特別寄稿

Comparative Analysis of Systems in Higher Education

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I

Cross-national research on higher education is a potentially large field of inquiry that can extend to many countries the major areas of research we pursue in the American setting, ranging from the psychological development of students to the control of national systems. Whatever we analyze at home can be studied to advantage abroad, since it is by means of comparative analysis that researchers identify what is unique to particular settings and what is basic to education everywhere. The possible gains may be likened to those already realized in such fields as comparative politics and comparative economics. We have learned a great deal about American democracy — and alternating inquiries of those political scientists, sociologists, and historians who have held our particular governmental institutions up against the light of forms in other democracies and in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. We clearly will gain in effective knowledge about American higher education when its forms and practices have been thoroughly compared to those found in other countries.

My interest is the organization and government of higher education, across all the many ascending levels that stretch from department and chair at the bottom to the national ministry, chief executive, and national legislature at the top —an analytical interest that began in the sociology of organization and which has been gradually expanded by a growing interest in the politics of higher education and by a deepening concern about the effects of the ever-stronger tendency to locate higher education within the administrative apparatus of the modern state. A dictum of this approach is, that we leave a huge hole in the middle of analysis until we get inside the black box of organization; that, for example, it makes little sense to do research on problems of access to higher

tives to it — from the sustained and illumina-education without first understanding the internal composition of the systems involved; or, that to understand the connections of higher education to work one must disaggregate the structure of higher education as well as identify the substructures of labor markets. When organization is made the central concern, analysis can then branch outward systematically to consider how higher education is related to components of the environment, including the push of consumer demands on the input side and the pull of labor markets on the output side. In such matters, it turns out, the study of other countries has much to teach Americans, not by way of specific items that can be wrenched from historical and contemporary context and readily imported, but in a more sophisticated understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of different educational structures and processes as they have been evidenced in other systems. When our counterparts in other societies have gone down particular roads ahead of us, lessons of history are then often to be found outside our own system. Such lessons from abroad may allow us to reduce the injury wrought by unanticipated, undesired consequences, such as the bureaucratic and political pressures toward uniformity that will follow in a decade or two if we create a national department of education. If we concentrate on enlightenment rather than narrow engineering, cross-national research can be relevant to policy.

This type of research—organizational and governmental—in a virtually virgin field requires methods in the main that are not currently in vogue in American social science and psychology. If one looks at country configurations of organization and governance, appropriate materials are qualitative or only primatively quantitative. Given little knowledge and a weak state of the art, the compelling context is one of exploration and discovery rather than of hypothesis-testing and validation. The good news is that, in the context of discovery, some serious progress has been made in the last ten to fifteen years. We clearly now know more, and can arrange what we know in useful categories, compared to 1960 or 1970.

What then do we now know cross-nationally about the organization and government of higher education? In what basic ways is the American system similar to and different from the British, the French, the German, the Japanese? What are some of the more promising analytical approaches and problems for the near future? I will treat in turn three topics: how national systems structurally allocate and support academic activities; how they coordinate and control those activities; and, lastly, how they handle a set of basic insistent values that pull in different directions and require all the delicate arts of muddling through that mortal persons can muster.

II. A Cross-National View of the Academic Division of Labor

It turns out that nations "assign" academic work quite differently and with fateful effects. The many assignments can be conveniently organized in four categories, as horizontal and vertical, within universities and colleges and among them. When we observe the main subunits within universities that are arranged side by side at the operating level, an important difference emerges immediately: in the United States, we have the department as the core unit, with departments of English, Economics, and Chemistry side by side, joined by the many departments or divisions of the professional schools. But most national systems have not been organized this way, to the surprise of

Americans, but rather leave the operating level to Chairs, a unit synonymous with a person, the Chair-holding professor, who has hegemony over a set of assistants in a realm of teaching and research and who, if need be, organizes and heads a research institute. It turns out that our old-fashioned unit, the Department, is a major goal of hopeful reformers in many countries, as a way of supplanting the powers of the Chair which have grown dysfunctional in an age of mass higher education. The Chair can be, and has been in so many settings, turned into a citadel of personal privilege, institutionalized in the old days of smaller and more informal systems but now appearing as too autocratic in an age of participation and popular democracy and as too ineffectual administratively in an age of large organization.

And then what can one possibly say about vertical arrangements in the university that go beyond dry-as-dust analysis of hierarchical structures? Again, it turns out, when we compare nations, that there are major differences. In the U.S., we have located general education and a modest amount of specialization in a first major tier of post-secondary education, giving an Associate of Arts degree after two years and a Bachelor's degree after four. *Then,* true specialization begins, in the graduate school with its master's degree and Ph. D., and the professional schools with their specialty degrees in architecture, social work, veterinary medicine, education, management, etc., as well as law and medicine. This two-tier arrangement was an historical accident, a grafting of advanced specialization and research on to a deeply institutionalized collegiate structure. However, the European and dominant worldwide pattern is quite different. Students come out of the secondary school and directly embark upon a specialty, in law, medicine, and other professional fields, as well as in the basic disciplines. The first major degree is a certification of professional or academic competence, with the holders expecting to be placed accordingly. There is essentially a one-tier arrangement, and more advanced work has been handled largely informally by those whose base of operations is in the first tier, that is, no separate graduate school or sets of graduate schools formally occupying educational turf beyond the first level. What are the effects of this cross-national difference? They are fateful indeed. As Joseph Ben-David and others have suggested, research and advanced training fare best when given their own sturdy bases within the university, units within which they are the primary business. And, most of all, the multi-tier arrangements soften the inherent conflict between mass and elite higher education, between open-door admission and selection. This conflict is a wrenching one for all systems that enter into mass higher education with simple undifferentiated structures, since then democratization, equal opportunity, and open access means that large waves of less-selective students enter directly into the single major tier of the old university that promises competent doctors and lawyers, economists and historians, when certification is made a few years later. Hence the issue of selection-the new installing of *numerus clausus*-has waged across the European stage. We have been saved from this, with no one seriously attacking the legitimacy of selection at the graduate level, and particularly for the professional schools of the most advanced professions, since the open door for Everyman is at entry to our first tier, with that tier serving as a buffer zone before selection exercises its sharpest bite. Increased vertical differentiation, of degree levels and organizational levels, is now and will be for some time to come a major road to travel in the reform of structures to accommodate mass

higher education.

The most interesting form of differentiation is on the horizontal plane among institutions, the setting apart of different types of universities and colleges or what we generally call sectors. Here we can quickly identify four national patterns. The first is a single system nationally with one type of institution. We observe a thoroughly nationalized and unified system, operating under a national ministry, and the system consists essentially of only one institutional type, the national public university, containing 85 percent or more of all enrollment.

The second pattern is similar in that there is only one formal and all-inclusive national system, again with a bureaucratic center, but there are two or more types of institutions. This seems to be the most common pattern worldwide; it exists in Communist societies, Western democracies, and Third World nations alike. Typically, the main sector is a set of universities, with one or more "nonuniversity" sectors organized around vocational instruction, or teacher training, or both, but occasionally around an esoteric function prized by the government. All sectors are financed primarily by the national government, sometimes through a single ministry but often through several ministerial channels. France is a striking case of this pattern, with its historical differentiation of universities and *grandes écoles,* specialized schools that rank above the universities in prestige since the most noteworthy of them are sharply elite in selection and placement.

A third major pattern of sector differentiation occurs when formal control is divided between national and lower levels of governments. Countries have generally evolved into this pattern from a background that combined private sponsorship and decentralized public control. The influence of the national government generally came later, after World War II and as recent as the period of expansion after 1960. At the same time, private sectors gradually vanished or became reduced to less than 15 percent of student enrollment. West Germany is an excellent case in point, where basic control has been deeply institutionalized at the level of the eleven Lander governments, but various bodies in the national government and at the national level have become more influential in the years since 1960.

Our final pattern is one in which formal control is in the hands of private parties as well as public authorities, to the point where 15 to 20 percent or more of the students are in institutions that receive most of their financing from nongovernmental sources and have boards of control selected through nongovernmental channels. This is the most heterogeneous pattern of control, one that coexists generally with a multiplicity of institutional types. Japan is a prime example with some 75 to 80 percent of its students enrolled in private institutions.

Our own system obviously falls in this fourth pattern, with 3,000 institutions almost equally divided into about 1,500 private colleges and universities and a similar number of public institutions, the latter all within the fifty subsystems of the states. Thus public control as well as private control is fragmented: traditionally, the national government has played a small role, much less than in Japan, and the influence of national bureaus has developed quite late and in an uneven fashion.

The final form of differentiation needs only to be briefly mentioned, since it has been referred to above. There are vertical arrangements among institutions, on grounds alone of task allocation, as in the case of community colleges feeding students to four-year colleges and universities—short-cycle units existing under long-cycle units—*and* on grounds of accrued status. Institutional status hierarchies vary

in steepness: very steep in Japan, France, and Britain; moderately steep in the United States; and relatively flat in West Germany and Italy. And with what effects? Steepness in the institutional hierarchy increases the likelihood of: (a) an examination hell for students, since so many will yearn for so few top openings; (b) monopolies and near-monopolies of placement from prestigious institutions to elite positions; (c) academic inbreeding, which has been as high as 100 percent in key faculties in the Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto; and (d) academic drift, in which less-noble institutions, if at all autonomous, will freely and voluntarily converge upon the more prestigious models.

In short: relatively straightforward analysis of how national systems compose themselves, allocating tasks to organizations in various horizontal and vertical combinations, can suggest fundamental similarities and differences that are worth more exacting and discriminating research, but which in the meantime can alter, at least incrementally, how we view our own system. Even more from without than from within, our own national system stands out as deviant... radically decentralized in any formal sense, highly disorderly, full of inequalities, inconsistencies, overlaps, and redundancies, and hence ready for the touch of the central analyst and administrator who will save us all. Which brings us indeed to coordination and control.

III. Coordination and Control

The above descriptive types of national systems may be more analytically dissected and compared if we consider the respective strength of four forms of coordination in each of them. The systems may be coordinated by bureaucracy, profession, politics, and the market.

The *bureaucratic* means are well-known, inherent in the formal structure of administration referred to in the conventional usage of the term coordination. These means have grown in strength virtually everywhere in the last quarter-century, as administrative echelon has been piled upon administrative echelon in the unremitting quest for comprehensive order. The bureaucratization of higher education occurred as it became big business and shifted to large-scale organization.

The *professional* means reside in the power of expertise within evermore specialized and numerous esoteric disciplines and professional fields, retaining much coordinating influence within the operating units of bottom-heavy structures and giving academics local springboards to national power, as in the staffing of the National Science Foundation in the United States, the calling of prestigious professors to national offices in European countries, and the institutionalization of national academic oligarchy in such key models of buffer organization as the University Grants Committee in Great Britain.

The *political* means are the forms of linkage and supervision that allow external and internal groups as well as regular political officials to have influence. Nearly everywhere issues in higher education are increasingly divided along the lines of party politics, legislative coalitions, and power exchanges among central executives. External interest groups are more systematically included, forming a corporatist or semi-corporatist relation with those formally responsible for state policy.

It has been left primarily to political economists to grasp and explain the ways in which *market* interaction coordinates the behavior of individuals, groups, and organizations. As put by Charles Lindblom: "All social controls have elements of the automatic, unintended and unconscious;" and, in market life, people are

"deliberate and conscious; but their acts accomplish feats of coordination of which they are not necessarily conscious and which they do not intend." Exchange is a basic form of interaction that stands in contrast to authoritative command. It can be seen not only as a method for reshuffling the possession of things but also a method of controlling behavior and of organizing cooperation among people in higher education, as elsewhere. Even in the most state-dominated systems of higher education, processes of market coordination will be at work. In higher education, there is always a consumer market, in which students make choices and often some payments. As students vote with their feet, flowing from unattractive to attractive parts, within and among institutions, they promote certain components at the expense of others. There is always a labor market, constituted by faculty and administrative employment. So long as personnel can make some choices of where and for what duties they offer their services, free to make some exit choices, there is such a market. Thirdly, there is something like an institutional market in higher education in which organizations deal directly with one another. This is all quite unclear, but prestige seems here to be the main commodity of exchange. Institutions rank each other, take up locations in prestige hierarchies, compete for prestige, establish trade agreements, and voluntarily imitate, and converge upon, the most prestigious institutions.

These four forms of coordination—bureaucratic, political, professional, and market—appear in different combinations in different systems. The most elemental continuum running through the four types of national systems identified earlier is from tight to loose linkage; from unitary structure, to pluralistic national government control, to federative federalist arrangements, to market linkage. Such democratic planning-minded nations as Sweden are not far from the first pole, followd by a somewhat more heterogeneous and conflictful France, then to such federative cases as West Germany, Britain, Australia, and Canada, and then to Japan and finally the United States, the competitive market system *par excellence*, with the historic pace long set by autonomous private institutions and with the habit of competition institutionalized within as well as among the many state systems.

But this simple continuum soon becomes a triangle, and then a four-sided conceptual scheme—and then a series of mixed-up statements—as we get inside systems and consider their true complexities. Integrated systems may be ruled by academic oligarchs, which has happened often in Europe, as well as by bureaucrats or political figures. The best model in the world of how to take governmental money without governmental control—the British University Grants Committee, between 1920 and 1965—is a great case of a trusted academic elite ruling responsibly. In other countries, centralization means that political figures and central administrators join together to declare professors and market forces alike as undependable and untrustworthy coordinators. In still another, e.g., Yugoslavia, decentralization does not mean a strengthening of the market but appeasement of local academic oligarchs and a strengthening of guild-like forms of linkage among barons who control bits of the countryside.

In short, we are only at the bare beginning of analysis of the organization and government of higher education. But our elementary categories at least point the way, transporting us away from simplistic views that equate coordination with state planning and administrative structure and toward the true complexities of behavior and action in an evermore diverse realm of human activity. As example: concei-

ving of the market as a form of coordination and then distinguishing consumer markets and labor markets, allows us to to distinguish analytically between Japan and the United States, the two leading "market systems." Both types of markets operate strongly in the United States, with personnel as well as clientele having a *relatively* high degree of choice, even in times of market sluggishness. But, in Japan, the consumer market is strong, with 75 percent of the students paying their way in the private sector; while the labor market is weak, since, for various reasons of Japanese work-group loyalty, the baronial powers of chairholding professors, and a high level of academic inbreeding, as modeled by Tokyo and Kyoto, academics do not easily move from one institution to another. The market concept, when more precisely subspecified for higher education, should help us tease out a number of inter-nation similarities and differences, and to explain otherwise baffling contradictions.

A second example of where we can make headway in more powerful analyses is what I call "political markets." Within the broad framework of state authority, in one government after another, administrators struggle against one another. The more socialist the country, the more does the interest-group struggle have to take place within the corridors of government. Ministries, departments, bureaus, and divisions—and indeed legislative bodies—balkanize around specific domains and clienteles and resist mightily the efforts to pull them together. They compete for power and prestige, as means of protecting and advancing their own work, and competition between governmental power centers becomes a form of coordination. In a classic essay written thirty years ago, Norton E. Long identified such competition as perhaps the most effective instrument of coordination in complex government. He noted:

> "The position of administrative organizations is not unlike the position of particular firms. Just as the decisions of the firms could be coordinated by the imposition of a planned economy so could those of the component parts of the government. But just as it is possible to operate a formally unplanned economy by the loose coordination of the market, in the same fashion it is possible to operate a government by the loose coordination of the play of political forces through its institutions."

Or, as put in the recent outstanding work of Lindblom on politics and markets: "large-scale politico-economic organization is possible either through unilateral coordination in hierarchy-bureaucracy or through mutual adjustment among authorities who practice an extended use of their authority in order to control each other." Such reasoning is particularly applicable to higher education, a sector characterized by unusual task complexity, ambiguous goals, and competing forms of authority. The superstructures of higher education generally have no clear apex, but instead at the top, exhibit a melange of boards, bureaus, committees, and commissions.

In short: we come to know little about how the actions of persons and organizations in higher education are concerted when we look only to the formal plan and the formal hierarchy. Much of the coordination is going on in other ways, including through the struggle, exchange, and mutual adjustment of officials at the higher levels.

IV. The Conflict of Values

In all advanced societies, fundamental problems in higher education must necessarily arise from the need to express three, often

conflicting, national interests. One is an interest in social justice, which in higher education primarily takes the form of equality of access and, then, secondarily, equality in treatment and outcome. As publicly interpreted virtually everywhere, particularly in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe, this interest presses hard for open-door admission, so that everyone can get in, and uniform standards, so that everyone will be treated equally and fairly. The equity issue is a permanent one in all democracies, not solely in the United States, and should be studied comparatively.

The second national interest is in diversity of response, the ability of a sub-system of a nation to accommodate to increasing heterogeneity of demand and to adapt differentially to a high rate of change. This interest becomes ever stronger in higher ducation, as consumer demands, labor-force connections, and knowledge cultivation all become more varied than in the past. It presses for a multiplication of types of institutions and levels of training, so that different parts of the system can handle different tasks and spontaneously adapt to dfferent environmental demands. The needed responses are too complicated, ambiguous, and contradictory to be handled by central administration and uniform regulations alone, necessitating the risk of varied and unplanned reaction by semi-autonomous segments. Yet, the "market" can also lead to convergence rather than divergence, and we need to identify the conditions in large academic systems that promote the one or the other.

The third major national interest is in competence, the capacity of the highest levels of the educational system to produce and distribute knowledge and to send forth people well-prepared for occupational performance and civic life. This interest can be served in part by administrative efforts to establish minimal, average, and high standards. However, the comparative experience of many countries suggests that such efforts are often self-defeating, given the special task structure of higher education. Competence is probably best upheld by a moderately strong, but open institutional hierarchy in which status is awarded to persons and institutions on the grounds of perceived quality—and in which institutions are able, on this basis, to compete for elevation.

In effecting such disparate national interests, the structures of national academic systems must necessarily be full of inconsistencies, compromises, and contradictions. Equity has to be limited by the structural arrangements that accommodate diversity and induce competence, e.g., private sectors, highly selective entry to certain fields and institutions. Diversity is compromised by the arrangements appropriate for equality in access and outcome, e.g., administered uniform standards, and by the convergence occasioned by imitation in status hierarchies. And competence is restrained by actions carried out in the name of equity and by the uncontrolled fragmentation of programs and standards that inheres in extensive diversity. Thus, it is no wonder that modern systems of higher education should at this time exhibit a bewildering mixture of the traditional and the modern, the open and the closed, the flexible and the rigid, the elitist and the democratic. In making the transition from elite to mass education, national systems come to embody new sets of elemental strains and dilemmas, each system doing so with forms and practices firmly institutionalized in previous decades and interlocked among themselves as well as with a variety of structures in the larger society.

V

I would like to close on a research note by

offering four "leading ideas" (statements too loose to be called hypotheses) that can be pursued on the reconciliation of equity, diversity, and competence in higher education.

1. conflict among these competing basic interests is reduced by increased differentiation within a national system. As explained earlier, the differentiation can be analyzed along horizontal and vertical dimensions, within institutions and among them.
2. the crucial form of differentiation for the protection of the diversity interest is horizontal differentiation among institutions—the creation and maintenance of different institutional sectors. Systems that do not have such differentiation cannot handle mass higher education as well as the countries that do.
3. the crucial form of differentiation for the protection of the competence interest is vertical differentiation among institutions—the creation and maintenance of institutional hierarchies that are open to the circulation of institutions. Efforts to equate institutions formally in terms of prestige weaken modern national systems by failing to serve this interest.
4. the required sectors and hierarchies will tend to be perceived as sources of inequality. Given that unlike segments will be cast as "noble" and "less-noble, rich and poor, high and low equal *treatment* of students across the institutions of a system will not be possible in the sence of a promise that everyone will receive training and degress of similar quality.
5. Hence, the definition of equality that best allows for the play of the other values is the traditional one of equal opportunity in entering different segments, rather than the definition that leads to, and follows from, efforts to develop equal institutions.

On such matters, other national systems have had extended experience that are relevant to our own ongoing efforts to reconcile these interests. And since these interests are becoming more manifest to larger publics, it is crucial that public definitions be more informed by appropriate broad-gage research. Otherwise, the rapidly-growing formal coordination we are experiencing at state and national levels is likely to lead to more unwanted effects than we care to know. *