

Commentary / Think Piece

The Public University – A Battleground for Real Utopias

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ABSTRACT

The university is a battleground of competing real utopias, harboring alternative visions of its future, visions that are rooted in real tendencies. The university as a public good previously untouched by marketization has now succumbed to it with some pushing it to become an entrepreneurial university with its own self-generated budget; others want a university that is “world class” to compete in the world rankings. Given these competing visions, the modern university hangs in the balance. In this article we delineate four crises of the university – fiscal, governance, identity and legitimation – corresponding to four functions of the university – policy, professional, critical and public. To maintain the integrity of the university it is necessary to maintain all these functions without letting any one or two of them dominate the others. As an alternative vision, we need to build an internal community of critical discourse as well as external accountability to diverse publics in order to counteract the tendency toward excessive commercialization in the policy sphere and rationalization in the professional sphere.

Key words: Crisis, university, rationalization, commercialization, public, policy

Real utopias, says Erik Wright, take seriously the problem of the viability of alternative institutions that “embody our deepest aspirations for a world in which all people have access to the conditions to live flourishing lives.” Real utopias can be supply-driven, searching for alternative institutions that might promote a better world or they can be demand-driven, emphasizing the ways existing institutions limit human freedom and demand alternatives.

My treatment of the public university falls into the latter category, focusing on the dangers of regulation and commodification of the production of knowledge, and indicating the principles of alternatives. The paper ends with an assessment of an experiment in pedagogy, deliberately constructed against the powerful global tendencies I describe.

Competing Real Utopias

The university, we like to think, is one of the oldest institutions. There are universities, still flourishing that go back a millennium. The university is also one of the most conservative institutions, resisting or adapting to change from which ever direction it comes, which perhaps explains why it has lasted so long. Not surprisingly, being the center of intellectual life, universities have produced manifold defenses of what they do, many of them utopian in character. We have Cardinal Newman writing in the middle of the 19th century of the cloistered university, educating the public mind, disparaging useful knowledge at the very time when Humbolt's university was coming to define what was modern, embracing research as well as teaching. Moving into the next century, Clerk Kerr (2001) celebrated the multi-university of the post war US, incorporating into its midst a variety of missions. Under pressure from outside forces – both budgetary and regulatory – these missions are now vying for supremacy, each with its own real utopia.

The university, therefore, is a battleground of competing real utopias, harboring alternative visions of its future, visions that are rooted in real tendencies. On the one hand, after many years of making the university an exception – an untouchable public good largely funded by the state – economists have now deemed its marketization as long overdue. They seek to fashion in theory and in reality the entrepreneurial university that will be a profit center living on its own self-generated budget through the commodification of the production and transmission of knowledge. This real utopia has a real presence today, given its rational justification by neoclassical economics.

On the other hand, the idea of the “world class” university has gripped the imagination of nation states, girding their universities to compete in the world rankings, themselves based on the “Great American University.” Sociologists of the neo-institutionalist or world polity school, following John Meyer and his colleagues, have provided the rational justification for these developments that strings the cosmopolitan world on a giant hierarchy, while leaving most localities behind in a dark cul-de-sac (Meyer et al., 2007; Schofer and Meyer, 2005; Frank and Gabler, 2006).

Against these two visions I will pose two alternative real utopias: first, a community of critical discourse that transcends disciplinary boundaries and sustains the idea of a discursive community critical of the university but also of the society within which it is embedded, and second, a deliberative democracy that roots the university in civil society and engages directly in a conversation with its surrounding publics about the direction of society. Just as regulation and commodification have a relation of antagonistic interdependence, so do the real utopias of community of critical discourse and deliberative democracy. In this view of the university, one cannot separate one vision from the others, they are in continual battle. Had I been a neoclassical economist or a world polity sociologist I might have tried to develop alternative real utopias (that do indeed exist already), but I have chosen to think through the meaning of the university from the standpoint of a public sphere, both internal and external. In trying to understand its form and feasibility it becomes necessary to examine these hegemonic models, not as real utopias but as real processes that set the framework with which all alternatives must wrestle.

These clashing visions are responses to the four-fold crisis of the university. First, and most obviously, the university faces a *fiscal crisis* in the sense that it can no longer rely on state funding for its survival, and, as the economic model suggests, nor need it once we get accustomed to treating knowledge as a commodity. Second, the fiscal crisis stems from a *legitimacy crisis* – the university has lost its legitimacy as a public good working with public funding. As it becomes increasingly dependent on private funding and on student fees so the idea of the university as a public good

and paying for it from taxes loses credibility. To restore public confidence, the university has to recover its place in society by establishing an ongoing relation with publics. We need to redefine the meaning of the public university. The legitimacy crisis, therefore, is wrapped with an *identity crisis* in which the different members of the university lose sight of its meaning in the face of commodification and corporatization, which erode previously taken-for-granted assumptions. To combat the identity crisis we need to develop the university as a place of intense dialogue, a community of critical discourse. Finally, these three crises have plunged the university into a *governance crisis* driving a process of rationalization that threatens to bureaucratize and corporatize both teaching and research.

I try to develop a vision of the university that recognizes all four crises and their corresponding real utopias, a vision of the university that dispenses with old fashioned ideas of the ivory tower, and starts out from the assumption that the university can no longer – if it ever could – be thought of as apart from society. Moreover, the context of the university can no longer be confined to the nation but must include global forces that are affecting all regions of the planet. If the university is definitely inside society, the question now is in whose hands does its future lie? Which real utopia will it follow? And with what consequences?

The University and Its Four Knowledges

There is a veritable sociological tradition that identifies the functions of the university. In the appendix to this paper I show how three such models, although presented in the abstract, are nonetheless responses to particular historical periods with their distinctive problems. Robert Merton's (1942) normative structure of science reflects the inter-war period of rising totalitarianism, Talcott Parsons' (1973) cognitive complex reflects the post-war academic revolution, and Ernest Boyer (1990) reconsideration of scholarship reflects the state of teaching in the research universities of the 1980s. Here I establish a vision of the university that reflects the ascendancy of regulation and commodification not just in the US but all over the world.

I start from first principles. For me the university is a place where knowledge is produced and transmitted, a place of scholarship and teaching. This gives rise to two questions: (1) Knowledge for Whom? and (2) Knowledge for What? For whom are we producing knowledge – are we producing it for ourselves or for others? Here the distinction is simple: an academic or extra-academic audience. When it comes to “knowledge for what?”, I draw on a distinction that runs through the writings of Max Weber and the Frankfurt School, the division between instrumental and reflexive knowledge. The first is concerned with discovering the most efficient means to achieve a given, taken-for-granted end, and the second is concerned with promoting discussion about the very ends, goals, values we otherwise take for granted. The result is the following two by two table:

Table 1: Four Knowledges of the University

KNOWLEDGE FOR WHAT?	KNOWLEDGE FOR WHOM?	
	Academic Audience	Extra-Academic Audience
Instrumental Knowledge	Professional	Policy
Reflexive Knowledge	Critical	Public

I use the term “professional” to refer to the academic who pursues knowledge within and accountable to a community of scholars. I think of them as having an instrumental orientation to knowledge because they are, for the most part, as Thomas Kuhn wrote, puzzle solvers, working within paradigms, whose foundations – methodological, theoretical, philosophical, value – we take for granted. Or in Imre Lakatos’s framework we work within research programs, defined by a negative heuristic, that is a set of assumptions that we never relinquish. Of course, many a professional academic objects to being labeled as having an “instrumental” approach knowledge, they have a far more grandiose vision of themselves as pursuing knowledge for knowledge’s sake. Perhaps, in order to be devoted to scholarship one has to create illusions of grandeur, believe in the supreme importance of what one does, if only because, as Max

Weber warned aspiring scientists, of the apparently meaninglessness of their work. Scientists must recognize that their work will necessarily be surpassed and forgotten, “for it is our common fate and, more, our common goal” (Weber, 1946 [1917]: 138). At the same time, the scientist must be devoted to the pursuit of the apparently trivial. “And whoever lacks the capacity to put on blinders, so to speak, and to come up to the idea that the fate of his soul depends upon whether or not he makes the correct conjecture at this passage of this manuscript may as well stay away from science” (Weber, 1946 [1917]: 135). Science depends, one might say, on a passion for instrumental reason.

In the eyes of the “professional” it is often far more easy to see instrumental knowledge as defining the policy scientist who advises clients (corporations, governments, NGOs) concerning problems that they define. But one should recognize, as we will, there is considerable variation here in the degree of autonomy vouchsafed to the scientist, the degree to which they become the servants of power or on the other hand, bring their own agenda to the policy table. Still, I consider this instrumental knowledge in as much as the client’s problems ultimately prevail, and the policy scientist exists to define the most effective means to solve those problems (or to legitimate a solutions already arrived at), and the likely consequences of pursuing the particular means. This dimension is becoming ever more important as the university’s relations to private corporations expand and intensify.

Very different are the types of knowledge that come under the heading of “reflexivity.” The notion of “reflexivity” has many meanings, but here it refers to discussions about basic issues, assumptions, values shared by a particular community. On the one hand critical knowledge, first and foremost, is aimed at the assumptions of the academic enterprise, the foundations of the research programs, of disciplines, of the university itself. On the other hand, public knowledge involves engaging with publics beyond the university, in discussions and debates about the general direction, assumptions, goals of the wider society.

Teaching itself takes on a different form for each of these knowledges. Teaching professional knowledge lies in the acquisition of the basic elements of a particular field; teaching policy knowledge involves transmitting knowledge with a view to its application, in the purest form it becomes a form of vocational education. Teaching critical knowledge involves learning how to examine the assumptions and presumptions of different fields or disciplines, or, at its most general level, cultivating the capacity to read, write and think about foundations. Finally, teaching as public engagement requires taking, as point of departure, the lived experience of students and working it up into novel insights about the world around them through bringing it into dialogue with academic literatures. In other words, teaching is not boxed into one or other of these knowledges, but suffuses them all.

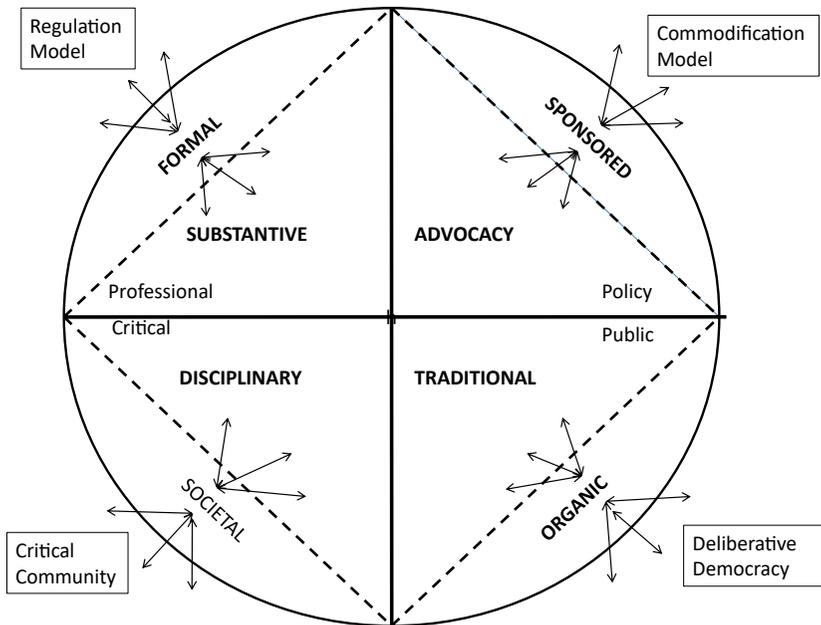
The assumption of this paper is that the four functions of the university are interdependent (as well as antagonistic), and all are necessary for a flourishing university in today's world. This is based on an empirical claim that political and economic pressures on the university make the instrumental moment ever stronger and at the expense of the reflexive moment – a development that defines modernity but from which the university has hitherto been largely exempt. To counter-balance these tendencies, we need to develop alternate ways of building and strengthening critical dialogue within the university as well as open dialogue with publics beyond the university.

University in Society

If the university can no longer be thought as outside or above society, but definitively inside society, it becomes all the more important to theorize its boundaries – however permeable, however contested – to understand its place in the wider society. To capture the fluidity of the university's insertion into society but also its integrity, I propose to think of the four knowledges as concrete sectors with an outer zone open to the wider society, and an inner zone connected to the other inner zones. The outer zone mediates between society and

the university's inner constitution – a two-way mediation through the university shapes and is shaped by its environment. The danger is that the outer zones fail to uphold their protective function and university succumbs to an invasion from external forces or is drawn off into the wider society, so that sectors lose their connection and accountability to the university. Figure 1 maps the zones that I discuss in the following sections.

Figure 1: University in Society



Fiscal Crisis and the Policy World

Let us begin with the policy world, which has become more important as university can no longer rely on state funding and has to rely on selling its knowledge to clients. The shift is symbolized, but no more than symbolized, by the passing of Bayh-Dole act of 1980, which allowed university's to cash in on patents, that emerge from government sponsored research. Powell and Owen-Smith (2002) and Rhoten and Powell (2011) show that the money to be derived from

patents is actually not that substantial in terms of overall university R&D budgets, and tends to be confined to a few inventions at a few major universities. It is but a part of a more general move in the direction of the privatization of research amply documented and described by Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) and Mirowski (2011) as part of a broader shift in the character of the capitalist economy.

Increasingly, scientists and engineers, especially in the biomedical field, are encouraged to create their own companies or joint ventures, for example, with large pharmaceuticals. The danger arises that the scientific research that they undertake as scholars is used to promote the very companies with which they are associated. As large corporations decide it is cheaper to outsource research, the university becomes a likely candidate as research there is heavily subsidized by the pre-existing infrastructure and cheap labor of graduate students. Large corporations are knocking at the door of university science labs and they are ever more likely to be invited in the more the university is strapped for funds. In a detailed and fascinating account of contract research organizations, Philip Mirowski (2011, chapter 5) has documented some of the disastrous consequences of the intrusion of pharmaceuticals into university research.

Christopher Newfield (2008) has convincingly argued that the social sciences and humanities are effectively subsidizing the infrastructure of the university that makes the physical and medical sciences so attractive to corporations. They do so because they bring in so much money from their teaching both in terms of continued state funding that is often on a per student basis as well as student fees. As fees increase so the subsidy also increases.

Of course, most universities simply do not have the resources or prestige to pursue the research projects of big science. They cannot attract funding from capital and so seek to compensate for the short fall in state funding through extracting more from the only client they have, namely students and at the same time “cutting back” on the faculty. They put ever greater pressure on faculty for speed up through increasing teaching loads, the employment of temporary instructors and deskilling the production process through distance learning. The polarization of higher education – the enrichment of the few and the

impoverishment of the many – follows as surely as night follows day.

All this contributes to the degradation of higher education at the same time that students are paying ever more money, taking out greater loans, and worst of all facing slimmer job prospects. The result is the inevitable vocationalization of higher education – students opting for and indeed demanding credentials that would help them find jobs in an ever-tighter job market, offering jobs that are ever-more precarious.

The fiscal crisis is pushing the university into the hands of its clients, whether this be business and corporate donors on the one side or students on the other. We are moving toward a model of *sponsored policy* in which academics have to follow the dictates of their clients, and away from a model of *advocacy* in which academics take the initiative. We have to make proposals of our own and seek out clients accordingly as, indeed, often happens with patents. We have to control distance learning ourselves rather than having it foisted upon us. Advocacy policy allows academics a certain autonomy to negotiate with potential clients, while keeping them accountable to their colleagues. It's not good enough to simply protect the autonomy of academic entrepreneurs, they have to be subject to oversight by the university community so they are not simply using university resources to feather their own nests.

Governance Crisis and the Professional World

As universities are driven more by commercial exploitation of their products, selling them to the highest bidder rather than making them publicly accessible, so inevitably, there are changes in governance structures. We see corporate models of governance that put cost cutting and efficiency ahead of effective collegial organization. Just as the old multi-divisional corporate form has broken down in the private sector of the economy so the same changes are being made in the university through centralization and out-sourcing. One area in which there has not been cost cutting lies in the expansion of administrative and managerial personnel and the salaries they command, which are designed to match corporate salaries. At the same time the number of tenured faculty has fallen, profoundly

changing the balance of power within public universities.

The recent struggle at the University of Virginia brought out into the open the forces now at work in many major universities. There the standing President, Teresa Sullivan, was ousted by the Board of Visitors because, so it has been assumed, she was not moving quickly enough in an entrepreneurial direction. She was then reinstated because of resounding protest by students, faculty and alumni, and bad press the ouster brought to this distinguished university. The public university still commands public support for its public mission.

A new managerialism may come from a shift toward the commodification of knowledge, an attempt to stimulate and control sponsored policy research, but it can be its own source. The case of the Research Assessment Exercise (now the Research Excellence Framework) in the UK is a case in point. The Thatcher government, convinced that academics had it too easy, sought to subject British universities to competitive pressures. Unable to directly marketize the production and transmission of knowledge, with the collaboration of universities, the government introduced a detailed auditing system that every 4 years involved the evaluation of the scholarly output of individual faculty within departments as a basis for the distribution of substantial funding. Departments would then game the system by importing prolific scholars, multiplying publications (that were more or less identical), devaluing books, and otherwise putting pressure on faculty to contribute to the standing of their department by expanding but also diluting their output. Not only was much time and energy wasted in trying to upgrade department profiles, but time horizons shrunk so that research became ever more superficial.

Ironically, Thatcherite attempts to simulate market competition came to look more like Soviet planning (Amann, 2003). Just as Soviet planners had to decide how to measure the output of factories, how to develop indices of plan fulfillment, so now universities have to develop elaborate measures of output, KPIs (key performance indicators), reducing research to publications, and to publications to refereed journals, and referred journals to impact factors. Just as Soviet planning produced absurd distortions, heating that could not be switched off, shoes that were supposed to fit everyone, tractors

that were too heavy because targets were in tons, of glass that was too thick because targets were in volume, so now the monitoring of higher education is replete with distortions that obstruct production (research) and dissemination (publication) and even transmission (teaching) of knowledge. The Soviet model has been exported to the European continent with the Bologna Process that homogenizes and dilutes higher education across countries, all in the name of the transferability of knowledge and the mobility of students, making the university a tool rather than a motor of the knowledge economy.

The regulation model we describe here is especially applicable, therefore, for states that hold on to public higher education, but seek to rationalize it rather than commodify it. What is happening today, however, is more sinister – rationalization as the vehicle for commodification. As fiscal austerity grips Europe, not only is free and open access to universities a luxury, but the auditing system is now deployed against those disciplines which are least “profitable” – state subsidies per student are not only cut, but are made to vary by discipline.

Just as the Soviet system of planning turned to shock therapy – all shock and no therapy – so, with notable exceptions, its universities became commercial operations, charging market rates for degrees in different disciplines, selling diplomas to the highest bidders, renting out its premises as real estate while buying academic labor at ever-lower prices under ever-worse conditions. Education and research are after-thoughts, sustained in a few pockets of protected higher education. Alexander Bikbov (2010) rightly asks whether the Russian University is the future of the world.

We see, therefore, how the two models work together: either regulation promotes commodification (UK, Russia) or commodification promotes regulation (US). In both cases we can distinguish between external forces of *formal rationality* that distort the process of *substantive rationality* that is designed to advance the research and teaching agenda in a community of scholars accountable to one another. We should be wary of seeing this as a one-way causality in which external forces are imposed on the university. To the contrary, academics have often brought formal rationalization

upon themselves, just as they have exploited market opportunities to cash in on their research.

Identity Crisis and the Critical Community

So far we have focused on the instrumentalization of the university, the rise of regulation and commodification of the production, dissemination and transmission of knowledge. Those devoted to such models might think there are no alternatives to their combination. The assumption of this paper is that there is and always has been another dimension of the university, what I call reflexive dimension concerned with discussion and debate about the basis of academic work, about society and the place of the university in that society. The stronger the instrumentalization, the more important it is to assert reflexive engagement: both the broader discourse with publics and the *critical discourse* that takes place within the university and from which the former emerges.

Critical knowledge lies at the heart of the production of knowledge. As I argued above knowledge grows within paradigms, frameworks or research programs that contain their own set of assumptions – methodological, theoretical, philosophical, value assumptions that are unquestioned. It is difficult to work seriously within a paradigm, contributing to its growth by tackling its anomalies and contradictions, while at the same time questioning its foundational doxic assumptions. It is the function of critical theorists to question and interrogate those assumptions, even to the point of aggravating the practitioners. From the point of view of the professionals, their critics are simply a nuisance, a drag on their productivity. Yet in the end they are pivotal in deepening paradigms but also switching to new paradigms. In sociology we can think of such figures as Robert Lynd, Pitrim Sorokin, Alvin Gouldner, C Wright Mills, Dorothy Smith, and Patricia Hill Collins as critical theorists, at least, in certain periods of their careers. Such critics not only engage in the interrogation of the assumptions of paradigms but of the discipline as a whole as we also find in the economic writings of Stiglitz, Krugman, and Amartya Sen today, just as the writings of von Hayek, von Mises and Friedman had been in their day.

Paradigms and disciplines may be essential for the development of knowledge but at the same time they balkanize thought into relatively arbitrary silos, barring the inter-disciplinary debate and discussion that might interrogate the nature of the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, etc. When suffering through an identity crisis, under assault from regulation and commercialization, it is especially important that the academic community as a whole rise above disciplinary divisions to consider the fate of the very university that, for so long, they took for granted. The university may be thought of intersecting circles of debate and discussion, but there should be ways to bring that discussion to the attention of the community as a whole through faculty associations, through senate meetings.

One way of raising the level of such discussion that would reverberate through the entire community might be through a system of participatory budgeting, following the models that have been developed in Latin America and elsewhere for municipal governance. University budgets are clouded in obscurity, hidden from public view, difficult to access. They are indeed complex instruments, but assigning a percentage of the budget for democratic deliberation, starting from the departmental level, aggregating to the broader colleges and then to the university level would generate serious debate about the meaning of the university to its participants. Of course, the university would not escape the pathologies associated with participatory budgeting – expenditure of time, inequality of influence, and so forth – but it would openly raise questions about the worthwhile projects to pursue and directly challenge decision making of regulatory and commercial models.²

Critical discourse, however, cannot be confined to the internal organization and mission of the university, it must also embrace the place of the university in the wider society, especially if it is to contest the regulatory and commercial models. Furthermore as it thinks of itself in society, it also engages in a critique of that society and its support for the formal rationalization of governance and commodification of research and teaching. In this vision the university is not a passive player submitting to the force of external forces but an active and self-conscious ingredient in the very

constitution of society. It is, to use Alvin Gouldner's (1979) term, a community defined by a culture of critical discourse.

Legitimacy Crisis and Public Engagement

Michel Foucault used to say that he was fond of visiting Berkeley because it contained within it – what was notably absent in the French University – its own public sphere. The other side of this positive picture is the insulation of the American public university from the public sphere. As regulation and commercial models take hold the idea of the university as isolated from society loses legitimacy in the wider society. There is no turning back to the world we have lost, the world of the autonomous university. To counter subjection to market forces, the public university has to redefine the meaning of public to include dialogue with and accountability to civil society beyond its borders.

Here too there is an inner and an out zone of public engagement. On the one side there is the traditional forms of engagement in which academics enter public debate through the media – whether through opinion pieces in newspapers, interviews on radio or television, writing popular books accessible to lay audiences, or developing their own blogs. The academic remains behind the walls of the university, sending out messages often to anonymous publics that are handicapped by their positions from the very possibility of responding.

Very different are the organic relations universities and their members can create with publics. These are unmediated relations of dialogue makes academic knowledge accessible but also accountable to publics. The land grant colleges were supposed to develop symbiotic relations with rural communities as part of their founding charter. This dialogic relation is at the heart of Freire's pedagogy. We can also include the best examples of service learning, different forms of participatory action research or community based research. The public university of today has to think systematically not only about open *access* to its knowledge and its teaching but *accountability* to different publics. But here lies the problem – in making itself accountable to various publics, it willy-nilly becomes involved in

policy projects to directly change the conditions of public life, which involves engaging with policy makers, and criticizing decisions fostered by colleagues in the policy world.

While universities already undertake diverse public engagements with the local world that surrounds them, the real utopia would involve orchestrating these separate engagements into a more holistic and coherent deliberative democracy. This is what Santos (2006) calls for in his article on the 21st. century university – we should not hark back to a past that is no longer recoverable but, in the face of mercantalization and the loss of the monopoly in the production of knowledge, we should envision a university democratically connected to the world around. In a more concrete fashion Michael Kennedy (2011) recounts the specific ways in which the University of Michigan pursues its public mission in Public Goods Councils, supporting local community organization (libraries, performing arts, museums, etc.), organizing public debate around affirmative action, but also promoting discussion about global issues, such as the reenactment of the Polish Roundtable negotiations of 1989, or bringing Turkish and Armenian intellectuals together to discuss the so-called “genocide” of 1915. In another paper (Kennedy, 2010) he discusses the way Ukrainian universities might nurture discussions of democratization, gender inequalities and energy security. There are, he argues many ways in which the university can actively partake and promote public debate.

I witnessed such an appreciation of the public embeddedness of the university in South Africa in the Spring of 2010 when the Minister of Education, Blade Nzimande, called a three-day “Stake Holder Summit” for Higher Education Transformation. All interested parties were invited – from Vice-Chancellors to administrators, faculty, students, service worker trade unions, NGOs and government officials. The task was to assess progress in South African higher education’s struggle with its apartheid past, its position in the global system, its need for trained manpower and to plan the future. There was intense debate in groups with different interests as well as collective assemblies. There can, of course, be endless deliberation but it becomes self-defeating if nothing concrete comes of it. Still, it takes

a country like South Africa with a strong legacy of political activity in civil society to be able to even think in these terms.

Maintaining the Integrity of the University

Figure 1, above, summarizes the argument so far, depicting the two zones that divide each of the four functions of the university. The outer zone effectively mediates the impact of external forces on the university but also becomes the vehicle through which internal pressures seek to control the environment. The integrity of the university is assured by the continuing interdependence among the inner zones.

Thus substantive rationality, advocacy policy, traditional public and disciplinary critiques are locked in a mutual interdependence even as they are also antagonistic to each other. Just as I'm proposing to limit the scope of the regulation and commodification models, so equally I'm not suggesting that a community of critical discourse or deliberative democracy with external publics exist to the exclusion of the others. The university is, indeed, an arena of competing models in which none disappear. The real utopia is simply to strengthen the reflexive dimension and in that way stimulate professional and policy moments from below rather than above.

The different balance between inner and outer zones, and, indeed, among the functions of the university, varies not just with the place of the university in the national context, but also with their position in a global field of higher education. There is no way of talking about the future of the university without recognizing its global context.

University in The Global Context

Our two models – regulation and commodification – operate in tandem at the global as well as the national level. Far from global forces circumventing, suppressing the national context, quite the opposite occurs – the national becomes the engine of globalization, which in turn invigorates the national. However, not all nations are equal and the overweening domination – symbolic and material – of the US pervades all spheres of the production and dissemination of knowledge.

Marginson and Ordorika (2011) have compiled impressive evidence of US domination. In the sheer amount of funding devoted to higher education the US spends 7 times as much as Japan, the next highest spender on their list (\$359.9 billion as opposed to \$51.1 billion). Marginson and Ordorika (2011: Table3.3) say that data for China is not available. In terms of research output the gap between the US and the rest of the world is staggering. In 2001 scientists and social scientists published 200,870 papers in “major journals,” followed by Japan with 57,420, UK with 47,660, Germany 43, 623, France 31,317 and China 20, 978. When it comes to the number of “highly cited” researchers, the US has 3,835, more than 8 times the second ranking country, UK. The US produced less than a third of world’s scientific articles in 2001, but counted for 44% of the citations (Marginson and Ordorika, 2011: 91), but this is not just a matter of prestige but the tendency of US scholars to cite each other!

This material domination translates into symbolic domination through the expansion of world rankings of the “best” universities in the world – the most important being the Shanghai Jiao Tong (SJT) ranking, the Time Higher Education (THE) ranking and the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranking. Each is compiled on the basis of a different set of (subjective and objective) factors, giving rise to somewhat different rankings. SJT was first compiled to encourage Chinese universities to emulate the best American universities and thus, not surprisingly, US universities dominate – 9 out of the top 10, 17 out of the top 20, 40 out of the top 50, 54 out of the top 100 and 84 out of the top 200. The SJT index measures of the quality of education (alumni winning medals, Nobel Prize, etc.), quality of faculty (medals and Nobel Prizes and number of highly cited researchers), and research output (as measured by number of articles in top journals). It is highly geared to the natural sciences. Although intended as an assessment of Chinese universities against the top research universities in the US, the rankings were then used by other countries and universities to mark their own distinction. They became a new form of global auditing, an extension of national to global regulation.

Nation states provide material incentives for their universities to enter and then climb the rankings, and universities in turn

create incentives for faculty to publish in “world class journals”. The ranking systems vary, using different factors and positioning universities differently, but the overall effect is the same. Universities accepted the rules as legitimate and sought to climb the ladder by gaming the system. It isn't just a matter of prestige or distinction: the accumulation of symbolic capital translates into economic capital as corporations paid attention to rankings when deciding to invest their funds in research, funds that becoming ever more important. Thus, Mirowski (2011) argues that large corporations have not just outsourced their research to US universities, but increasingly they have invested in universities in other countries, especially in China, India, and Brazil, where research capacities have greatly advanced, where restrictions are less, and where costs are lower. They have had to rely on world rankings to identify potential targets for investment. In some countries, such as Turkey and South Korea, national capital buys up existing universities or creates its own from nothing with the aim of producing centers of excellence. They too rely on world rankings to measure their success.

Rankings not only govern capital investment but the mobility of students, themselves a source of substantial revenue, who think globally when choosing their universities. According to Marginson and Ordorika (2011) the cross border flow of students increased by 41% between 2000 and 2004. In 2004, 2.7 million students enrolled outside their country of citizenship, and of these 22% went to the US, 11% to UK, 10% to Germany, 9% to France and 6% to Australia. English as medium of instruction was an enormous asset to universities in attracting students, so much so that French and German universities offer courses in English to attract overseas students. At the doctoral level, the domination of the US is even more extreme (102,084 PhD students enrolled in US universities in 2004/5 as compared to 23,871 in the UK). Interestingly, stay rates for doctoral students vary by country with China at 96% and India 86%, representing a significant brain drain as well as source of funding.

Students, themselves, stood to gain from receiving degrees from prestigious (highly ranked) universities. Thus, for example, competition to get into the very best Chinese universities is so

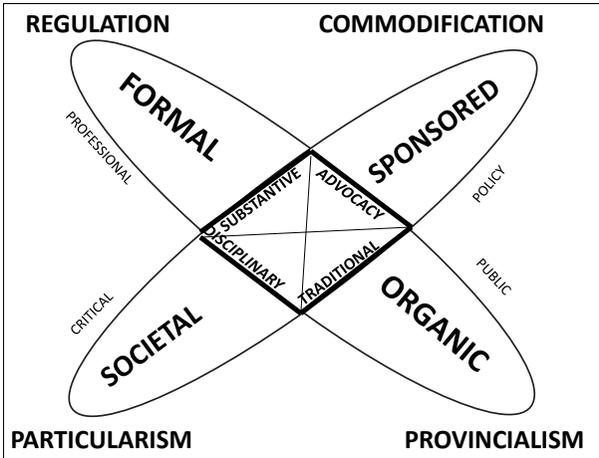
intense that if parents can afford to, they send their children abroad. And the flows are not only from semi-periphery to core, they are also from periphery to semi-periphery. For example, African elites send their children, again at great expense, to the prestigious universities of South Africa for their education. Not only students, but also universities are now mobile. Capitalizing on their symbolic capital, US universities have created their own campuses abroad, often sponsored and funded by host countries, such as the Emirates, attracting students from all over the world to learn from the most prestigious faculty, themselves paid inflated salaries. All this global market in higher education – selling degrees to students or knowledge to corporations, the confluence of regulation and commodification – has its downside.

By making the richest US universities the model of excellence – Harvard has an endowment of over \$30 billion which is greater than the GDP of many African and Latin American countries – poorer countries pour their scarce resources toward an unattainable and inappropriate goal, enriching one or two universities while impoverishing the rest. In some cases, following recommendations of the World Bank, it becomes a justification for withdrawing funds from national universities so that the training of students, especially postgraduates, takes place abroad. The depletion of resources going to higher education has led to the exodus of the best faculty into think tanks that undertake relatively well-remunerated policy research for national and international bodies. The degradation of universities deepens.

Where higher education is still a going concern, there is a growing divide between top universities, tied to or aspiring to global networks, and poorly resourced local universities mired in service to the locality – cosmopolitanism through regulation at one pole, localism as provincialism at the other. In the Middle East, for example, we can find elite universities, such as the American Universities of Beirut and Cairo, following “international” standards, teaching the students of the wealthy in English, and ever more differentiated from the massified national universities suffering under appalling conditions, teaching in Arabic (Hanafi, 2010). Victor Azarya (2010) described

a parallel situation in Israel where the top universities – Hebrew University, University of Tel-Aviv, University of Haifa – consider themselves an appendage of the US system of higher education, while the non-elite and technical universities, offering much poorer conditions for faculty and students alike, are responsive to the needs of the locality.

For the humanities and social sciences the regulation model has further implications. Since research output is measured in terms of articles published in the major international journals, scholars are given incentives to write in English for journals that work with frameworks appropriate to northern societies. The result is that ambitious scholars are drawn away from the problems and issues of their own society to address those of the metropolitan world, often simply the United States. This is problematic enough for countries where English is the medium of instruction and research, such as South Africa, but it's much worse for countries where English is, at best, a second language. It stratifies the national system of education according to arbitrary criteria imposed from outside, and very quickly the "leading" universities develop a vested interest in world rankings as it assures them priority in national funding, but also in attracting foreign funding. Not only within countries but within regions too, the ranking system reflects the domination of particular countries, South Africa within Africa, Brazil within Latin America, UK within Europe.

Figure 2: Rising Global Inequality in Higher Education

In very simplified terms Figure 2 illustrates the creation of a global field of higher education strung out between poles, intensifying a stratification that was always present. On the one hand, market ascendancy has turned the university into an engine of capital accumulation, leaving no space for critique which retreats into impotent particularism, flailing against commodification. On the other hand, regulation models have gone global, dividing the world into Castells' flows of power through cosmopolitan linkages and those disconnected provincial worlds of public engagement. Sari Hanafi (2011) has famously posed the dilemma as publish globally and perish locally or publish locally and perish globally. Driven by pressures in the wider society, often exacerbated by university actors themselves, the outer zones of the university have become the transmitters of external forces. Given the world in which we live is there a way to begin to rebuild the synergy among the inner zones, so that the university recaptures its lost autonomy?

University and the Turn to Reflexivity

Given the instrumentalizing forces reigning down on the university, it seems necessary to work toward a movement that links critical and public knowledges at a global as well as at national and local levels,

countering the tendencies to particularism and provincialism as a retreat against the universalistic claims of neoclassical economics and neo-institutional sociology. I propose to think of the International Sociological Association (ISA) in these terms.

Pierre Bourdieu called for the creation of an international of intellectuals, in his case a renowned group committed to questions of social justice. In representing their own corporate interests they also represent the universal interest. Although he would be skeptical of a professional organization such as the ISA as representing a narrow corporatism, a corporatism of the particular, nonetheless the last 60 years of its existence has seen it become more inclusive in virtually all salient social dimensions, building bridges among sociologists across the world. It began as a child of UNESCO in 1949, dominated by sociologists from the US and Europe, then included representatives from the Soviet Bloc, but over time has striven to incorporate sociologists from the Global South, helping to cultivate their National Associations as well as their participation in the ever-expanding research committees. By gender, by race as well as by geography the ISA has become more diverse.

This is not to deny there are abiding inequalities within the organization, inequalities to do with language and resources (material and symbolic) that reflect the wider inequalities discussed above, still they are inequalities we seek to negotiate in our midst. The ISA has 5,000 members: 65% come from World Bank's category A (wealthiest) countries, 21% from category B countries and 14% from Category C (poorest). The ISA organizes a major world conference every two years, with an attendance from three to five thousand; it sponsors two professional peer-reviewed journals, published in English; and organizes a PhD laboratory for international students every year. All these projects, however, tend to reach but a minority of sociologists in the world, many of whom cannot afford to attend world conferences, or do not have the resources to publish in professional journals or compete for places in the PhD laboratory.

In order to extend the reach of the association we inaugurated "Digital Worlds" – resources available for free to anyone who has access to the internet. This includes "Journeys through Sociology"

based on interviews with members of the Executive Committee, “Socio-tube” video material from conferences and the like, and a blog on “Universities in Crisis,” populated with articles from sociologists around the globe. We have also created an electronic magazine that reports on the activities of the ISA, offers a sociological lens on public issues in different places, and spotlights the character of national sociologies. The magazine appears in 13 languages, translated by teams of sociologists in different countries. The idea is for these teams to provide the hub for launching national debates, conferences, discussions, seminars about the issues raised globally in the pages of *Global Dialogue*. All of these projects are intended to contribute to a global community of sociologists, reflecting on their relations to the forces of globalization.

Here, however, I would like to draw attention to another project under the umbrella of digital worlds – global courses. Laleh Behbehanian and I began with a course on global sociology in the Spring of 2011 that brought Berkeley undergraduates into a conversation with sociologists around the world about the very possibility and meaning of global sociology. The conversations, many of them conducted on skype or through video-conferencing, were posted on the ISA website. This was a very special course in which students had direct access to some of the best minds in sociology, watching them struggle with their questions. It gave students a sense of the complexity of globalization as seen from different places in the world. They, however, were not satisfied. Students criticized the project in three major respects. First, the issues taken up tended to remove sociology from the distinctive context of its production, largely responsive to academic issues around globalization, issues born in the US or Western Europe. Second, almost all of the sociologists, whether they lived in the Global South or not, were trained in the North or had spent formative years in the North, and, of course, they had to be relatively fluent in English to be part of the course. Finally, there was no recorded dialogue outside the seminars in Berkeley. The videos were posted, watched by many people in different places, but there was no further coordinated participation.

We responded to the criticism in the following year with a new global course, this time on public sociology. We chose sociologists who we knew to be interesting practitioners of public sociology: Manuel Castells theorist of the information society, a traditional public sociologist with commitments to organic connections to social movements; Michel Wieviorka working in a similar tradition, a leading French public sociologist dealing with questions of violence, discrimination, and racism, often in close collaboration with social movements; Nandini Sundar, Sari Hanafi and Cesar Rodriguez Garavito all working with dispossessed peoples living in terrorized zones – in India, in Lebanon, and in Colombia; Walden Bello, Filipino sociologist turned politician, known for his activism against and critique of multi-lateral agencies; Pun Ngai critically engaged with Apple, exposing the conditions of Chinese workers at its biggest supplier, Foxconn; Marta Soler and Ramon Fletcher describing their critical communicative methodology to defend the interests of the Romani in Spain and beyond; Karl van Holdt talking about the problems of transforming the post-apartheid state; and Frances Fox Piven talking about the way sociologists can advance the power of insurgency. The theme of the course required sociologists to be embedded in their own societies, a necessary condition for the development of any global sociology as well as public sociology.

We first read and discussed their work before engaging with them over skype – the latter conversation being recorded and posted on the ISA website. This was the first step. Unaccustomed to this sort of course, both its content, dealing with issues in countries they knew little about, and its form, engaging directly with practicing sociologists, students were both intrigued and overwhelmed! Still this did give them a different sense of what sociology could be about.

The second step involved the creation of seminars across the world – Kyiv, Barcelona, Sao Paulo, Johannesburg, Tehran, and Oslo – that would watch and discuss the videos and then post a summary of their discussion on facebook. This in turn would generate further discussion about the nature of public sociology in different places, using different methodologies – a discussion in which anyone could

participate so long as they viewed the videos. The entire discussion was then assembled on a blog. The experiment was perhaps too hastily constructed and the participation of the seminars varied in intensity, but the project goals were clearly viable, namely to build a community of sociologists, in global conversation about local issues.

=As students pointed out in their evaluations, this project also had its limitations! They quickly grasped the limitations of the organization of the class. First, it was my contacts with sociologists around the world and perhaps even the prestige of Berkeley that made it possible, so replication might be difficult. Second, as in the previous course, the sociologists we tapped were all part of some global network, trained in the West, even though most importantly they were also embedded in their localities. Third, the initiative emanated from Berkeley with the parallel classes following a pre-established structure. They didn't participate in shaping the course. Fourth, the course itself was about public sociology, but there were no publics involved. It was hermetically sealed from the outside world, trapped perhaps within its own discourse of public sociology.

This calls for a second phase of the project, namely to encourage each of the seminars to build their own videos of public sociologists that they engage with. A number of these seminars are at the center of a network of national public sociologists, that they could bring into a global conversation. The advantage of having the course posted on the ISA website is that not only will it never disappear, but demands that we build on its foundations, a ladder that becomes redundant once we reach the roof. More generally, this enterprise allows us to bring centers of public sociology into contact with one another, somehow bridging the divide between global and local.

This project turns upside down the vision of the university depicted in the models of regulation and commodification. It counteracts the instrumental dimension with renewed emphasis on reflexivity, on forging a community of critical thinkers, critical of these models but critical also of the world that produces those models. Not just a community of critical thinkers, but a community of engaged scholars who build close ties between the university and its publics. Bound to be subordinate to those overweening models,

this real utopia demonstrates that there is still space to create alternatives, and those alternatives can spread.

Social media today are the terrain of struggle. On the one hand, they have become the basis of the degradation of education through distance learning, substituting packaged lectures for the interactive relation between teacher and taught, and among those taught as well as among the teachers. On the other hand, others have argued that social media can become a new emancipatory tool of higher education. The Open Education Resource movement places a great deal of hope on making the best materials open access, such as Coursera which makes courses from Stanford, Princeton, University of Michigan and the University of Pennsylvania accessible to all for free. The idea is a noble one – to reach those who would otherwise never have access to such courses. In the final analysis, however, such ventures would seem to reinforce rather than undermine the dominant models, building up the symbolic capital of such major universities so that they can better convert it into economic capital. The project we are proposing brings students and teachers together in new ways, brings researchers together in new collectivities, and allows centers of public sociology to learn from each other's experience. The purpose is not to make the US global – an imperial project – but constitute the global out of dialogue among national projects, projects that link academics to publics.

Concluding Thoughts on Real Utopias

In his inaugural address to the Working Men's International Association (otherwise known as the First International) in 1864, Marx lauded the cooperative movement for demonstrating that the rule of capital and the existence of a capitalist class, far from being preordained, are destined to disappear before "associated labor." But, he added, if the cooperatives are kept "within the narrow circle of the casual efforts of private workmen" then they will pose no threat to capitalism which will thrive all the more by demonstrating its flexibility. The danger is that real utopias become, like cooperatives, not a challenge to but fodder for capitalism.

This is especially relevant for the models that we have considered here. The regulation and commodification models not only buttress academic capitalism but, so I have tried to argue, sacrifice the growth of knowledge for short term instrumental gains, and at a time when the planet and its communities desperately seek solutions to their problems. Institutional innovations that potentially defend the integrity of knowledge production are easily absorbed by these models. Can the sort of reflexive knowledge production I have described secure a stable place within the university, as community of critical discourse and deliberative democracy, and if so might it only feed further instrumentalization. In any event, we cannot rely on isolated instances of reflexivity, experiments here and there. There has to be a concerted movement if instrumentalization is to be arrested let alone reversed.

The goal, however, is not to overthrow professional and policy knowledges but to have them challenged and contained from the side of critical discourse and public engagement. Just as the university is endangered by the supremacy of the regulation model or the commodification model, so it would also be threatened by the dictatorship of deliberative democracy and critical discourse, destroying the very heart of the university – the professional production of knowledge. Indeed, one might go further to argue that the point of a real utopia is not its self-realization but the limitation of other utopias. The real utopias project sits firmly within the critical and public dimensions which it conjoins, but it does not seek to reduce all knowledge to itself. That would be a real dystopia rather than a real utopia.

Appendix: Three Ideological Views of The University

Sociology has supplied its own visions of the university. I want to consider three here. First, they all presented themselves as universal, but digging deeper they stand revealed as responses to some external threat. The visions produced are ideological in the sense that they ignore the very context from which they spring, and second they present the

university as a coherent community without internal contradictions, thereby marginalizing alternative visions of the university.

Merton's Ethos of Science

Perhaps the most interesting from the standpoint of this paper is Robert Merton's (1938, 1942) "ethos of science," conceived when there was much debate about how science should be conducted, on the one side, and the threats posed to science by "totalitarianism" (both the Soviet and Nazi variety). It was in this context that Merton proposed the four "institutional imperatives" as comprising the ethos of science: universalism, communism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism. What is curious (serendipitous!) is the correspondence between Merton's four norms and my own four types of knowledge, that now become the four dimensions of professional knowledge.

Figure 3: The Four Norms of Science

Professional (Universalism)	Policy (Disinterestedness)	POLICY
Critical (Organized Skepticism)	Public (Communism)	
CRITICAL		PUBLIC

- Universalism refers to subjection of truth claims to "preestablished impersonal criteria" and that scientific careers be open to all talents. This is endangered by ethnocentrism invoking particularistic criteria for science and for recruitment to science. Universalism is at the core of professionalism, the professional moment of professional knowledge.
- Communism refers to the common ownership of scientific knowledge. Scientists receive recognition or esteem for their contributions, but not ownership rights. It is part of a shared cultural heritage and implies open communication. Merton is clear that "communism" is the antithesis of "private property," which again he saw as threat. Communism represents the public dimension of professional knowledge.

- Disinterestedness refers to the absence of interests other than the pursuit of knowledge, assured through competition and “rigorous policing.” It is important that scientists, not exploit their expertise to befuddle clients or audiences. Disinterestedness is the value upon which rests the possibility of policy science.
- Organized skepticism which can be threatening when science advances into new areas or when there are attempts to control science from outside. Organized skepticism is none other than the critical perspective that is built into the very progress of professional knowledge.

As Stephen Turner (2007) has been at pains to point out Merton’s “ethos of science” was constructed in a very specific political, intellectual and sociological context at the beginning of the World War II. It is clear from the earlier essay how concerned Merton is with the way totalitarianism, more Naziism than Stalinism, but democracy itself threatened the ethos of science through its support for private property, bureaucracy, and all manner of substantive inequalities. His account from 70 years-ago has, therefore, a very contemporary ring as we have seen the rise of commodification and regulation models. Still, there’s no analysis of the internal contradictions among the norms of science and the way these may be affected by external pressures.

Talcott Parsons and the Functions of the University

Talcott Parsons offers a very different ideal type. With Gerald Platt he authored the book, *The American University* (1973) which extended his AGIL four function scheme to the university. Any social system, he argued, has to fulfill adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latency. That is, it has to adapt to the environment, achieve its goals, secure its integration, and protect its core defining values. So the American research university has research and graduate teaching as its core function (L), contributes to the understanding of public issues (I), trains professional practitioners (G), and educates students as citizens (A). Again there are interesting parallels with the scheme I have developed: research and graduate training corresponds

to Professional, and the contribution to defining public issues corresponds to the Public. The training of professional practitioners corresponds to the Policy dimension, but interestingly leaves out the ways in which university research is directly tied to government agencies and corporate enterprises. Parsons includes the education of undergraduates as a separate component (adaptation) whereas my model would include teaching as an aspect of every type of knowledge. What is missing is the critical role function of the university both internally and externally, which he would perhaps insert into the research function.

Figure 4: Parsons and Platt's University as a Cognitive Complex

	<i>Knowledge "for its own sake"</i>	<i>Knowledge for "problem solving"</i>
<i>Institutionalization of the cognitive complex</i>	L. The core of cognitive primacy (research and graduate training by and of "specialists")	I. Contribution to societal definition of the situation (by "intellectuals" as "generalists")
<i>Utilization of cognitive resources</i>	A. General education of "citizenry" (especially undergraduates as "generalists")	G. Training of professional practitioners (as "specialists")

The link between abstract function and its concrete expression is relatively arbitrary, so that we think of this four function scheme of the university as reflecting the particular context in which it was written – the student rebellions of the 1960s. Parsons and Platt identify the source of the problem as lying in the rapid expansion of educational system and the difficulty of students adapting to these circumstances. There is no sense of the fundamental tension between the university and its environment, even to the extent of Merton's scheme. But like Merton, Parsons and Platt regard the university as internally integrated. They do not see the deep tensions between the functions of the university, nor the way outside forces may exacerbate those contradictions. Thus, it is not surprising that they do not

emphasize the profoundly critical role that the university plays in society.

Ernest Boyer and the Scholarship of Teaching

Our third model comes from different quarters, from Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990) was much discussed and debated during the 1990s. Centering the importance of teaching undergraduates, it was continuous with Parsons and Platt, but it sought to reintegrate teaching and engagement within the framework of the research university, countering the supremacy of research. Accordingly, Boyer expanded the meaning of “scholarship” from discovery and application, to teaching and integration (working across disciplines).

Figure 5: Boyer’s 4 Types of Scholarship

DISCOVERY	APPLICATION
INTEGRATION	TEACHING

Again, curiously, the four types of scholarship do broadly correspond to professional, policy, public, and critical knowledges, but with the following qualifications. First, professional knowledge includes much more than “discovery” and implies the broader academic context within which research takes place. Second, in contrast to the broad notion of “application,” policy knowledge implies a specific relation of scholar to a client or patron, very different from public knowledge that involves a dialogical relation between scholar and public. Third, “integrative” scholarship, involving the bringing together of different scholarships (disciplines), is only one way that critical knowledge challenges narrow professional knowledge. Finally, in my scheme teaching is not a separate form of scholarship but lies in the public domain of all four knowledges: professional, policy, public, and critical knowledges all have their distinctive forms of teaching.

Boyer aims to integrate teaching with public service and the development of service learning on the one side and with research on the other side. There have been notable advances in this direction. Still, he downplays the inherent tension among these forms of scholarship, especially when due recognition is given to the pressures of regulation and commodification, which set up internal patterns of domination and conflict.

Each of these ideal types reflects a particular definition of the “problem,” which applies no less to the model I have presented that gives pride and place to the destructive influence of regulation and commodification, which creates its own contradictory dynamics within the university, and calls for alternative real utopias grounded in the reflexive dimension.

Endnotes

- ¹ This paper was originally given at the meeting of the American Sociological Association in Denver (August 17-20, 2012) that was devoted to the theme of “Real Utopias”. It was subsequently revised thanks to comments from Erik Wright and Michael Kennedy.
- ² Departments at the University of Rosario (Argentina) have experimented with this idea.

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