regional campus within a larger State-oriented network.

Related to the question of catchment is diversity in the **mode of enrolment** (full-time, part-time, external) and in the **age and prior qualifications** of the student body. Here there is considerable variation, as there was before 1988. The New Universities, Unitechs and some Gumtrees depend on their capacity to attract students other than school leavers, including entrants from TAFE, older students, and students in full-time work upgrading qualifications. For example in 1997, 75 per cent of all

Bachelor-level entrants to the University of Western Australia were school leavers, but only 20 per cent of Bachelor-level entrants to Southern Cross were in this category. Only 1 per cent of Bachelor-level entrants to Melbourne, Adelaide and ANU were from TAFE, but 18 per cent at Edith Cowan and 14 per cent at the University of Technology in Sydney, and Charles Sturt.

Post-1987 universities tend to have more part-time students. In 1997 18 per cent of UWA's students were internal part-time, whereas 46 per cent of UTS's students were in this category. As noted, some institutions specialise in distance education: except for Deakin and New England, these are post-1987 universities. While at nine universities less than 1 per cent of students were external, 72 per cent at UNE, 70 per cent at Southern Queensland, 68 per cent at Charles Sturt and 51 per cent at Central Queensland were externals.¹⁶ Space does not permit a full discussion of these variations, but Table 2 contains data on the proportion of Bachelor-level entrants from TAFE, and the proportion of all students enrolled in external mode.

Has inter-institutional diversity in catchments, and student composition of the student body, increased or decreased since 1988? Diversity between institutional types is decreasing. The smaller CAEs were often more localised and specialised than any present universities. At the same time, the growing proportions of students aged over 30 years, and from TAFE, and the slowly improving rates of participation in regions outside the main cities, suggest that another kind of diversity - diversity in routes of access - has grown.

In terms of **fields of study**, the main post-binary tendency is again convergence. The new universities have duplicated the comprehensive approach of the pre-1987 universities, while the Gumtrees have extended in Law and Engineering. Most universities now offer Law, and MBA programs are now almost universally available. One vital form of diversity remains: the distinction between Medicine universities and non-Medicine universities (Table 2). Universities with Medical faculties are strongly placed players. Not only does Medicine attract both highest scoring school leavers, and public support, it is well funded, and Biomedicine and Biotechnology have immense commercial potential. There has been no increase in Medical faculties since 1987, but the recent budget provided for new medical places at James Cook University at Cairns, and Charles Sturt at Wagga Wagga.

In terms of **level of study**, there has been a particularly rapid growth of research higher degree enrolments in the post-1987 institutions (albeit from a small base) indicating another tendency to convergence. Despite this, inter-institutional diversity in the extent of research activities, and in **income from research activities**, remains very marked. While all institutions are now eligible for research funding, most of that funding is distributed on a competitive basis, and dominated by already research-strong institutions. Research performance is a primary determinant of the vertical differentiation between Australian universities. Along with accumulated assets, and patterns of school-leaver preference, it is the means whereby Sandstones and Redbricks sustain a leading position. Table 2 shows that at the University of Queensland, 24 per cent of all income in 1996 was from research activities, whereas the corresponding figure at Deakin, Charles Sturt and Edith Cowan was 2 per cent. At the University of Western Australia 11 per cent of all government operating funds were generated by the research quantum compared to 1 per cent at Southern Cross and Central Queensland. Institutions with the strongest academic research performance as measured by the quantum tend to be strongest also in attracting commercial research funding.¹⁷

DETYA also provides data on diversity in **incomes and assets**. In 1996 the proportion of all income derived from student fees and other charges for services varied

from a high of 19 per cent at UNSW to 6 per cent at Newcastle. The proportion of income from uncontested private sources (property, investments, donations, endowments and bequests) varied from 29 per cent at UWA to 5 per cent at James Cook. The level of non-current assets varied from almost \$2.5 billion at Sydney to less than \$100 million at Southern Cross. These variations in uncontested private incomes and non-current assets signify the extent to which an institution is financially independent of government and market forces. They tell us much about its capacity to shape its own identity and destiny.

What about diversity in **teaching and research**, educational diversity?¹⁸ While the integration of advanced education into a unitary sector diminished the binary diversity in course content and pedagogies, and spread the research role, more subtle trends elude us. Not since the Commonwealth-financed discipline reviews of the 1980s has there been a close look at diversity between institutions in pedagogies, course coverage and values. In the DETYA data it is difficult to discern trends at the level of academic discipline, in educational diversity and in the relationship between institutional diversity/isomorphism and educational diversity/isomorphism.¹⁹ To explore these issues a more fine-grained analysis is necessary. Here the most useful research tools are qualitative, not quantitative. The discipline reviews were grounded in interviews and document analysis. More such research is needed in order to illuminate the all-important trends in educational diversity.

It is likely that educational diversity has decreased. A recent study of governance and organisational cultures in Australian universities unearthed strong indirect evidence of increasing isomorphism in educational programs and research practices.²⁰

Diversity and hierarchy

The main form of institutional diversity in Australian higher education is in fact the vertical differentiation of the system into the categories listed in Table 1: Sandstones, Redbricks, Unitechs, Gumtrees and New Universities. In all of the forms of diversity that have been discussed so far, the role of this institutional hierarchy is very apparent. This is no horizontal division of labour, no situation in which diversity expresses notions of 'equal but different', it is a system premised on dominance/subordination. The Sandstones and Redbricks outcompete the other universities in the competition for school leavers and research grants. Other universities would take over those roles if they could.

The Sandstones and Redbricks all have Medical faculties, and are consistently strong relative to other institutions not only in high scoring school-leavers but in their proportion of students enrolled at higher degree level, in their level of research income, in their level of private

Table 2: Diversity between higher education institutions: some indicators

University	Medicine faculty or research school	Proportion of all Bachelor-level entrants from TAFE 1997	Proportion of all students in distance education 1997	Research students as a proportion of all students 1997	Research income as a proportion of total income 1996	Uncontested private income as a proportion of total income 1996
		%	%	%	%	%
Sydney	YES	2	3	11	15	22
Melbourne	YES	1	2	9	23	12
Queensland	YES	3	4	11	24	10
Western Australia	YES	1	0	10	23	29
Adelaide	YES	1	4	10	24	15
Tasmania	YES	7	3	6	14	6
Aust. National	YES	1	0	11	50	20
New South Wales	YES	2	8	8	20	13
Monash	YES	8	16	7	14	15
UT., Sydney	NO	14	0	3	5	14
RMIT.	NO	10	2	5	6	8
Qld. UT	NO	8	7	3	5	7
Curtin UT	NO	11	7	4	7	11
South Australia	NO	7	14	3	7	12
New England	NO	5	72	6	12	5
Macquarie	NO	4	9	5	15	10
Newcastle	YES	5	3	4	14	16
Wollongong	NO	7	3	7	12	8
La Trobe	NO	3	0	6	9	13
Deakin	NO	5	38	2	2	10
Griffith	NO	6	4	4	8	6
James Cook	NO*	4	6	8	10	5
Murdoch	NO	6	15	7	13	6
Flinders	YES	3	7	5	22	11
West. Sydney	NO	5	3	3	3	11
Charles Sturt	NO*	14	68	1	2	24
Southern Cross	NO	10	46	2	3	4
Victoria UT	NO	8	0	3	4	11
Swinburne UT	NO	19	0	3	5	4
Ballarat	NO	3	0	1	3	3
Central Qld.	NO	9	51	2	3	12
Southern Qld.	NO	5	70	1	3	14
Sunshine Coast	NO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Edith Cowan	NO	18	18	3	2	12
Canberra	NO	9	0	3	7	10
Nthn. Territory	NO	13	11	4	10	9
Batchelor Coll.	NO	n.a.	0	0	n.a.	9
Aust. Catholic	NO	4	4	1	1	4
AUSTRALIA	n.a.	7	13	5	14	13

In the 1999 Federal budget medical places were allocated to James Cook University at Cairns, and Charles Sturt at Wagga Wagga. n.a. means data not available. Non-contested private income includes donations, bequests and income from university properties and assets.

Source: DETYA, The characteristics and performance of higher education institutions, 1998

money, and in their assets. The Sandstones have few students from TAFE and less adult part-timers than other institutions, and no significant role in distance education.

The Unitechs maintain a special role in continuing and vocational education, with a high number of mature age, part-time and working students. The Unitechs are not strong in research. The Gumtrees have an intermediate role. They work hard to sustain research - where all Gumtrees except Deakin outperform the post-1987 universities, and Flinders and Newcastle benefit from Medical faculties - while some have developed distance education. There is more entry from TAFE than takes place in the Sandstones. The New Universities struggle for a research role. Postgraduate research numbers remain relatively small and research income is low. They are building student numbers in the areas of emerging participation, such as regions and TAFE-leavers. Four of them are major distance education specialists and two more have a significant level of distance enrolment.

Have these differences hardened into a genuine division of labour, as in the days of the binary system? Not really. Some Unitechs and the New Universities appear to emphasise the vocational utility of qualifications, or student-centredness in delivery, contrasting with the traditional academic university. However the real distinctions are usually less than the marketing ones. Sandstones draw school leavers not so much because they are research institutions but because the distinction associated with attending a Sandstone (including its image as a research university) provide a head start in the labour markets. Utilitarianism is strong across the whole higher education system, as the DETYA study notes.²¹ Meek and O'Neil remark that though the universities created out of the CAE sector often present as if they are 'more geared to the demands of industry and serve a student clientele having more vocational and applied interests', 'there is little available evidence to demonstrate that courses and students are as different as they are made out to be'.²²

In this context claims about vocational utility and a special orientation to continuing education are often little more than a *post hoc* rationalisation of a secondary competitive position. There is no evidence to suggest that mature age students, working students or leavers from TAFE see the Unitechs and New Universities as intrinsically more desirable than the Sandstones. They are enrolled in the Unitechs and the New Universities because it is those institutions that (rightly) have provided access to them. The match between institution and students is a function not of niche provision, in which specialist courses match to particular needs, but of the unequal workings of supply and demand within a common system-wide competition. Vertical differentiation remains the dominant element.

Everyone in Australian higher education knows that this vertical differentiation of universities is important, and that it drives both the patterns of diversity and the patterns of imitation, the tendency to ape the leading models. Yet policy makers are bound by a peculiar form of tokenism in which all universities are treated as formal equals. They are unwilling to challenge the social power of the Sandstones (where most of the policy elite is itself educated), and are chronically unable to address questions of power and domination/subordination in any governmental sites. They do not acknowledge vertical differentiation. Perhaps this is why Meek and Wood's DETYA-financed study avoids it too. This weakens their analytical hold on the problem of diversity, and is one reason why their findings are inconclusive. Unless the roots of existing diversity/isomorphism are acknowledged, it is not possible to develop clear-minded policies to increase horizontal diversity.

At the same time, not every form of inter-institutional diversity is tied to hierarchy and dominated by the Sandstones. In the last decade Australian universities have developed a number of strategies for changing their mission and their educational activities, so as to enter emerging fields of activity and gain a competitive advantage over other institutions. Here the Redbricks and the New Universities have often been more adventurous than the others. One such area of diversity, already noted, is specialisation as a distance education provider. Distance learning and flexible delivery have a growing potential because of the emergence of on-line courses and inter-university global collaboration. While the Sandstones neglect it, the role in distance education cuts across the other categories, embracing Gumtrees, New Universities and the Redbrick Monash at Gippsland.

Distance education is only one such avenue of upward mobility. These various forms of diversity that have been deliberately designed to lift an institution's competitive position are examined, in detail, in the study noted above.²³ The squeeze on recurrent funding, reduces academic potential and makes it more difficult to sustain such strategies. Nonetheless, they are an important exception to the overall pattern of vertical differentiation.

Diversity and the market

Compared to 1988, the pattern is one of a more diverse student body able to experience a wider range of activities within larger, more diverse institutions, but in institutions more standardised. The abolition of the binary system, and the creation of a common template of the large comprehensive managed university, were designed to achieve just that.

It would be interesting to conduct a detailed comparison of diversity before and after the watershed year of

Table 3 Research income by category of institution, 1990s

Institutional grouping, number of institutions	Proportion of all funds provided specifically for research purposes *			Proportion of total research quantum	
	1992	1994	1996	1995	1999
	%	%	%	%	%
Sandstones (6)	52.5	44.7	46.7	50.4	48.2
Redbricks (2) **	18.1	21.0	18.0	19.4	17.8
Unitechs (5)	6.6	6.9	8.8	6.8	8.1
Gumtrees (10)	19.8	22.7	22.2	20.6	20.7
New Universities (14)	3.0	4.8	4.3	2.8	5.2
Total (37)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* excludes that proportion of recurrent funding that in the DETYA data is notionally allocated to research activities.
 ** excludes Australian National University.
 Source: DETYA, Selected higher education research expenditure statistics, DETYA, Canberra.

1988. This would throw some light on the respective roles of the state, and quasi-market competition, in relation to diversity and isomorphism. For example, it might be argued that the centrally planned binary system of 1965-1988 was associated with greater systemic diversity than today's system. There was restraint on isomorphism across the binary divide, though this restraint partly broke down when the CAEs broadened their course mix and entered degree programs on a larger scale. At the same time, binary diversity was achieved at the price of a narrower set of study options, especially in the CAE sector, and a more limited range of functions in the traditional universities. But additional data would be required to test these hypotheses in detail.

What of more recent trends, since 1988? Do we have data confirming that the growth of inter-institutional competition is associated with diversification? Or convergence?

The system settings suggest a trend to market-generated inequalities. In 1997 only 54 per cent of institutional revenues were from Commonwealth grants, compared to 87 per cent in 1986. The Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) provided 15 per cent, and fees and charges another 15 per cent.²⁴ One would expect the strongest institutions to be best placed to compete for these private sources of income. However, not all business activities are captured by the DETYA data. It is difficult to discern trends by category.

One area where the data are stronger is research incomes. DETYA shows that between 1992 and 1994, the proportion of total research incomes received by the Sandstone universities declined, and that of the Redbricks, Gumtrees and New Universities improved. Perhaps this was an effect of greater reliance on competitive systems, allowing academic merit in the Redbricks and Gumtrees to be expressed, and official support for generalising the research role. However, from 1994 to 1996 there was a reverse movement: an increase in the Sandstone and Unitech share of research incomes, decline in the Redbricks, and a lesser decline in the Gumtrees and New Universities. Table 3 sets out these trends.

Table 3 also compares the distribution of the research quantum in 1995 and 1999, by category of university. The position of the Unitechs and the New Universities improved, the Sandstones and Redbricks declined, and the Gumtrees showed no change. If anything, this suggests trends to convergence not vertical differentiation. However, note that the dominance of the Sandstones has scarcely altered. Educating 19.8 per cent of all students in 1998, they were allocated 48.2 per cent of the research quantum for 1999. A decade of research development in the 19 post-1987 universities has made little difference. The New Universities are still minor players. Overall there has been little closing of the gap between research strong and research weak institutions, especially in relation to research quantum, the most powerful

measure. The jury is still out, but one suspects that in future research will drive greater vertical diversity in universities' incomes, roles, and reputations.

In the longer term, this combination of a stable hierarchy, a competitive system, and a small number of models of successful institution – Australia has one primary model (the Sandstones with a Redbrick variant) and one secondary model (the Unitechs) – is bad for diversity. As Clark puts it in relation to the US system, 'institutions become variously sorted out on a continuum of degrees of difference'. What he calls 'weak emulating' by newer universities increases the gradient of vertical differentiation.²⁵ In the UK and Australia relentless government comparisons of quality and research performance reinforce the effect. As Fulton puts it in relation to a similar post-binary outcome in the UK:

*What is emerging from student selection, from teaching assessment and ... from other indicators as well – and it is confirmed by the composite league table of 'good universities' which several national newspapers now regularly publish – is a single status hierarchy in which all of the main indicators point in the same direction. This is bad news for diversity: it gives great authority to the leading universities to impose their values and practices on the rest of the system, whether deliberately or not; and it renders alternative values and practices distinctly suspect... Far from encouraging diversification, the new unitary structure is serving to underpin the robustness of the pre-existing hierarchy.*²⁶

The US system contains a larger variety of models, but the same league table logic takes over within each category: doctoral universities, four year colleges, and so on. The effects of institutional hierarchy and of market forces tend to reinforce each other.

Conclusions

The data suggest significant diversity between Australian universities in a number of respects, such as catchment areas and student composition, income from research, income from private sources, and financial independence. Most of these forms of diversity are closely correlated to the historical segmentation of the Australian system, led by the Sandstone universities. By American standards, Australia has low diversity in institutional size, role and fields of study. By world standards the relative absence of small specialist institutions is unusual and narrows the range of potential student experiences. On the other hand, the pattern of large doctoral universities, all with at least some research activities, ensures significant internal diversity.

Since 1988 higher education has become both more and less institutionally diverse. On one hand ('more') there is the tendency to greater vertical differentiation, at this stage more a plausible hypothesis to be tested than a rock solid trend. Perhaps market forces have so far

counter-acted any trend to a 'flatter' system arising from the Dawkins reforms, with the opposing effects cancelling each other out overall. If so inequalities will develop quickly during the next decade, in which market forces are likely to be more dominant. In the past a centralised industrial relations system, with common determination of pay and conditions across the system, has tended to 'flatten out' vertical differentiation. The shift to a more decentralised system - see John O'Brien's article in this *AUR* - might reinforce market differentiation, unless union strategies such as 'pattern bargaining' are successful.

On the other hand ('less') both the state and market forces have encouraged systemic convergence, and have encouraged organisational and academic isomorphism. Canberra has administered a 'one size fits all' approach, and has supported standardised governance and common definitions of academic work. Few would argue for a return to the binary system, and in an emerging global knowledge economy²⁷ surely none would argue for a return to higher education without research: in fact research activities are now developing apace in TAFE. Nevertheless, policy needs to factor in greater variation in institutional size, and should use targeted subsidies to initiate forms of horizontal diversity.

Market pressures are associated with greater variety in quality, prices and mode of provision, as institutions compete for market share, develop sub-markets and colonise new customers. It seems that expectations of a flowering of creativity in course content, pedagogical innovation and fundamental research inquiry have been disappointed. These forms of creativity depend on long lead times and thus on the security of funding that enables a willingness to take risks. In a managerial environment in which untied public funding is falling as a proportion of total incomes, and isomorphism is uppermost in strategies, the capacity for such innovations has become more restricted.

If so this raises a major question about the move to a competitive market, the guiding principle of the last decade of reforms. Earlier it was argued that there is no evidence that market competition is associated with greater responsiveness to students.²⁸ In research, the move to markets is associated with a tendency to greater reported quantity of research, but there is no necessary increase in the quality of research.²⁹ If there is no evidence that market reform is associated with greater educational creativity and diversity, either, we must question just what market reform *does* achieve: that is, aside from a reduction in the level of public spending on higher education, and a convergence with business models.

Footnotes

¹ V. Lynn Meek and Fiona Q. Wood, *Managing higher education diversity in a climate of public sector reform*, Evaluations and Investigations Program, Higher Education Division, DETYA, 98/5, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1998, p.4.

² For example see Burton Clark, 'Diversification of higher education: viability and change' in V. Lynn Meek, Leo Goedegebuure, Osmo Kivinen and Risto Rinne, *The mockers and the mocked: comparative perspectives on differentiation, convergence and diversity in higher education*, Pergamon, Oxford 1996, pp. 16-25.

³ Meek and Wood, *op cit*; Higher Education Division, Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, *The characteristics and performance of higher education institutions*, Occasional Paper, November 1998.

⁴ One would like to see Education faculties and specialist centres on higher education carrying out such research, but in contrast with the United States, higher education studies in Australian universities is a small field. Over the last decade DETYA has generated an uneven but substantial body of work on higher education, constituting most of the research conducted on the sector in Australia, though this is not always acknowledged in the academic literature. DETYA-supported research takes the form of both in-house papers, often with a statistical bent, and commissioned studies by academic researchers. Commissioned work varies from papers arguing a policy case, to evaluations of the outcomes of policy changes which accept the terms of policy as given, to critical scholarly studies which raise questions sometimes uncomfortable for government. There are also DETYA's regular statistical series. Much of this body of work, and all recent commissioned studies that have been released, can be downloaded from the DETYA Higher Education Division Web page. See <http://www.deetya.gov.au/highered/index.htm>

⁵ Simon Marginson and Mark Considine, *The Enterprise University: governance, strategy, reinvention* [forthcoming].

⁶ Some smaller units such as the Australian Defence Forces Academy are treated as separate, though these are formally part of larger institutions.

⁷ For example see contributions by Neave, Fulton and others in Meek et al 1996, *op cit*; and Simon Marginson, *Markets in education*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1997.

⁸ Simon Marginson, 'Competition and contestability in Australian higher education: 1987-1997', *Australian Universities' Review*, 40 (1), 1997, pp. 5-14; Simon Marginson, 'Harvards of the Antipodes? Universities in a globalising environment', *Leading and Managing*, 4 (3), 1998, pp. 156-171. The issues will receive more extended treatment, connecting to questions of institutional organisation, leadership, strategy and identity, in Marginson and Considine, *op cit*, chapter 6.

⁹ Frans van Vught, 'Isomorphism in higher education? Towards a theory of differentiation and diversity of higher education systems', in Meek et al, 1996, pp. 44-45.

¹⁰ Daniel C. Levy, *Isomorphism in private higher education*, paper prepared for the conference on international private higher education, Boston College, May 1998, p. 29.

¹¹ Peter Karmel, 'Funding mechanisms, institutional autonomy and diversity', in Meek and Wood 1998, *op cit*, p. 50.

¹² Levy, *op cit*, p. 23.

¹³ There is a brilliant account of the positioning strategies of Australian universities in Colin Symes, 'Selling futures: a new image for Australian universities?', *Studies in Higher Education*, 21 (2), 1996, pp. 133-147.

¹⁴ See Marginson, 'Competition and contestability in Australian higher education: 1987-1997', *op cit*. In contrast with the previous article, Table 1 introduces the additional category of 'Redbricks', renames the 'Wannabees' the 'Gumtrees', and moves the University of South Australia from a marginal category into full membership of the Unitechs. For a more extended discussion of all these issues see Marginson and Considine, *op cit*.

¹⁵ Global Alliance Limited, 'Australian higher education in the era of mass customisation', Appendix 11, *Learning for life: Review of higher education financing and policy – a policy discussion paper* (the West Report discussion paper), DETYA, AGPS, Canberra, 1997, p. 21.

¹⁶ DETYA, *op cit*, pp. 19, 92, 101 and 107; DETYA, *Selected higher education statistics 1997*, pp. 25-26.

¹⁷ The composites of the quantum, and the many problems generated in measuring and managing research quantity (and quality) using quantum-type measures, are examined in Marginson and Considine, Chapter 5.

¹⁸ Diversity in organisational design has diminished in Australia. The Gumtree experimentalism in governance and academic field definition that characterised the earlier years of Griffith, Murdoch, La Trobe, Deakin and others has slowly faded and these institutions converged with the Sandstone norm, though not completely. However, diversity in management and governance is another story. For more discussion see Marginson and Considine, *op cit*.

¹⁹ Meek and Wood also stop short of this – see *op cit*, pp. 133 and 194.

²⁰ Marginson and Considine, *op cit*.

²¹ DETYA, *op cit*, p.2.

²² Meek and O'Neil, 'Diversity and differentiation in the Australian unified national system of higher education', in Meek et al, 1996, *op cit*, p. 73.

²³ See Marginson and Considine, *op cit*, especially chapter 6.

²⁴ DETYA, *Selected higher education finance statistics, 1997*, DETYA, Canberra, December 1998, <http://www.deetya.gov.au/highered/statpubs.htm>

²⁵ Clark, *op cit*, pp. 23.

²⁶ Oliver Fulton (1996), 'Differentiation and diversity in a newly unitary system: the case of the U.K.', in Meek et al, 1996', *op cit*, pp. 174-175 and 179.

²⁷ Peter Sheehan and Greg Tegart (eds.) *Working for the future: technology and employment in the global knowledge economy*, Victoria University Press, Melbourne, 1998.

²⁸ Marginson, 'Competition and contestability in Australian higher education', *op cit*.

²⁹ Marginson and Considine, *op cit*, chapter 5.

Pattern bargaining, decentralism and union democracy: The NTEU and enterprise bargaining in universities

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Introduction

Unions, like most organisations, pursue strategies to meet their objectives. This is legitimised, in part, by the democratic structures and procedures within the union. There may be, nevertheless, a tension between the achievement of objectives and the necessity for democratic legitimisation. The pursuit of strategies and achievement of objectives may tend to move the organisation towards more autocratic and centralised modes of operation, while the development and pursuit of the same objectives may require a significant degree of democratic legitimisation. Strategies are also influenced by the nature of the regulatory system in which unions operate. A centralised regulatory system may reinforce oligarchic tendencies, while a more decentralised system may strengthen democratic processes. If the regulatory environment, however, has the object and the effect of undermining union effectiveness, the rhetoric of employee rights may be utilised by employers to counter union strategies. Alternatively there may be a more dynamic link between union strategy and union democracy, whereby internal union democracy may strengthen union strategy, particularly through the agency role of union activists, such as elected branch officials. Indeed in a decentralised environment that privileges individual choice over collective determination, the effective operation of internal union democracy may be even more necessary to underpin the achievement of union objectives than is required in a more centralised environment.

In their study of collective bargaining *Industrial Democracy* (1911) Beatrice and Sydney Webb conceived the role of unions as the organisational means of applying political democracy to the workplace. Michels, on the other hand, argued for the inevitability of oligarchic hegemony over democratic legitimacy within political parties of the left (Michels 1962). His argument was tested in a union environment by Lipset et al in a study of the International Typographical Union (ITU). While they largely endorsed Michels' thesis, they argued that

democracy was enhanced in the ITU by having an operative two party system within the union. Thus union democracy could be secured if there is a strong possibility that an elected official could be defeated in an election (Lipset et al 1956: 304-5). Edelman and Warner (1975: 30) provided a more extensive list of democratic criteria including membership participation in policy making and implementation; accountability of officials; legitimacy of opposition; and availability of processes for the protection of the rights of individuals and minorities. Dickenson largely adopted Lipset's approach in her study of the Commonwealth Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association and the Federated Ironworkers Association (Dickenson 1982). Davis argued that the Lipset/Dickenson approach defined union democracy too narrowly. Elections were a useful safety valve in many unions, but they were not in themselves sufficient to guarantee the continual translation of members' wishes into official policy (Davis 1987: 25-6). Davis adopted Edelman and Warner's criteria in his study of six Australian unions.

These criteria do not, however, address specifically the role of union activists, although they may play a crucial role in assuring that members are able to make use of democratic structures, as well as acting as the prime agents of union strategy when membership mobilisation is required. One of the key concerns of this paper, then, is to examine the role of union activists in this agency process, not only in relation to policy, but also in the achievement of more immediate objectives. The role of activists is to be the mediators in the ongoing conversations between leaders and members (Fairbrother 1996). In the NTEU activists are usually rank and file elected officials.

Dickenson's and Davis' works were undertaken when the Australian industrial relations system was relatively centralised. While the organisation of Australian unions reflected, in part, that regulatory environment, the organisation of particular unions also reflected specific histories and traditions, as well as the federally-induced

divisions between national and state registered unions. Nevertheless, in the current environment of greater decentralisation it is useful to revisit the relationship between union democracy, the role of activists and the implementation of union strategies. What happens when the regulatory framework privileges enterprise-based activity over centralised leadership within the organisational framework of a union? Does a decentralised environment strengthen the role of activists *vis a vis* leaderships? In more decentralised environments unions have traditionally sought to pattern bargain in order to limit the degree of dispersion of wages and conditions. What happens when the interests of local activists and members diverge from the overall objectives and strategies of the union? How is this accommodated and managed when the regulatory environment encourages fragmentation through the discourse of employee rights, rather than securing collective organisation and commonality of outcome?

Organisational strategy

Union strategy has been, recently, cast within the framework of organisational and business strategy (Gahan 1988; Gahan and Bell 1999). In the Australian context Gardner (1989) and Gardner and Palmer (1993) drew on the work of Pennings et al (1985) that distinguishes between explicit, emergent and implicit strategies. The behaviour of unions can be understood as combining elements of explicit strategy that involves the setting of clear objectives and the development of deliberate approaches to their achievement, with more implicit adjustments being made along the way. This process of continuous adjustment produces emerging strategies that remain focussed on the objective, but is more than just 'muddling through' (Lindblom 1981). It is not clear how useful the grafting of a business strategy analysis onto unions is as an explanation of the process of achievement of objectives. In business environments the objective is profit maximisation, whereas unions have an overall objective of membership welfare, the nature of which is more difficult to define (Child et al 1973). Moreover, 'bottom line' focussed organisations usually have a defined authority structure that is designed to concentrate on the achievement of an overall objective. The formulation of objectives and pursuit of strategies is the prime responsibility of management with the chief executive officer at the apex of that structure. Such a structure is accountable without being democratic. Unions, on the other hand, have authority structures that are dependent on periodic legitimation through democratic forms, even if the adherence to these forms are often more rhetorical than being deeply embedded in the life of the organisation.

The origins of the National Tertiary Education Union

The NTEU was formed in 1993. It involved the amalgamation of five organisations. The Federated Australian University Staff Associations and the Union of Australian College Academics, consisted overwhelmingly of academic staff. The Australian Colleges and Universities Staff Association covered general staff in Victorian universities and technical and further education colleges. The other organisations covered general staff at the University of Adelaide and senior general staff at the Australian National University. Since 1993 additional general staff in the ACT and Victoria, and academics in New South Wales, have joined the Union. In 1998 the NTEU had about 25,000 members. Currently the Union has an application before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission seeking comprehensive coverage of all university staff, which is being resisted by other unions in the sector.

The formation of the NTEU brought together several differing cultures and experiences of its members. Among academics there was a research culture of the traditional universities, as well as the teaching and professional orientation of the former colleges of advanced education. Academics were more likely to be 'metropolitans' with some sense of a connection to the international contexts of various fields of knowledge, although this was more likely to be stronger in the 'traditional' university sector. On the other hand, general staff and many academic staff from the former colleges, were more likely to be 'locals' with a greater concern for the particularities of the employment relationship in specific institutions (Gouldner 1957). These differing orientations within the membership had the potential to be a source of tension and disunity within the NTEU. On the other hand, the more militant traditions that had characterised the former college sector and the general staff in Victoria, could act as an encouragement to the traditional university branches to take a more determined approach in the wages campaign. More significantly, however, the formation of the NTEU took place at the time when the university sector was undergoing considerable change. The creation of the unified tertiary education sector in 1987, the expansion of student numbers, the growing marketisation of higher education and the concomitant growth of managerial models of governance (Marginson 1993: 122-141, 172-199), arguably contributed to the growth of a common consciousness of shared employee status among both general and academic staff. The potential for division within the Union was thus counteracted by the external unifying forces impacting on the system and the emerging Union.

The complicated structure of the Union reflects the diverse origins of the organisation. The NTEU has a three tier structure: the branch, the state/territory and the

national levels. The strong branch orientation of FAUSA is reflected in the fact that each Branch is able to set a fee for its own organisational purposes. Elections for Branch officials are held every two years. The tradition of state level organisation characteristic of the former UACA is preserved in the Union. State based elected Secretaries and appointed Industrial Officers have the prime responsibility for the coordination of union activity in Branches. The significance of the state structures are variable, with New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland having well resourced state offices, while in Western Australia and South Australia, the state offices have less influence and less capacity for coordination. The National Executive of the Union consists of state and territory representatives, elected by their constituencies every two years, as well as the three National Officers elected in a full membership ballot every four years. The rules of the Union provide for proportional representation of general and academic staff on various elected bodies of the organisation. An annual National Conference, with representatives from all branches and state bodies, determines the policy and strategic directions of the Union. The three full time National Officers and the National Executive have the responsibility for pursuing those policies and strategies. This structure allows for the diverse voices within the organisation to be heard within the formal and informal decisions making processes of the Union. The tradition of branch based relative autonomy reflected in the structure of the Union creates the possibility that a sufficiently determined branch can exercise an effective veto over the national strategies of the Union. In that sense it can be said that internal democracy does go beyond the formal structural arrangements designed to reflect, in a formal manner, the diversity of the Union.

The first round of enterprise bargaining

It is necessary to review the first round of bargaining in order to provide the context in which the NTEU developed its strategies during the subsequent round. The first round, in 1994-5, marked the transition from the system-level of wage determination to an institution-based system. University managements were required to negotiate with institution-based unions for wage adjustments. Vice-Chancellors and the NTEU were united in the view that all or most of the additional wage costs ought to be borne by government. In 1994 the NTEU had made an agreement with the government that produced a government-funded increase of 2.9 per cent with an additional 2 per cent to be negotiated with universities directly. In addition, the NTEU formulated a 10 per cent wage claim to be funded by government. In 1995 the Union concentrated on securing the 2 per cent outcome institution by institution. The NTEU was determined that the unfunded component would be held at 2 per cent. Other unions in

the sector took the view that the source of funds was less important than the achievement of the wage rise. The difference in approach was dramatically illustrated at the Australian National University when general staff-only unions mounted a picket for nearly six weeks in order to force management to pay the full cost of the wage rise (Healy 1995), while the NTEU branch continued to adhere to the National Union's agenda of lobbying the government to provide supplementation. A certified agreement for a 2 per cent wage adjustment was agreed to the chagrin of general staff unions. In late 1995 the Labor Government intimated that it would be willing to pay a fully supplemented amount of 5.6 per cent in exchange for agreed productivity offsets (Healy and Chan 1995). The Cabinet, however, decided that the cost would be met by a loan to universities that would be repayable at the rate of 1.5 per cent over five years in addition to the 5.6 per cent. This was rejected by the Vice-Chancellors and by the NTEU, although other unions were prepared to accept the proposal (NTEU, *National Industrial Bulletin*, 9 February 1996). The offer elapsed when the federal election was called in January 1996 (O'Brien 1996).

Facing the Coalition Government

During the 1996, election campaign the NTEU received an undertaking from the Coalition parties that supplementation would be available for salary adjustments in the university sector. When the Coalition Government was elected, it soon became clear that there would be no additional funds for salaries. The Union and the Vice-Chancellors also feared the Government would cut recurrent funds to universities and demand that wage increases be paid from the reduced level of funding (AVCC 1997). The Union could begin an industrial campaign at each university to extract a pay rise, or it could launch a political campaign to resist further funding reductions. The NTEU could be sure of the support of national organisations of students for a political campaign. On the other hand, Vice-Chancellors could hardly support an institutionally based industrial campaign in support of an unfunded wage adjustment, however much they might be sympathetic to the claim. The NTEU chose to undertake a political campaign, which would seek to build a united front against higher education cuts. The united front took the form of a National Higher Education Alliance incorporating the NTEU, the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, the learned Academies, Alumni Associations, the Federation of Scientific and Technological Societies and student organisations (Wright and Garcia 1996). In addition, the NTEU and national student organisations held National Days of Action, which included strike action by many staff, in April and August 1996 with the tacit support of Vice-Chancellors.

In August 1996 the government announced that it would reduce the forward estimates for higher education by 5 per cent from 1997, as well as making no provision for funding pay rises. It was clear that the united front strategy had not succeeded, although there was a view that the reductions would have been more severe if a campaign had not been undertaken. Moreover, the campaign had an important legitimisation function. NTEU members needed to be convinced that the only way to achieve a wage rise was to conduct an institution-based industrial campaign (McCulloch 1998). The failure of the membership-supported political campaign set the ground for members being prepared to take a more traditional industrial approach to the achievement of the Union's objectives.

Setting union objectives

The National Council of the NTEU met in late September / early October 1996 and set the objectives for the second round of bargaining. The objectives were as follows:

- a 15 per cent pay rise;
- no reduction in national award conditions;
- the inclusion of managing change clauses in agreements;
- no increase in hours of duty, and no change in work patterns without compensatory measures;
- all agreements to conclude by 1998;
- the Executive to fix minima in the light of outcomes from leading sites strategy; and
- Australian Workplace Agreements were to be permitted when members had no choice or where content and precedent are not deemed to be detrimental to members' interests overall.

The key strategy for achieving these objectives was to choose a number of 'leading sites' and set a floor price for the system as a whole (NTEU, *National Council Minutes*, 3-5 October 1996: 11-13). It was not possible, however, to delineate an equivalent employers' agenda articulated by the Australian Higher Education Industrial Association. Nevertheless, issues such as performance management, year round teaching, productivity-contingent pay rises and modification of award based disciplinary and redundancy processes emerged as key management bargaining issues at each institution (AHEIA 1997a). Indeed, these issues have re-emerged as key management objectives in the 1999 bargaining round.

Pattern bargaining: The 'leading sites' strategy

The decentralised wage bargaining system in universities provided both difficulties and opportunities for the NTEU. As in any decentralised system, the Union needed

to stretch its resources over more than 30 sites, instead of negotiating centrally with the Vice-Chancellors' industrial association and the government. In the new climate where pay rises had to be found within shrinking university budgets there was likely to be resistance from managements. Nevertheless, the higher education system was operating in a more competitive environment. There would be strong incentive for some of the more prestigious universities, who often had superior resource bases, to make offers that would differentiate them from other universities. The NTEU leadership needed to ensure that a high floor price was set in the institutions most able to bargain, in order to improve on the outcome in subsequent negotiations. Thus the Union decided on a 'leading sites' strategy. The criteria for leading site status were willingness and capacity of the branch to embark on a wages campaign, the capacity of the institution to pay, and the desirability of a spread of institutions across the country. After some discussion the following institutions were designated as leading sites: the University of Canberra; the Australian National University; the University of Sydney; Southern Cross University; Queensland University of Technology; the University of South Australia and the University of Western Australia. Subsequently the University of New South Wales, the University of Wollongong and Griffith University were added to the list (NTEU *Enterprise Bargaining Memorandum*, 15 October 1996). Not all of these universities fell within the prestigious category.

Setting the 'floor price'

It was a useful tactic to attempt to set a floor price in different kinds of institutions at the same time. This could be achieved if the negotiators at each institution could limit the scope of management discretion in the making of wage offers. The two branches that were ready to embark on the campaign were a 'group of eight' institutions, the ANU; and a former College of Advanced Education, the University of Canberra (MacDonald 1996). Their desire to bargain was influenced, however, by the attitudes of other unions with members at the two institutions. During the 2 per cent round, both the NTEU branches had been criticised by the other unions for not seeking a greater quantum from the institution. The second largest union at the ANU, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, was also most concerned to ensure that the NTEU did not increase its general staff membership at its expense. The AMWU tended to adopt a 'more militant than thou' stance *vis a vis* the NTEU. It seemed determined to demonstrate that the priorities of academics would prevail over the concerns of general staff in the agreement-making process. The general staff-only unions, however, needed the weight of numbers provided by the NTEU. While the general staff unions could create considerable inconvenience to the institu-

tions by placing bans on activities such as cleaning and maintenance, the core activities of teaching and assessment could only be affected significantly if NTEU members (both academic and general staff) banned work directly related to those areas.

The NTEU represented employees in all classifications. The other unions represented staff in the lower parts of the classification structure. Therefore, it made sense for the general staff unions to seek a flat rate component in the total wage outcome so that lower paid workers would receive a greater overall wage increase. This approach had support among some NTEU members at the ANU. The ANU Branch, with a majority of general staff members, had argued at the Union's National Council that branches should be able to negotiate wage increases with flat rate components in them (NTEU *National Council Minutes*, 1996). The Council expressed a clear preference for a percentage increase. Little flexibility was given to branches in this matter. The issue became critical when the general staff-only unions and the ANU management reached agreement on a wage increase that incorporated a significant flat rate component. It was clear that if agreement was reached for general staff, then the NTEU would have little choice but to accept it for its general staff members. Academics would have to wait longer for a pay rise. There was a risk of a split in the NTEU membership at ANU. The ANU management and the general staff unions presented a draft agreement to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission covering general staff only. The NTEU intervened at the hearing and pointed out some deficiencies in the agreement, including the failure to incorporate existing award conditions. The Commission gave the parties and the NTEU the opportunity to continue discussions with the object of including all staff in the agreement. The NTEU General Secretary, Grahame McCulloch, took control of the negotiations and was able to persuade management to agree to a process that would enable the inclusion of academics in the agreement. The matter was resolved when management agreed to a joint working party to examine changes to academic redundancy procedures that had been the principal source of dispute between the NTEU and the ANU management. In exchange the NTEU had to concede that there would be a significant flat rate component in the wage adjustment.

These complicated manoeuvres took place at the same time as negotiations were being conducted at the University of Canberra. The issue of a flat rate component was less contentious at the University of Canberra. The general staff only unions gave priority to achieving an outcome at the ANU and were less concerned with the University of Canberra. Moreover, the management had little interest in providing lower percentage increases for higher paid staff. As a former college of advanced

education, the University of Canberra was concerned to recruit high quality academic staff to enhance the institution's status as a 'new' university. Moreover, the NTEU had a more amicable relationship with the Community and Public Sector Union on the campus than it had with the other general staff unions. The CPSU and the NTEU was able to place an effective ban on the processing of examination results. This action was instrumental in persuading management to agree to an overall increase of 11.3 per cent for all staff at the institution with a minor flat rate proportion in the quantum, to be paid over twenty seven months (Healy and Armitage 1997). This agreement effectively set the 'floor price' for the sector, although the agreement exceeded two years. While the National Executive was satisfied with the floor price set at the University of Canberra, there was considerable concern that the working party mechanism at ANU would lead to a diminution of award standards covering academics. The national leadership and the ACT representatives argued that this was the best that could be achieved given that the other unions and the ANU management had attempted to split the NTEU Branch and that members at ANU had undertaken considerable industrial action. Thus the Executive accepted the agreement at ANU, albeit with some reluctance (NTEU *Executive Minutes*, 6 December 1996; author's notes).

Living with precedent

The managements at the University of New South Wales and at Griffith University also sought to modify the redundancy provisions for academic staff. The NTEU membership in these two institutions was overwhelmingly academic. There was no possibility that the NTEU membership could be split in the way the ANU management had sought to do. At UNSW the management proposed wide-ranging changes to academic working conditions, the provision of Australian Workplace Agreements for professors, a system of performance pay and the modification of provisions regulating the employment of fractional staff (Mudford 1997). NTEU members threatened to take strike action in the first two days of the first teaching session. Moreover, the floor price for the sector had been set and, in particular, the University of Sydney management offered 12 per cent to academic staff at that institution. This was apparently sufficient to persuade the UNSW management to modify its agenda. Nevertheless, the NTEU was forced to concede on the issue of redundancy provisions. The working party mechanism agreed at the ANU was not acceptable to the UNSW management. The UNSW Branch agreed to modifications to the waiting period provisions of the redundancy arrangements in exchange for significant improvements in payments to redundant staff so that they could be dispensed with in the shorter period than that provided for in the award. The National Executive

accepted this trading of money for time, although the provision went beyond the ANU model. The Executive technically breached the policy admonition of the Union's National Council that award provisions should not be varied in enterprise agreements, although in this case, there was defensible compensation for affected members.

Adjusting to a new regulatory environment

The negotiations at the ANU, UNSW, Sydney and Canberra took place within the framework of the 1993 *Industrial Relations Act*. There was limited scope in this legislation for university managements to bypass unions in the development of the agreements. *The Workplace Relations Act 1996* that came into effect in early 1997 expanded the opportunities for employers to appeal directly to employees and thus marginalise unions in the agreement-making process. Employers were able to offer individual contracts to staff in the form of Australian Workplace Agreements and present draft enterprise agreements to staff without unions necessarily agreeing to all of the provisions (McDermott 1997). These two issues were to be tested at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). Union strategy, both at the national and branch level, was to be tested against the model of 'employee democracy' embedded in the legislation.

After some unsuccessful negotiations with unions representing both academic and general staff, in February 1997 the USQ management announced that it would seek an agreement directly with the staff. The National Office of the NTEU became involved in the dispute. There was much activity on the campus including a series of meetings involving both union members and non-union members. The Vice-Chancellor finally agreed to negotiate with the unions. The National Office regarded the USQ branch as fertile ground for the testing of the opportunities provided for employers in the new legislation. The lack of bargaining monopoly by the existing unions added a further level of complication for union organisation and exposed the reality that defensive campaigns from the centre could only be successful if there was widespread support from the rank and file. To persuade the USQ to withdraw its threat to submit a non-union agreement to a staff vote was a victory for the unions both on the substance of the issue, and in a more general organisational sense (McCulloch 1997).

Negotiations continued from March to May 1997. The National Executive endorsed the draft agreement on 27 May. Subsequently Union staff were undertaking a final check of the agreement and discovered that there was provision for Australian Workplace Agreements for senior academic and general staff. The university management claimed that the Union had agreed to this. McCulloch denied this. He then attempted to persuade the management to remove references to AWAs, in ex-

change for the Union agreeing to substantial flexibility in the appointment of senior staff. The management who set 2 June as the deadline for acceptance of the draft agreement rejected this. In the absence of agreement the draft would be put directly to staff (Swannell 1997). The Executive was advised that the Union was unlikely to win a staff ballot. The Executive had little choice but to accept the draft (McCulloch 1997). Subsequently a ballot of all staff endorsed the agreement.

There are a number of issues arising from this incident that are worth noting. First, it was necessary for the national level of the Union to intervene to defend Union policy and to head off an attempt by management to bypass the unions. Second, it became necessary for the Executive to endorse an agreement that not only breached Union policy, but which also contained a provision, which symbolised the individualised direction of the new industrial relations legislation. In that sense the Union needed to maintain an overall pattern of collective determination of working conditions, while at the same time accepting a provision, if extended, that could undermine that collectivity. To do otherwise would have alienated members in a particular workplace from the Union as a whole. The dispositions of the local took precedence over the organisational strategy of the centre.

Fissures at the centre: contingent pay rises

A different problem at the University of Melbourne threatened to set the Branch against the centre and split the national leadership itself. The University of Melbourne management proposed to link a part of the pay rise to the achievement of productivity goals, related to income from full fee paying students. The Victorian Division of the NTEU had argued at the National Council that the Union should be more flexible about the quantum of pay rises from universities subject to staff reductions (NTEU *National Council Minutes* 1996). Victorian universities had been hit hardest by funding reductions. There was a fear that members could not be mobilised to fight management agendas when jobs were in jeopardy. The University of Melbourne Branch contained both academic and general staff, although the principal general staff-only union, the CPSU, still had significant support at the institution. Nevertheless, overall union density at the institution was only 35 per cent. The Victorian Division was conscious of its relative autonomy from the National Office. Moreover, there was also a strong element of operational autonomy of the University of Melbourne Branch from the central Union organisation. There was also a strong material basis to their different tactical perspective: the wage offer being made was superior to that offered elsewhere. Nevertheless, the National Executive reminded the Division and the Branch that contingent pay rises would not be

acceptable (NTEU *Executive Minutes*, 6-7 February 1997). Eventually the National Office became involved in the negotiations when neither the Branch nor the Division was able to shift management's agenda. (NTEU, *Executive Memorandum*, 12 March 1997). The matter came to a head on 26 March when the National Executive held a special meeting to discuss the draft agreement.

The Victorian negotiators argued that the Branch was prepared to accept contingent pay rises because the draft agreement included a provision that there would be no overall staff losses during the life of the agreement. McCulloch argued that since the National Office's intervention there had been significant improvements with a reduction of three contingent instalments to one instalment and the pay offer increased by 0.5 per cent to 12.5 per cent. There would be no AWAs, although individual contracts would characterise senior appointments. McCulloch reported that the Vice-Chancellor was prepared to put the offer to the staff directly. He argued that if the National Office campaigned against acceptance of the agreement it would do so against the wishes of the Branch, the Victorian Division and the other unions who had already accepted it. The agreement was likely to be endorsed by the staff. Opponents of the agreement argued that a contingent pay rise would encourage other university managements to pursue a similar approach. The Executive had a long and acrimonious debate and eventually resolved, by a moderate margin, to accept the draft agreement if the Branch persisted with endorsing it, while making it clear that it had grave concerns about its implications for bargaining elsewhere. Supporters of the motion for acceptance included the General Secretary and National Assistant Secretary; among the opponents was the National President. The issue had split both the Executive and the national leadership (NTEU *Executive Minutes*, 26 March 1997; author's notes). This episode became emblematic of the dilemmas faced by a union that was characterised by a significant level of autonomy built into its structure and traditions, operating in a decentralising environment that encourages fragmentation of union solidarity (Healy 1997).

'Setting the bottom line'

After the first ten agreements the floor price had been firmly established and the management agendas for individual contracts and contingent pay rises had been contained. In June 1997 the Executive set a minimum of 11 per cent as an acceptable wage outcome (NTEU *Executive Minutes*, 13-14 June 1997). The question for the Executive was what it would do if a branch took the view that it could not meet the minimum. This issue was faced when the Murdoch University agreement came before the Executive. The Branch made it clear that it would accept a 10 per cent outcome. The Murdoch Branch was part of the Western Australian Division of

the Union that was not only remote from the eastern seaboard, but also whose four branches guarded their relative autonomy from each other. The Murdoch Branch President attended an Executive meeting to defend the Branch position. He argued that there had been a 30 per cent increase in students at the institution in the previous two years. Thus staff were more concerned about increasing workload rather than a pay rise difference of 1 per cent from the going rate. He said that it would be very difficult to persuade the members to change their position, particularly as the other unions had accepted 10 per cent. The Executive was fearful that if the Murdoch Branch was allowed to defy Union policy then Branches operating in more parlous circumstances would be even less resistant to management pressure. After the Melbourne episode the Executive was determined that it would not shift from the 11 per cent, especially since Murdoch was receiving growth funding of 5 per cent per annum for three years. The Branch agreed reluctantly to re-open negotiations (NTEU *Executive Minutes*, 13 - 14 June 1997, author's notes).

In broad terms the debate here was about the balance between the setting of bottom lines and the flexibility that could be permitted in the enforcement of those minima. There was an issue of union discipline and solidarity amidst the reality that guidelines would only apply if the active elements in the Union were willing to adopt them. In the end, it seemed, the Executive could only enforce the Union policy with the consent of the relevant members. Automatic solidarity had never applied in an industry that placed a premium on occupational autonomy, particularly among academic staff (O'Brien 1993). Nevertheless, the Executive mindful of the Melbourne experience as well as the overall Union strategy, urged the Murdoch Branch to try again. It could run the risk of further alienating a Branch with no strong links with the National Office of the Union or even the state section of the organisation. In the end the Murdoch agreement included an 11 per cent pay increase. In this contest the centre had prevailed over the Branch. It was an important moment in the continuing conversation between members, activists and the leadership of the NTEU.

Conclusion

The 11 to 13 per cent range of pay rises were not too far from the overall wage objective of 15 per cent. These, however, were headline figures and the timing of the agreements stretched until late 1999. There had been some changes in award conditions, particularly in relation to academic redundancy. Changes to disciplinary provisions had been conceded in some agreements. Managing change clauses were included in all agreements. The Executive had fixed an overall acceptable minimum, which it was able to enforce in the face of

either management hostility, branch unwillingness or opposition from other unions. It had to concede Australian Workplace Agreements in only one institution, but these applied only to a limited category of senior staff. The result at each institution was the product of shifting configurations of funding changes, management strategies, inter-union relationships and the level of political mobilisation of activists and members, as well as internal bargaining within the NTEU. There was, however, no way of escaping the strong perception that these pay rises had been paid for in job losses (Davis 1997) estimated to amount to between 2 to 3 per cent by the end of 1998, although the reductions in funding were a key element in the outcome. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that universities were reducing the percentage of funds spent on wages even after taking account of staff losses. On the face of it the Union had substantial success in its strategies and objectives, a situation conceded by the AHEIA (AHEIA 1997b) and deplored by federal Minister Kemp who argued that the only real productivity gains had been made at the University of Melbourne through the mechanism of contingent wage rises (Grattan 1998).

The success of the NTEU in meeting its overall objectives is also a significant function of the strong conviction, even among Vice-Chancellors and their negotiators, that a significant pay rise was overdue in the university sector. The impact of the reductions in government funding was felt less acutely in 1996 than it is now. Once the floor price was set, the principal issue was the degree to which the more prestigious institutions could offer a wage premium in an increasingly competitive environment. Some changes were made on non-wage matters, but many of these issues are being revisited in the current bargaining round. Moreover, the funding environment in 1999 is more difficult than in 1996. It remains to be seen whether university managements will fight harder than they did in the last round. An indication of the changed circumstances may be gauged at the University of New South Wales. In 1996 the NTEU Branch threatened to strike for the first two days of the teaching session. An agreement was made without the strike taking place. In 1999, the UNSW is again a 'leading site'. Less than one month into the teaching session academic staff at UNSW have had three days of strikes. By June the issue remained unresolved. It is clear that NTEU will need to campaign much longer in 1999 than was required in 1996.

More generally this account of the 1996-7 bargaining round is revealing about issues of union democracy and union strategy. The NTEU inherited a number of structural arrangements, which reflected the different experiences of its constituent parts. This structure enabled the voice of the parts to be heard in a process of interaction between the centre and the periphery of the Union. This

meant that there was a structure to enable a process of negotiation between the national and local bodies of the Union. The prime instruments of those conversations were Union activists whose voice was legitimised by the complicated structure of the Union. Activists acted as two-way communication channels between members and officials. Thus the Union centre needed to adjust its objectives to meet particular situations. It is also clear that the achievement of a headline wage outcome of between 11 per cent and 13 per cent took precedence over other objectives. While the concessions made in these areas were not major in the overall pattern of agreements, they were necessary to achieve a significant pay rise.

This situation raises doubts about the relevance of explanations of union strategy that have their origins in business strategy. If it is possible to conceive of a profit-seeking organisation as being strategically focussed on the singularity of the 'bottom line', it is less easy to determine whether the maintenance of membership welfare has been achieved in a union environment. They may be structured to maximise the opportunity for central decision making bodies to determine overall policies and strategies. The priorities and dispositions of other units within the organisation, however, will influence the pursuit of strategies and objectives. Indeed it may not be all that useful to talk about union strategy as an indivisible force. It is more sensible to see unions as a coalition of forces, traditions and experiences within a formal unitary structure that increasingly must operate within a regulatory framework that encourages enterprise fragmentation over the enhancement of organisational unity.

The legitimising role of union democracy in maintaining organisational solidarity may indeed be even more useful in an environment that privileges the rights of the periphery over the centre, and of the individual over the collective. The flexible achievement of union objectives and strategies might be facilitated, rather than undermined by, continuing democratic conversation and exchange within union structures. Indeed, that may be the only way that unions can cope effectively with an environment hostile to union organisation. In a sense the NTEU was lucky. The complicated structure that emerged from the political compromises made during the amalgamation process facilitated, as well as legitimised, the compromises made between the centre and the branches during the bargaining round. Much more centralised unions may not have the benefit of such flexible structures. Nevertheless, for the NTEU the much more difficult funding environment in 1999, and the apparently greater determination of the Vice-Chancellors to resist the Union, will test even more the delicate and shifting relationship between Union strategy and union democracy within the organisation.

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The traumas of social democracy: Understanding Labor's troubled times

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In retrospect

In the latter 1980s and early 1990s the Hawke-Keating path for Australian Labor was excoriated by centre-left intellectuals as a capitulation to neo-liberal economics and the dictates of the market. Michael Pusey witheringly described a Labor Party converted to 'Thatcherism', in which only the left maintained a virtuous aloofness from the contagion. (Pusey 1991) In universities the Dawkins reforms of the years after 1987, surely the most ambitious attempt at a social-democratisation of our post-secondary education system, were derided as narrow managerialism even by some of their chief beneficiaries - such as staff in the university in which I work. And while the left of the 1960s had decried Gough Whitlam as the grave-digger of Labor's 'socialist objective', the left of the 1980s and 1990s took Whitlamite social democracy as the benchmark in evaluating Labor failure in their own time. According to these analyses, which took as their benchmark the traditional post-war economic totems of tariffs and industry protection, the Hawke-Keating years marked a fundamental repudiation of the traditions of Australian social democracy.

Even at the time it was clear that there was something suspect about this fundamentally overheated analysis. Its manichean fable of Australian nation-building subverted by market-fetishism seemed at once to overestimate the distinctiveness of the Australian experience, and to underestimate the complexity of that experience. (Burchell 1994a, 1994b) With the benefit of hindsight, its shortcomings stand out in sharper relief. In retrospect the 1983-96 Labor government looks less like a revolutionary break with the past than an adroit if fraught compromise between the pragmatic imperatives of internationalisation - the 'globalisation' which has belatedly seduced the sociologists about a decade later - and the ethical demands of Whitlam-style social democracy, with its distinctive balance of competing attachments to mixed forms of social provision and to social justice.

The internationalisation of the Australian economy is in practical terms irreversible, even if it is politically useful for the current Labor leadership to offer some symbolic gestures of retreat to placate the social conservatives and economic nationalists. This is not to say that

'globalisation' as a general phenomenon is a startlingly novel aspect of our epoch, let alone that it has completely eclipsed the role of national governments. (See Hirst and Thompson 1996) Rather it is because the Australian economy and polity - hitherto peculiarly sheltered - is incapable of surviving in the old autarkic mode of the 'nation-building' years. The fact that the international economy currently seems ungoverned and out of control is not an argument for not being in it, and the alternative path of Dr Mahathir is not an attractive one. The problem faced by Labor in the 80s and 90s was how to reconcile the demands of participation in this unruly and unruled world with the kinds of civilized social norms to which Australians have understandably become attached. A civilised society requires a sound tax base, but this is difficult to sustain in a world where fickle capital seeks the lowest obstacles to the highest returns on its investments. It is here that the great juggling act of the Hawke-Keating years finally came unstuck, and social democratic parties here as elsewhere in the world are no closer to a solution.

The solutions of the Hawke-Keating years were ingenious, but always had a limited time-horizon. Welfare expenditure was targeted ever more tightly and adroitly. The poor became marginally less poor, but those in the next socio-economic category above the poverty line, feeling themselves poorer, grew resentful, and took electoral revenge. Decent social services were maintained and even strengthened, but the cash to maintain the budget bottom-line often had to be raised by one-off garage sales of public assets, and this became less practicable as the stock of disposable public assets not vital to public welfare dwindled. The 'external constraint' of the current account made deficit financing increasingly perilous, and so the business cycle became increasingly resistant to active management. It was social democracy on a wing and a prayer.

In this respect the Hawke-Keating experience was not so much a journey beyond social democracy as a pragmatic adaptation of social democracy, albeit in a somewhat unstable fashion. The mission to transform our economic culture, and with it the culture of economic governance, was believed capable of co-existing with

the key elements of the classic program of social provision established over the decades following 1945 - state agencies for the universal provision of social security, family benefits, unemployment relief and so on, along with new or revived social agencies in the area of health and child-care. This is not to say that there were no innovations - only that they were not revolutionary ones. The Higher Education Contribution Scheme, it is true, was a significant break with the Whitlam legacy, albeit one within the general confines of social democratic provision. The link established between receiving unemployment benefits and undergoing vocational training likewise was a qualified departure from the post-war vision of benefits as a civic entitlement. Yet it was envisaged chiefly as a technical device for integrating training and job-placement, rather than as part of a grand civic scheme of 'reciprocal obligation', as is currently the case in Britain. The only area of social provision to be comprehensively reshaped was the provision of retirement benefits. But even here, while the experiment with compulsory superannuation has proved controversial in some circles, Labor was drawing upon the classic repertoire of post-war European social democracy to augment the somewhat idiosyncratic Australian version: there was no radical break with the past.

This has placed the second-term Labor Opposition in a curious fix. On the one hand, it has been politically expedient to gesture towards a return towards economic protectionism, and to shed the 'caffè latte cosmopolitan' cultural image of the Keating years. Yet, as Kim Beazley has belatedly come to realise, this is not a credible policy stance for an alternative government at the end of the century. On the other hand, it is impossible to resurrect *in toto* the policy parameters of the previous government, if only because as noted above, that kind of policy juggling-act has become unsustainable - not least as a result of its past successes in trimming and targeting. It is clear a change of direction is required, but it is not so clear what that change should amount to - let alone how such a shift can be improvised on the run by harassed shadow ministers. Rambunctious internal critics such as Mark Latham, whose great miscellany of a book was the only piece of serious policy discussion in Labor's first term in opposition, were until recently considered only in terms of their embarrassment value. (Latham 1998) Now that Beazley has begun to loosen the bonds of party discipline on policy discussion it may be possible to confront at last some of Labor's demons. The task will not be easy, though: we live in the era of the instant pantologist, the too-confident futurist, the plausible cyberspace guru. For every flower that will bloom there may be several rank weeds.

The Third Way

If Australian Labor has been reluctant to break decisively with its post-war traditions in the arena of social policy, the same could hardly be said of the British Labour since the electoral triumph of Tony Blair. Indeed, Blair has gone out of his way to separate himself not just from the somewhat hazy 'socialism' of Labour's old left, but from the traditions of post-war social democracy upon which he was nourished. British Labour, like the 'New Democrats' in the United States, now borrows ideas and labels eclectically and with a restless hunger. The British centre-left has become the Big Idea capital of the Western world. Long gone are the days when Labour stood, in the words of its most celebrated intellectual of the interwar period, for a program of 'tentative, doctrineless socialism'. Now socialism may be long dead, but doctrines, or at least nostrums, are thriving. The British broadsheet media, once sound but dull, now resounds with the echo of short-lived intellectual fashions. The academic centre-left has fractured. Some, freed from the intellectual discipline of the Thatcher years, have descended into institutionalised vitriol, or retreated into the romantic radicalism of their youth. Others, deprived of influence in the 1980s, find it possible again to gain an only half-sceptical governmental audience for issues around constitutional reform. (See Barnett 1999)

Others again have turned to political concept-mongering on a grand scale. In the 1980s this represented itself in phenomena like the magazine *Marxism Today*, which matched pragmatic centre-left politics with somewhat airy attempts at socio-cultural grand theory, but had little or nothing to say about policy - and which also fed into the broadsheets. Today it is represented in a burgeoning literature which on the face of it, at least, represents a quite decisive and radical repudiation of the social democracy of the post-war decades, and which does have a connection to policy - the literature of the Third Way. It is this literature which presents the most clear-cut practical alternative to the compromise of the Hawke-Keating years for Australian Labor on offer. NSW's Bob Carr is clearly influenced by it. Kim Beazley has dabbled in it on occasion, Labor's welfare policies have recently been relaunched by Wayne Swan with a fanfare in its direction, and both Mark Latham's and Lindsay Tanner's recent books draw upon it to lesser or greater degrees. It has percolated through the ranks of policy advisers and shadow ministerial staffers. It is the nearest Labor has to a Big Idea in the making.

The term 'The Third Way', like much of the literature surrounding it, is less evident than it seems. Ostensibly, it indicates the search for a creative 'middle way' between the monolithic value-systems of right and left, socialism and the market, individualism and collectivism. What differentiates this 'radical centre' from its more mundane siblings of the centre-ground, we are told, is its

search for a set of organising principles which can undercut the repetitious opposition of public versus private ownership, regulation versus deregulation, and so on. Rather than an interminable debate between proponents of big and small government, to which a resolution will never be found because the terms of the debate will never be agreed upon, advocates of the Third Way propose a series of partly-technical, partly-ethical debates over the best means for achieving good government with the resources to hand.

This is disingenuous in at least two respects. In the first place, the middle path advocates of the Third Way seek is of necessity not between right and left, capitalism and socialism, *et cetera* - manichean oppositions which have sometimes orientated international politics, but rarely the internal politics of nation-states - but between the two great practical governmental programs of the recent epoch, the post-war social democratic settlement of the centre-left, and the more recent rebellion against that program led by the neoliberal right. However, this makes for a decidedly more complex and less heroic story. Hence in his recent book on the Third Way, Tony Giddens uses socialism and social democracy ('the old left') almost as synonyms, and connects the crisis of social democracy to the same constellation of factors which led to the downfall of the former Soviet Union. In the process the history of post-war social democracy is reduced to caricature. (Giddens 1998, pp. 7-11) In the second place, the Third Way is not of course a purely eclectic set of borrowings on the one hand, or a set of novel political principles on the other. Rather, it is the prodigal offspring of that selfsame social democracy, and its search for novel solutions to familiar problems is inflected by its complicated relationship of rebellion against and filiation to that tradition. In both of these respects the strengths and weaknesses of the literature of the Third Way are archetypal for all other attempts to think a way past the contemporary dilemmas of social democracy.

In order to understand this literature it is important to have a sense of its context in recent British political history. British Labour was partially converted to social democracy between the late 1950s and early 1970s, at the cost of great internal trauma. At the same time the social changes of the 1960s and 1970s had produced a new tertiary-educated Labour left, weaned on the university tumults of 1968 and after, and schooled in the Alice-in-Wonderland world of student politics. When Labour lost office to Margaret Thatcher in 1979 these internal divisions broke out into open civil war. The radical left wrested control of the local parties, a good deal of the social-democratic right fled to the centrist SDP, and a shell-shocked coalition of Labour centre-right and centre-left spent their energies in avoiding complete eclipse. By the time office was again in sight in the early

1990s this coalition was too exhausted, too timid or too unworldly to make the final leap. Into the vacuum leapt Tony Blair and the Third Way.

Blair and his allies realised that Labour as government-in-waiting needed a new story, a fable for government within which could be inserted the major themes and anxieties of the day. Only a few were to hand. There was the old 'labourist' narrative - the staple bogey-man of leftist critique - according to which Labour's mission lay in taking care of its friends, and improvising the policy means with which to do so from what lay to hand. There was the social democracy of Hugh Gaitskell and Tony Crosland from the 50s and 60s, which advocated the classic post-war strategy of social redistribution allied to the 'mixed economy'. And there was the composite critique of 'Thatcherism' from the 80s, which stressed the 'hegemonic' aspirations of political rule, and focussed upon 'cultural politics' as the appropriate sphere of response. As was no doubt only too clear to a man as astute as Blair, 'labourism' had run its course, its constituencies exhausted both by social transformation and the institutional ravages of the Thatcher years. The 'Thatcherism' analysis had been a force for sanity in the wild days of the early 80s, but was almost entirely devoid of practical policy prescriptions. And Croslandite social democracy, while in its day as heretical a Labour trend as is the 'radical centre' now, seemed to represent much of the historical baggage of Labour in government of which Blair was determined to divest himself. The 'Croslandite' welfare state, that great monument of the interwar and wartime planners, was a semi-military creation, supplying eyeglasses and council flats alike on the industrial model. Thatcher and her ministers harried it like terriers for the better part of two decades, without ever actually dismantling it. On Blair's accession it stood battered but aloft, the ambiguous legacy of another epoch of Labour governance. As a result Blair and his supporters have an unusually developed awareness of the shortcomings of post-war social democracy, and of the need for a clear rhetorical break with it.

The story they tell is partial, and at times decidedly hyperbolic, but nevertheless a vivid one. Its moral, in brief, is that in important respects the program of classic post-war social democracy has outlived its usefulness. Post-war social democracy, after all, was a product of the long boom, and of the socio-economic order which produced that boom, rather than the one produced by it. National economic planning, demand management, public utilities reasonably competitive with the private sector - all of these features of the classic social democratic imaginary are, so it would seem, temporary phenomena of the thirty years of economic stability from the end of World War Two to the onset of 'stagflation' in the mid-70s. And with them the social buttresses upon which the social democratic vision rested - a universal

and comprehensive public education system which would flatten out class disparities by placing children of all social classes cheek-by-jowl, a social safety net based upon the bureaucratic distribution of benefits by public agencies, public housing on a loosely industrial model, and so on. All of these cornerstones of social democratic provision, it is commonly argued, are the products of the social imagination of generations weaned upon the rationality of mass-production, an homogenous cultural life, and the awful remembrance of the experience of dearth.

Again according to this argument, the current facts of social life run almost directly counter to the sociological datum of the classical social-democratic imaginary. Since at least the late 1960s Western societies have become more culturally diverse to a striking extent, and the assertion of cultural difference now vies with cultural tribalism as a totem of personal identity-formation. Successive generations of baby-boomers and post-baby boomers have become accustomed, to a far greater extent than hitherto, to making sense of their lives in a world of goods, and to the diversification of styles and products understood as an integral part of that process. There has been a raising of expectations about the capacity for social and cultural mobility, and a concomitant loss of respect for supposedly timeless social verities. There are higher expectations about the appropriate standards of behaviour of public officials, but less conviction in their ability to meet them. The 'political process' itself has become an object of widespread contempt. In this environment, so the argument runs, classic social democracy of the post-1945 sort is at best unfashionable, at worst dead in the water. Its commitment to standardised and quasi-industrial forms of social provision runs counter to the prevalent 'individualism' and the raised expectations of generations accustomed to being treated as valued customers rather than recipients. Its reliance on a climate of political optimism and generosity collides with popular scepticism and even cynicism towards politics *per se*.

Proponents of this argument do not simply adopt *en bloc* the Thatcherite critique of the post-war welfare state, but they do accept several of its key assertions. The industrial model of health and welfare provision, they agree, constituted its recipients as passive clients, and fed a sense of distance and alienation from the services which were supposedly designed to support them. Rather than enhancing civic capacities, as the major theorist of the welfare state, T.H. Marshall had anticipated, social services often produce a sense of powerlessness, and hence hinder the development of civic life. Public housing, erected as a vast program of slum clearance, has in many cases only created new semi-slums and corralled violence and crime in 'troubled' housing estates. In short, as the most coherent advocate

of the Third Way, Tony Giddens, argues, 'the welfare state, seen by most as the core of social democratic politics, today creates as many problems as it solves'. (Giddens 1998, p. 16) While Australian Labor has mainly viewed the contemporary problem of government in terms of the financing of its social obligations, British Labour (like the 'New Democrats' in the United States) increasingly views the welfare state itself as a problem (or, in the more sophisticated cases, a series of problems) to be solved.

The argument is an important one, and it correctly identifies many of key problem-areas of contemporary policy-making. Yet as an historical account it is also decidedly tendentious. It is convenient for the general purposes of the Third Way case to present the welfare state as a unitary and purposive creation - indeed, as an embodiment of the post-war social-democratic utopia as tangible as the socialist tower blocks of Moscow or Warsaw. It is also highly misleading. For the welfare state never was a systematic creation of post-war social democracy aimed at a comprehensive redistribution of incomes and a fragmenting of class boundaries in lieu of a socialist revolution. On the contrary, as Giddens quite properly acknowledges, the rudiments of the welfare state were originally a creation of nineteenth century conservatives and liberals, who saw in it an answer to the looming 'social question' of the day, with its portents of political unrest and social collapse. Subsequently, it was elaborated upon by governments of all persuasions for a variety of, sometimes conflicting, reasons. Inasmuch as the welfare state has been a distinctive feature of post-1945 social democracy, it is as a tool of governance adapted for the specific purpose of providing a sense of personal and social security against the uncertainty of the market in the aftermath of the Great Depression. In this the welfare state resembles much of social democratic governance in the post-war period, as indeed of all governance: it was one element in that improvised and unstable assemblage of institutions and techniques which we could call a governmental program. The fact that programs of this sort are sometimes allied to a coherent strategy for political rule does not make them any less piecemeal or improvised. And if that is true of governance in general it is even more true of that delicate balancing-act between electoral reality and the market economy we know as social democracy. (Cf. Hirst 1998)

These observations have consequences for the general *modus operandi* of centre-left critics of 'welfarism', both in Britain and Australia. By falling into the time-honoured leftist bad habit of mis-describing an operational political program as an ideology, they oversimplify both the problem and the solution. It is not enough simply to propose, for instance, a new principle of 'reciprocal obligation' as a replacement for an 'old' principle of welfare-as-right - because there never was a single

principle underlying the operation of welfare services in general in the first place. Some forms of welfare - such as social transfers to low-income households, once styled 'poor relief' - have their origins in pre-Victorian notions of welfare which were themselves understood as a response to what we might call unqualified 'welfareism'. (See e.g. Dean 1989) Others - such as unemployment benefits - have their origins in European notions of social insurance which were explicitly contractual, in broadly the same manner (though not the same form) as the 'reciprocal obligation' now proposed by their critics. Others again - such as family benefits - have their origins in the concerns of statecraft with nation-building and population expansion. This complex cluster of policy areas can't be resolved by recourse to a single political-philosophical principle, be it contractual, communitarian, or whatever. Rather, they require attention in detail, on the basis of the specific relationships between the state and its 'clients' which operate in each case. This is a point to which I will return.

Community

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the Third Way in Britain is its apparent lack of 'class feeling'. Like Australian Labor in the 80s, the Blair Government flaunts its new-found respect for private entrepreneurship and its new-found respect from the finance markets. Blair confidante Peter Mandelson, embarked on what Anthony Barnett terms an '18th century parabola of pride and fall', notoriously declared that the government 'is intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich' - not long before descending into his own personal variant of the 'WA Inc' inferno. (Barnett, 1999, 24) However, as in Australia, the extent and nature of this 'market embrace' is easily misunderstood by political moralisers. British Labour's infatuation with entrepreneurship cohabits peacefully with the traditional Labour suspicion of the corrosive effects of private capital and 'individualism' on community and the social bond. Indeed, the Anglican Blair has disinterred the corpse of British Christian socialism as part of his personal mission to reinstall a self-consciously ethical dimension to the political imaginary. Like the interwar intellectual R.H. Tawney and past Labour leaders such as George Lansbury and Clement Attlee, Blair's complaint against the market is chiefly ethical, and only secondarily socio-economic. Like Tawney he deplores ethical individualism, and the economic forces which give rise to it; unlike Tawney, however, he views private capital, like Blake's Satan, as a force for energy and dynamism which has to be harnessed. Moreover, since in the argument I have retold here the welfare state, like the market, may also act as an impediment upon 'active citizenship', 'community' occupies a particularly salient position in the road-map of post-social democratic politics. Here the Third Way

presents itself not so much a *via media* between political extremes as an attempt to rescue community from the effects of unbounded ideology. Here again it is influential on at least elements within Australian Labor: Lindsay Tanner's *Open Australia* is in part a *cri de coeur* for tempering the excessive individualism of the baby-boomers with new-tied bonds of community.

Much ink has been spilt on the 'communitarian' element in Blair's political vocabulary, and on the supposed influence of this political language on the policies of his government. (For a highly sophisticated theoretical example, see Rose 1999) Indeed, influential Labour idea-mongers like Geoff Mulgan, of the highly successful think-tank Demos, have trumpeted communitarianism as one of the key Big Ideas in the development of a new, 'empowered' citizenry. Following the argument outlined above, the central problem of citizenship is the passive relationship of private citizens to government. Citizenship, so the argument runs, needs to be active if it is to be real. Active citizenship derives from a culture of moral self-reliance. And citizens need to be invested with responsibilities in order to develop this sense of moral self-reliance. According to Mulgan, the natural crucible of moral responsibility should be the idea of a self-governing local community, a collective on a 'human scale'. (Mulgan, 1998, 198-207)

I suspect that it is unwise to invest the 'communitarian' character of these statements with too much importance. As I noted above, unfamiliar terminology is the fuel of British political debate at present, and very little of it burns for long. This is hardly surprising: much of it is no doubt devised by harassed ministerial staffers on the run, and most of it is meant for immediate consumption rather than protracted contemplation. Political philosophy can be invoked in debates of this nature for a number of reasons: because it provides a handy shorthand for otherwise unwieldy exchanges (in the manner of 'jargon'); because it provides an historical basis for comparison; because it provides analogies between 'lower-order' concepts (such as reciprocal obligation) and 'higher-order' ones (such as the social contract); and simply because it provides an impressive-sounding substitute for harder-to-find operational concepts of a less abstract nature. Communitarianism is a 'higher-order' concept which provides an historical and social rallying point for those political theorists with a moral or aesthetic distaste for contemporary liberal political philosophy. However, given that its key feature is the celebration of the neoclassical ideal of the self-governing community of active citizens, its relevance to debates about the relationships of state agencies to citizens is decidedly slim. In any case the Blair vocabulary is as much influenced by liberal contractualism as by communitarianism: the very idea of a culture of reciprocal obligation between government and citizen, after all, is a social

liberal one. Likewise, when in Australia Mark Latham looks to a political-philosophical patron-saint for his reformed social democracy, it is to a scaled-down version of the liberal Kantian John Rawls that he turns.

Mulgan and others, it is true, invoke the ideal of the self-governing community, and even present social obligation as a means to the restoration of a primal civic virtue and autonomy. Yet their attempts to define this loose image of community are generally half-hearted, and sometimes positively puerile. The irrepressible Mulgan, for instance, in defending the virtues of the contemporary 'connected' community, declares that 'the potential dangers of community' are far less than they once were: after all, 'connexity widens people's horizons and makes it easier to form new communities, like the virtual communities of cyberspace, or the weak communities of shared interests or fun'. (Mulgan, 1998, 200-1) Here the epochal struggle of community and society, of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* - that great *leitmotif* of the romantic politics for a century or more - descends to the level of the frisky cybergeek. Mulgan's more important point, meanwhile - that citizens do not derive the capacities they need to function effectively as citizens from their interactions with the state - is not an argument about community as such, but about the limitations of a particular way of understanding the relationship between state agencies and the citizens who depend upon them.

Regardless of the label, however, there are good reasons for mistrusting any attempt to ground a recast social democracy, or post-social democracy, on the territory of political philosophy. Social democracy, as the name implies, is a hybrid concept. In its post-1945 incarnation it implied two balancing-acts in one. It was a program of government with a similar ideal end to socialism, but operating under a democratic discipline; at the same time, borrowing from the older use of the term, it was a governmental use of representative democratic institutions for 'social' ends. As the Foucauldians would have it, social democracy has no distinctive 'rationality of government' of its own: it is and has always been a productive hitching-together of liberal institutions, national-bureaucratic mechanisms and a loosely socialist ethic. To put it another way, social democracy has no patron saint, and no overarching 'animating principle'. Rationales for its reformation or dissolution have to be cast in a different order of argument.

Democracy

As one might expect, given the temper of the times, in this argument the virtues of community slip neatly into those of democracy. Of course, this is hardly a feature specific to the Third Way: in the political maelstrom of the *fin de siècle*, democracy serves as the rallying-cry for the disorientated '68er, the postmodernist-visiting-the-

planet and the straightforward political huckster alike. For advocates of the Third Way, however, it serves a number of quite specific purposes. Democracy provides the political yardstick by which to assess the bureaucratic state and the welfare state and find them wanting; it provides the cultural stuffing for the otherwise wobbly value of community; and it provides a procedural basis for attempts to rethink relationship of government to citizens. Mulgan, quite rightly, locates the origins of the modern national state in the military needs of the early-modern period: taxation, bureaucracy, trade regulation are all in an historical context by-products of the needs of the early modern states to wage warfare on an ever grander scale. He then looks forward to the 'demilitarised' state appropriate to our more complex and flexible cultural condition - less a 'pyramid' than 'a flotilla where no-one is in absolute command'. (Mulgan 1998, pp. 179-197; cf Hirst 1997, pp. 216-235 for a more sophisticated version of the same historical account.) In this picture, then, community serves as the bargaining-point for a new, more democratic contract between state and citizen. Likewise, Giddens invokes democracy as an explanation of the political disenchantment and even cynicism rife in Western polities. 'The demand for individual autonomy and the emergence of a more reflexive citizenry' serve as a popular challenge to representative democracy: 'democratisation is outflanking democracy, and the imbalance must be addressed'. (Giddens 1998, p. 71)

The problem with this kind of argument is that while it continues to accept as political democracy the representative institutions and processes of the state, it defines as civil democracy precisely that which stands opposed to the state understood as a collection of bureaucratic and administrative agencies. In other words, like the Enlightenment *philosophes* of Reinhart Koselleck's classic argument, the 'democratic' character of a popular movement is defined by virtue of its distance from the administrative state. (Koselleck, 1988) As Barry Hindess has observed, viewed in this light even an explicitly anti-political movement seems 'democratising' so long as its anti-politics is directed towards the state. It is not difficult to see the polemical attractions of such an image: after all, this is an era of dissatisfaction and even disillusionment with representative government, and any 'democratic' argument which has an anti-representative tinge to it can appear radical. But there is a fundamental bad faith involved in an argument which presents as civic virtue what is more plausibly described as cultural *ennui* - let alone one which attempts to adopt it as a model for 'democratisation' in general.

This kind of woolly thinking and even bad faith about 'democracy' dogs much of the literature of the Third Way, and even some of the specific policy measures which draw upon it. Giddens cites as cases of 'democratising democracy' 'local direct democracy', electronic

referenda, and citizens' juries, without even bothering to explain what purposes these mechanisms might be used for, and to what effect. Exercises in democracy, it seems, are good in themselves - even if they have no effect whatsoever. This might be termed the therapeutic model of democracy. Practical exercises in 'democratising democracy' in Britain at present are not much less airy. The Blair Government, for example, has trialed a number of regional policy forums. The format of these gatherings, apparently, is as follows: the relevant minister meets with academic experts, parliamentarians, Labour Party branch members and 'people from the local community'. First the minister outlines a series of policy dilemmas, and then small-group discussion provides suggestions for policy. (Leigh, 1999) Again, while the mechanism may be clear, the purpose certainly is not. Is the minister seriously expecting to have his or her policy dilemmas 'solved' in this manner - in which case, how do the diverse participants acquire the relevant expertise for such an undertaking? If not, is the aim to acquire knowledge about public opinion - in which case, why this very odd configuration of 'the public'? If neither of these, then what? One, uncharitable, conclusion might be that the whole process is simply 'show democracy' for PR purposes. Another, perhaps more charitable, one, is that it represents a deep-seated confusion on the government's part in how to make practical a conception of 'democratisation' which is inherently spiritualist and unreal.

Conclusion

It would be easy enough as a scholar to dismiss the Third Way and related literature out of hand for its various delusions, follies and vanities. The task of policymaker and political reformer, however, is not so simple. Neither the Third Way writers in Britain nor their Australian near-relations such as Latham and Lindsay Tanner (1999) are simply wrestling with ghosts. The themes I have rehearsed here - the 'crisis' of the welfare state, the political content of citizenship, the nexus of public provision and political obligation - identify many of the key problems to be faced if Australian Labor is to find a way out of its current malaise. Moreover the Australian debate, if it emerges, may be presumed to have a rather greater purchase on the mundane world of statecraft, if only because government in the 80s and 90s taught the Australian centre-left about the primacy of practical technique in policy-making, and on the practical meaning of abstract terms such as 'economic constraint'.

Certainly this is the quality most evidently lacking from the current British debate. In the 'visionary' mode it is too

easy to slip from a hard problem such as securing the fiscal basis for a defined portfolio of social programs to an easy solution - such as devolving the problem out of sight in the name of community. There is an argument currently abroad, for instance, to the effect that fiscal debates are another dispensable hangover from the past: there is more than enough money in the pot, so the story goes, and the real question is how best to allocate it. There is a grain of truth in this: bigger government is certainly not necessarily better government, and good government often thrives on a clear sense of competing priorities. At the same time, however, no strategy which sidesteps the vexed question of funding decent social provision in a time of proliferating needs and dwindling fiscal resources is going to be of much avail for long. Whether they like it or not, post-social democrats still inhabit the fraught and contested economic landscape of social democracy.

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Hysteria, history and hope: Higher education policy reform set against the Indonesian political and economic crisis

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The following piece was written in October 1998, after I returned from Indonesia where I had been living since late February of that year. In March-April 1999 I visited Jakarta again and found that little had changed, except of course that the first "free" national elections loomed, set down for June 7. A mood of excitement prevailed: everyone was eager to engage in conversation about politics and to express a preference for one party or another. I found overwhelming support for Megawati Soekarnoputri and her party, Partai Demokratis Indonesia – Perjuangan, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle. As this article goes to press it seems that the unthinkable has happened and Megawati has won at least a qualified victory.

Profound uncertainty nevertheless prevails about the future of Indonesia. Murder and mayhem have remained daily features of the television news bulletins. Prospects for a free ballot in East Timor are grim. The reconstruction of the education system has not advanced, despite vigorous debate in the print and electronic media, and many thousands more students have dropped out of school and university, due to the economic crisis. Classrooms are half empty. International agencies predict that a substantial proportion of the current generation will grow up illiterate, malnourished and small in stature. Literally millions of young people will forego for ever their chance to obtain tertiary education.

On Tuesday, 12 May 1998, six young Indonesians, students from Trisakti University in Jakarta, died at the hands of the army of their own country. They were shot in cold blood, while trying to obey soldiers' orders to return to their campus from the street in front of its gates. By Thursday, 14 May the huge city was in chaos. Thousands died and millions of lives were ruined in the looted and burnt-out buildings. For several days the rule of law completely broke down, only to be restored by tanks and a full military deployment in the streets of the capital.

This is a story of students, politics and higher education policy. It is my story, an intensely personal account. I was a member of the sole Australian aid project team which chose to stay behind during the panicked evacuations of 14-17 May 1998. The previous week we had received a Consular Advice from the Australian Embassy warning us not to go onto university campuses. Upon reading the faxed message I climbed into a Project car and drove, nevertheless, to IKIP Jakarta, the Jakarta Teachers' College, where banners flew ("DEATH IS INEVITABLE: REVOLUTION NOW"), students milled about, and riot police in full gear coldly eyed our Government car, marked by red number plates, as it entered the campus. My meeting, with a team of Indonesian Project consultants, was tense.

Several further consular bulletins to Australians in Jakarta arrived in the ensuing days, each exhibiting more alarm than its predecessor. The Advice of that terrible Thursday, 14 May, suggested strongly that we make for the airport. But vehicles bearing the deathly red plates were being overturned and set on fire in the street. In their cars on the airport tollroad, Westerners and ethnic Chinese were ambushed by gangs of thugs armed with golf clubs, bricks and pieces of wood. Vehicles were destroyed, valuables seized. Not all the victims escaped with their lives.

That afternoon our team held an emergency meeting. It was a way of filling in time: we dared not leave the office. Our Australian consultancy company representative, on the telephone from Melbourne, urged us to do as we saw best. The company's insurance policy, however, would not cover our evacuation unless the Embassy actually ordered us to go. For a moment there was silence around the table as we sized each other up. "We stay," we agreed. What followed was the most horrifying and the most exciting fortnight of our lives. None of us will ever regret that decision.

Our three green four-wheel drive Panthers were quickly equipped with false black plates to replace the deadly red Government ones and, thus safely disguised, we were sped home, hiding our white faces as the brave

drivers took us through the strangely quiet streets. The only people about were small gangs of youths, striding crazily along the middle of the traffic lanes. After dropping me off at home Purwanto, my driver, was attacked and robbed, his car windscreen smashed with bricks.

I stayed inside for the next five days, holed up. I watched CNN on the hour, played endless games of patience, listened to Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and wrote, wrote, compulsively. The sudden appearance, one dawn, of ABRI tanks in my street was a welcome relief. "The army is protecting the safety of the city," their loudhailers blared. Thank God, at last.

The following Monday students began pouring into the Parliament Buildings, vowing to occupy the precinct until President Soeharto stepped down. Buses and open trucks roared along Jakarta's main roads, crammed with waving, idealistic, exuberant young people, each clad in a coloured jacket which indicated their campus. They clung to the rooves of vehicles, holding aloft the red and white national flag which streamed behind them in the hot, smog-haze slipstream. At the Parliament their teachers joined them. A women's group calling themselves *Suara Ibu Peduli*, the Voice of Caring Mothers, fed them, gave them water to drink. Doctors and paramedics volunteered their services to tend heat exhaustion.

The students were resolute. They stayed put. On Thursday 21 May the students won. At nine o'clock that morning on national television Soeharto resigned and history was made.

The scene at the Parliament Buildings was overwhelmingly emotional. Students cried, laughed, swam in the moat, scaled the roof and climbed the statues of national heroes, the heroes of the Independence Struggle, adorned them with flowers and draped them in the beloved Red and White, the *Merah-Putih*. They fraternised with the army, hugging, kissing, singing, dancing together, students and soldiers.

All of this was broadcast on the Government television station. For foreigners living in Jakarta – the few who had sat out the riots and mayhem of the previous week – it was exhilarating and uplifting beyond words. For those whose work, like mine, takes them into universities and polytechnics, dealing with students and higher education policy, there was a sense of pride and, always, an edge of fear that something would suddenly go wrong and more young people would die. Nothing was predictable; nothing felt completely safe.

After the *denouement* which was Soeharto's downfall the campus opposite my home, that of the Jakarta Arts Institute, became a centre of "cultural reformation", people's political culture: street theatre, protest, songs of revolution and the construction of street installations and painting of yet more banners. For weeks it was the most exciting place in Jakarta to be. Famous writers and poets spoke to cheering crowds; people sold *kaos*

politik, political T-shirts, there were photographic exhibitions of the destruction, rape and gruesome death of "Grey Thursday", 14 May.

Gradually, though, the euphoria subsided. Indonesians faced once again the reality of their broken country where real living standards have dropped to twenty-five per cent of previous levels in less than a year, where more than a quarter of all children no longer go to school, but instead beg in swarms on the streets, where unemployment soars. Where nearly half of the population can no longer afford enough to eat each day – official measure of "absolute" poverty.

Indonesian students, in the weeks leading up to 21 May 1998, changed their nation for ever: that cannot be doubted. But the political events of that day have done little, if anything, to rescue the country's reeling, desperate economy. Indonesia is destitute. In this atmosphere, however, the Government is under extreme pressure to implement its avowed agenda of reform, *reformasi*, in all areas of public and commercial life; to stamp out *KKN*, corruption, collusion and nepotism, so deeply embedded in all aspects of the country's affairs that to an outsider its poisonous reach can scarcely be imagined. Much corruption, it is true, has involved the former President's family, but it extends well beyond the businesses and dealings of the Soeharto clan. *KKN* is everywhere.

KKN, naturally, has its tentacles in the education system. At the time of Soeharto's downfall his children were plotting for control of the production and sale of all school uniforms in Indonesia, where tens of millions of students are officially required to purchase four different ones, new, each year. In higher education stories of corruption abound. Money can sometimes buy success as well as the right merely to receive tuition. Of course, most higher education staff would regard themselves as upright citizens, and would angrily repulse the advances of those knocking on their doors armed with bribes. But, where the habits of corruption have run so deep, it is naïve to expect that any area of public life is immune to its reach.

In any case, most of the 47 public universities and polytechnics are desperately poor and many of the over 13,000 private institutions are no better off, though a few in each sector are reasonably resourced and a handful of institutions are well equipped and staffed, even by international standards. Staff in the public sector, including academic staff, are officially public servants and are remunerated accordingly. This means salaries of around \$A100-200 per month plus an allowance of rice. Professors earn a little more, but even they are hard-pressed to survive on their official incomes. As a result, most university staff are obliged to hold down two, three or even four "full-time" teaching and consulting jobs. Administrative staff run small businesses on the side.

Everyone dashes frantically between their responsibilities, hindered by the nightmare traffic and the unreliability of all arrangements – due largely to the fact that everybody involved has too many commitments. As university employees will be the first to admit, it is impossible to do justice to each one of their jobs in these circumstances. And, as they will also admit, it is often the students who suffer.

Absenteeism among academics is often a problem. Some habitually fail to turn up to teach their scheduled classes or to invigilate examinations. Student networks keep watch, exploiting lax assessment procedures or advising others on which subjects to avoid if they actually want to learn from a living, breathing lecturer. One major public university has resorted to special contracts with its staff, paying them above the odds if they will agree to attend their classes and to be present on campus between specified hours. Basically, they are being paid extra simply to do what is required of them in their original duty statements. This new move is officially known as a “quality improvement” initiative. Some private-sector institutions can afford to pay higher salaries and consequently the expectations placed on staff are more rigorous. These institutions, naturally, charge tuition fees beyond the reach of most Indonesians.

Indonesia has many fine academics and university administrators. High-fliers are often trained in the West, but, on their return to their own institutions, the academic staff among them often find research facilities, and the corresponding research culture, seriously lacking. It is difficult for scholars to maintain intellectual momentum in these circumstances. University libraries are poorly stocked, their holdings sadly out of date. The plummeting *Rupiah* means that even fewer volumes can be imported and, of course, international journals are impossibly expensive. In 1998, the central library of the Bandung Institute of Technology, ITB, one of the country's most prestigious institutions, could afford to subscribe to only two such academic journals – in total. Some individual academics make their own personal libraries available to colleagues and students; many exploit the Internet as far as its resources will allow, but the problem remains profound. In reality, few Indonesian students and academics have access to the information and other intellectual resources essential to the pursuit of knowledge and participation in the development of ideas in the modern world. In a globalised economy, the implications are obvious.

Again, some private institutions can afford better facilities. These universities and academies nevertheless seem to concentrate on teaching rather than fostering research. It is a practical issue: one cuts one's losses.

It is common to characterise the intellectual culture of universities in Asian countries by disparaging references

to conservative authoritarianism, lack of creativity and a rigid, unimaginative approach to pedagogy. All of these feature in Indonesian higher education but they are not necessarily caused by the application of “Asian values” nor to mysterious attitudinal differences between Indonesian culture and that of the West. To make such assertions in an unqualified manner is to fall victim to orientalism. It is true that, in some ways, Indonesian culture demands greater deference than ours on the part of women, the young, the lower in status and – yes – the lower in social class or “caste”, a remnant feature in the numerically and politically dominant Javanese ethnic group as well as in Hindu Bali. Islam imposes its own social restrictions although, in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, religious fundamentalism is not at all widespread. But, far from being brought about by religious or cultural totalitarianism, the intellectual poverty of much of Indonesian academe emanates from the strictures of plain economic poverty on the one hand, and from political and administrative strangulation on the other.

To the eyes of one schooled in Australian higher education the resource problems facing Indonesian universities, academies and polytechnics are staggering. It is hard to see beyond these difficulties. While libraries and laboratories can be breathtaking in their emptiness and dilapidation, the administrative facilities in which staff labour are often equally modest. Computers are a rarity in some institutions, with student record-keeping reminiscent of our own fifty years ago. Buildings are sometimes in poor repair and many are not suited to the purposes to which they are put. Health and safety concerns abound, especially in laboratory settings.

This is not to deny that some institutions boast up-to-date equipment, attractive, well-constructed lecture halls, offices and science blocks and even reasonably comprehensive library stocks. They do. But these are not the norm and no-one expects Western-standard facilities to be commonplace in the higher education system of what is after all a developing country.

But equally challenging to the Australian mind is the regulatory and administrative structure which provides the context for Indonesian higher education. Both public and private sectors are overseen, and their activities and procedures prescribed, in a manner which would have done the former Soviet Union - at its most extreme - proud. Indonesia banned the Communist Party well over thirty years ago but, for those seeking to understand its approach to public policy, the crucial concept is that of a centralised, rigid and extremely intrusive system. Every detail of an institution's functions, especially those of a public institution, is seemingly specified by decree, regulation or guideline.

An example is the country's existing Government scholarship system for needy students. Procedures for

advertisement, selection, notification of successful and unsuccessful applicants and, finally, disbursement of funds to scholarship-holders are outlined by the Directorate General of Higher Education in an annual *Pedoman* or Guidelines document which has the force of law. This extraordinary publication prescribes for all imaginable circumstances the exact form of words to be used in written communication with applicants and recipients. It explains step by step the approved procedures governing the payment of monies to beneficiaries and the verification procedures and safeguards to be employed in order to ensure that no *KKN*, corruption, occurs. Funds must be seen to go to those for whom they are intended.

Yet, beside all this close specification and obvious administrative paranoia, there lies the fact that the scholarship program is also devolved almost wholly to local campus level. The complex rules exist to avoid misappropriation and mismanagement. But the rules themselves are so complicated that they beg to be ignored, bent or flouted. They also leave gaping holes where such problems could possibly occur. Their Byzantine nature gives rise to the suspicion that the procedures have never been thoroughly reviewed, that holes are simply plugged as difficulties become apparent, by the addition of a further procedure, form, letter or reporting requirement. The Australian *Income Tax Assessment Act* may spring to mind as a similar phenomenon. But the Heath Robinson approach (wire, string, bits tacked on), which characterises our own antipodean Leviathan, Indonesia repeats a thousandfold.

One might have thought that, in order to maximise financial probity, faced with problems and weaknesses endemic to any student financial assistance program where payment to beneficiaries is devolved, an alternative system might have been considered. The obvious structural cracks could be addressed. Selection might be carried out locally, but payment to students, in these days of electronic banking systems, could occur through a transparent, safe, simple centralised method. As yet, however, changes along these lines have still not been formally proposed in the Indonesian higher education community.

The principal vehicle for the regulation of Indonesian higher education, the equivalent of Australia's *Higher Education Funding Act*, is *Peraturan 30/1990*. This Regulation is currently under review but indications are that change initiated as a result will be relatively minor and superficial. Central to this piece of legislation, not surprisingly, is the role of the Minister of Education and Culture. The extent of the Minister's powers, however, astound the foreign onlooker.

In public institutions, the appointment of university Rectors and polytechnic Directors, their various deputies, deans and even professors, is directly the responsi-

bility of the Minister him or herself. The number, roles and titles of senior staff are prescribed in the Regulation, allowing no deviation from the standard administrative structure to suit the needs of institutions. All public universities must have, besides their Rector, three Vice-Rectors, whose areas of responsibility are respectively defined as Academic, Administration and Student Affairs. This structure is mirrored in polytechnics and in the specialist institutes. Some such institutions are small: too small, it might be judged, to sustain the top-heavy structure specified in the Regulation. Nevertheless, an academy of 400 students and a single faculty must by law adopt an administrative and academic framework identical to a university boasting a student body twenty times the size, and faculties and courses far more numerous. Universities with large postgraduate enrolments and broad offerings look essentially the same administratively as tiny polytechnics which teach only Diploma courses in Engineering.

Public universities and other public higher education institutions are clearly located in the public sector. They are in a sense extensions or branches of the Department of Education and Culture and are entirely regulated by Government. This situation contrasts sharply with that of Australian universities, which sit both uncomfortably and also comfortably between public and private. The ambiguous status of Australian institutions (and others in countries where the Anglo-Celtic model prevails) actually serves them well in some respects, because it enables them to exploit their positions selectively, to distance themselves, or to align themselves vis a vis government, to their advantage. In Indonesia, by contrast, the situation of "public" institutions is severely restricting. In particular, the fact that university staff are public servants means that their salaries are subject to standard pay scales quite unrelated and inappropriate to their level of qualifications and specificity of expertise. People with knowledge and qualifications virtually unmatched anywhere in the country are paid less than a tenth of what they might receive overseas. This situation alone is directly responsible for many of the problems experienced in Indonesian public institutions. They cannot attract and retain excellent staff, nor can they obviate the needs of staff members to seek extensive outside employment which seriously affects the performance of their substantive duties. The public service salary nexus must be abandoned.

The tenure of senior academic and administrative staff in the public sector is four years. It is uncommon for Rectors in particular to be reappointed to the same post and inevitably stability and long-term development are casualties to this arrangement. There is a tendency for senior staff from Java to be posted to institutions in regional areas, sometimes creating cultural and religious tensions, especially where a Muslim Rector or Director is

sent to oversee an institution where students and staff are predominantly Christian – as they are in many of the Eastern islands, for example.

In the private sector the appointment of institutional CEOs is also subject to Ministerial approval, though academic and administrative structures are less closely regulated. In the past the Government has on occasion rejected the nomination of Rectors at private institutions, though more frequently this possibility simply constrains the institution's governing body in its deliberations, since a head-on clash with the Minister is better avoided. At Satya Wacana Christian University in Salatiga, a controversy and bitter dispute over the appointment of a new Rector, which ran for several years and is still evident in the institution today, is perhaps the best-known recent case where such constraints have apparently been influential. This well-equipped university, formerly internationally respected for its excellence and its political independence, has experienced a serious decline in student demand: many of its academic staff have left, some for overseas positions.

Draconian regulation restricts the rights of public servants to speak out on political and social issues. The employment status of public-sector academics as public servants has acted to stifle their freedom of expression and, in a derivative but effective manner, has had the same effect in much of the private sector as well. This is true despite the fact that "academic freedom" is guaranteed in *Peraturan 30/1990*. This freedom, however, remains confined to actions and statements which are made in the actual course of lectures and in other formal academic contexts. Previous Minister of Education and Culture Wiranto, appointed by Soeharto to the short lived Seventh Development Cabinet, was called upon during the tense weeks leading up to 21 May to explain exactly what this provision meant. He clarified the intent of the Regulation by declaring that a "lecture" was part of a formal curriculum and its audience should only be the students actually enrolled in the subject in question. Once any other person entered a lecture hall and was able to hear the words of the lecturer, academic freedom ceased to apply. And certainly an academic speaking outside the classroom was not protected by the principle. The purpose of this "explanation" was obvious to all.

No-one was actually prosecuted as a result of the "clarification" of Chapter VI of the *Peraturan*, on *kebebasan akademik dan otonomi keilmuan*, academic freedom and intellectual autonomy. In any case the new Minister, Dr Juwono Suwarsono, Habibie-appointed, has taken a slightly more liberal view. A definite change in climate in education policy has followed the ousting of the Seventh Cabinet and the installation of the new *Kabinet Reformasi dan Pembangunan*, Reform and Development Cabinet. The new Minister is a respected

sociologist from the University of Indonesia, premier public university, famed for its strength in the humanities as well as in science and technology. The institution has a moderately liberal and progressive reputation, both intellectually and also in terms of its administrative and structural innovations – made, of course, within the confines of the infamous *Peraturan* already referred to.

The previous Minister was an ITB man, an engineer and formerly the Rector of Institut Teknologi Bandung, giant institution in Dr Wiranto's own discipline but not so well known across the academic spectrum. The rise in education policy circles of the ITB big guns, known as the "Elephants" or *Gajah*, was evident in the last few years under Soeharto and embodied finally in the appointment of Wiranto to the all-powerful ministerial position in the short-lived Cabinet of March 1998. It caused trepidation and anxiety to many in the higher education community, who had been hopeful of liberalisation in areas such as curriculum – largely centrally determined for both public and private sectors – and in administrative reform. In classic Indonesian fashion the ITB *Gajah* had unobtrusively placed themselves in key roles throughout the bureaucracy, in readiness for the final stroke. Their ascendancy overtook the gentler humanities-inspired rule not only of the University of Indonesia, but of Gadjah Mada University, an old institution located in Yogyakarta, ancient seat of learning and culture in Central Java, famous for dissent. Academics from this institution had held many important posts and had included a recent Minister, Dr Wardiman, who held the post immediately prior to the appointment of ITB's Wiranto.

Bearing the same name as the current armed forces chief, Education's Minister Wiranto acted during his short reign to side with the forces of law and order and actively to discourage student and academic dissent to Soeharto's rule. He formally confined student protest, effectively paving the way for the Trisakti tragedy by declaring that demonstrations must not extend beyond campus gates. Even the street outside the university was out of bounds, he said. Thus the army had a pretext for its actions of that dreadful day, 12 May.

Now, however, we are told that the bad old days are over. A commitment to *reformasi*, the stamping out of corruption and a thoroughgoing review of all aspects of the former New Order regime, is the consistent rhetorical mantra of Habibie's Reform and Development Cabinet. Massive reform of the electoral system is well advanced and some important legislative changes in the financial sector have been introduced. But many argue that all this is largely cosmetic and that, fundamentally, those now in power remain committed to the old ways and to old personal loyalties. In education the Minister has announced a review of the entire national school curricu-

lum, but he has also admitted that this will be slow in coming.

In higher education, scepticism and downright resistance are clearly evident in the face of proposals for change. As fast as articles appear in the Indonesian print media calling, for instance, for devolution of authority within the system, counter-opinions are put forward which assert that everything is fine as it stands, and that "foreign" ideas are not welcome. The suspicious exotic proposals include concepts such as quality assurance, efficiency, relevance, accountability and representation in institutional governance. Foreign they may seem, but the West does not hold exclusive property rights to sound and responsive management, nor to well-developed curriculum and good pedagogical practice.

Often, however, instead of a willingness to engage with new ideas and with the challenges posed by the current crisis faced by Indonesia, the approach of academic and bureaucratic leaders is one of passive despondency and pessimism. "In Indonesia things are different from the West," one is told a touch condescendingly. "Here devolution would never work because we have always organised things centrally and people are not used to it." Decades of authoritarian rule, preceded by centuries of colonial servitude, have taken their toll on initiative and confidence – boldness – in policy-making. For so long deference and conformity have ensured survival. It is not easy to change gear overnight.

Beyond this obvious problem, however, lies the immediate context in which decisions are currently made, ideas considered. The political and economic crisis, profound and deeply worrying even by late 1997, a year later shows signs neither of resolution nor of even easing. The atmosphere of foreboding, even fear, is present in every official meeting or encounter. The changes forced upon all Indonesians in their personal lives are mirrored in their public, professional or workplace existences. High-status bureaucrats are just as worried as everyone else about how they will feed their families. Corruption is exposed within their own Department or university: where will it end? The sense that events can no longer be shaped, that situations are beyond control, leads to acute inertia and even to irrationality. People sometimes lose sight of the main issues, choosing to concentrate on detail or to cling fanatically to procedure, insisting on the intricate niceties of rules.

At the end of the 1997-98 academic year, the Ministry in Jakarta, confronted by thousands of final-year university students unable to afford to submit their universally obligatory *skripsi* or thesis because of the soaring cost of paper and photocopying, made an astounding concession: the *skripsi* would no longer have to be double-spaced. One-and-a-half spacing would suffice. This trifling matter, needless to say, is centrally determined.

The rector of Gadjah Mada University, a rational and highly respected man, continues to hand out financial assistance to his students on the basis that their degree certificates will be available only when the money is repaid. Now, he tells a crowd of journalists, he has three large cupboards crammed full of certificates because virtually no funds whatsoever have been recouped from graduates. It is remarkable, first, that the Rector would make this information public unless he were to do so in the course of proposing a better means of securing loan repayments. Secondly, it is amazing that he continues to provide the loans in the face of the program's abject failure. The weight and size of the problems with which Indonesian decision-makers are confronted are factors which in themselves add immeasurably to their substantive policy difficulties. Paralysis sets in.

Meanwhile students, possibly in hundreds of thousands, drop out. Further austerity measures are introduced at institutional level. All staff must find outside work to supplement sharply falling real incomes. Public transport has been halved because bus companies can no longer afford to buy spare parts (almost all imported), putting thousands of vehicles off the roads. It takes many people three hours or more just to get to work. Travelling between multiple jobs, in these circumstances, is a nightmare.

For working parents with young children, the economic crisis brings an added danger: a colleague's neighbour was worried and puzzled to find the younger of her two preschool children upset, exhausted and filthy at the end of each day. Both children were normally left in the care of a domestic worker while their parents went to the office. Apparently the maid, to increase her own income, had been renting out the two-year-old to a troupe of beggars who used him to add to the pathos as they plied their trade at a major intersection.

As a foreign consultant, this last problem is fortunately one of many that I am spared. Insulated economically from many aspects of the crisis by a salary paid in stable foreign currency, and protected psychologically by the ever-present option simply to resign and go home, we international workers are extremely privileged. Nevertheless, our work is severely hindered by the uncertainties and the ever-shifting ground characterising the general situation, and by the tense, difficult atmosphere to which this gives rise.

The Government, still, has no clear strategy to deal with the country's appalling economic problems, though it has begun to face the political ones. It accepts eagerly the immense mountain of foreign capital now poured in as loans. This approach is not new: for years World Bank and Asian Development Bank loans have been represented in the Indonesian national accounts simply as "revenue". Repayment seems a distant, unreal prospect. Now funds flood in as never before and higher educa-

tion, for its part, is dependent upon this source, for most new developments and especially for student financial assistance. The Indonesian domestic tax base has always been weak. In the current climate it is unlikely that tax revenues will grow in real terms, even if the taxation regime becomes more rigorous as a result of legislative reform. Therefore the short and medium term future of public funding for higher education lies in the balance.

International agencies including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have in recent years sought to support the private sector's role as a means of expanding higher education in many developing countries. They have looked also towards cost recovery as a principle on which to base future financing of national systems. In the immediate future, these options are not open to Indonesia. Foreign companies will not rush to invest in universities, local business is bankrupt, and students and their families will not be able to afford to pay high fees for tuition. And yet, unless the country invests in the skills and knowledge of its people, it will never pull itself out of the dire situation into which it has fallen. This is its dilemma. The immediate, practical assistance of the more fortunate developed world, its higher education institutions, their resources and their staff, are the only hope for Indonesian higher education and its students.

On Friday, 15 May, the day after the horror of Grey Thursday, students of the Jakarta Arts Institute staged a demonstration on the forecourt of Taman Ismail Marzuki, the Arts Centre opposite where I live in inner-suburban Cikini. They performed street theatre, they declaimed poetry, in ancient traditional dance form they presented a protest against the cold-blooded murder of their six comrades from Trisakti University, on the other

side of the vast city, three days before. I watched from my window in dreadful fear: I knew that, technically, the students were breaking the law by carrying out their action in front of their campus, rather than within its boundaries.

At midday the students dispersed. Only one remained, a pony-tailed young man in jeans, his long hair an allusion to the Indonesian independence struggle where men vowed not to cut their hair until the fight against the Dutch was won. A freedom fighter. He lay sprawled on the concrete, motionless, face down in the relentless sun, surrounded by the students' six mock graves built to represent their dead comrades. A seventh "grave", intended for President Soeharto and bearing his portrait, was behind him. The young man risked death from heat exhaustion or, worse, a bullet.

I could not turn my mind or my eyes away from his suffering, which, like his hair, bore deliberate traditional and historical references to old Javanese forms of silent protest. I wanted to cross the road to persuade him to go home, or simply to offer him a glass of water, but it was too dangerous for me to go out. It was not until after sunset that he finally left the scene.

Perhaps this young student's bravery and tenacity symbolise hope. Perhaps the idealism of Indonesia's youth can be channelled and expressed in a new, democratic Indonesia where real opportunity is offered by a regenerated economy and an open, strong education system. Perhaps Indonesians young and old will finally find their voice.

Semoga Indonesia merdeka. May Indonesia be free. This essay is dedicated to my Indonesian comrades, colleagues and friends and to the brave students of the Jakarta Arts Institute, *Institut Kesenian Jakarta*, Cikini.

Globalisation and the crisis in the concept of the modern university¹

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Our institutions are no good any more: on that there is universal agreement. However, it is not their fault but ours. . . . The whole of the West no longer possesses the instincts out of which institutions grow, out of which a future grows: perhaps nothing antagonizes its 'modern spirit' so much.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1889/1976) *Twilight of the Idols*. In *The Portable Nietzsche*, translated and edited by W. Kaufmann, Harmondsworth, Penguin, p.543.

Introduction

The concept of the modern university is in crisis. This was recognised more than a century ago by Nietzsche (1889/1976: 541), who argued that liberal institutions – of which the university is perhaps one of the most enduring examples – cease being liberal as soon as they are attained. For Nietzsche, there is freedom in the struggle for liberal institutions, but decadence following their establishment. Nietzsche's devastating critique of modernity and its institutions has renewed relevance in the current historical moment as scholars around the globe attempt to get to grips with far-reaching changes in the status and character of universities under globalisation. One particularly helpful and influential account has been provided by Bill Readings (1995, 1996), who distinguishes three principal ideas underpinning the concept of the modern university: the Kantian idea of reason, the Humboldtian idea of culture and the technological idea of excellence.² Readings argues that of the three ideas, only the latter remains intact in the modern era. Global capitalism renders the ideas of pursuing truth and preserving or promoting cultural enrichment problematic. Contemporary universities function as performance-oriented, heavily bureaucratic, entrepreneurial organisations committed to a narrow conception of excellence generated by the imperative of international competitiveness.

For anyone working in an Australian, Canadian, British, American or New Zealand university at any time over the past decade Readings' observations must constitute an easily recognisable and frightening description. The language of managerialism with a focus on strategic planning, mission statements, and performance indica-

tors seems to have nothing to do with the traditional governance of the university and the further the university moves away from the old structures the more it loses its institutional uniqueness and looks like just another corporation. The neoliberal policy paradigm now dispenses with any pretence to anything other than the underlying market logic: contestable funding, "providers" and "consumers", student loans and so on, have real consequences and now form the parameters of our daily working lives. In short, the establishment of a new language of the university has been accomplished and while we might distance ourselves from the ideology of managerialism or even attempt to subvert it in various ways, we cannot help but be effectively reshaped by it.

In this paper we first briefly review Readings' position as he encapsulates it in a paper published posthumously in the *Oxford Literary Review* in 1995 and we suggest four major areas where we differ from him. Second, taking our lead from Readings, we suggest that the position of the university is significantly altered under neoliberal economic globalisation. This paper argues that the idea of the modern university was intimately interwoven with the development of the liberal nation-state and that its crisis is part of the decline of the modern nation-state under the impact of globalisation. The term 'modern' here refers to a notion of the university that surfaces primarily as an expression of German Idealism in the writings of Kant (1798/1979) and the Humboldt brothers (see e.g., Humboldt, 1970 and Bahti, 1987) and is represented, above all, in the idea of the modern state-funded research-based university (see Peters, 1998). The interpretation we provide is a 'poststructuralist' analysis based on the work of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. In the context of a Deleuzian capitalism of circulation and communication, it is both important to begin the task of mapping systematically the way intellectual property rules create emerging structures of political space. The paper concludes by considering Deleuze's idea in relation to intellectual property regimes (IPRs) that have been traditionally regarded as territorial and bound by the nation-state. More recently, as Farrands (1996) points out, IPRs have been progressively removed from the individual state through inter-

national trade agreements and are now policed by multinationals and international institutions. We discuss IPRs and its implications for Australasian universities briefly in terms of Jane Kelsey's (1997) work on the GATS.

Dwelling in the ruins of the university

In an earlier paper which is the lead article in a special issue of *Oxford Literary Review* commemorating his work, Readings (1995: 16) argues that we must recognise that the University is a *ruined* institution and he asks us to ponder the question of what it means to dwell in the ruins without falling back on romance or nostalgia. For his part Readings restricts himself to the notion of the culturally-oriented humanities, noting the way in which that under the impact of the market and the adoption of consumerism as a way of life, the (Humboldtian) idea of culture has dropped out of the discourse purporting to give the university a foundation or, at least, no longer appears serviceable. As the editors remark, the university no longer functions as a "privileged site of national cultural self-definition" (Clark & Royle, 1995: 16). Readings (1995: 21) himself suggests that the animating idea of culture in Cultural Studies "is not really an idea in the strong sense proposed by the Modern University".

In face of such an overriding economic imperative Readings asks "how thought may be addressed within the University" (p. 22) or rather "how to think in an institution whose development tends to make thought more and more difficult" (p. 23). His answer is partly construed as an historical response although clearly it also contains faint traces of a German idealism with its concern to protect, if not an idea, then a *space*. He implicitly defines thought in terms of its disciplinary structures whilst acknowledging the dissipation of such structures and the opening up of a certain interdisciplinary space. To dwell in the ruins of the university without nostalgia Readings suggests we ought to abandon disciplinary grounding but retain as structurally essential "the *question of the disciplinary form that can be given to knowledges*" (p. 25). In this new context disciplinarity has become a *permanent question*: "we must keep open the question of what it means to group knowledges in certain ways", to ask not only in what it consists but also what it excludes.

We are sympathetic to Readings' interpretation. His project and his thinking acted as a source of inspiration for us. In the spirit of critical thinking we want to respond to aspects of Bill's analysis. Let us summarise our criticisms. First, we think Readings conflates the Kantian and the Humboldtian ideas: he talks of disciplinarity in the humanities, acknowledging the decline of the Humboldtian idea of culture as a central organising idea for the university, yet the idea he wants to defend, in some limited sense, is a variant of the (Kantian) idea of reason

— the idea of thought or thinking and its institutional space. Some clarification is required here: we think there is a suppressed argument in Readings' paper that does a lot of work concerning the definition of thought or thinking in the humanities in terms of its disciplinary structures. For our part we would want to talk of the *multiplicity* of thought, of the difference between disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking, of thinking without the disciplines, perhaps even of thinking despite the disciplines (see Peters, 1999).

This new multiplicity of thought in the humanities is not just a kind of postmodern *bricolage*, assemblage or blind eclecticism driven by the academic market; it is also a kind of unravelling of the disciplinary purposes of the Modern University. It is not without considerable care that Foucault chose the notion of discipline as part of the title of his famous work, *Discipline and Punish*. "Discipline" — a systematically ambiguous term — as a form of moral training establishes the liberal rationality of governance required for our autonomy as subjects and, therefore, also the self-regulating autonomy of the university as a whole. Barry Hindess (1995: 44), for example, argues that "the most influential Western models of a university should be seen, at least in part, as belonging to a liberal rationality of government" in the Foucauldian sense of individual self-regulation. Indeed, the neo-Foucauldian trope of disciplinarity has proved remarkably productive for understanding not only the university and the rise of cultural studies but also modern institutions per se.³

Second, we acknowledge our disagreement with Readings when it comes to giving up entirely on the idea of culture and on the university as a privileged site for national cultural self-definition. Readings is still wedded to the idea of the Modern University, an idea largely born out of German idealism and one certainly bearing all the traces of a Eurocentric conception. While Readings does entertain a certain resistance to the history of the idea — we now live amongst its ruins and we must learn to do so without nostalgia — he does not seek to displace it or dislodge it entirely. More importantly, he does not want to interrogate its cultural expression, its native tradition or the way it expresses a certain typical Euro-universalism and ethnocentrism. The time of the idea is a European time which must be questioned. In non-European cultural traditions the task of the post-colonial university, *in a different cultural time*, may be precisely to focus upon the question of national cultural self-definition and to do so as a means of coming to terms, confronting, engaging with, or resisting forces of cultural homogeneity which threaten to erode indigenous traditions in the wake of a globalisation which commodifies both word and image.⁴ We cannot presume that the university will take place or perform the same functions in non-European cultures as does/did in

European cultures. Some indication of this might be gained from the prescribed purposes of national universities (for example, the National Islamic University of Malaysia) which have a statutory function of protecting and enhancing national religious and cultural traditions.

Third, by concentrating upon the disciplinary shifts in the humanities alone Readings is not able to provide an analysis of the way in which these shifts respond to or interact with other shifts — say between the sciences and the humanities — or the way the whole disciplinary regime is modulated together. His allusion to the shift of philosophy and the presence of certain strands of European philosophy in departments of literature and cultural studies, which are almost totally ignored by philosophy departments, is a good example. Such a question almost certainly requires reference to disciplinary developments in science and the adoption of a “scientific” philosophy. Let us briefly elaborate: a genealogy of American philosophy reveals the fracturing of a public intellectual tradition under such figures as Emerson and Dewey, when Jewish emigre philosophers strongly influenced by the Vienna Circle (Reichenbach, Feigl, Carnap) migrated to the United States. In general analytic philosophy became very narrowly professional and technical, turning in upon itself and, accordingly, less interested in communicating with other disciplines. Under the influence of twentieth-century formalism and logicism it ditched its “humanity” and “literariness” to become a highly professionalised and a purely technical discipline (see Rorty, 1982, Dyke, 1993, Barradori, 1994).⁵

Fourth, we do not think that Readings sufficiently distinguishes between the two kinds of market liberalism: that construed in national economic terms and a neoliberal economic globalisation. They have both impinged upon the university in distinctive ways and in different eras. Neoliberal economic globalisation, at least, presents *new* problems — legal, ethical, epistemological — to the university. It is these issues which we want to tease out in more detail, focusing particularly on the role of science, the emergence of the research-based university and its harnessing by the liberal nation-state in the next section of the paper.

Globalisation and the Modern University

The idea of the modern university was first formulated in different but related ways by Kant, Schleiermacher, Scheller, Humboldt, and Newman, and became the basis of national (German and English) discourses which both consigned an idea to the university and purported to justify its institutional essence in philosophical terms. Kant and Newman, as representatives of different national traditions, shared a common emphasis on the importance of the search for truth or the role of critical reflection and its relation to the question of the governance of the institution. They shared also a similar

understanding of the industrial or quasi-industrial organisation of the university as a *modern* liberal institution based upon a division of (academic) labour.

The emergence of the *modern* university is a phenomenon of the nineteenth-century: its development as the principal knowledge-producing institution, Wittrock (1993) asserts, is concomitant with the rise of the modern liberal nation-state, in its newly formed (e.g., Germany or Italy), reformed (e.g., France), or “new world” colonial-satellite status (e.g., Australia and New Zealand). Wittrock (1993: 303-4) argues that the development of the research function is “co-terminous with the nineteenth-century transformation of universities from institutions for the transformation of a received body of knowledge to generally immature adolescents into research-institutions, the ‘axial’ institutions of the modern world”. He suggests that specialisation within universities (the emergence of an academic division of labour based upon the development of the disciplines) and the move from gentlemen amateurs to a professional specialisation can also be seen in a Foucauldian way as precipitating a new kind of epistemic regime. What is interesting in Wittrock’s analysis of the transformation of the university is, in part, his historical observation that while the emergence of a new epistemic regime was co-terminous with the resurrection of the idea of self-governance proposed by the Humboldt brothers, such an idea was at odds with the process of ever-increasing disciplinary specialisation (p. 342).

It is important to recognise that the accounts offered by Newman and by the German idealist tradition differed on this one crucial point. Newman did not see the advancement of knowledge as a central function of the modern university. He gave no room to research per se, suggesting that teaching was the principal function which defined the essence of the institution. In his Preface to his famous work of 1852 he wrote:

The view taken of a University in these Discourses is the following: — That it is the place of teaching universal knowledge. This implies that its object is, on the one hand, intellectual, not moral; and, on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophic discovery, I do not see why a University should have students; if religious training, I do not see how it can be the seat of literature and science. Such is a University in its essence, and independent of its relation to the church (Newman, 1966: xxxvii).

What was genuinely new about the *modern* university, Wittrock (1993: 345) argues, was that the task of research, of advancing knowledge, became a central part of the university’s mission, and increasingly that part of the university developing self-image was what separated it off from other institutions offering post-secondary education. A large part of Wittrock’s (1993: 361) argu-

ment is that “two of the three institutions of modernity, namely, the nation-state and the university, can no longer take their continued existence for granted — certainly not in the form in which they have appeared for over a century”. The third institution, the modern corporation, has also undergone changes to its form. Wittrock concludes that while there is no reason to expect the demand for higher education or scientific knowledge to diminish — quite the contrary, he adds, — “such may well occur in a fashion that makes any discussion of the ‘idea’ of a university appear hopelessly antiquated” (Wittrock, 1993: 361).⁶

Wittrock’s work provides a helpful standpoint from which to examine recent policy documents on tertiary education. In New Zealand, the long-awaited white paper on tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 1998) takes several crucial further steps toward a fully privatised, consumer-driven university system. Over the next few years, government funding for research will be progressively shifted from an EFTS-based entitlement (granted to all institutions meeting the specified quality criteria) to a contestable pool. The contestable fund will place a priority on “advanced, high-quality portfolios with a strong strategic focus” (p.32). Researchers will be required to show “how their portfolios will develop the innovation and human resource capabilities of New Zealand” (p.33). Universities will be largely indistinguishable from other tertiary institutions in the new system. The policy principles, legislative framework and funding arrangements are now essentially the same for all institutions and organisations in the post-compulsory education sector. In the white paper any notion that the university might have a distinctive *cultural* role to play disappears, and the arts and humanities become invisibilised. Research remains important, but this will increasingly be tied to corporate demands in the new global order, with an emphasis on techno-scientific modes of inquiry and business models of “quality control”.

These trends have been reinforced by other policy developments in New Zealand. Of particular interest given the concerns of this paper, is a scenario-building exercise initiated by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (1998) under the heading of “The Foresight Project”. The Foresight process, which has been underway now for more than a year, is designed to map out possible future directions for New Zealand as a “knowledge society”. As we have noted elsewhere (Peters and Roberts, 1999; Roberts, 1999d), the Foresight Project places a heavy emphasis on investment in science and technology as a means for increasing New Zealand’s international competitiveness. There is talk of the need to become innovative; to become a nation of creative entrepreneurs while at the same time lessening divisions between social groups. Globalisation is por-

trayed in a largely positive light, and the value of becoming involved in new systems of trading information and services is taken for granted. In the Foresight Project materials “knowledge” is conflated with “information”, and no attempt is made to locate discourses on futurology in their historical and social contexts. Remarkably, despite the rhetoric about the importance of learning and inquiry, virtually nothing is said about the role universities (or other tertiary education institutions) might play in building or sustaining the so-called “knowledge society”. A commitment to higher forms of learning is made, in the interests of securing a competitive advantage and greater prosperity, but the university is no longer required for legitimisation of research activities. Other organisations, particularly those with a commercial and more applied techno-scientific focus, assume greater importance in this vision of the knowledge society. An attempt to retain elements of the nation-state emerges in calls for greater “social cohesion”, but this goal is in tension with both the neoliberal philosophical assumptions underpinning social reform in New Zealand and the imperatives of competitive global exchange endorsed by the Foresight Project developers.

In a range of OECD studies, an explicit link between globalisation and the need for a new approach to both knowledge and production has been drawn. Two documents arising from the OECD’s International Adult Literacy Survey (OECD, 1995, 1997), for example, speak of the urgent need for higher skill levels in even the most “advanced” nations. It is claimed that with the decline in low-skill jobs, new forms of reading and writing competence are required for maintaining economic efficiency, improving individual social mobility, reducing welfare dependency, and enhancing the quality of cultural and communicative life. Globalisation breaks down trade barriers, allows the free flow of information and labour, and demands continuous upskilling. Life-long education, rather than a fixed period at a university (or other tertiary institution), is required. Another OECD report (OECD, 1996) contains a selection of papers from a conference held in Copenhagen in 1994 where the objective was to address the conceptual difficulties economic theory faces in coming to terms with the core concepts of “knowledge” and “information”. One paper, by Dominique Foray and Bengt-Åke Lundvall (1996: 29), gives a very real sense of the stakes involved. Having provided interpretations of the knowledge-based economy, considered the empirical evidence and trends, and made some conceptual clarifications (going back to Polanyi’s *tacit* knowledge), they conclude:

While information technology makes more kinds of knowledge codifiable, and thereby accelerates the processes of innovation, change and learning, some elements of tacit knowledge have become more important than ever for economic performance and success. The

traditional dichotomy between public and private knowledge is becoming less relevant. Hybrid forms of knowledge which are neither completely private nor completely public are becoming increasingly important. More and more strategic know-how and competence is developed interactively and shared within sub-groups and networks.

They continue:

These changes may be regarded as parts of an ever further-reaching process of socio-economic change – we are moving towards a networked learning economy where the opportunity and capability to access and join knowledge- and learning-intensive networks determine the relative success of individuals and firms.

What we find fascinating about this statement (and the paper as a whole) is the complete absence of reference to traditional knowledge-institutions, the acknowledgement of the tacit dimension in knowledge, and the recognition of the hybridisation of knowledge forms. This account says little about *how* and *why* strategic competencies are constructed and valorised in information economies. The important question of what a blurring of boundaries between public and private knowledges might mean for a concept of education, and perhaps particularly the notion of *higher* education, is also not explored in the paper.

Of course, the new policy prescriptions for the university have not been welcomed by everyone. Nor have “populist” market interpretations of globalisation as the triumph of capitalism and democracy been accepted by all. These views may be contrasted with a range of “critical” positions from the Gramscian writings of Robert Cox, to the more “technical” approach adopted by Susan Strange, or the “developmental” perspective of Anthony Giddens and Roland Robertson. There is not space enough here to engage or to distinguish these positions further. What we wish to do instead is to put forward, in outline, a neo-Foucauldian – or better, a Foucauldian-Deleuzian – approach to globalisation which has clear implications for the institution of the university. To a large degree this approach continues to focus upon Foucault’s notion of “rationality of government” (see Burchell, 1991; Barry, 1996): it understands neoliberal economic globalisation as a deepening of world political order through marketisation effected by the spatialisation of both time and knowledge.

A Deleuzian economy of circulation and communication?

In his “Postscript on the Societies of Control” (1992) Gilles Deleuze claims:

We are in a generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of enclosure – prison, hospital, factory, school, family. The family is an ‘interior’, in crisis like

all other interiors – scholarly, professional, etc. The administrations in charge never cease announcing supposedly necessary reforms: to reform schools, to reform industries, hospitals, the armed forces, prisons. But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It’s only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door (pp.1-2).

Drawing on the work of Paul Virilio, as well as Foucault, Deleuze argues that new modes of free-floating control are replacing the closed systems of disciplinary societies. Deleuze speaks of enclosures as “molds”, with distinct castings; in controls, by contrast, we find a form of “modulation”. The new processes of control are based on the model of the network, with greater flexibility and continuous change. In disciplinary societies “one was always starting again (from school to the barracks, from the barracks to the factory”, whereas in societies of control “one is never finished with anything” (p.2). In place of the signature (which designates the person as an *individual*) and the number (which indicates a person’s position within a *mass*), it is the *code* that is important in societies of control:

[T]he code is a password, while on the other hand disciplinary societies are regulated by watchwords (as much from the point of view of integration as from that of resistance). The numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it. We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become “dividuals”, and masses, samples, data, markets, or “banks” (p.3).

We live, Deleuze suggests, in a capitalism of higher-order production. The factory has given way to the market, where control tends to be short-term, with rapid rates of turnover, but also continuous and without limit. The model of the school will be replaced by the ideal of perpetual training (driven by corporations), and university research will no longer seem necessary. Societies of control allow people to be *tracked*: continuously monitored, via computer networks and sophisticated electronic devices, while ostensibly granting new freedoms. In this sense, among others, they are no less oppressive than the disciplinary societies that preceded them. Indeed, Deleuze notes, “[t]he coils of a serpent are even more complex than the burrows of a molehill” (p.4).

In a recent interview Eric Alliez (1997: 86) provides a graphic description of Deleuze’s “societies of control”, linking them, above all, to the question of knowledge and the new spatialisation of knowledge and education under a *capitalism of circulation* based upon the mode of information:

The analysis that Deleuze gives us of the passage from

“disciplinary societies” to “societies of control” aims to throw light on the forms taken by the accelerated substitution of a capitalism of circulation and communication for a capitalism of production centred on the exploitation of paid industrial labour alone (the factory being the paradigm for milieus of enclosure). The technological mutations of the age of planetary informationalisation are thus related to a mutation of capitalism (a Hypercapitalism of services) which knows no discourse of legitimation other than the purely horizontal one of the market (from enlightened neoliberalism to the hallucinated anarcho-capitalism of the Internet ...), and no practice of domination other than that of a purely immanent social control by universal marketing in continuous variation and modulation (with the 3 M’s ruling the New International order: Money, Media and Military).

The new spatialisation of knowledge and education in the postmodern age is based on the “soft architecture” of the *network* which increasingly defines the nature of our institutions, our practices and our subjectivities.

Two signposts in the study of the university in relation to globalisation can be distinguished: (i) a Foucauldian one pointing historically to “disciplinary societies”, to the notion of disciplinarity, to the study of enclosed institutional spaces, and to the study of the university as part of the “rationality of government”; and (ii) a Deleuzian one, indicating the road ahead of us – the understanding of the university as an institution undergoing transformations based upon the dispersed logic of the network. Both sets of studies are required; they are, indeed, complementary. Yet neo-Foucauldian studies of disciplinarity (i.e., of the emergence and transformation of disciplines) in themselves to us seem isolated historical accounts oriented toward a modernist understanding of space: they lack a directional politics, a politics of the present.

Let us give a brief example. In an important and insightful paper, Alison Lee and Bill Green (1997: 21) argue for a re-assertion of the notion of pedagogy as a means for “re-inventing the university in and for post-modern times”. They make reference to the work of Keith Hoskin (1993) and claim that it was the conjuncture of three emergent sets of practices — writing, examination and grading — together with three pedagogical sites of the seminar, the laboratory and the classroom, that “caused a great discontinuity in Western intellectual history” (p. 7). The danger here, however, is that insufficient attention will be paid to questions of political economy, and their relevance to the formation of new knowledges. Such an analysis can become too oriented to the “economy of disciplines” rather than the “discipline of the economy”. Will the rehabilitation of pedagogy *vis a vis* research and detailed empirical studies of pedagogy be adequate in helping us to

confront the political difficulties faced by the postmodern university? We think the critical questions concerning the survival of the university (for example, its privatisation, the cuts to staff and budgets, the closing down of departments, the separation of teaching and research) have less to do with “re-inventing” pedagogy than with understanding the nature of neoliberal economic globalisation and its effects upon the university.⁸

It is possible, we think, to understand globalisation fruitfully in terms relevant to the university through the concept of the spatialisation of knowledge: a concept promoted by both Foucault and Deleuze, and also given a specific determination by their countryman, Henri Lefebvre (1991). One idea central to Lefebvre’s view is that we are never confronted by one social or cultural space; instead, a multiplicity of social spaces can be found, and growth and development does not annihilate these spaces. Indeed, Lefebvre seems to argue that in the development of world wide networks of communications and knowledge these social spaces emerge in all their complexity and diversity (1991: 86).⁹ Lefebvre argues that an understanding of the social distribution of knowledge and power requires a critique of space – its production over time and within its numerous social contexts.

In this regard, and in the context of a Deleuzian capitalism of circulation and communication, it is interesting to examine the way intellectual property rules create emerging structures of political space. Intellectual property regimes (IPRs) have been traditionally regarded as territorial but more recently they have been “increasingly detached from the individual state through international agreements including those which create extra-territorial rights, and are now policed by corporations and their lawyers or by international institutions” (Farrands, 1996: 179). These agreements tend to focus more on products and core technologies than on territories; by doing so they rewrite cultural and social space.

Farrands (1996: 179) argues that these globalisation processes tend more toward some form of reconstitution of difference than they do toward a homogenisation; that is, IPRs remain diverse. Yet whatever form they take “they shift or reupholster existing power relations much more than they make any radical shift in them”. This is a point he develops in more detail:

There is ... no single intellectual property regime in the international political system. Different rules cover different areas – patents and copyright, licensing and so on – and have their origins in different national jurisdictions and international agreements. Together, they constitute a system of governance in which a variety of stakeholders have some interest in stable management. That is to say the control, legitimation and regulation are managed by a variety of interests

only some of which are governments (Farrands, 1996: 183).¹⁰

He charts the shift in GATT talks around IPRs, and the moves by the USA after 1986 (before this date IPRs had not figured in such talks) to make intellectual property an agenda priority. There is no doubt that electronic data transmission, satellite broadcasting, the development of rapid copying systems, and the “writing” of software on microchips, have tended to confuse questions of copyright and raise new legal issues in defining and policing fraud. In this climate trade policy has focused on the language of “economic security” and become increasingly protectionist.

The investigation of IPRs is one way of investigating the problematic of *extra-state governance*, its language and its practices – what Foucault (1970: xxii) called “the space of knowledge”. This extra-government space has, in part, been expanded by the way neoliberals have withdrawn from aspects of the management of the national economy. In many instances their “downsizing” and deregulation has simply shifted management to another level beyond the state, where the grid of power-knowledge is harder to detect.

Jane Kelsey (1997) has given attention to the implications of New Zealand and other countries becoming signatories to the latest GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) talks, which were part of the recent Uruguay GATT negotiations concluded in 1996. She argues that the consequences of exposing tertiary education to strong pressures of international competition, without suitable constraints and protections, are potentially very damaging for a small country like New Zealand. One such consequence is the risk of cultural homogenisation, where cheaper, standard, satellite-broadcast, courses and programmes could threaten to displace local content and cut across indigenous rights. Under a trade paradigm education loses its capacity to transmit cultural values and to critically reflect issues of identity or national self-definition. In her opinion the GATS offer works to reinforce trends towards commercialisation, internationalisation and privatisation. In this worst case scenario, perhaps, we can talk no longer exclusively of “the rationality of government” but also of “the rationality of corporation”.

Conclusion

In the course of this paper we have provided a poststructuralist analysis of the university and the crisis in the concept or idea of the *modern* university which was very much a creation of the modern liberal nation-state. In the first instance we reviewed the poststructuralist analysis of Bill Readings who talks of the ‘post-historical’ university. In general we agree with Readings and think that his argument is a strong one and his analysis fruitful, although we also raised criticisms against his position.

We attempt to develop an alternative poststructuralist analysis of the university based more directly on the work of Foucault and Deleuze with special regard to questions concerning the transition from ‘disciplinary societies’ (Foucault) to ‘societies of control’ (Deleuze), charting the shift in terms of the spatialisation of knowledge and the explosion of institutions based upon forms of enclosure. Contemporary universities in the global economy must come to terms and develop strategies that recognise this shift and its potential resource and political implications. The shift is illustrated in IPRs and the changing pattern of extra-state governance and it is highlighted in the recent GATS agreement. These issues require the closest scrutiny if universities are to survive in a recognisable form that preserves some of the historic commitments of the modern university to independent inquiry, academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

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Footnotes

¹ A modified version of this paper is to appear in our forthcoming book, *University Futures and the Politics of Reform* (Peters and Roberts, 1999). We wish to thank two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript.

² Bill Readings died in a plane crash in late 1994, only a couple of months before Michael Peters was to work with him on his research seminar called "The Crisis of Identity of an Institution". The seminar Peters gave at the University of Montreal was "Cybernetics, Cyberspace and the University: Hermann Hesse's *Glass Bead Game* and the Dream of a Universal Language" (Peters, 1996a). Readings earlier had contributed an essay "Towards a Heteronomous Politics of Education" to a collection Peters edited on the educational significance of Jean-François Lyotard's (1984) *The Postmodern Condition* (Peters, 1995). He had edited (with Paul Griemas) the political writings of Lyotard (Readings, 1994). For "Lyotardian" readings of the university see also Readings (1993), Peters (1989, 1991, 1996b) and Roberts (1998). This paper forms part of an ongoing project on the crisis of the university. Elsewhere, we have focused on tertiary education reform at the national and international level (Peters & Roberts, 1998a; Roberts, 1999a, 1999b), cultural politics and the university (Peters, 1997), the reconfiguration of scholarly life (Roberts, 1997, 1999c), and the impact of the new information technologies on higher education (Peters & Roberts, 1998b; Roberts & Peters, 1998).

³ See, for instance, Caputo & Yount (1993), Hunter, (1994, 1995), Messer-Davidow et al, (1993), Roberts & Good (1993), Sosnoski (1995), Elam (1994), Nelson & Goankar (1996), Lee & Green (1997).

⁴ The question of the post-colonial university and cultural self-definition is addressed, in part, by so-called "Subaltern Studies" (Guha, 1982; Guha & Spivak, 1988) but also suggestively by Edward Said (1994a, 1994b) especially in terms of imperialism in literature and representations of the intellectual, and also by Ashis Nandy (1988) in his study of the impact of British science in India

⁵ In this respect we find fascinating the comment Foucault makes on Anglo-American philosophy in "La Philosophie analytique de la politique" (orig. 1978, 1994) cited in Davidson (1997: 3):

For Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy is a question of making a critical analysis of thought on the basis of the way in which one says things. I think one could imagine, in the same way, a philosophy that would have as its task to analyze what happens every day in relations of power, a philosophy that would try to show what they are about, what are the forms, the stakes, the objectives of these relations of power. A philosophy, accordingly, that would bear rather on relations of power than on language games, a philosophy that would bear on all these relations that traverse the social body rather than the effects of language that traverse and underlie thought. One could imagine, one should imagine something like an analytic-political philosophy.

⁶ For a contrasting and more optimistic view see Clark Kerr (1994: xiv) who embraces a "convergence" thesis:

I see a convergence going on, with national systems of higher education facing many of the same problems and working towards solutions that are more like each other than the historical points of origin of each system. As knowledge becomes more universal and as needed skills around the world become more similar, and as people are more liberated in their aspirations, systems of higher education tend to become more alike. Under the impacts of spreading industrialization and democratization, we have been moving away from more culturally bound systems of higher education, nation by nation, to a more uniform world of learning.

Kerr (1994) contrasts the "internationalization of learning" against the intensification of interest by nation-states in institutions of higher education and the "nationalization of their purposes". He neglects entirely the effects of economic or cultural globalisation on higher education.

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