

# Accountability or Accountancy? Governance and University Evaluation Systems in an Era of Performativity

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“Formal, transparent and credible systems of quality assurance will help guarantee a successful future for Australian universities..” (DETYA, 2000: 1)

In this process, a number of trade-offs can be distinguished, one of which is the quality movement aimed at optimising the aggregate valued added for the investment in each part of the system (Sheehan, 1996: 32)

## ABSTRACT

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While changes in governance of education are more or less obvious throughout the education systems globally, the strategies employed are complex, and often make use of concepts and ideas stemming from contested policy and programme arenas. Being aware of this, the author focuses his analysis on the issue of changing modes of university evaluation within the Australian system, drawing upon evidence from other systems, and from other elements of university governance, where necessary. In this paper it is argued that there are at least two principal contradictions in contemporary forms of governance discourse, including in higher education. Firstly, notable contradictions occur around the notion of efficiency and performativity, which often achieve the very opposite of what is claimed. Secondly, the notion of ‘steering from a distance’ is argued to be riven with contradictions, resulting in heightened forms of control and demands for performance, rather than the much-touted institutional autonomy, which is often said to be its rationale.

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Forms of governance have been changing of late, not least in the public sector, where governments have often been transformed from service

providers to service purchasers, only setting the regulatory framework for «.. a system of independent providers competing with one another in internal or “quasi-markets”» (Mok & Welch, 2003: 9). No less true in numerous university systems, nonetheless even implementing the regulatory regime can not be taken for granted in some systems of higher education. Albeit imbued with the rhetoric of new public sector management, and a plethora of rules and regulations designed to forge world class universities, some systems are patently unable to regulate quality assurance in higher education effectively, whether because of limited means, uncertain will, wider problems of governance or less-than-transparent and impartial mechanisms (Tipton, Jarvis and Welch, 2003, Welch, 2003). This seems all the more the case, where the private sector has come to play a dominant role in higher educational provision.

In many parts of the world, including the so-called Anglo American democracies, major parts of the post-communist world, and much of the developing world, embracing significant parts of Latin America and the Asia Pacific area, the state is in retreat. In this context, tensions between static or rising demand for services such as health care, aged care, welfare or higher education, and a plateauing or declining state capacity (and/or willingness) to deliver the required services, has led to a heightened emphasis on public sector management reforms. Now, in order to maximise productivity and efficiency in the public sector, (whether hospitals, public transport systems, or universities), public sector institutions are inured to emulate private sector productivity norms. Common state governance strategies are to create and foster markets within the public sector, forcing universities for example to compete – both for customers (formerly called students)<sup>1</sup>, and for often modest amounts of discretionary funding, sometimes «clawed back» from existing operating grants. Given the current context of ever-tighter institutional budgets (where it is estimated that in the UK, for example, levels of public funding per equivalent full time student (EFTS) have fallen by some 40% since the late 1980s (Hare, 2003)) few, if any, universities could afford to ignore the competition for resources, even if these resources are not «new money», but simply amounts re-distributed for specific purposes. Using such special purpose funds to alter the direction of institutional development, allows governance to be conducted in a less direct, but equally effective manner, the so-called «steering from a distance» (Marceau, 1993, Kleeman, 2003). Universities also compete for staff, both nationally, and in some cases, internationally (Welch, 1997b).

All in all, in a context where universities are being asked to do more and more with less and less, and to contribute more directly to enhanced levels of economic growth, universities are being pushed to operate in a more openly competitive manner, both internally and externally:

They are increasingly competing for students, research funds, and academic staff both with the private sector and internationally. (OECD, 2003: 60).

## **I. The meaning of governance**

What is meant by governance in the university sector? According to one contemporary source, it covers much more than formal processes of control and administration:

Governance comprises a complex web including the legislative framework, the characteristics of the institutions and how they relate to the whole system, how money is allocated to institutions and how they are accountable for the way it is spent, as well as less formal structures and relationships which steer and influence behaviour. (OECD, 2003: 61)

In broad terms, then, governance can be said to cohere around five broad areas:

- ▲ the extent of autonomy that institutions have to determine their own affairs.
- ▲ The extent to which they are reliant upon government funding, or can draw on diverse sources.
- ▲ Modes of external and internal evaluation, (so-called «quality assurance»), and the extent to which they are practised.
- ▲ Changing patterns of university governance.
- ▲ Changing patterns of leadership within institutions. (OECD, 2003).

None of the above items, however, are in themselves simple. Although it would presumably be agreed by all, for example, that the concept of governance embraces the practice of university autonomy, this too is a multi-faceted phenomenon, as is clear from the table below:

Table 1. University Autonomy, by Country, Selected OECD states

	Own Buildings & Equipment	Borrow Funds	Budget Autonomy	Set Academic structure/course content	Hire and Fire acad. Staff	Set Salaries	Decide Student Enrolment	Set Fee Levels
Mexico	□	Δ	□	□	□	Δ	□	□
Netherlands	□	□	□	Δ	□	□	□	Δ
Poland	□	□	□	□	□	Δ	□	Δ
Australia	□	Δ	□	□	□	□	Δ	Δ
Ireland	□	Δ	□	□	□	Δ	□	Δ
UK	□	Δ	□	□	□	□	Δ	Δ
Denmark	Δ	□	□	Δ	□	Δ	□	Δ
Sweden	Δ	Δ	□	□	□	□	Δ	
Norway	Δ		□	□	□	Δ	□	
Finland	Δ		□	Δ	□	□	Δ	
Austria	Δ		□	□	□	□		
Korea (Nat'l. Public)			Δ	Δ		Δ	?	
Turkey				Δ	Δ		?	
Japan (Nat'l. Public)				Δ	Δ			

OECD, 2003: 63 LEGEND: □ has autonomy Δ has limited autonomy

While it is perfectly possible to show how, in each case, the other items listed above, are also complex, and often contested policy and programme arenas, to do so would take much more space than is available here. All the more so, if such a study were to be comparative in form. The remainder of the analysis, therefore, will largely focus on the issue of changing modes of university evaluation within the Australian system, drawing upon evidence from other systems, and from other elements of university governance, where necessary. It will be argued that there are at least two principal contradictions in contemporary forms of governance discourse, including higher education. Firstly, notable contradictions occur around the notion of efficiency and performativity (Habermas, 1976, Lyotard, 1980), which often achieve the very opposite of what is claimed. Secondly, the notion of «steering from a distance» is argued to be riven with contradictions, resulting in heightened forms of control and demands for performance, rather than the much-touted institutional autonomy that is often said to be its rationale.

## 2. Background to the Australian Higher Education System

The Australian higher education system, consisting of 38 universities, can be said to have begun with the founding of the University of Sydney, in 1850. At that time, quality assurance in higher education was assumed to derive from the Oxbridge model, upon which all early universities in the Australian colonies were based<sup>2</sup>. Students, at that time entirely male, stemmed from a narrow and elite band of society. To the extent that evaluation occurred, it was undertaken by peers, informally, believed to be inherent in the notion of a university, and best undertaken, if at all, by academics themselves. In short, systematic evaluation of either programmes or institutions was conspicuous by its absence.

Now, with an overall higher education population of around 850,000, some 14% of whom are international students, and about half female, many of the original assumptions upon which the earliest Australian universities were founded, no longer obtain. Not merely are students much more heterogeneous, reflecting the rich cultural diversity of contemporary Australian society (Welch, 1997a), academics at Australian universities also now originate from an increasingly diverse range of countries (Sheehan & Welch, 1996, Welch, 1997b, 2002) and, in the context of an increasing engagement with its neighbours, now more often stem from the Asia-Pacific zone.

Like many other countries worldwide, which have experienced massification of higher education (RIHE, 1997), together with increasing heterogeneity of student and staff bodies, and increasing diversity of delivery (DETYA, 2000), two trends have developed. Firstly, an increasing mismatch has developed between the scale of increase in student enrolments, which has been spectacular over the past 20 years, in Australia (Welch, 2001) and in many other parts of the world, and the ability or willingness by the state to fund such increases, at least fully. This is all the more significant in a national system of education, such as that of Australia, where almost all universities are still public institutions, established by state acts of Parliament, and traditionally funded by the Commonwealth (federal) government.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, and running parallel to the first, has emerged a movement to increasingly evaluate universities, mainly in terms of teaching, and research, but sometimes involving administration. This trend, provoked to an extent by what Barnett has called an «age of anxiety» (Barnett, 1996, Beck, 1992) has to an extent been paralleled by moves to change

accreditation of universities, in an era when increased cross border trade in educational services has meant that some dubious institutional newcomers may attempt to establish a «university» in, or close to Australia (see below).

In a sense, this move to increase systems of evaluation is curious, as academic staff, for example, have always been carefully evaluated at regular intervals in Australian universities, at least when applying for promotion, or sabbatical leave. Equally, universities as public institutions, are subject to financial audits, to ensure that spending is transparent, and properly dispersed, while numbers have themselves engaged in national and/or international benchmarking with their peers. All in all,

A number of external mechanisms for reviewing aspects of internal university activity are of long-standing amongst Australian universities. These include: the use of external examiners for higher degrees by research and some honours degrees; the role of professional bodies and associations in accrediting professional courses such as medicine, law, accounting, engineering and architecture; peer review mechanisms in relation to research funding; and the use by universities of a wide variety of internal/external review and reporting procedures for faculties, departments, centres and whole institutions. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has, over the years, organised discipline reviews and taken other steps to assist its members in addressing quality issues. (Quality Assurance, 2001: 3).

In another sense however, the institution of more wide-ranging and demanding systems of evaluation is no surprise, reflecting the federal government's increasing insistence that funding be tied to measures of performance. Indeed, it is an oft-remarked irony that, despite the formal autonomy which is attached to each university, that, at a time of «steering from a distance» (Marceau, 1993) in higher education, measures of evaluation at Australian universities are having the effect of tying universities rather closer to government agendas and priorities than before. This effect of the institution of intrusive systems of evaluation has been noticed in other national systems of higher education, and deserves closer attention. Clearly, any indicators of performance, including in education, always need to be seen, and themselves evaluated, in terms of their aims, and the wider aims of the social system in which they are embedded. Increasingly, it is evident that the neo-liberal (or as

it is often termed «economic rationalist»<sup>4</sup> assumptions have come to dominate Australian society and social policy over the past 20 years or so (to some extent independent of whether Labor or Liberal parties are in power, and to some extent independent of whether at state or federal levels of government). Education has not proved immune to this trend (Welch, 1997a).

Rather than the traditional U.S. emphasis on accreditation (without which institutions were deemed ineligible for federal R & D programmes, as well as student aid funds (Franzosa, 1996), systems of evaluation in Australian universities usually fall under the term «quality» or «quality assurance». It has traditionally been assumed that Australian universities, as opposed to the former «college» sector<sup>5</sup>, can accredit their own programmes, although as seen below, national disciplinary reviews, and others, now increasingly involve professionals from outside the institution – both academic peers, and professional practitioners as appropriate.

It is wise to put the term «quality» or «quality assurance» in quotation marks here, since not all hard-pressed academic and administrative staff in Australian universities accept that these increasingly intrusive and burdensome measures all have the effect of increasing system quality. Indeed, many have argued that rather too much time and energy is now taken up in complying with the demands of quality assurance measures of one kind or another, internal and external, and that this time could be in fact spent better on doing the research and teaching which is supposedly being measured by the systems of evaluation.<sup>6</sup> Some research shows that the high costs in staff time and other measures, indeed detracts from system performance, since staff are taken away from their normal duties, in order to respond to the demands of performance evaluation systems. No additional funds or other resources are offered by governments who insist on such compliance procedures. This issue of the compliance costs upon stretched institutional resources, also merits closer attention and further research. Indeed, it can be seen as an argument for ensuring that, whatever systems of evaluation might be introduced into national systems of education (Kim, 1996), they should, if possible, be successfully negotiated with the university administrative and academic staff concerned, before being implemented.

Certainly, the costs to the system, and to individual institutions, faculties and departments have been substantial, just as in the UK: the former VC of a British university estimated that the costs to British

universities of such efficiency audits were in the order of «a third of an average sized university's teaching capacity, 50 researchers' work and almost £250,000 a year in photocopying» (Pritchard, 1994: 258). More recent UK estimates put the figures much higher:

«Fees for 250,000 students; the cost of five universities; the pay of 10,000 lecturers: each equals –but probably underestimates– the £250 million annual cost of quality control, audit, accountability, and research assessment systems in English higher education. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland spend proportionately the same» (THES, 2001).

Indeed, Hare's assessment of the UK's Research Assessment exercise (RAE), is that costs have risen substantially:

..the benefits of the RAE system most likely rose for a time and by now will have levelled off, or even started to decline; and the costs were initially high, and will have risen over time as individuals and institutions devote more time to playing the RAE «game». Hence we may well have already reached a position where the costs outweigh the benefits.. (Hare, 2003: 56).

These very real concerns about the compliance costs to hard-pressed universities in the UK, mirror the concerns voiced in Australia, where after a decade and a half of a widening gap between ever-increasing enrolments and swiftly declining proportions of university budgets that are supplied by the national government, resources for teaching and research are already stretched. While no-one seriously opposes university accountability, the significant diversion of teaching and administrative staff from their principal tasks, in order to cope with the substantial demands of university evaluation systems, has evoked widespread concern. Expressed concerns as to the very real costs to universities of responding to ever-increasing demands for performance data on the part of government may well lie behind the decision, announced in December, to allocate very modest sums (\$200,000 per institution) to public universities as a gesture to «costs of implementation» associated with the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS).



### 3. Erosion of Autonomy?

Many Australian academics would also share the criticisms of many of their UK peers that the obsessively managerial control over the business of university research is «undermining the strongly held academic values of autonomy, freedom and the like». (Hare, 2003: 57, Kleeman, 2003). Kleeman for example, has underlined the

«...considerable influence over the overall direction of research in universities (that the government can exercise)... by steering more resources through targeted or competitive schemes, in combination with the priorities that will guide the relative national funding in broad fields of research». (Kleeman, 2003: 29).

Over the years 2000-2006, the proportion of targeted research and infrastructure is scheduled to rise from 36% of the total to 52% (Kleeman, 2003: 30).

More direct concerns were expressed at the Minister's expressed wish to intervene directly in academic matters such as which courses should be offered in universities. Far beyond attempts to steer the system via allocation of resources, and the establishment of research funding priorities by external mechanisms, this direct form of control would have intruded directly on core institutional autonomy, as indicated in Table 1, above. Like measures to push universities towards implementing regressive industrial relations measures, this proposal too was defeated in federal parliament, after vigorous opposition by trade unions, concerned parliamentarians, individual Vice Chancellors, and even the normally more quiescent Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (Australian, 2003a,b,c,d, AVCC, 2003).

Moreover, some in Australia continue to voice real concerns (again mirrored in the UK, to a degree) that the increasing effect of research evaluation measures will be to gradually strip even basic means of scholarship and teaching quality from those units or sections categorised as teaching-active, rendering them effectively as teaching-only:

Funding models can leave teaching-active sections, if they have few research students and little external grant funding, without the means to support even basic levels of research and scholarship. This threatens the standard and nature of university teaching, which by its nature should take place within a culture of sustained scholarship and creation of new knowledge through research (Kleeman, 2003: 25).

Principal evaluation measures to have been introduced nationally in Australian higher education comprise both «carrot and stick» approaches: that is, some operate as incentive schemes, while others are measures which have the effect of disciplining universities, and which they can only ignore at their cost. The first area to be dealt with is that of teaching.

#### 4. The Evaluation of Teaching

Traditionally, Australian academics, especially those in the sciences, have been selected on the basis of their demonstrated research excellence, and in some cases practical experience in the field. While this has ensured a high degree of research capacity, the fact that teaching ability and experience was often not taken into account at appointment, meant that this dimension of quality was assumed, rather than having to be demonstrated, as with research. Although teaching was recognised to be an important part of an academic's work, the evaluation of teaching achievement was formerly unsystematic. This imbalanced approach to evaluation or quality was compounded by further and later decisions, where promotion was also based almost entirely on research excellence, often seen in rather quantitative terms. Sometimes, this practice was defended on the basis that it was easier to evaluate or measure research, than to do so with teaching.

Early measures to redress this imbalance were in the form of incentives. The Council on Australian University Teaching (CAUT) was formed to give a higher public profile to good university teaching, and to promote and systematise good practice. Replaced by the Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development (CUTSD) in 1996, by an incoming federal government, the aims remained much the same:

«.. identifying and promoting good teaching, learning and assessment practices in universities; encouraging and fostering innovation in higher education teaching; and providing staff development opportunities for academic and administrative staff» (CUTSD, 1999: 1)<sup>7</sup>.

As part of this development, National Teaching Development Grants (NTDGs) were made available to individuals or groups, on a competitive basis. The aim of these was to raise the status of teaching and encourage innovation and excellence in university teaching. Individual

awards were highly competitive, with only 46 applications succeeding in 1999, from a total of 218 applications. «Organisational» NT DGs were also awarded, mainly to departments or faculties, once again on a highly competitive basis (13 successful applications from a total of 87). Staff Development Grants were also introduced, specifically to support staff development strategies in teaching and learning, perhaps in collaboration with professional units supporting this purpose, which have for years existed at all Australian universities, and are charged with enhancing the quality of teaching and learning on campus, including via regular evaluation of all courses<sup>8</sup>.

In addition to these measures, all universities have introduced internal awards for excellence in teaching, often at Faculty and level, as well as across the university (see the url listed below, and in the Bibliography). These measures, which are peer-reviewed, have further helped to raise the status of teaching as an acknowledged activity in Australian universities, while at the same time creating a culture whereby it is accepted that teaching is systematically and regularly evaluated. The awards are keenly sought by academic staff, and the results published in university news media. (An example, from the University of Sydney, can be found at the following address: <http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/Vcawards>). The gaining of such awards can assist in promotions procedures, which now give more weight to more objective measures of teaching performance<sup>9</sup>. More recently, formal courses (such as a Graduate Certificate of Teaching in Higher Education), which is available to all staff at the university, and in which younger members of staff with little formal study of education or teaching experience now often enrol. For some time now, indeed, there has been talk of making such courses a requirement of appointment to a teaching post at a university (unless it can be demonstrated that the applicant already has an equivalent qualification, or substantial existing experience), although academic trade unions have expressed doubts about the wisdom of moves to make a professional qualification compulsory, and it is uncertain that such a move would command wide support among university staff. Nonetheless, in many universities in Australia, new academic staff are now virtually required to undertake a base qualification in pedagogics, often entitled a Certificate. Under the most recent legislative package, finally passed after great debate, opposition and amendment in December 2003, further measures were announced, in particular both supplementation of Australian Awards for University Teaching, with a new range of awards from 2006; and the

introduction of a new Learning and Teaching Performance Fund from 2006, to reward institutions that «demonstrate excellence in learning and teaching» (DEST, 2003).

## 5. Early «Quality» Measures

The early 1990s saw the development of system-wide measures to enhance quality. The so-called «quality rounds» of this time, announced A\$70m –or about 2% of operating grants (Sheehan, 1996: 25)– of new funding for those institutions «able to demonstrate a high level of quality assurance in the context of their missions and goals» (DETYA, 2000: 2)<sup>10</sup>. The first round in 1993 was accompanied by considerable confusion, not least by some (older) institutions, who were rather less inclined to take it seriously. The first round dealt with teaching, research and community service, and was succeeded by two further annual rounds, devoted to teaching, and research and community service successively. The first round grouped universities into 6 bands and was criticised for creating a form of «league table». This subsequently was reduced to three bands.

The initial institutional resistance, most particularly among some older and more elite universities, was quite quickly overcome, and Australian universities soon came to see that, while quality improvement was an inherent part of their charter, they also owed «a major responsibility to all interested parties, whether students, staff, professional bodies, employers, government or the wider community, to provide assurance that quality and standards are preserved and enhanced». At the same time, they were quick to point out that this could not be achieved without «a real commitment to the maintenance and improvement of quality from those responsible for resourcing the system» (Sheehan, 1996: 28, AVCC, 1992: 8).

A recognition that both institutional reputation and funding was at stake, in an increasingly competitive national and international environment, quickly helped to strengthen such commitment to quality measurement and enhancement<sup>11</sup>. A national industrial court decision of 1991 deemed that annual staff evaluation measures (of teaching, research and administration) were allowable. This led to each institution developing their own version, which commonly consisted of an annual interview between the individual staff member and his/her «supervisor», and which

were often based on measured performance against agreed teaching, research and administrative standards. In practice, however, the system has been seen as burdensome, and it is often difficult to agree on what constitutes «adequate performance», or how to deal with inadequate performance, even if it can be established. At the same time, the fact that components of an institution's funding became dependent on evaluation of performance imposed considerable administrative burdens upon already hard-pressed staff, and there were ongoing problems with performance measurement. Even something as apparently straightforward as the measurement of research performance proved to be by-no-means simple, when government attempts to develop a register of principal journals to be included in the evaluation exercises, were repeatedly challenged by academics. As a result of these difficulties, research performance has now come to be weighted more on the basis of research grants secured, especially nationally competitive grants, and research degree completions, while actual research publications were also upgraded somewhat in importance, in terms of the overall evaluation<sup>12</sup>.

Despite such difficulties, the cultural change effected by these «quality» rounds, introduced by the Higher Education Council (HEC, 1992), and the responsiveness by universities in addressing gaps identified in their respective performance, allowed the federal government, in particular the responsible government department (DETYA), to introduce a scheme of annual quality improvement into its funding negotiations with institutions as from 1998, after consultation:

In fact, the audit program served as a mechanism for change. Rather than providing a snapshot of current activities..., this holistic approach had the advantage of involving much of the university in a self analysis, and it evaluated policy and hence commitment to the future” (DETYA, 2000: 3).

At the same time, however, it must also be admitted that «the process has empowered management, possibly at the cost of some elements of collegiality or institutional democracy» (Sheehan, 1996: 30)

The most recent developments include the development of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), agreed at a meeting by all relevant state and federal ministers in 2000. It commenced regular audits in 2001, publishes performance results, and reports on the standards and standing of the Australian higher education system, in national and international perspectives. It has a small permanent staff,

operating under a small Board of Directors. Core funding (estimated at \$1 million per annum) was to be by governments using a MCEETYA<sup>13</sup> formula, with the direct costs of audits met by those institutions audited. In general, a five yearly cycle of audits would be undertaken. Each university is now required to develop annual Quality Assurance and Improvement Plans, including a range of outcomes information. More recently the purview of AUQA audits was extended to cover overseas external bodies such as professional bodies of accountants or dentists, continue to play a role as external members of relevant evaluation panels, and the advice by such panels of experts is taken seriously by universities, especially in today's competitive environment. Universities also cooperate in evaluating each other's degree programs. A Faculty, for example, may initiate its own evaluation, or undergo an evaluation, as part of an institutional decision, or a national inquiry into a particular discipline. Funding sources are likely to vary accordingly.

In the process of such a review, the faculty may well complete a self-evaluation as a preliminary exercise, which, together with major documents and policies, and examples of teaching and research, is submitted to a panel of internal and external assessors, at least one or two of whom are likely to be major figures from peer institutions. In the case of professional faculties such as Engineering or Pharmacy, this would likely be complemented by one or two eminent figures from industry, with a record of interest in professional education and re-education. Professional faculties that perform poorly, are at risk of losing their professional accreditation, particularly if the problems are not swiftly addressed. This prospect is something that all such faculties take very seriously indeed, since it threatens the employability of their graduates, and thus both their professional reputation, and their livelihood. At least one or two visits by the panel would be subsequently undertaken, to gather further information, and discuss issues with staff and students, before a report is prepared. If the review is a national disciplinary review, it is likely that this report would be published, which imparts a greater degree of transparency to the process, and further ensures that institutions take the advice seriously. In addition, as indicated above, it is now expected that each institution will routinely «undertake student evaluation of teaching, develop special projects for the improvement of teaching, and offer internal awards for teaching excellence» (DETYA, 2000: 6).

In addition, institutions' Quality Assurance and Improvement Plans now outline the university's goals in teaching and learning, research,

management and community service, together with the strategies used to achieve these, and performance indicators used to gauge their success. The Commonwealth government has recently funded the development of a «benchmarking manual» for Australian universities<sup>14</sup>, including 67 measures of performance on the range of activities listed above, which institutions can use to measure their performance against like institutions. Graduate destination surveys which, four months after graduation, measure the proportion of graduates from each institution who have achieved either full time work or full time further study, are also published by the Commonwealth government and used by institutions. All in all, the following measures of institutional performance are published, annually, by the Commonwealth government:

Sector-wide performance indicators relating to students, staff, finance, research, graduate careers and course ... in the Characteristics and Performance of Education Institutions (as well as) institutional quality improvement plans and associated performance measures ... (Quality Assurance, 2001: 3).

A further development relates more to institutional accreditation. It was provoked by a recent attempt to establish an off-shore 'university' (called «Greenwich» university) on an island off the coast of the state of New South Wales which has a unique jurisdictional status, which meant that state-federal relations were also relevant. Under the Australian Constitution, the individual states are responsible for schooling and technical schooling (called TAFE in Australia). Higher education is different: while financed by the Commonwealth government, it is also dependent upon the states, in that the establishment of each university requires a separate act of State Parliament in order to be ratified.

In this case however, the new institution applied direct to the federal government for ratification (thereby avoiding the lengthy and detailed state procedures), which was somehow granted with insufficient scrutiny. The ensuing furore raised not merely complex questions of federal-state relations (the federal government had failed to consult the relevant state government about the matter), but also key issues of quality, since it transpired that the institution in no way merited the term university, being without either relevant facilities or highly qualified academic staff and in fact being dependent upon links with other established institutions to provide courses and qualifications<sup>15</sup>. Subsequently, meetings of state and federal authorities have now agreed upon standards which all institutions that apply to operate as a university in Australia must meet

in order to qualify. While the episode provided a salutary lesson in the negative effects of globalised university education, it will not necessarily be the last such episode, especially in an era increasingly characterised by regional or international agreements such as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), GATS (Global Agreement on Trade in Services), or the proposed MIA (Multilateral Agreement on Investment), which can often over-ride principles of national self determination. In theory, this can mean that a foreign interest can establish a (real or virtual) university in another country, against the wishes of public authorities, and then perhaps claim legal right to national funding, in just the same way as any existing national university.

## 6. Conclusion

Virtually no-one seriously opposes the principle that institutions of higher education should be run efficiently and effectively, as other institutions in society, whether financed from the public or private sector. Nor that they should be accountable. Many, however, have reasonably queried the timing and underlying intent of introducing such intrusive forms of evaluation at a time of severe financial constraints<sup>16</sup> and increasingly strident attacks upon public sector expenditures, often dismissed as «wastage» (Welch, 1997a: 1-23), as well as major reductions in tenure etc. (Sheehan and Welch 1996). There are at least two clear dangers. Firstly, it is clear that great care must be taken in introducing systems of evaluation since, paradoxically, the effects of their implementation could well be to weaken the principle of equity in institutions of higher education, and at the same time to reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of individual departments and thus the institutions of which they are a part. There is no doubt that the implementation of the Jarrat proposals in the U.K. in the 1980s achieved precisely this in many British institutions and was exacerbated by moves to rate individual university departments according to supposed research excellence (THES, 1986a: 1-5, Neave, 1988), and then tie a proportion of the institution's overall grant to this rating. And indeed this weakening seems to have been one purpose of the British proposals:

«The intention is that a department having been designated as weak by the UGC, the university should be obliged to take some action, either to strengthen it or to punish it. The idea is that the



strong should grow strong(er), and the weak weaker» (THES, 1986b: 36).

Experience suggests that the costs of such reviews are no less substantial in Australia (Miller, 1995b), and that paradoxically, such «quality» audits can lead to the opposite effect: «a decline in standards because of the great effort involved in satisfying the formal bureaucratic demands of the procedure» (Pritchard, 1994: 258, THES, 2001). The costs of compliance by universities with forms of surveillance fostered by what has been termed the «intrusive state» (Barnett, 1990: 152-8), or what in the Australian context has been characterised as the triumph of the technology of Total Quality Management [TQM] (Sheehan, 1996) are, as was seen above, substantial, and not merely in narrowly economic terms. Is this the kind of efficiency to be promoted in our universities?

Secondly, there is clear danger in too heavy a reliance upon quantitative performance indicators, since a perfectly reasonable response on the part of universities would be «to develop course appraisal systems which record performance in just those terms» (Barnett, 1990: 103).

This sketch of the evaluation measures used in Australian higher education has revealed not merely the mechanisms and indicators themselves, but also provided some indication of the rationale for their introduction, especially at the particular time and in the particular context in which they were introduced. It has also sought to sketch their development over time, and has shown some of the pitfalls involved in the development of intrusive performance measures of evaluation in higher education. On the basis of the sketch above, it could be argued that, while systems of evaluation can be an important means to enhance institutional performance and responsiveness, this is only if any such measures used are as straightforward as possible, are very transparent and developed in consultation with, and hopefully in concord with, the institutions and their teaching and administrative staff. External summative measures, imposed without consultation by what has been termed «the evaluative state» (Neave, 1996), are likely to be opposed, or only followed pro-forma, and hence much less effective in enhancing the quality of the system. A key danger, indeed, is to tie measures of programme or institutional effectiveness in higher education too closely to government agendas, often of a short-term economic kind, which can risk se-

riously distorting the institutional mission of higher education in society, undermine the importance of wider and more liberal understandings of higher education, and transform accountability into a form of accountancy (Readings, 1997, Welch, 1998):

«The purposes of higher education (became) equated with national economic goals and thus the central problem for higher education was defined as the cost-effective management of human capital and workforce productivity. This had the effect of legitimating a tacit agreement that evaluation in higher education should measure and monitor institutional productivity through techniques developed in industrial management» (Franzosa, 1996: 141, see also Sheehan, 1996: 31).

Previous episodes in education where so-called efficiency measures were introduced as reform initiatives in education, do not inspire confidence in current efforts. Motivated by concerns to contain costs in the face of rising demand for participation, such previous episodes often resulted in reduced costs, a more vocationalised curriculum, and a nett loss of morale and creativity in the system, provoking one teachers' union to respond in 1911:

«If efficiency means the demoralization of the school system;  
dollars saved and human materials squandered;  
discontent, drudgery and disillusion –

We'll have none of it!

If efficiency denotes low finance, bickering and neglect;  
exploitation, suspicion and inhumanity;

larger classes, smaller pay and diminished joy –

We'll have none of it!

We'll espouse and exalt humane efficiency –  
efficiency that spells felicity, loyalty, participation,  
and right conduct.

Give us honorable efficiency and we shall rally to the civic cause».

(Callahan, 1962: 121).

In a previous analysis (Welch 1998), it was argued that, like Winnie the Pooh's address<sup>17</sup>, such efficiency movements were not all that they seemed. Often, they masked an underlying intent to introduce into education the instrumentalist logic and practices of the business world: practices which were anti-democratic in effect – reducing equality within the system. It is not hard to point to important parallels with the current

climate of efficiency movements in higher education. In the earlier analysis, it was argued and instanced that the forms of efficiency which were imposed on schooling and higher education systems were motivated more by goals of cost-cutting, a desire to vocationalise the curriculum and an intent to impose an ethos of business-style principles upon publicly funded education systems, often during periods when rising demand and aspirations for education was imposing additional costs on the public purse. These goals, at times proposed by business leaders intent on reforming public institutions by making them more explicitly business-like, were often achieved at a considerable cost in social terms, particularly in terms of a loss in equity, reduced funding and a narrowing of the curriculum. Alternative notions of efficiency, which, while having proper regard to questions of financial and other forms of public accountability, also insist that equity is a key element in efficiency (Welch, 2000), lack this socially regressive character, and instrumental technologic, of such more economistic forms of efficiency.

In the current example, it can be equally argued that the burdensome bureaucracies that now attend so-called quality assurance procedures in Australian universities, have in some ways reduced what many working academics would acknowledge as quality. This is because of the excessive amounts of time and energy that must be invested by both academic and administrative staff in responding to ever-increasing demands for performance data by the state (a situation now too-often mirrored by internal governance procedures, and modes of performance evaluation, within the institution). This must all be done by already hard-working academic and administrative staff, who are accorded no supplementary resources, with which to cope with the additional workload. Hence, core activities of teaching and learning, and research suffer –and all justified– in the name of quality.

The implications of the above sketch of evaluative measures in higher education for debates in contemporary governance can now be summarised. In particular, it can be argued that there are at least two key contradictions in the contemporary governance discourse. Each comprises a basic plank in the modern governance platform. The first, as was seen above, consists of inherent contradictions in the prevailing notions of efficiency, or performativity. Here, Habermas' corrosive critique of the modern state's use of the apparatus of efficiency parallels Lyotard's outline of the practices of performativity, to a degree. Habermas' account points out that arguments about efficiency reveal an underlying economism that

parenthesises ethical concerns in society. Drawing on Marcuse's critique of *One Dimensional Man* (1968), and decisionism, Habermas argued that ethics in modern society has now been subsumed by a technocratic consciousness, whereby problems of system effectiveness are addressed by the «purposive-rational application of techniques assured by empirical science» (Habermas, 1974: 254, see also Habermas, 1970, 1978, 1984). Modern (western capitalist) societies, then, are distinguished by a greater concern with the technical (that is, administrative/industrial/functional concerns), than with the practical (the realm of ethical, and political decisions). The original distinction between «praxis» and «techne» is owed to the Greeks, of course (Habermas, 1974). Contemporary critical theory extends the analysis to processes of modernity and society, in particular to the extension of a form of rationality and related social processes, which celebrates efficiency at the expense of ethics. With Marcuse (1968) and others, Habermas is profoundly critical of the extension of an instrumental rationality (associated with aspects of Max Weber's account of modernity in society), whereby norms and social goals are simply assumed, rather than debated: «... a technology become autonomous dictates a value system –namely its own– to the domain of praxis it has usurped, and all in the name of value freedom» (Habermas, 1974: 270). In the process, means-ends values of economy and efficiency permeate social institutions and practices (Pusey, 1991), at the expense of ethics, and older notions of the social good. Ball, for example, has shown how correlate notions of business efficiency are assumed, rather than problematised, in education, as part of an increasing technology of control (Ball, 1990). It is not hard to see the applicability of such critiques to the current and widespread fad of performance indicators and performance management within higher education.

More thorough-going in its rejection of modernist epistemological claims, and less rooted in a careful exposition of specific episodes in the development of modern society, Lyotard's account of (post) modernity is nonetheless also critical of the extension of what he terms performativity into many arenas of society (Lyotard, 1984). Knowledge itself, he argues, is being commodified, and has now become one of the principal productive forces in late-modern society. Universities, and academic work are therefore subject to processes of performativity, whereby «optimising the system's performance» (Lyotard, 1984: xxiv) becomes the ultimate goal, and relevant technologies found within the discourse of business and management. Thus system performance criteria are invoked to

decide whether a particular research centre should be allowed to continue (Lyotard, 1984: 47), and questions drawn from the discourse of business efficiency dominate: «Is it efficient?» or «Is it saleable?» become more important and more common questions than “Is it true?» (Lyotard, 1984: 51). There have been some interesting applications of the notion of performativity to the analysis of education in recent years, and more specifically to changes in universities and academic work (Currie, 1998). Once again, the applicability of the concept to the contemporary technology of TQM and performance indicators, to optimise the performance of the university sector and of individual institutions (in economic and financial terms, rather than in terms of creativity, or knowledge) is clear.

The second key contradiction in modern governance discourse is revealed when we see how the reality of «steering at a distance» operates. Once again, it raises the spectre of enhanced control as a major goal of such managerialist mantras. While steering at a distance has been justified (as has decentralisation of educational administration more generally) by an appeal to autonomy and democratisation, it is reasonable to question whether this is always the outcome. Certainly, it has been argued by many, including working teachers, that decentralisation of schools has largely outsourced the responsibility, while retaining the authority (Welch, 1997, Smyth, 1993). In the recent review of higher education in Australia alluded to above, the reality of steering at a distance became evident –despite all the rhetoric of ceding autonomy to universities– when the Minister attempted to arrogate to himself the authority to intervene directly in the course mix taught within universities. Citing a concern with so-called «cappuccino courses», the Minister sought to enshrine in the proposed new legislation, the power ‘to determine whether particular courses or subjects should be taught to undergraduates, and whether particular Ph. D. topics should be allowed’ (Australian, 2003b). It provoked the following response from one of Australia’s most conservative former Vice Chancellors:

Institutional autonomy and academic freedom are under threat in Australian universities. Legislation before the Senate, if it becomes law, will give federal politicians and bureaucrats powers of intervention that will threaten the independence of higher learning and research training, and undermine the standing of our universities across the world. ... The issue is not about saving taxpayers’ money... The point is not about «cappuccino courses». It is about an unacceptable and unsafe ministerial prerogative... If the bill is

passed, all ministers henceforth will be empowered to disallow courses or subjects they don't like, and some minister, one day, will surely abuse that power. (Australian, 2003b).

As indicated above, the national chorus of dissent ensured that this element in the proposed bill was defeated in the federal Senate (Australian, 2003c, Financial Review, 2003). At the same time, however, it also tore the mask from the new public sector management mantra of steering at a distance, revealing the much uglier face underneath. It exposed a direct attack on university autonomy, a fundamental element of higher education governance (as indicated in Table 1, above). In this sense, it illustrated the darker side of Neave's (1996) argument as to the evaluative state. It should be hoped that the Australian state apparatus now draws the appropriate lesson, and refrains from such dangerous and intrusive attempts to control universities, in the future. As in other systems of higher education, faced with many of the same pressures, time will tell.

## Σημειώσεις

<sup>1</sup> One fascinating index of the rise of marketisation and privatisation in the public sector has been the linguistic re-invention of individual users of such services to the ubiquitous «customer», rather than the previous 'student', 'passenger', or 'patient' (depending on the context, and institution).

<sup>2</sup> To say this, of course, is to ignore significant differences between the two institutions. In the nineteenth century, for example, when the early universities were being established in each of the capital cities of the individual colonies (the federation of Australia only dates from 1901), Cambridge was more successful in incorporating the mathematics and sciences, (influenced in part by the example of such scientific luminaries as Isaac Newton, who had earlier held the Lucas Chair of Mathematics), whereas Oxford clung tighter to its roots in the classical languages and literature. The definitions of knowledge pertaining in each, however, were less embracing of mathematics and natural sciences than their German counterparts of the time. See inter alia, Welch, A. (1981) «Curriculum as Institution and Ideology. A Comparative Essay in the Legitimation of Educational Knowledge», *New Education*, 2 and 3, 1 pp. 71-83.

<sup>3</sup> Only two small private universities exist in Australia – Bond University, and the University of Notre Dame, the latter religious.

<sup>4</sup> Pusey, M. (1989), *Economic Rationalism in Australia. A Nation-Building State Changes its Mind*, Sydney, Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Until the wave of institutional amalgamations of the mid 1980s, the Australian higher education system was dual in character, comprising both the traditional university sector, (which was assumed to be able to accredit its own programmes), and colleges (of education or technology), which were generally more under the control of external bodies, usually state governments (Sheehan, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> In mid 2001, the renowned London School of Economics in England, announced that it was ceasing to cooperate with the UK system of quality control.

<sup>7</sup> The latest organisation to be announced is the Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC), established in 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Each Australian university has had, for some years, a «Teaching and Learning» unit (although often with somewhat differing names), whose job includes regular monitoring of courses taught on campus (including consulting with staff to develop instruments appropriate to the measurement of course effectiveness), and the provision of advice to staff members about their teaching performance (feedback). The measurement of off-campus teaching, perhaps a more complex task, may also be undertaken by such professional units.

<sup>9</sup> For example, while research, teaching and administrative and community service are all taken into account for promotional purposes, most Australian universities have long moved to evaluate teaching performance much more rigorously, and have made it possible for staff to apply for promotion on the basis of teaching excellence. Few staff would in practice do so, without also being able to demonstrate research productivity, but this feature acts as a further incentive to enhance teaching excellence, based on systematic evaluation measures.

<sup>10</sup> The federal government's claim that this was new funding was belied by the increasing practice of «clawbacks», whereby such funds were actually drawn from existing higher education funds, and re-specified for new purposes. Universities then had to compete for these «new» funds, or forego a potential part of their budget. Virtually all universities chose to compete.

<sup>11</sup> Results of these rounds quickly became known, and the fact that performance data is now regularly published is an incentive for institutions to try to improve their «rating».

<sup>12</sup> Research publications were upgraded from 2% to 9%, while the weighting attached to research degree completions surged from 4% to 31%.

<sup>13</sup> Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, a nationwide council of state and federal government authorities.

<sup>14</sup> Mc Kinnon, K., Walker, S. & Davis, D. (2000), *Benchmarking: A Manual for Australian Universities*, Canberra, DETYA.

<sup>15</sup> Even this much proved to be uncertain, since some of the institutions with whom it claimed to have a stable arrangement to accredit its courses disowned any such agreement.

<sup>16</sup> Real per capita funding declined by 11.8% in Australian universities between 1983 and 1991 (Sheehan, 1996), and has continued to decline since.

<sup>17</sup> It will be recalled that Winnie the Pooh lived under the name of Sanders – that is he had the name 'Sanders' above his door, and lived under it.

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## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ\*

### Λογοδοσία ή Λογιστική; Δημόσια διαχείριση και συστήματα αξιολόγησης των Πανεπιστημίων στην εποχή της «Απόδοσης»

Επισημαίνοντας τις σημαντικές μεταβολές που έχουν παρατηρηθεί τα τελευταία χρόνια διεθνώς σε παραδοσιακούς χώρους δημόσιας ευθύνης, το άρθρο αναζητά κατ' αρχάς τις επιπτώσεις που αυτές έχουν στην αντιμετώπιση των ιδρυμάτων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης από τις κρατικές / κυβερνητικές αρχές. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, εστιάζει στη σταδιακή μεταλλαγή του κράτους από *παροχέα* σε *καταναλωτή* υπηρεσιών με τη προοδευτική απόσυρση του Δημοσίου από χώρους ευθύνης, όπως η υγεία και η εκπαίδευση, σε μεγάλο μέρος του σύγχρονου κόσμου (όχι μόνο σε «αγγλοαμερικανικού» τύπου δημοκρατίες, αλλά και σε πρώην κομμουνιστικές χώρες και μεγάλα τμήματα του αναπτυσσόμενου κόσμου). Η εξέλιξη αυτή έχει εισαγάγει στους χώρους αυτούς κανόνες, νόρμες και όρους («παραγωγικότητα», «αποδοτικότητα», «πελάτες») που μέχρι πρότινος απαντούσαν μόνο στον κόσμο των επιχειρήσεων. Η δημιουργία τέτοιων «οιονεί αγορών» εντός του δημόσιου τομέα συνδυάζεται με α) μια μείωση και β) μια αυξημένη επιλεκτικότητα των κρατικών χρηματοδοτήσεων. Ο έλεγχος των τελευταίων από το κράτος αποτελεί έναν λιγότερο εμφανή, αλλά εξίσου αποτελεσματικό τρόπο παρέμβασης στα ανώτατα εκπαιδευτικά ιδρύματα μέσω της λεγόμενης «καθοδήγησης από απόσταση» («steering from a distance» – Marceau 1993, Kleeman 2003). Για τα πανεπιστήμια, που, σε μια εποχή μεγάλης μαζικοποίησης και ετερογένειας του φοιτητικού δυναμικού, καλούνται να «καταφέρουν όλο και περισσότερα με όλο και λιγότερα», οι νέες συνθήκες επιφέρουν αυξημένο ανταγωνισμό για την προσέλκυση φοιτητών, οικονομικών πόρων και ακαδημαϊκού προσωπικού. Εδώ, σημαντικό ρόλο διαδραματίζουν οι διαδικασίες αξιολόγησης της ποιότητας των πανεπιστημίων, που είναι καθοριστικές για την κατάταξή τους στους δημοσιοποιούμενους από

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διεθνείς οργανισμούς και εθνικές κυβερνήσεις αξιολογικούς πίνακες.

Στόχος του άρθρου είναι να εξετάσει τις αλλαγές στις οποίες οδηγούνται τα πανεπιστήμια στην Αυστραλία λόγω των σύγχρονων τρόπων αξιολόγησής τους από το κράτος. Στην ανάλυσή του ο συγγραφέας υποστηρίζει ότι προκύπτουν αξιοσημείωτες ανακολουθίες μεταξύ των στόχων που τίθενται και των αποτελεσμάτων που προκύπτουν σε δύο κυρίως κατευθύνσεις: Πρώτον, οι στόχοι της διασφάλισης ποιότητας, αποδοτικότητας και *απόδοσης* (performativity) συχνά οδηγούν στην πράξη στα αντίθετα των επιδιωκόμενων αποτελέσματα. Και, δεύτερον, η κρατική «καθοδήγηση από απόσταση», παρά τη διακηρυσσόμενη στόχευσή της στην ενίσχυση της θεσμικής αυτονομίας της ανώτατης εκπαίδευσης, καταλήγει μάλλον σε στενότερο έλεγχο και διόγκωση των απαιτήσεων από αυτήν.

Ο Welch ανατρέπει στις απαρχές της ανώτατης εκπαίδευσης της Αυστραλίας, στα μέσα του 19ου αιώνα, όταν, ακολουθώντας το πρότυπο του «Oxbridge», η αντίστοιχη «αξιολόγηση» των πανεπιστημίων ήταν έργο της ίδιας της ακαδημαϊκής κοινότητας, χωρίς κανένα συστηματικό ή επίσημο χαρακτήρα.

Αντίθετα, με το μοντέλο που έχει διαμορφωθεί σήμερα, τα πανεπιστήμια υπόκεινται τόσο σε εσωτερική (με τη συγκέντρωση εγγράφων και τη σύνταξη εκθέσεων) όσο και εξωτερική αξιολόγηση. Η τελευταία είναι από το 2000 έργο της Australian Universities Quality Agency, η οποία δημοσιεύει τα αποτελέσματα των αξιολογήσεων σε εκθέσεις που αποτιμούν την κάλυψη προκαθορισμένων δεικτών και standards ποιότητας. Κάθε πανεπιστήμιο υποχρεούται να καταρτίζει ετήσια Σχέδια Διασφάλισης και Βελτίωσης της Ποιότητας, με πληροφορίες για τις επιδόσεις του στη διδασκαλία και την έρευνα. Τα Σχέδια και οι εκθέσεις τίθενται υπό την κρίση επιτροπών, που, στην περίπτωση τμημάτων με σαφή επαγγελματική προοπτική (όπως π.χ. των Μηχανικών ή των Φαρμακοποιών), στελεχώνονται από επιφανείς προσωπικότητες των αντίστοιχων επαγγελματικών κλάδων. Όσα από τα τμήματα παρουσιάσουν ανεπαρκή αποτελέσματα διακινδυνεύουν την επαγγελματική τους διαπίστευση, ενδεχόμενο που είναι επόμενο να λαμβάνεται σοβαρά υπόψη από το πληττόμενο τμήμα, αφού απειλεί την «απασχολησιμότητα» των αποφοίτων του, κατά συνέπεια το κύρος και, εντέλει, την ίδια τη βιωσιμότητά του. Με τον τρόπο αυτό, τα αποτελέσματα των αξιολογήσεων λειτουργούν ως μέσο στενότερης πρόσδεσης των πανεπιστημίων στους κυβερνητικούς σχεδιασμούς και προτεραιότητες.

Όσον αφορά τις διαδικασίες αξιολόγησης / συμμόρφωσης στις νόρμες αυτές καθαυτές, το άρθρο επικαλείται έρευνες στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο, οι οποίες κατέληξαν στο συμπέρασμα ότι το κόστος τους (οικονομικό, ανθρώπινης ενέργειας και εκτροπής των ακαδημαϊκών από τα κύρια καθήκοντά τους) είναι πλέον τέτοιου ύψους, ώστε να υπερβαίνει τα όποια οφέλη – μια πραγματικότητα που ο συγγραφέας θεωρεί ότι αντανακλά και την κατάσταση των αυστραλιανών πανεπιστημίων.

Αναφερόμενος στο ίδιο το περιεχόμενο της *αποδοτικότητας*, ο Welch θεωρεί ότι αυτή υποκρύπτει το στόχο της μείωσης του κόστους, την «επαγγελματικοποίηση» των προγραμμάτων σπουδών και την τάση εισαγωγής επιχειρηματικών αρχών και ήθους στα δημόσια εκπαιδευτικά ιδρύματα, ιδιαίτερα μάλιστα σε περιόδους που η ανερχόμενη ζήτηση και οι υψηλές προσδοκίες για την εκπαίδευση προσθέτουν δυσβάσταχτα βάρη στον κρατικό προϋπολογισμό. Σε περισσότερο θεωρητικό επίπεδο, ο συγγραφέας, ανατρέχοντας στον Habermas, προσάπτει στην επικρατούσα αντίληψη περί απόδοσης / αποδοτικότητας έναν υποβόσκοντα *οικονομισμό* και μια διάθεση παραμερισμού της ηθικής διάστασης στην αντιμετώπιση των κοινωνικών ζητημάτων.