This book examines changing ways that academic work is governed – from outside and inside universities – in the shifting social, cultural and political contexts of new times. Chapters trace developments in institutions, national sectors, and internationally – all applying a global scope to identify significant shifts in the broader conditions of university operation. Attention is given to governance processes across all key domains of academic work: teaching, research, leadership, management and institutional organisation. Key trends are analysed, including risk management, audit culture, league tables, techniques of accountability, and more. These investigations bring forth re-conceptions of university ‘governance’ as involving increasingly distributed and networked arrays of mechanisms, affecting academic work practices, relations, values, emotional labours and identities. Ambiguities, tensions and complexities of academic work are explored; and questions are raised as to whether prevailing managerial modes of governance can address these features of university engagement with globalising contexts.

Contributing authors carry significant international reputations and bring diverse theoretical and research bases to bear. The book will appeal to scholars and postgraduates in fields of higher education, public administration, policy sociology and globalisation studies. It will be of interest to those in senior leadership roles within universities as they work through future directions for their Institutions.
Re-Positioning University Governance and Academic Work
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RETHINKING THEORY AND PRACTICE
Volume 41

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Re-Positioning University Governance and Academic Work

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1. REPOSITIONING UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE AND ACADEMIC WORK: AN OVERVIEW

This book examines changing modes in the governance of universities as they respond to shifting policy contexts and working conditions in ‘new times’. In looking at local and national instances, the chapters apply a global scope as they identify significant changes in broader contexts and conditions of university operation. In the process, they address analytical and ethical questions about the significance of governance forms and developments for university work. The particular focus of investigation is governance of, and within, universities, with attention to a range of work domains: teaching, research, leadership, management and institutional organisation. In these investigations, contributors bring forth re-conceptions of university ‘governance’ as comprising an increasingly distributed and networked array of complex mechanisms – affecting academic work practices, relations, values and identities – in and across universities as they variously re-position and re-invent themselves in globalising contexts.

Universities are among the oldest institutional fields in historically ‘western’ regions, established well in advance of nation-states. Over such a long history, the institutional forms of universities have of course evolved and shifted across time and place. While universities have always interacted with, and in various ways depended on, religious, political, economic and other powerful fields in social space, by the 20th Century their institutional formations had acquired a significant degree of relative autonomy to prioritise cultural-intellectual values relative to political-economic concerns. In historical hindsight, we see it as fair to say that universities became significantly self-governing for most of the 20th Century – both as individual institutions and as aggregated ‘national sectors’.

However, the past 30 years have seen the self-governance and relative autonomy of universities substantially eroded under pressures of ‘marketisation’ rationales (Bourdieu, 2003), steered by external governments in conjunction with national policies, in turn responding to globalising forces, as well as to ideologies of ‘globalisation’ (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The ‘enterprise university’ as an institutional form (Marginson & Considine, 2000), emergent over the past three decades and now well-established, entails significantly altered governance relations – often noted in the literature as a shift from ‘collegial’ to ‘managerial’ modes of regulation – both within institutions, and between institutions and external political-economic agencies (Castells & Ince, 2001). Inside the university, a growing array and pace of new practices bring with them changes in the norms for ‘business as usual’: a dramatic
re-normalisation of work and, with that, governance relations. The advent of national and international league tables for ranking research and teaching performance fuel debates about how university institutions and sectors are to be re-positioned – with what roles and functions – to serve contemporary social needs and aspirations. League tables and other ‘audit culture’ technologies are just one among many trends, chronicled in this book, that constitute a global policy shift of major proportions, although playing out differently in distinct national contexts, and differently responded to by institutions of diverse category and status within any given national university sector (Forrest & Altbach, 2006; Hartman, 2008).

From within US and UK nations, a growing critical literature has examined the effects of recent changes in context on the ‘idea’ and ‘core values’ of university institutions and societal sectors (e.g. Readings, 1997; Coady, 2000; Giroux & Myrsiades, 2001; Walker & Nixon, 2004). What has been less analysed, in relation to broader shifts in policy direction, are the implications for changing modes of governance. We suggest that governance of universities needs to be studied at macro, meso and micro levels: that is, (1) governance over universities, through forces exerted from political, corporate and other fields and agencies of both national and global influence (the macro level); (2) governance within the institutional organisation of universities, through new forms of leadership and management (the meso level); and (3) governance in/across the varied domains of university work, through ‘governmentalities’ that infuse and re-regulate practices, relations and identity formations (the micro level).

National and regional governments, under a sense of declining capacity to control globalising political, economic, cultural and technological forces, respond with policies seeking to legitimise government as appearing able to ‘manage’ these forces to the benefit of populations. This typically involves devolution, or de-centring, of responsibilities to institutional fields that are nonetheless answerable to regulation from ‘above’ through a growing array of ‘accountability’ technologies (Taylor et al., 1997; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Brennan, this volume). Universities are key sites of such governmental moves to secure legitimacy through policy. In response to these external enactments of pressure upon universities, a parallel modality of governing – managerialism – emerges and evolves internal to universities. Intellectual work is now governed in different ways, both through restructuring of formal agencies and hierarchies of institutional governance, and through a range of new ‘textual’ steering technologies and practices such as: external government funding policies with attached accountability criteria; intellectual property agreements; contracts and franchises, quality audits, and much more. This convergence of external and internal hyper-steering of university operations reduces the self-governing power both of academics within universities and of university institutions as a whole. Ironically, the weakening of university autonomy in relation to external governments induces more top-down and heavy-handed means of governance regulation within universities in order to oversee compliance with external government targets and accountability criteria (Zipin, 2006 and in this volume), furthered by a proliferation of new techniques and practices. Within universities, this amounts to a shift in the gravitational locus of governing: from
‘government’ to ‘governance’ – i.e. from authority that is exercised from locatable venues of official decision, to a diffusion of micro-managerial mechanisms that tacitly encode and instil norms of work performance, in the process constituting self-regulatory dispositions and identities among university actors (Rose, 1999; Ball, 2000, 2003; Blackmore, 2003 and in this volume).

Drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, and on the data of empirical research studies as well as lived experience, authors in this book explore how new modes of governance interpenetrate the practices and relations of university work in core domains of teaching, research, leadership and management; and how these governance technologies cultivate new dispositions, or ‘governamentalities’ (Foucault, 1991; Peters et al., 2009), Zipin & Brennan, 2003, 2004; Blackmore & Sachs, 2007). For example, ‘entrepreneurial’ dispositions are cultured as ‘the market’ becomes a central organising principle (Robertson (ed), 2003); and ‘self-responsible’ mentalities (Rose, 1999) are constituted as the ‘managing’ of quality, outcomes and ‘balanced budget’ are devolved and dispersed down to academics.

Why Governance?

Broad ideas of ‘the university’, specific justifying logics of university sectors, and the functional roles of universities within societies have all been changing significantly over the past three decades. Many of these changes have been explored in already published books that put particular focus on a given dimension of higher education (e.g. research, the knowledge economy, managerialism, gender, the influence of information technologies, quality assurance, and so on). By contrast, the chapters in this book, taken together, offer a multi-dimensional look at this complex array of phenomena, integrated through a focus on their implications for university governance. In our understanding, ‘university governance’ comprises a multi-dimensional array of phenomena to do with relations of power and the control of conduct, yet also with enabling the agency of people who have stakes in universities – from within and outside of university work – to imagine new possibilities for university futures (Rizvi, 2006). We see these aspects of power and agency to be at the heart of the changing university in its shifting contexts, and fundamentally to do with governance.

Governance increasingly seeps into a range of academic work dimensions – research, teaching, internationalisation, consultancy, intellectual property, and more – in new and expanding ways that call for complex, multi-layered analysis. In order to comprehend the complexity of inter-related governance phenomena without overly generalising, this book focuses on specific local/global articulations of trends that policy analysis often takes as more-or-less homogeneous, but that play out in distinctive ways across the Australian, Canadian, Singaporean, UK and USA contexts addressed in chapters of the book. These trends include tight coupling between national economies and university teaching and research; internationalisation of teaching and research; university take-up of corporate attributes in financing their operations; managerial restructuring across whole university sectors; vanguard use of technology in management; stress on performative accountability
through multiple instruments; and more. Universities have come to the forefront in policy logics and network-building exertions of international policy agencies including the WTO, OECD, UNESCO and IMF, as part of infrastructure-building for ‘innovative economies’ that can compete in ‘global markets’, and also as a focus for ‘development’ and international aid. Notions of ‘policy borrowing’ in this context are insufficient to explain the complex global flows of emerging, converging and diverging policy and practice (Levin 1998). In a globalising context of exchange and interdependence, national university sectors can be seen as both donors and borrowers: they both receive and contribute to new lines of policy, strategy, technique and practice, in ways that vary depending on socio-geographic location and other factors. In providing analyses of cases in different nations, this book offers a comparative lens for understanding a complex field of globally significant yet locally diverse developments in university governance.

Given the national importance of university export income from international education (particularly in the English-speaking nations), the constant struggles to compete with other national sectors and economic groupings, and agitated debates about national public expenditure on education, universities are and will continue to be key national policy fields within globalising contexts. At the same time they are sites where people build working lives and careers (of ‘casual’ and ‘permanent’ sorts). Changing conditions of work in higher education settings, and the lived experiences of academics in new conditions, also need study in terms of the governance of selves and working relations. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) stress the importance of practicing a ‘reflexive sociology’ in which academics turn their analytic gaze upon power dynamics and the construction of subjectivities within their own ‘field’ of work. The university rarely studies itself as such. Moreover, the new ways and degrees of cooption of the ‘left hand’ of the state (the public services and other venues of ‘more progressive’ agency) to the ‘right hand’, with concomitant decline in universities’ relative autonomy in relation to ‘marketisation’ logics of national government policies (Bourdieu, 1998), give urgency to the collection offered here. In keeping with a reflexive sociological approach, chapter authors write from varied standpoints of experience within universities. As present or former members of academic boards, quality assurance managers, faculty Deans or Heads, members of tertiary union executives, lecturers, leaders and members of research centres, participants in international programs and projects, and more, they all cast a reflexive eye on current and breaking trends in university governance.

As already suggested, the past few decades have seen what we will dare call an ‘epochal shift’ in university governance, as national governments external to universities seek more directly and systematically to govern university outcomes. And yet this happens concurrently with strong internationalisation impulses, calling for ‘flexible’ leeway to innovate beyond national agendas (Marginson, Murphy & Peters, 2009). As with many ‘free trade’ initiatives’, governments tend to support them despite contradictions they may pose to national agendas – and, indeed, to national powers to set agendas. For example, the European Union, at a regional level through the Bologna Process, has sought ‘harmonisation’ across national university sectors (and other education sectors), as a means of forging
coherence among diverse nation states. This in turn has ripple effects within each member nation’s university sector. It also feeds into discourses about what universities ‘must do’ in globalising times, such that smaller countries are drawn to emulate the model in ways that they can. Dale (2005, p. 118) characterises higher education sectors, during the 1990s, as having developed a number of internationalising tendencies:

– harmonisation (e.g. the EU’s Bologna Declaration);
– dissemination (e.g. OECD setting and spreading of agendas);
– standardisation (e.g. worldwide models in research assessment, ranking of journals, ranking of universities);
– interdependence (e.g. common issues of environmentalism);
– imposition (e.g. complying with contractual agreements of financial institutions such as IMF, and trade agreements such as GATS, that control intellectual property).

Through such trends, universities – and the nations in which they are situated – both cooperate and compete with each other, internationally and within national sectors. For example, three of Australia’s elite universities have negotiated membership in *Universitas 21*; and they promote this membership competitively, both in ‘globalising’ terms and as bolstering their status within the Australian university sector. This parallels how ‘global markets’ in general put nations on ‘the same page’ in ways that nonetheless stage competitions in which some have strong advantages relative to others. Moreover, each of the trends noted by Dale raises issues for university governance, since new ‘steering from a distance’ expectations are enacted at a greater distance from – and sometimes contradicting – the steering exerted through national policy agendas, standards and accountabilities. The combination of national and international steering mechanisms has significant governance implications for both institutional independence and academic autonomy.

There is thus a national-international hyper-complexity of networks and arrangements that affect university governance. Political theorists such as Rhodes (1997) have argued that complexities arising from transnational institutional arrangements (campuses in other countries), and from changes in relations between the state and stakeholders/citizens with the rise of user pays and client-serviced education, have contributed to the shift from government to governance. Rhodes (1997) sees governance as ‘the processes, the changed condition of ordered rule, or the new method of governing society’ (p. 55). He characterises multiple trajectories of governance:

– *corporate* governance, in which efficiency and effectiveness become the drivers: or, as Lyotard in 1984 stated the new dictum with regard to universities: ‘be efficient or dead’;
– *new public administration*, where private sector principles of management and marketisation penetrate the modern liberal university with strategies of performance management, incentive structures, consumer choice, contractualism, outsourcing and quasi markets – all are aspects that have been identified in higher education (Marginson & Considine, 2000; Morley, 2003; Sidhu, 2006; Blackmore & Sachs, 2007);
— *new political economy*, in which governance is constituted by changing relationships between the state, the market and the economy – characterised by Slaughter and Leslie (1997) as academic capitalism, which blurs ‘public’ and ‘private’;
— *network governance*, which focuses on coordination of political and economic relations between multiple actors, mediated by the state as the modern university’s work; its transnational scope and range is more dispersed spatially, yet more closely linked to local communities through networked partnerships.

We suggest that universities experience all aspects of these modes of governance, as late 20th century processes of corporatisation of public universities, and of education generally, have overlaid practices of marketisation and managerialism onto old modes of bureaucratic government (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007). Universities’ roles and functions, as well as their sources of funding, are now more complex and uncertain. There has been a tightening of control over what is taught and researched through financial contractualism based on performance outcomes, new accountabilities and quality assurance; and at the same time a loosening up in terms of local structural and financial as well as academic arrangements in terms of employment and industrial relations that enable university managers to achieve desired ends. Managerialism, marketisation, privatisation and diversification have changed universities’ roles in relation to states, individuals, economies and communities. New governance forms are also emerging as public/private partnerships and multinational companies move into education and research (Bhanji, 2008).

(Again we need to caution that, within such general trends, university governance is also shaped by particular national governmental dispositions: e.g. some are more democratic, some more authoritarian. Rhetorical similarities across university sectors can be superficial relative to entrenched cultural practices and powers; see Mok, 2007).

To summarise, certain interconnected dynamics, appearing as salient and convergent features in the complex contexts of changing university governance, will (among other features) be elaborated across the chapters of this volume:
— intensified ‘internationalisation’ as universities seek to gain recognition in global and national competitive league tables, in competition with other universities for reputation, students and research income.
— government and business sector promotion of deregulated education markets in ways that put pressure on university institutions to develop new client and financial bases;
— mobilisation of discourses about harnessing universities’ capacities in terms of new knowledge production for innovation-oriented economies;
— increased external government intervention in regulating universities – including accountability criteria attached to institutional receipt of specifically targeted government funds – built into initiatives such as research assessment exercises and rankings of teaching quality;
— more muscular executive/managerial prerogative within universities, in response to increased external government regulation, which ironically reduces the relative autonomy of universities (including senior managements) in relation to government;
weakening of academic self-governance through legislative bodies within universities, through increased oversight by managerial executive bodies, and through restructuring of university councils;

downward devolution and dispersion of accountability for university performance to academics (and, in certain ways, to students), who then bear increased responsibility and risk; while at the same time academic work is devalued in relation to a growingly top-heavy caste of senior-level managers along with auxiliary offices staffed by non-academics;

intensified mechanisms of ‘regulated deregulation’ – such as ‘quality’ controls and ‘strategically aligned’ professional development – in core academic work dimensions of curriculum, assessment, teaching and research; and

increased regulation of academics and their work through ‘performance management’, and concomitant decline in their autonomy, under the justification that ‘these are times of uncertainty and high risk’.

Contents of this Book

The chapters in this book investigate shifting trends in university governance in a variety of dimensions, and evaluate their effects. They consider important changes in the roles and operations of the core domains of teaching, research, leadership and management, and their consequences in the lived experiences of academics. The contributors do not focus on ‘traditional’ governing bodies such as University Councils and Academic/Faculty Boards, but rather on how governance expectations, relations and practices are transforming through multiple restructurings of the work done in universities, and how this work is regulated. In exploring diverse domains of university work, the chapters also explore varied governance mechanisms with distinctive histories in different national settings. Overall, the chapters conceptualise and analyse governance as a multi-dimensional array of distributed processes, involving government infrastructures applied to universities (a macro-level of government of universities); techniques and effects of managerialism within university institutions (a meso-level of governance in universities); and the engineering of shifts in prevailing values across university sectors, affecting professional dispositions and identities (a micro-level of governmentalities and their subjective and normalising effects on those who inhabit spaces of university work).

In the opening chapter, Simon Marginson considers how university league tables are now central to university governance and planning, in alignment with more strategic and prescriptive policies seeking to develop ‘knowledge economies’ nationally and globally. Rankings are the new signifiers of quality in the global education market. Global ranking mechanisms emerged in the early 2000s: particularly the Shanghai Jiao Tong index, developed in 2003 as a tool initially to benchmark the rapid emergence of China’s tertiary sector against North American and European systems; and the Times Higher Education Supplement’s ranking, developed in 2004. While conceptually and methodologically questionable, these rankings have gained powerful global influence due to their capacity to encapsulate
and compare multiple parameters that count in ‘games’ of international and national competition in which government policy makers and university senior managers are key players with high-stake concerns. These include the status of national university systems in international markets’, and the differential capacity of given universities to attract ‘quality’ students as well as government and non-government funds for research. Rankings offer a level of transparency, and therefore accountability, through standardised measures that facilitate comparison between individual institutions, and between national sectors. Such ranking systems are taken seriously by students, employers of graduates, and university administrators. Universities thus mobilise multiple governance strategies, in key evaluative domains such as academic recruitment and promotion, that reward particular types of performance, benchmarking against like institutions, and that set targets and performance indicators for units and individuals, so as to advance institutional position internationally and nationally. As Marginson argues: ‘By shaping university and system behaviours and standardising the definitions of outputs, all the way down from the governing council/senate to the classroom and the research laboratory, ranking systems begin to shape the university mission and balance of activity, externalising part of university identity’. Rankings, he suggests, comprise a ‘global technology’ – not simply a product of neoliberal imaginaries of globalisation, but productively symbiotic with them – that is here to stay. This technology can be expected to have long term effects: to homogenise universities cross-nationally towards the model of the English-speaking, science-heavy university; to concentrate research in fewer elite universities; and so to direct ‘innovation and knowledge economies down narrow pathways’.

Ravinder Sidhu, in the second chapter, provides a case study of how Singapore, as a developmental city-state, seeks to position itself as a ‘knowledge and education hub’ through a strategy of state sponsorship of transnational education and research alliances. Tracing a history of Singapore’s highly centralised political governance of universities, she observes a ‘long standing existence of practices of governing from a distance through complex assemblages of ethnic actors, state authorities and trade and capital networks’. This national project has been interlinked with citizenship and migration policies as well as government-industry-university collaborations. Sidhu explores governance issues through two examples of transnational global programs for bringing ‘world class institutions’ to Singapore: a successful Europe-based INSEAD collaboration; and a less than successful initiative with USA-based John Hopkins University – each of which established campuses in Singapore as part of the Singaporean government’s Global Schoolhouse agenda. Sidhu’s accounts and analyses indicate the perils of policy reliance on simplistic measures of ‘quality’. She argues that ‘governing quality though contracts and through reliance on the symbolic power of league tables is insufficient without the engagement of the people who constitute these transformational educational and research networks on the ground’. In Sidhu’s evaluation, Singaporean transnational alliances create both risks and opportunities for universities to establish, maintain and/or increase positional status. She also highlights the irony in which, in the tightly governed city-state of Singapore,
academics who migrate there for transnational initiatives often find more freedom than in the increasingly constrained Western university environments under neoliberal management. Such freedom is less so, however, for women due to issues of mobility, focus on male-dominated business and science partnerships, and cultural mores. Becoming ‘global’, concludes Sidhu, ‘requires changes to a university’s governance and mission including new understandings of academic work and research productivity’.

Nonetheless, as Elizabeth Bullen, Jane Kenway and Johannah Fahey illustrate in Chapter 3, the policy lexicon of growingly transnational universities is dominated by ‘knowledge economy’ discourses that are themselves problematic. ‘Knowledge economy’ articulations have centred on the university as a key site of production of information and knowledge that can be appropriated by the nation state. The underpinning principles are ‘the centrality of science and technology, the creation of national innovation, systems, the codification of knowledge through ICTs, the commodification of knowledge through intellectual property regimes and the production and circulation of knowledge by and through entrepreneurial knowledge workers and networks’. Bullen et al. trace a genealogy of knowledge economy discourse, and its linkage to universities, since the 1960s: from an emphasis on ‘management of knowledge’ as central to the conduct of an entire society; to the valorisation of an ‘information economy’ for ‘post-industrial societies’ energised through technological development and linked to national interests; to arguments that technological rather than price competition will stimulate economic growth; and on to distinctions between ‘knowledge’ and ‘information’, with the latter as the key driver of ‘the global economy’. Through their genealogy, Bullen et al. identify various strands of thinking about ways in which knowledge is important to governance of economic growth: for example, Gibbons et al.’s (1994) famous distinction between Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge – the former disciplinary and theoretical; the latter interdisciplinary and problem-focused – which even the authors of this model worry has been ‘exploited, oversimplified and opportunistically manipulated by policy makers’. Such simplistic ‘policy enthusiasm’ for applied research, without measurable evidence of impact, has had the consequence of de-legitimising basic and other research in favour of the ‘techno-preneur’ who can attract funding for ‘research that business and industry stakeholders want, over traditional academic values, free inquiry and researcher autonomy’. In sum, ‘research governance has become increasing the servant of government as researchers find themselves compelled to steer their research trajectory to a course set by national innovation agendas if they want to succeed’.

Following on from this sweeping genealogy of sectoral trends across western nations, Jill Blackmore elaborates on governance of research in the Australian case, focussing on the development of Australian research assessment policies since 2004, and on how research practices have been radically transformed by these policies. Blackmore analyses how emphasis – in policy discourses and associated practices – on quality, efficiency, performance and accountability have often been counterproductive in their effects, and have also been inequitable, especially along a gender axis. Her analyses chart the incitement of shifts from
more collegial review models of research proposals and publications, to more reductionist models that measuring quality and productivity through the use of ‘streamlined’ approaches. These include the calculative technologies of metrics – as proxies for ‘quality’ – in addition to measures of income, research concentration and entrepreneurship: modes of research practice more common to the hard sciences, but now applied forcefully to social sciences and the humanities. ‘These technologies of research assessment’, observes Blackmore, ‘are another tool of the audit culture in universities, a culture that is becoming part of a global architecture of calculation linking the macro to the micro-institutional practices and thus improving the governing capacities of the state and universities’. Such technologies also function to reproduce inequalities, argues Blackmore, by newly configuring old disciplinary hierarchies into research assessment that advantage those academics in the male dominated scientific and technology disciplines in research-intensive universities, and those who are transnationally mobile and entrepreneurial. They particularly disadvantage women who have been predominantly concentrated in areas of heavy teaching workload – in academically lesser-status ‘professional’ areas such as education and nursing – and only just moving up the ranks towards research leadership. Blackmore argues that, ironically, as the academic profession is becoming feminised and casualised, control over who judges quality of research is moving outside the academic field into male-dominated, technologically managed fields that determine research priorities and possibilities. Increasingly, international publishers, together with journal editors, are becoming the gatekeepers of research excellence.

From a Canadian perspective, Kari Dehli also chronicles the audit culture and its calculative technologies. From the standpoint of a researcher, research supervisor and department chair, Dehli unpacks how theories of neo-liberal governance, as well as more tacit and normative ‘governmentalities’ – a concept taken from Foucault and others – infuse her institutional context at the University of Toronto. With particular focus on a large graduate program in education, she analyses how this program is registering, and exhibiting consequences of, new funding models, performance criteria, and heightened competition for research degree places. From her analyses, Dehli argues that neo-liberal techniques of governance are about ‘a way of thinking and knowing that shapes the terms and scope of the political ... constituting the calculative, entrepreneurial and performative subject, simultaneously the target and vehicle of new forms of “governmental” power’. These techniques, amongst others, include ‘cost-centres and devolved budgets, enrolment target-setting, performance review, best practices, [and] portfolio assessment’. In a close look at the practices surrounding graduate student enrolment and the pursuit of research funding, Dehli illustrates how funding arrangements for graduate students position them as a cost and not an investment, and how student and academic choice of research program and topic are becoming aligned more closely to institutional priorities and grants, while expanding ‘professional’ programs have become ‘cash cows’. Dehli concludes that institutional possibilities for advancement entail capacities either productively to engage, or to distance oneself, from new management and neoliberal government. However, these are viable strategies for
those at the top of hierarchies – older rather than new staff, and faculty rather than administrative staff or graduates, men more than women – at the expense of those less powerfully positioned in social-structural terms.

The theme of governance through competitive auditing of performance, with funding as a lever, is likewise salient – with further nuances – in Alison Lee and Catherine Manathunga’s comparative history of the assessment and ranking of university teaching in England, the USA, New Zealand and Australia, followed by a focussed look at the recent Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF) in Australia. Lee and Manathunga show how ranking and funding implicate academics in the self-management of their professional practices. Working from Foucault, they develop and apply an analytical construct, ‘tactical polyvalence’: the ways in which policy discourses mobilise key words that are ‘symbolically powerful and endlessly available for re-definition’. Hence, ‘freedom, democracy, literacy and indeed quality are terms mobilising tactically polyvalent discourses that reward close policy scrutiny for the work they do and the meanings they are made to make’. Through performative policies such as the LTPF, ‘teaching’ becomes such a term: ‘It is hard to be “against” teaching, or to publicly admit to not valuing it’. And yet ‘teaching’ has, in the contemporary university, been positioned often in binary (and ‘lesser’) opposition to ‘research’, while nonetheless captured within a similar matrix of targets that comprise ‘performance economies’. Managing teaching has become central to the management of risk and performance. As with research, there has been an international trend to impose external national assessments of teaching quality onto universities, linked to funding, all in the name of ‘excellence’. Observing that a ‘new “language of indicators” … has emerged as warrants for “excellence”, to govern the conduct of teaching’, Lee and Manathunga note that ‘[i]n the language of performativity, local teaching practices are ungovernable and opaque; and so ‘current modes of university governance seek to shape teaching practices and render them “transparent”’. However, on a somewhat optimistic note, such managerial ‘economies of performance’ – focussed on visible, measurable and individual elements of teaching – will always be in tension with, and can never fully capture, professional ‘ecologies of practice’ which address less calculable elements of teaching as a social, emotional and collective practice.

Attention to new audit technologies gains yet further dimensions in Marie Brennan’s investigation, in the Australian context, of another key domain of university work: leadership/management. From a middle-manager standpoint – that of Deans of Faculties or, in many Australian Universities, Heads of School – Brennan examines how, despite the rhetoric about devolving powers and responsibilities ‘down the line’ to where faculty members do the ‘core business’ of universities – the key momentum of line management is concentration of power up the line, in senior management positions. Brennan chronicles the contexts and instruments through which, in building strong-armed executive power at the top of a line-management chain, legislative branches where academics have had representative agency to oversee their own work – such as Academic Boards (or, in other systems, ‘Faculty Senates’) – have systematically been weakened. Likewise, academic representation on University Councils – statutorily the most authoritative
university governance bodies – has been re-defined such that academics not only are fewer in number (while ‘business’ presence has increased), but have had their roles redefined ‘away from representing their constituencies, towards a business model of directorship of a company, in which all members are loyal to the institution first and foremost’. Furthermore, in locations of everyday academic work, Brennan analyses how ‘practices of planning, monitoring, reporting and accountability cycles’ require work time from all staff, but especially oversight time from middle-managers, in ways that demand a continually upward-looking, ‘accountable’ relation to those in senior executive positions. Burgeoning numbers of non-academic staff serving in branches auxiliary to senior management, such as Human Resource and Finance offices, administer agendas from ‘the top’ in ways that allow those in senior positions to exert executive fiats at an increasingly stretched distance from academic realities on ‘the ground’. At the same time, these offices add yet further pressures and instruments of persistent auditing in relation to powerfully regulatory ‘standards’ of central control. Indeed, middle managers buffer senior positions from need for contact with the ground; yet at the same time they dwell among those who live at ground levels. Hence, ‘[p]robably the most uncomfortable position in the university is middle management’, argues Brennan, ‘caught in a tension between (1) central “visions”/mission statements and other demands for “upward” alignment; and (2) lateral demands of the daily work practices of colleagues in Schools and Faculties – for whom there are both direct relations and duties of care – as they conduct the “core business” of teaching and research’.

The difficult emotional labours of university work, evoked in Brennan’s analyses, are given explicit elaboration in the next to last chapter. Peter Bansel and Bronwyn Davies graphically portray, and acutely analyse, how a highly successful professor, given the pseudonym ‘Professor James’, experiences the contradictions and ambivalences in his multiple and indeed privileged positionings as a ‘white male, leading science researcher, manager, successful research entrepreneur, and research supervisor’. Their focal question is central to the capacity to govern in universities: how is it that academics are both so critical of, and so compliant with, the principles and practices invoked by governance? Drawing strongly on Foucault’s concept of ‘governmentality’ – which ‘foregrounds the technical means through which the ambitions and ideals of any mode of government’ are effected through a ‘conduct of conduct’, made ‘practicable through … mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies and vocabularies’ – they bring ethical and affective consequences to light in this case study of one individual. In interviews with Professor James, he talks about his experiences as head of a department where research output manages to thrive within the constraints and possibilities conditioned by neoliberal governance regimes. While Professor James’ terms of engagement are framed by neoliberal managerialism, his motivation is to undertake and sustain ‘pure research’, a desire that ‘lies outside neoliberal goals’. He does benefit from neoliberal policy orthodoxies surrounding science, innovation and economics; and he justifies the challenges in terms of virtues of working hard, informed by a sense of duty and a personal sense of Christian morality. Yet frustration is evident in his testimony that ‘the very processes that are
supposedly assuring quality are actually, possibly, some of the worst impediments we can throw up in people’s way’. His academic habitus is ‘simultaneously enabled, undercut and unravelled by his position as manager’. Still, although realising that he and the group of researchers in his centre are always vulnerable, and must play the game of outcomes-based performance well, he does not question the discourse of choice that frames his possibilities. Bansel and Davies thus analyse the ‘movement and tension between the ambitions and calculations of government’ and that of the institutionalised subject, and, in turn, how these ‘re-alignments and shifting positions are an emergent feature of day-to-day survival’. Within this context of survivalism, conclude Bansel and Davies, the dilemma for academics is ‘that the individual whose ideals are in many ways antithetical to neo-liberalism, and who is most vulnerable to it, is the one who will work at making neoliberal forms of government work, not through any love of neoliberalism, but through a love of what neoliberalism puts at risk’.

Finally, at a philosophical level, Lew Zipin amplifies the ethico-emotive dynamics of what he sees as psychically disturbed trends in university governance, reflecting the ‘dark emotional ground tone’ of post-modern or late-capitalist (‘post/late’) times. He analyses how powerful epistemological (govern-mental) technologies of regulatory power work upon and through bodily emotions of academics in their spaces of everyday work. Zipin begins with a close reading of how three prominent texts published on the cusp of the new millennium – by Zygmunt Bauman, Bill Readings and Lynn Worsham – theorise the ways in which contexts of post/late times induce shifts in the nature of university operations, and correlatively in academic experience. From his exegetical examination of these texts – particularly favouring Worsham’s analyses of ‘pedagogical violence’ that inheres in post/late modes of workplace regulation – Zipin builds a framework for analysis of current governance trends and their ethico-emotive effects in universities. He diagnoses how managerial modalities encode hidden curricula for violent action upon emotional bodies, inducing many academics to abject feelings of guilt, shame and self-doubt, with potentially dangerous mood-swings into rage, as well as confused ambivalences, defensive flat affects and even euphoria – depending both on institutional positioning within the university, and on positions along gender, race-ethnic and other axes of social-structural power relation. He argues that pedagogical violences of managerialism are precipitated by complex accountability pressures leveraged from outside universities, in which senior managers feel hard-pressed to ensure successful performance, inciting them, in Marginson’s words (quoted by Zipin), to seek to ‘break the power of the [academic] disciplines in university governance’ by ‘break[ing] the power of the disciplines in teaching and research’. In acting on such impulses, suggests Zipin, senior managers themselves internally suffer abject feelings of guilt, anxiety and doubt; but they compensate through aggressive flexing of their might, goaded on by a heady sense of the power that sector-wide institutional restructuring for executive heavy-handedness has given them. In conclusion, Zipin calls upon academics to seek to transform their emotive struggles and ambivalences through a politics that takes ‘mutual responsibility for each other’s health in working life’, combining reflexivity with
courage not to suppress the ‘difficult emotions of dark times’, but to allow these emotive forces to ‘energise an ethico-emotive politics’ that pushes for new and better modes of university governance.

Across these nine chapters, common themes emerge. All refer to the changing role of the ‘competition state’ with regard to universities and individuals (students, academics and administrative staff) as new stakeholders enter the play; and to the shifting ethos of universities from collegiality to competition, with an associated shift in the emotional economy of the academy from one of agency to a sense of lost autonomy. There are sharp critiques of how policy as the tool of governance has been wielded reductively, with many unintended consequences (as well as some that are functionally useful to certain powerful interests), due to overly simplistic understandings and assumptions, mobilised in key concepts of reform: ‘innovation’, ‘knowledge economy’, ‘applied and pure research’, and so on, that skew teaching, research, leadership and other ‘core business’ aspects of university work in counterproductive ways. At the same time, they do not argue ‘that policy shapes practice in any simple or linear fashion, but rather that the policy story is an extraordinary and persistent one with respect to teaching [and research, etc] as a site of investment and control’ (Lee and Manathunga, this volume). What is evident is that, when confronted with unruly and inequitable consequences of simplistic policies, governmental dispositions are to more finely calibrate policies and their various instruments, persisting in reductive simplifications of complex problematics, regardless of often negative synergies with other policies in the mix, rather than question definitions and internal logics regarding the ‘problems’ that policies purport to ‘solve’ (Bacchi, 2000). Regardless, policy makers and institutional managers push, through multiple layerings of governance, actively to constitute the entrepreneurial and performative modes of academic habitus that are critically evaluated in this text. Fundamental to the competitive global market in higher education, now governed by league tables, is the new survivalism that predominates in ‘new managerialism’ and regulates working academics lives. The discourse of survivalism denies concern over equity and access at a time when inclusion – a tactically polyvalent discourse of university reform – is crucial for knowledge-based cosmopolitan societies.

Such a multi-dimensional complexity of governance dynamics gives rise to a set of significant paradoxes explored by contributors to this book. One such paradox is increased academic responsibility yet decreased autonomy and agency. Another is increased organisational hierarchies and accountabilities built around the regulation of academic performance, yet reduced curricular and pedagogical flexibility and decision-making by those with academic experience and expertise, and who are subject to ‘performance’ evaluation. A third is the breadth of the international scope of the shifts, yet which often are justified locally in terms of more or less ‘traditional’ western European-style university ideals. These and other paradoxes are mapped in this introduction, and amplified in the chapters of this book. It is the view of the editors that key trends in university governance have been developing over a long enough period for careful and complex analysis now to be feasible and timely. Such analysis needs to include finely tuned critique, but also
go beyond critique in identifying newly emergent opportunities for alternative approaches to governance, which need evaluation in ethical as well as strategic terms.

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INTRODUCTION: THE HIGHER EDUCATION WORLD HAS BEEN CHANGED

Sometimes an event takes place that is truly momentous. We know that it is irreversible and that after it happens nothing will be quite the same again. A tsunami such as that which devastated Aceh in Indonesia on 26 December 2004 falls into this category. So does a sudden and unheralded act of war on a large scale, such as the attack on the American naval installation at Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, or the bombing of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in the United States on 11 September 2001. Another such case is the assassination of a charismatic political leader who cannot be replaced, so that history takes a different path. At the micro-level we experience the same kind of devastating change in the loss of a loved one, or collapse of a business that has absorbed all of our resources and efforts. We can fall in love suddenly and profoundly, so that we have no choice but to go with it. Perhaps the deepest of all these momentous, irreversible experiences is the birth of a child.

For those who work in higher education institutions around the world, the launch on the Internet of the first comprehensive set of global university rankings by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Institute of Higher Education in China (SJTUIHE) on 28 June 2003 was another one of these momentous events. Some grasped the significance of the Jiao Tong as soon as it appeared. Others became aware of it only as it began to reshape perceptions and behaviours and the effects flowed back into their own nations and institutions. In that moment in June 2003 a credible world-wide hierarchy of research universities was created, in the form of the league tables that governed sporting competitions around the world. It was instantly understood and immediately seductive. It seemed that the arcane and archaic world of universities had been opened to everybody’s scrutiny. The familiar spectacle of a league table of universities was readily translated into imaginings of a global university market. It locked into the world of cultural prestige and social status embodied in the leading institutions; it seemed to bring them to account, even to democratise them, as market consumption always does; and it was a potent technology for strategies and policies premised on the struggle for advantage.

The Jiao Tong ranking felt right. It fitted with what people knew. Harvard was on top followed by the three leading universities in California, Stanford, Caltech and Berkeley. Cambridge in the UK was next, then MIT and research universities...
from the USA, UK and other nations ranging all the way down to number 500 in the world. Everyone disavowed the exercise and pooh-poohed the measures and everyone wanted to know where their own university sat in the hierarchy and how close they were to greatness. It was irresistible.

Though lists of leading universities had appeared before, they were usually based on surveys of reputation. The results were of passing interest, a conglomeration of opinions that told people nothing about the fundamentals of relative performance or quality. The Jiao Tong was more compelling than its predecessors. It sprang from social science techniques that originated in census-style sociology and models of economic outputs rather than subjective market research. It measured the real activity of universities and in a manner that was comprehensible. There was a medium degree of complexity in the methodology of data processing leading to a single ordinal number for each university at the end. The Shanghai Jiao Tong University Institute also made several moves that grounded its ‘Academic Ranking of World Universities’ effectively and in a lasting manner. It measured research performance in several ways. Many people immediately disputed the measures and their interpretation (and many still do) but it was difficult to dismiss all of the measures. The data were transparent and the sources were known: Nobel Prize winners, the identity of leading researchers by citation, the number and quality of citations and publications (SJTUIHE, 2008). The data sources could not be directly manipulated by the universities themselves or by national governments with a vested interest in ‘their’ university performance. The Shanghai Jiao Tong team soon made it clear that they were willing to fine-tune the rankings on the basis of valid proposals for more accurate measures and they were utterly uninterested in special pleading. The Jiao Tong ranking withstood all attempts to discredit it and by 2005 it was thoroughly entrenched.

It was a remarkable achievement. A top ten university in China, an emerging rather than established system of research universities, relativised every university in the world including those located in the dominant country, the USA, and so defined the global university market.

So the age of global university rankings was born and higher education was normalised as a single global competition of research universities, one system crossing every border; and as a quasi-market competition for status, for gifted and creative people and for resources on a worldwide scale. Half a decade later it is apparent that global research rankings are shaping and normalising worldwide higher education in much the same way that the annual rankings by the US News and World report have shaped American higher education since the 1920s. Since 2003 global rankings have fed into the accelerating ‘arms race’ in investments in innovation; and, in synchrony with the evolution of knowledge-intensive production, the globalisation of communications and the continuing advance of education, have helped to shift the idea of the ‘global knowledge economy’ from the edges of mainstream economic policy to the centre of government thinking around the world. It seems that the global knowledge economy (and higher education and research along with it) have become the holy grail, the unrealisable essence at the heart of policy. A nation, or a meta-national region such as the EU, cannot have
enough knowledge power. In a world of finite resources, knowledge is infinitely expanding and increasingly it is seen as the key to comparative advantage. It seems that the knowledge economy will guarantee the future and will meet all our needs. Growth. Wealth. Climate control. National success. Freedom, the brilliance of the human spirit, the triumph of the will, etc. University rankings give form to the idea of the global knowledge economy, especially the basic research aspect of it. They show governments and multinational business firms where knowledge power lies and lock universities firmly into the political economy.

Global university rankings have their critics and some have powerful and convincing arguments. After all it is preposterous to squeeze the vast diversity of higher education across the world, with its rich and remarkable range of approaches, systems, languages and creative products, into a single vertical table based on one vector of value which is North American style scientific research. It is like reducing the novels of Tolstoy to 30-second sound bites or squeezing the library of Alexandria into a toothpaste tube. No ranking system can satisfy everyone in its coverage (for a start, teaching performance is outside all of them at present) and the first Jiao Tong rankings have already spawned a diversity of mutations and metrics. There are few outright winners and many losers in a league table. On the face of it, rankings ought to be wildly unpopular. But the rankings juggernaut rolls on. For the foreseeable future it is unstoppable because it meets the political, economic and cultural needs of the times. It provides substance for external pressures for accountability and performance and the rubrics of community and industry engagement. It feeds into the global student market, into the marketing pitch of institutions and the choice-making of prospective students. Pre-eminently global, it has the attraction of all one-stop ‘best in the world’ summaries that, in our hubris, make the planet appear smaller and more controllable. Spectators at worldwide contests have power of a sort, at least to themselves, the power of opinion over what they see. The capacity to question the rankings is part of the charm they exert. And the thrill of winners and losers on this scale is popularly and deeply compelling, like the stories in history of the rise and fall of empires.

The pre-rankings era in higher education now appears as an age of pristine innocence, populated by beings of refined sensibilities that were oblivious to their looming fate, like the aesthetic cultures of the fin-de-siecle European cities before the onslaught of the first world war. The university ranking process is not fixed in stone. As Heraclitus said, everything is always becoming. University rankings will change in future and they will change according to conscious design; they may become greatly pluralised and the competitive edge of any particular league table might be blunted. But for good or ill global rankings are here to stay; and higher education and research - global, national and local - will never be the same again.

This chapter considers the origins, workings and policy effects of university rankings. It concludes with discussion of the junction between university rankings, university governance and systems of power at micro and macro levels, and it reflects on the global ordering of higher education that rankings entail. A piece of scholarship of this length cannot do justice to what is already a vast subject in the national and global literatures but there are other summative accounts, surveys,
reviews, evaluations and critiques available (Van Dyke, 2005; Usher & Savino, 2006; Salmi & Saroyan, 2006; Marginson & van der Wende, 2007; 2009b; Hazelkorn, 2008).

Origins of University Ranking

In one sense, university ranking has no origin. Concentrations of knowledge power and status long pre-date modernity and are found at the beginnings of urban cultures and incipient states. Most civilisations had their leading temples, churches and centres of learning. Philosophers’ schools were vigorously set against each other in Athens and Rome. In another sense, present university ranking has several origins. Being still in its early stages at the global level, ranking continues to be the subject of heterogeneous invention and has yet to settle into predictable systems for managing human exchange in the manner of, say, transport or the financial sectors.

But a key precursor of the present development of global university ranking is the annual survey of American higher education by the US News and World Report, which dates back to the 1920s. Other origins lie in the Shanghai Jiao Tong University research ranking in 2003, which as noted has been decisive; the ranking of the ‘world’s best universities’ by the Times Higher Education Supplement from 2004 (The Times Higher, 2008); and the student-friendly comparisons of programs and services launched by the Centre for Higher Education Development and Die Zeit in Germany (CHE, 2006). We are also seeing the mushrooming of systems of research metrics, for example Leiden University (CWTS, 2007), and the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (2008), which revise the Jiao Tong approach in different ways; and the Webometrics (2008) ranking of university presence on the web. The last group of developments will not be discussed here.

US News and World Report

The annual US News and World Report ranking began in the 1920s. It focuses principally on aspects of institutions seen to contribute to the quality of teaching and the student experience, thereby servicing the voucher style national student market which is underpinned by government-backed loans and university tuition scholarships. Research plays a minor role. There is not one ranking but several, sorted by institutional mission, using the classification system devised by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The leading grouping is the ‘National Universities’, 248 universities (162 public and 86 private) with a range of fields of study, offering degrees to doctoral level and mostly research intensive (Kirp, 2003, p. 12).

In the category of National Universities, 25 per cent of the index is comprised by a survey of ‘undergraduate academic excellence’ sent to university presidents, provosts and deans of admissions. Two items each constitute 20 per cent: student retention and graduation rates; and ‘faculty resources’ which rewards small classes, high academic salaries, high academic qualifications and a high proportion of staff full-time. Student selectivity at entry, a proxy for positional status, is 15 per cent.
The lesser items are spending per student (10 per cent), the proportion of alumni who donate to the institution (5 per cent), and the graduation rate after controlling for spending and student aptitude (5 per cent). The US News ranking is managed by a commercial publisher whose only motive is to sell magazines. Except for its annual goldmine, its special edition on ‘America’s best schools and colleges’, US News is ‘otherwise little-noticed’ (Kirp, 2003, p. 25). Its categories and its statistical modelling are questioned, the combination of the elements into a single index number is un-theorised and arbitrary, and it is open to institutional lobbying and data manipulation. Nevertheless US News has captured the role of superintendent of higher education in the public interest. More than any other factor this much publicised annual ranking has shaped the discourses and technologies (though not the political economy, which has other foundations) of American higher education as a national market.

University Presidents can live and die on the basis of fluctuations in their US News position and over the years it has come to profoundly affect institutional behaviours. There is much at stake in the rankings exercise. ‘With each step upwards in the rankings, proportionately more of the students a college accepts, and more of those with high SAT scores, decide to enrol’ (Kirp, 2003, p. 25). Universities and colleges have learned to modify themselves so as to maximise their US News position. Since the rate of alumni giving feeds into the US News rankings, some colleges eliminate from their data base graduates they know will not donate. ‘Admissions officers encourage as many students as possible to apply, knowing that the more applicants that a college rejects, the more selective it appears to be’ (Kirp, 2003, p. 25–26). Some schools place their best applicants on a wait-list, knowing that they will not come anyway, and wanting to appear more selective. Institutions reduce the size of their initial intake so that refusal rates are ratcheted up and they can claim greater selectivity, letting in other students later as a supplementary cohort. More seriously, a growing proportion of student aid has been shifted from needs-based schemes designed to encourage students from social groups under-represented in higher education, to merit-based schemes targeting students with high SAT scores (Kirp, 2003, pp. 61–62). Thus rankings nominally designed for the public good have undermined it. There is a warning here. The US News experience suggests the possibility that the fostering of market subjectivities at the global level, via university ranking systems, has the potential to encourage behaviours that undermine the global public good (Marginson, 2007a).

**The Jiao Tong**

The Jiao Tong ranking was specifically created to service China’s national policy. The conventional World Bank recipe for emerging nations is to build primary, secondary and tertiary education in that order. The government of China knew that in future it would need to make a transition from the medium technology manufacturing economy that was generating phenomenal rates of economic growth based on cheap labour from the countryside, to a knowledge-intensive services economy based on high educational levels. It opted for a radically different recipe
to the conventional one, based on a more immediate transition to higher levels of skill without going through the World Bank’s stages of economic development. It set itself the goal of immediately forming a modernised tertiary education system at OECD levels of participation, the rapid expansion of R&D and the creation of a system of world-class research universities.

Between 1990 and 2005, tertiary student participation in China rose from 3 to 20 per cent of that age group (World Bank, 2008). Between 1998 and 2005, enrolled tertiary students multiplied by 4.5 times and the number of tertiary graduates multiplied by 3.7 times (Li, Whalley, Zhang & Zhao, 2008, p. 5). Over the same time period quality has been lifted at all levels of tertiary education and there has been a remarkable growth in research activity, albeit from a low base. Several government programs are focused on additional investments in the top layer of research universities, led by Tsinghua University and Peking University. Between 1996 and 2005 China’s investment in R&D as a proportion of GDP rose from 0.57 to 1.35 per cent (World Bank, 2008) and in the first five years after 2000 it increased at an annual rate of 18.5 per cent per year, almost three times the rate of growth of R&D spending at the top of OECD Europe (OECD, 2007). In 2006 China became the world’s number two R&D nation in aggregate, passing Japan. Both commercial research and basic research are growing rapidly. Between 2004 and 2005 international patents filed in China rose by 47 per cent (Li et al., 2008, p. 43). Between 1995 and 2005 the annual number of scientific papers produced in China rose from 9061 to 41,596; and China’s annual output of papers rose by 16.5 per cent per annum (National Science Board, 2008). These are extraordinary growth figures that indicate a remarkable concentration of policy effort.

Where does the Shanghai Jiao Tong University exercise fit into this picture? The global comparisons of university research performance collected by the Institute of Higher Education at Shanghai Jiao Tong University were launched as a nationally-supported project designed to show China exactly where its research-intensive universities were at and to guide investments in the universities. The ranking system was not designed to favour Chinese universities and build global reputation on an artificial basis. The intention was to monitor the gap in research performance between China and universities in North America, the UK and Western Europe, according to an international benchmark that was based on the American model of the comprehensive research-intensive science university. This was seen as the global standard, the mark of the world leading knowledge-led economy that China wanted to be. It was therefore vital from the start to conduct the comparative exercise as precisely as possible. The Jiao Tong group argued then and continues to state that the only data sufficiently reliable for ranking purposes are broadly available and internationally comparable data of measurable research performance (Liu & Cheng, 2005, p. 133.) This is measured using a composite index with weights given to the different criteria. The index is primarily driven by academic publication and citation, mostly in science-based disciplines with some attention to social sciences and humanities: 20 per cent citation in leading journals as listed by publisher Thomson; 20 per cent articles in Science and Nature; and 20 per cent the number of Thomson/ISI ‘HiCi’ researchers in the top 250–300 in their fields on the
basis of citation (Institute for Scientific Information, ISI-Thomson, 2008). Another 30 per cent is determined by Nobel Prizes in the sciences and economics and Fields Medals in mathematics, based on their training (10 per cent) and current employment (20 per cent). The other 10 per cent is determined by dividing the above total by the number of academic staff (SJTUIHE, 2008). The Nobel indicators are controversial, as the prizes are submission based and, arguably, factors other than merit enter into the decisions.

There is a long lead time between R&D investment and its manifestation in research outputs, and a further lag in the Jiao Tong indicators themselves, which pick up citations over the previous decade. Nevertheless trends in the Jiao Tong indicate that China’s universities have been steadily lifting their research performance according to the self-imposed rankings benchmark. In the first five Jiao Tong rankings, the number of universities from China and Hong Kong in the world’s top 500 rose from 13 in 2003, to 18 in 2008. Shanghai Jiao Tong University itself moved from the world’s top 450 research universities in 2003 to the top 300 research universities in 2008. There is still far to go to achieve the ultimate objectives. As yet there are no universities from China in the world’s top 100 research institutions. The 2008 rankings by discipline found that China had only ten universities with top 100 disciplines, compared to 308 in the USA, 50 in the UK, 26 in Canada and 20 in Germany. However there were nine Engineering schools in China in this category, second highest level in the world after 49 such schools in the United States (SJTUIHE, 2008). The long climb to parity with the USA has begun and the Jiao Tong rankings will measure each height as it is reached. Other national governments are also using the Jiao Tong to drive improvements in research performance.

*The Times Higher Ranking*

The annual Times Higher Education Supplement ranking is a different story. Rupert Murdoch’s Times decided that a handful of social scientists and ex engineers at China’s ninth ranked university were not going to set the frame of the world market and, just over one year after the first Jiao Tong ranking was issued, they produced a very different global ranking, one closer to the methodology of the US News and World Report than that of the Jiao Tong. Like US News, the ultimate purpose was to sell newsmagazines and the focus was on factors that might drive student choice-making between institutions. A secondary purpose might be inferred from the outcome of the exercise, which was to elevate the global position of British universities, or at least to elevate criteria for comparison and methodologies of comparison which benefited those institutions.

The Times Higher ranking has undergone a long succession of changes in data collection and compilation but the broad approach has remained consistent. Like Shanghai Jiao Tong University, it uses a composite index. Unlike the Jiao Tong, it captures a broader group of phenomena than those solely related to research. Half the index is grounded in reputation, 40 per cent comprised by a survey of academics (‘peer review’) and 10 per cent by a survey of ‘global employers’. There are two internationalisation indicators: the proportion of students who are international
(5 per cent) and the proportion of staff (5 per cent). Another 20 per cent is fixed by the student-staff ratio, a quantity measure intended as proxy for teaching ‘quality’. The other 20 per cent is comprised by research citation performance per academic staff. The Times issues an annual list of the top 200 universities in order, plus rankings by institution in natural sciences, engineering and IT, biomedicine, social science and arts/humanities (Times Higher, 2008).

Like the Jiao Tong rankings, the annual Times Higher rankings are widely publicised each year and successful universities make much use of the rankings position in their marketing campaigns. But the process of data collection, which is handled by a marketing company that uses market research techniques that do not pass social science tests, is less rigorous than at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. For example in 2006 the survey of academic ‘peers’ gathered a response of just 1 per cent from 200,000 e-mails sent worldwide. The pool of responses was weighted towards the UK and former countries of the British Empire where The Times was well known, such as Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. Rates of return from Europe and the USA were significantly lower. The returns were not re-weighted to correct for this compositional bias. There are other problems with the Times Higher approach. Arguably, teaching quality cannot be assessed using student-staff ratios. Resourcing is one condition of teaching quality but it does not guarantee it. Research is only 20 per cent of the index, which might be appropriate to the global commercial market in degrees, but arguably is not the way that most of the world values ‘best universities’. The student internationalisation indicator rewards an institution for student volume without accounting for the quality or quantity of applications. It focuses on the capacity to generate global revenue as an end in itself rather than ‘best university’ global quality. Again, this makes sense in commercial terms. The Times Higher ranking rewards a university’s marketing division better than its researchers.

The outcome is a conglomerate league table. It elevates the stellar universities in the USA and UK via the reputational and research indicators. It picks up the best known institutions in national systems especially those located in national capitals, via the reputation indicators. Thus the leading Chinese universities do better in the Times Higher than the Jiao Tong. The reputational indicators and internationalisation indicators are also affected by the intensive cross-border marketing of some Australian and UK universities. The result is a less coherent order in which the hierarchy of research universities is under-determined by the hierarchy of universities providing mass education in the commercial cross-border market. Below the top 40 places the Times Higher ranking has also proven to be highly volatile. Institutions undergo sharp rises and/or falls and a university markets itself on the basis of its Times ranking at peril because the position can suddenly decline. The University of Malaya in Malaysia dropped from rank 89 in 2004, to 169 the following year and then out of the rankings altogether. The Vice-Chancellor’s contract was not renewed. From 2004 to 2006 the University of Geneva in Switzerland moved from outside the top 200 to 39, Fudan University in China was ranked at 195, 72 and 116 in successive years, the University of Seoul in Korea jumped from 118 to 63, RMIT University in Australia dropped from 55 to 146 (Times Higher, 2008).
These huge fluctuations are not performance related. They are principally random effects triggered by weaknesses in data gathering and changes in data collation methods. Over time this has tended to undermine the credibility of the rankings.

The Times Higher ranking also generates less random effects that are integral to the political economy of the exercise. Reflecting the composition bias in the peer survey and the focus of the indicators on factors germane to the global market in degrees, the UK and Australian institutions perform rather too well. The UK has just 15 per cent of the GDP of the USA but the UK has almost half as many universities as the USA in the Times top 100 in 2006: UK 15, USA 33. Thus the Times manages to reduce American global dominance from 54 research universities in the Jiao Tong ranking to just 33 in its own league table. The individual positions of the British universities are higher also. In 2006 the UK had two of the Times Higher top three and Cambridge UK had almost closed the gap on Harvard. Yet the Harvard faculty is cited at three and a half times the rate of Cambridge and has far greater world-wide prestige. Further, Australian universities tend to perform exceptionally well in the peer survey of academic staff, and in the student internationalisation indicator. In 2006 the Australian National University was ranked by the Times ‘academic peers’ ahead of Yale, Princeton, Caltech, Chicago, U Penn and UCLA. Despite a relatively poor citation rate and moderate staffing ratios, Australia had 13 of the Times top 200 universities, making it the third strongest national system, ahead of Japan, Canada, Germany and France. This makes sense in relation to the global degree market but not total performance or global university standing.

The CHE Comparisons in Germany

The Centre for Higher Education Development (CHE), located in Gutersloh in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, has moved in the opposite direction. It has turned its back on the pervasive idea of higher education as a marketplace of competing firms. The CHE comparisons are produced in conjunction with the German Academic Exchange Service and the publisher Die Zeit and have now been replicated in other European nations. They do not use reputation-sensitive whole-of-institution league tables, and focus on the generation of comparative data that will be of maximum usefulness to choice-making students.

CHE surveys 130,000 students and 16,000 staff in almost 250 institutions, collecting data on student experiences and satisfaction, and academic recommendations on the best locations in each field. It focuses on 36 academic subjects each offered by a substantial number of institutions. It supplements the surveys with independent sources comprising one third of the data base. No data are taken from institutions. CHE ranks departments according to each separate indicator of academic and service quality, assigning them to top third, middle third or bottom third of all institutions. It refuses to integrate the indicators into a single weighted indicator either for each subject or each institution. It states that there is no ‘one best university’ across all areas, and ‘minimal differences produced by random fluctuations may be misinterpreted as real differences’ (CHE, 2006). CHE notes
also that students have heterogeneous preferences as to mission and purpose. Accordingly, the CHE data are made available to prospective students and the public free of charge via an interactive web-enabled database. Any person can interrogate this database by investigating the comparisons in their own chosen disciplines and services, thereby creating the weightings and rankings themselves.

By dispensing with holistic rank ordering of institutions in league tables, the CHE avoids problems of arbitrary weighting and composite indicators and admits multiple purposes into the comparison. It has partly shifted the normative power of the comparison process from the ranking agency to the user of higher education. The approach lacks the discursive potency and economic lock-in of a single league table; but arguably the data are more informative to more people. In Europe the approach has proven attractive to public and students, governments, and academic experts on rankings systems (van Dyke, 2005; Salmi & Saroyan, 2006; Usher & Savino, 2006). The CHE data collection has been extended to Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands and Flanders, the Dutch-speaking portion of Belgium. ‘The CHE ranking system is thus well positioned to develop into a European-wide system’ (Van der Wende, 2007). It is a significant counter-weight to those university ranking systems that constitute higher education as a market of competing institutions but is unlikely to displace them altogether.

**Rankings and Goal-Determination**

Once through the door, the logic of competition is relentless. The driving imperative imposed by global university rankings is to lift performance measured in norm-referenced terms within this global frame of reference. Increasingly, this imperative is governing the behaviour of those with overarching responsibilities for institutions (university presidents, rectors and vice-chancellors) and national systems (ministers and officials). Ministers redouble the pressure on university leaders. Every government would like to lift its nation’s capacity to compete in what is now universally imagined as the global knowledge economy. Here university rankings provide one of the few simple clear-cut indicators of the nation’s competitive position.

Ellen Hazelkorn reports on a survey of higher education leaders and managers in 41 countries, concerning the impact of league tables and ranking systems. She finds there is widespread concern about rankings and also a readiness to respond to them. Hazelkorn’s survey finds that 58 per cent of university leaders are unhappy with their current institutional rank, 93 per cent want to lift their national position, 82 per cent want to lift their global position and 71 per cent want to be in the global top quartile. Almost universally, respondents testified that ‘rankings are a critical factor underpinning and informing institutional reputation’ and a crucial factor in determining student applications, though there are varied opinions on how crucial it is (Hazelkorn, 2008; quotes here and below from her article, pp. 197–201, derive from interviews). It is considered more important for international students than for local students who often utilise other sources of information. Rankings are seen as equally crucial in influencing government support and funding, and in shaping the pattern of international university partnerships. Rankings are also widely used by
employers in recruiting graduates and by universities themselves in recruiting academic staff. More than 56 per cent of Hazelkorn’s respondents said that their institution had established a formal mechanism to review its ranking position and consider ways and means of improving it; and 63 per cent state ‘they have taken strategic, organisational, managerial or academic actions’. Only 8 per cent of respondents stated that they had taken no action in relation to rankings.

Institutional leaders confirm they take rankings seriously, embedding them within their strategic planning processes at all levels of the organisation, including Governing Authority, Senior Executive and School/College. Depending upon the institutional strategic objective vis-à-vis their current position, HEIs (higher education institutions) use ranking metrics to guide their own goals. This may mean setting student and faculty recruitment targets (e.g. specifying academic entry criteria, making conditions of appointment/promotion clearer and more transparent, appointing Nobel prize winners), indicating individual academic performance measurements (e.g. research activity and peer-review publications, programme development), setting school/college level targets, and/or continual benchmarking exercises. As one respondent stated: ‘the improvement of the results has become a target in the contract between presidency and departments’, while another confirmed they have ‘developed a set of internal research output indicators...we do internal benchmarking’.

Some HEIs have restructured departments, invested in their organisation’s facilities or improved ‘awareness and expertise in the Research and Innovation Office’. Many HEIs have established an institutional research office to collect data, monitor their performance, better present their own data in public or other official realms, and benchmark their peers’ performance. Others have taken a more aggressive approach, using rankings as a tool to influence not just organisational change but influence institutional priorities. In this respect, both teaching programmes and research are mentioned. Respondents spoke of using ranking ‘to drive activities at university, faculty and campus levels’ and ‘for internal budgeting’.

Rankings function as the meta-performance indicator. The criteria used to determine the order of rank become meta-outputs that each institution is required to place on priority so that rankings begin to define ‘quality’. In the world of the Jiao Tong rankings, ‘quality’ means scientific research and Nobel Prizes rather than teaching or community building or solving local or global problems. According to the Times Higher ‘quality’ means reputation, larger staff-student ratios, research, and international staff and students; and it is partly fostered by marketing. By shaping university and system behaviours and standardising the definitions of outputs, the way down from the governing council/senate to the classroom and the research laboratory, ranking systems begin to shape university mission and the balance of activity, externalising part of university identity. This shift from autonomy to heteronomy carries with it serious problems for the trajectory of higher education in many countries, robbing not only institutions but national systems of part of their control over their identity and creating savage pressures to homogenise according to the model of an English-speaking science heavy university. This excludes from status or weakens the status of not only institutions focused on shorter course
vocational education but most technical universities; non-comprehensive specialist institutions in medicine, engineering, business and the arts; and institutions combining a very broad range of functions and missions, so that research is a relatively small part of their contribution to the national system, such as the leading national universities in Mexico and Argentina.

At the same time the loss of autonomy is not universal. We should be wary of claims that the sector as a whole is shackled by the abstract forces of marketisation or global norming. Rankings-driven heteronomy scarcely touches institutions at the very top whose internal life is reflected in the templates of the rankings systems, which remain masters of their identity, and who now take their place at the head of the global knowledge economy along with Google and Microsoft. It is true that rankings technology imposes on the traditional elite a regime of greater transparency in which performance is more harried. It breaks down some of the gothic mystery of the leaders, the ineffable essence inherited from their clerical origins from which they used to draw much of their authority. Nevertheless they have become more powerful overall. In the era of global rankings, the Ivy League, Cambridge and Oxford cut stronger figures in the world, amid a more vertically differentiated network of universities in which the number of elite universities has shrunk. On the other hand, outside the USA and UK, the status of elite institutions at the national level is partly displaced by the global super-league at the top of the tables, and major public or national universities are facing downward pressures in the US as elsewhere (Calhoun, 2006).

Since the Jiao Tong began in 2003, rankings have strengthened support in government for increased investment in university research and the concentration of research resources in leading universities, sometimes at the expense of other institutions and sometimes not, in order to lift the rankings position. China’s policy has already been mentioned. Germany is investing 1.9 billion euros in the Exzellenzinitiative program, initially in three universities, and this may foreshadow a regeneration of German global capacity in university research. The European Commission has established a target of R&D investment of 3 per cent of GDP across all member countries and plans to establish a collaborative super-institution, the European Institute of Technology. Other nations will follow, more so if China’s transition to a research-intensive economy is successful. This offers universities the prospect of larger research budgets, and also intensified controls as governments seek to secure tangible results from their investment. For the world it means an ‘arms race’ in investment in innovation, an ever-growing reliance on the use of rankings, and more precisely targeted rankings technologies.

Rankings and Governance

Of all the new factors that have emerged in the last decade, global university rankings have had a greater impact on higher education and especially research policy than any other, with the possible exception of 11 September 2001 and the US response. For example, rankings have had a greater shaping effect in the strategies and priorities of higher education than the mainstreaming of concerns about climate change
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following the UK Stern report. This is remarkable and it raises the analytical and political stakes in questions of interpretation. That is a longer discussion than there is room for in this chapter, which will be confined to a small number of points about rankings and governance. (There is further discussion elsewhere; see, for example, Marginson & van der Wende, 2009b; Marginson, 2007b; Marginson, 2007c).

First, it would be misleading to see rankings as imposed on higher education institutions in each country from outside the sector, by government or business or by the endogenous forces of global economic competition. It is true that all of these elements are in play. But global rankings are distinct from other technologies of performance monitoring and management characteristic of the New Public Management in the neo-liberal era. They did not originate in the systems of control and micro-management used by state agencies or large corporate bureaucracies operating at the national level. They are an explicitly global technology, their function is the ordering of global relations in higher education where there is no state or policy regime, and even their one national-system genesis in the US News exercise was outside government. Notwithstanding the role of the Chinese government in supporting the genesis of the Jiao Tong rankings, rankings sprang largely from civil society and higher education itself and were widely and popularly embraced before their endorsement and use by governments and university managers as tools of surveillance and incentive-making.

As this chapter has demonstrated, global university rankings were developed by two groups of agencies operating outside the sphere of government and organisation: first, publishing companies such as US News and The Times; and second, academic units like the Jiao Tong Institute and the CHE, competent in sociological research. These two sets of agencies have different purposes and techniques. Their ranking systems diverge. But they share a capacity to imagine and vector wide-ranging common spaces and thus to construct a global dimension of higher education. In turn this global imaginary has locked onto the signs of global convergence that we observe more or less continuously: the accelerating flows of students, academic personnel, messages, ideas, research data, policies, organisational templates, technologies and money; all of which helps us to visualise global higher education as a single environment and renders more credible the idea of a global league table (gross over-simplification though it is) (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007b). More tendentiously, rankings imagine that global environment as a market of competing institutions. This also connects to what many people already know. It fits with the familiar neo-liberal conception of education as an economic market and the Anglo-American notion of globalisation as the roll out of world-wide markets. The notion of the global market gains salience from the actual commercial competition for international students, the competitive element in research, and the long-standing status hierarchy among traditional universities. Hazelkorn concludes that ‘it is clear that rankings are a manifestation of the already competitive global market in which higher education operates, and are being used and perceived as such’ (Hazelkorn, 2008, p. 211). That is too neat. It downplays the role of cross-border collaboration and especially free knowledge flows. The global public goods produced in higher education are much more significant than the global private goods
(Marginson, 2007a). But Hazelkorn is right about the conditions of emergence. The notion of universities as teams in a knowledge economy World Cup is not the only way to imagine the global dimension of higher education. But it fits with the policy times and has grabbed the imaginative space.

Second, notwithstanding their origins, university rankings quickly achieved a productive symbiosis with the New Public Management and neo-liberal political economy in higher education, in almost every nation. (Global rankings have little impact in the USA where the national market is seen to embody the best institutions in the world: the US News still reigns). As the meta-performance indicator, rankings strengthen the hand of government in imposing on institutions a performance culture and a regime of measured outcomes, and strengthen the hand of managers in mimetically imposing these systems on academic units, as Hazelkorn’s study indicates. No doubt neo-liberal governance provides favourable conditions for ranking and ensures that the outcomes of such comparisons will be instantly noticed. At the same time institutional ranking reinstalls as ideology key elements of neo-liberal governance. It explicitly orders higher education as a global market of competing teams (quasi-firms), and shifts the onus of responsibility for improving the quantity and quality of research and higher education from governments to institutions and so on down the chain. As with all systems based on self-regulation, autonomy is valued and acquiescence is voluntary but the goal power of ranking is compelling. All university league tables, national or global, position university executives and researchers as self-regulating market actors. As Nikolas Rose remarks, this is ‘the conduct of conduct’ in which forms of freedom become the medium of marketisation, and human agents are players in the ubiquitous competition games (Rose, 1999). Here global university ranking is a form of ‘global governmentality’ whereby global systems and factors, even global factors that are invented for the purpose and then take on a life of their own, are used as tools of governance at national and local levels and are selectively channelled into the shaping of behaviours (Larner & Walters, 2004).

Third, the advent of global research rankings take us into a space that is national and post-national at the same time. It is post-national and global in that it arranges the higher education world as a network of equivalent institutions transparent in terms of uniform criteria, like the elements that comprise physical chemistry, without regard for the particular character of each institution and the circumstances governing its performance. Research rankings are also post-national in the sense that research and knowledge flow cross borders without restraint. Although English is the one common language of research, so that research measurement favours the English-speaking systems - a very significant limitation for those working in non English-speaking countries - in principle the common research conversation is open to all.

At the same time, global rankings are also national because league tables and rankings performance readily translate into comparison between nations (i.e. an inter-national as well as global comparison), and not just between institutions qua institutions and between their academic disciplines. Also national investment remains the largest influence on university capacity to perform, even in the USA where federal science funding is determining. Global university ranking, like all
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such league tables of comparative international performance, speak to the role of national government at the apex of the ‘global competition state’, which is becoming the principal way of understanding the nation in this era. Except perhaps in the USA, the nation is no longer a horizon unto itself and increasingly is understood in terms of its position and trajectory within the global setting. The adoption of this outlook in China, in place of the old autarky of the Middle Kingdom, largely indifferent to the world beyond its historical borders, is a major shift.

Fourth, global university ranking, and the technologies of output measurement that have become associated with it (publication counts, citation counts, journal rankings, impact measures, methods of securing equivalence across field, and so on), are a system for assigning workable economic values to the products of universities and to universities as institutions. Trends in a university’s rank can be seen as equivalent to the rise and fall of corporate equity prices, where the issue is not the absolute level of the price but its trajectory, up or down. The number of a university’s publications, reworked according to an index of quality, can be seen as a precise indicator of the research it produced in the preceding period. Once credible calculations are installed the numbers take on great weight (consider the power of the US News despite widespread critique of several of the measures). Exact funding can be allocated on the basis of rankings metrics, by governments, business firms and philanthropists. In other words the notion of universities as competing units of production has the potential to become more than an ideology shaping behaviour; it could become an operational economic system. University research in rankings systems still falls short of the capitalist ideal. Free scientific production placed in the public domain has no prices attached to it, and it is difficult or impossible to ascribe monetary value to the indirect benefits that research knowledge creates in the production process in industry. Nevertheless, the research ranking technologies constitute a significant step in the direction of the economisation of higher education. At the least, rankings have laid the basis for one form of precise targeting of government investment and for the ever intensifying micro-management of free public knowledge goods.

Finally, global university ranking constitutes an attempt to order the worldwide higher education environment in particular ways. On the vast open possibilities conjured up by global communicability and cultural flows (Marginson, 2008), it imposes an audacious closure, one that clearly assists some interests and not others. Ranking strengthens and reproduces the domination of the English language university systems. It installs the model of the top American research university (more particularly the idealised private university, the Ivy League) as the dominant template for higher education on a worldwide basis, even though no other nation has the global power or resources to imitate this kind of institution. It encourages the centralisation of research activity in fewer, stronger institutions and so directs innovation and the knowledge economy down restricted pathways. As discussed, by relegating all but the leading science universities to a subordinate position, it sharply bears down on diversity within and between nations. Because there is only one valued mission, this narrows the scope for upward institutional mobility and especially for mould-breaking organisational designs. There is some space for the
upward mobility of institutions and systems. The governments of China, Singapore, Korea and Taiwan China are particularly interested in global ranking because this technology enables them to track the progress of their own institutions. The challengers of hegemony on the grounds of hegemony, these systems will face continuing tensions in national strategy between cultural identity and the processes of global modernisation.

Global university ranking is here to stay. Responding political strategies will have to work around it, alongside it, under it and over the top of it. Ranking as such will not disappear. Global league tables cannot altogether block the potential for other kinds of cross-border relations and for forms of high quality institution other than the research-intensive English language university. But they pose the need to factor back in diversity (of institutional types, of languages, of knowledge, of modes of governance) and the non-competitive global exchange of people and knowledge.

A key move is to pluralise comparison itself, to move part of the action away from the whole of institution league tables that recycle inherited reputation and resources and so preserve the global and national status quos. The CHE’s interactive data for student choice are one example of such pluralisation. The more numerous and varied the means of comparison on offer, the better informed we will be and the less that any one system of comparison can secure enough weight to shape global relations decisively in its own image.

NOTES

1 The website contains all of the rankings outcomes since the series began in 2003, including the rankings by broad disciplinary field from 2007 onwards, and a detailed explanation of the methodologies used, relevant papers and links to rankings sites worldwide.

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