The Coming of Post-Institutional HE

Sir David Watson
Professor of Higher Education
Principal, Green Templeton College, Oxford
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Outline

- Two crises – “when the lights went out” (1974) and when the banks failed (2008)
- The rise and fall of Public Sector Higher Education (PSHE)
- Towards Post-institutional Higher education
Looking back at the 1970s

For fans of capitalism and markets, the late 1970s in the UK was a low point: 30% inflation, the IMF called in, the winter of discontent, oil shocks, stock markets at all-time low valuations, the US in reverse.

It was also with hindsight, a great turning point. Then we had the Thatcher and Reagan revolutions, privatization and de-regulation, the break up of the USSR, ‘The End of History,’ the opening up of China, and a 20-year stock market boom.

So it is strange to read the thesis du jour, Piketty’s *Capital in the Twentieth Century*, and see these past 40 years on a totally opposite trajectory: a descent from the sunlit uplands of equality achieved in the late 1970s – the most equality ever – to a slough of despond of terrible mounting inequality.

Andrew Wileman (2014), My Life and Times, *Management Today* (September), 36-42

The seventies turned out to be the decade when the country began its transformation from steady economic growth to spasms of contraction, from industry to information and finance, from institutional authorities to individual freedoms, from center-left to centre-right. Global competition happened in the seventies, and so did populist politics, special interest money, the personal computer and the cult of the self.

What happened in between?

- UK – Thatcher through Blair to the Coalition
- USA – Reagan through the Bushes to gridlock
- The neo-liberal paradigm and the death of the public sphere

“How much of a reckoning about the 1980s will there ultimately be? What the police did then may never be fully exposed. The same may go for the bankers. The privatised utilities seem vulnerable... Murdoch’s political dominance has surely gone... the 90s and 00s the decades of complacency will be next. In an anxious country, the recent past is always to blame.”

Dealing with crisis

- Muddling through
- Austerity
- Precarity
- Innovation
UK Government HE initiatives since 1963: twelve frameworks

2. 1965: the Woolwich speech – creation of the Polytechnics
5. 1985: the National Advisory Body for Public Sector HE (NAB), capping the pool, centralisation of local authority HE
6. 1988: the Great Education Reform Act – incorporation of the Polytechnics, Central Institutions and large Colleges
7. 1992: Further & Higher Education Act – ending of the binary line, Funding Councils for devolved administrations, creation of the new universities
9. 2004: Higher Education Act – variable fees, new universities, foundation degree awarding powers for FECs
11. 2010: the Browne Review – higher undergraduate fees, new student contribution system
12. 2011: Students at the Heart of the System
A Restlessness (or a Redundancy) of Reports

- McNair Report (1944) – Teachers and Youth Leaders
- Percy Report (1945) – Higher Technological Education
- AUT (1958) – Policy for University Expansion
- Anderson Report (1960) – Grants to Students
- Franks (1963) – Britain’s Business Schools
  - NACTST (1965) – The Demand for and Supply of Teachers, 1963-86
  - CVCP (1972) – Use of Academic Staff Time
  - CDP (1974) – Many Arts, Many Skills: the Polytechnic Policy and Requirements for its Fulfilment
  - Lindop Report (1985) – Academic validation in public sector higher education
  - ABRC (1987) – A Strategy for the Science Base
  - Roith Report (1990) – Research in the PCFC Sector
  - Robertson Report (1994) – Choosing to change: access, choice and mobility
- NAO (2002) – Individual Learning Accounts
- Milburn Report (2012) – How higher education can advance social mobility
- Finch Report (2012) – Expanding access to research findings
UK HE policy: “mood swings”

- Con 1 (1979-1985) – contraction and differentiation
- Con 2 (1985-97) – expansion and equality

- New Labour 2 (2004-2010) – return to two tiers, co-payment

- The Coalition 1 (2010-13) - contraction and radical co-payment
- The Coalition 2 (2014-15) – expansion and “alternative providers”
James: framework 3

- Towards the post-binary system
- The “three-cycle” model
- The DipHE
- Public Sector Higher Education (PSHE) and the rise of the CNAA
The Rise and Fall of PSHE

- Expanded when the university system wouldn’t
- Was local and regional as well as national
- Was planned (locally by Regional Advisory Councils [RAC] and the nationally – after the “capping of the pool” by the National Advisory Body [NAB])
- Was quality-assured (the rise and fall of the Council for National Academic Awards [CNAA], 1965-1993)
- Took teaching seriously
- Innovated in academic and vocational HE
- Did breadth as well as depth (CNAA Principle 3)
- Was fundamentally collaborative (the national university)
- Worried the establishment (e.g. reverse academic drift)
The Society for Research into Higher Education

The Polytechnic Experiment
1965-1992

John Pratt
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CNAA “Principle 3”

Programmes of study ‘must stimulate an enquiring, analytical and creative approach, encouraging independent judgement and critical self-awareness’
University of Brighton: students by subject area, 1994/95 - 2001/02

- Creative Arts & Design
- Subjects Allied to Medicine
- Biological Sciences
- Computer Science
- Physical Sciences
- Social, Economic & Political Studies
- Librarianship & Information Science
- Languages
- Agriculture & Related Subjects
- Humanities
- Medicine & Dentistry
- Law
- Business & Administrative Studies
- Mathematical Sciences
- Combined
- Engineering & Technology
- Architecture, Building & Planning
- Education

Source: HESA 1996; 2002
The Browne review: framework 11

- Included part-time
- Endorsed expansion
- The student market
- Transaction costs
- No purely “private” solution
- Proposed a “soft-cap” and a “levy”
- Modelling and the effects of “write-off”
- Little England
Willetts/Clegg: framework 12

- Vouchers
- ABB
- “Consultations”
- No research needed (in case...)
Prospects after 2015

- Voucherisation ("The RAB charge is not real money" (David Willetts, *THE*, 18.19.14))
- Student number controls
- Homogenisation
- Alternative providers (Vince Cable: some private providers are "a lot of dross," *Daily Telegraph*, 7.10.14).
- Impact
- The "fourth age of research" (Jonathan Adams, *Nature*, 30.5.13)

The post-institutional paradigm

- Learners first
- Thinking tertiary (the FE/HE boundary; local learning ecologies)
  - Learning and earning
- ITC (including MOOCs)
- Multi-mode funding and accreditation (whither vouchers?)
- Institutional hybridity
- Life-long learning
Learners first

“The polytechnics should attempt to redress the balance by making their students their primary consideration unambiguously and without fear or favour – students should come before subjects, before research, before demands of employers and before demands of the state. If they do this they will change the pattern of higher education in this country. If they do not they will fail to do anything of significance. They must challenge many of the assumptions and practices of the existing institutions and not merely fill a niche which these institutions have neglected. None of the preserves of other institutions of higher education is sacrosanct. Academic education and research cannot be left to the universities, professional education cannot be left to the professions, teacher training cannot be left to the colleges of education, industrial training cannot be left to employers and trade unions.”

The tertiary moment (2005)

- FE and “local learning ecologies.”
- Tomlinson, 14-19
- HEFCE/LSC “lifelong learning networks”
- RDA Skills Strategies

Open and Distance Learning

- 1838 University of London external degrees
- 1890s US degrees by correspondence
- 1920s NYU and Harvard radio degrees
- 1965 UK University of the Air (Open University)
- The mega-universities (John Daniel)
- 2002 MIT On-line
- 2006 Khan Academy
- 2008 The connectivist movement (Manitoba)
- 2010 Udemy
- 2012 The Year of the MOOC (Udacity, Coursera, Futurelearn)

Learning and Earning

- Craft (Sennett on the “head and the hand”)
- The *Limits of Competence* (Barnett)
- The “new artisan” (Fraser and Thompson)
- The cases of Microsoft and The SANS Institute ([http://www.sans.org/](http://www.sans.org/))
- Accreditation
- Recognition and portability (including APEL)
UK CATS Performance: 2011-12

- 693,891 students were enrolled on all years of undergraduate courses in UK HEIs;
- 130,758 of these (18.8%) were admitted directly to years 2 and above;
- 27,895 (21.3%) of these students admitted to higher years held formal sub-degree qualifications (Foundation Degrees, Diplomas or Certificates of HE, Higher National Diplomas or Certificates, National Vocational Qualifications at Level 4 or above; etc.);
- of these 7,829 (28.3%) joined the Open University, 1,702 (6.1%) the University of the West of Scotland 607 (2.2%) Birkbeck, and 604 (2.2%) the University of Staffordshire;
- 3,606 (2.8%) of the students entering higher years were admitted on the basis of HE credits earned in other institutions;
- of these 2,333 (64.7%) joined the OU.

What emerges is a complex picture in which one-third of all students change institutions at some time before earning a degree, a rate that is consistent across all types of institutions outside of the for-profit sector (where the rate is lower). Slightly more part-time students transferred than full-time students. Of those who transfer:

- 37% transfer in their second year
- 22% transfer as late as their fourth or fifth years
- 25% transfer more than once
- 27% transfer across state lines
- 43% transfer into a public two-year college.
The modern university: key types

1. The international research university
2. The professional formation university
3. The ‘curriculum innovation’ university
4. The distance/open learning university
5. The College
6. The specialised/single subject HEI
7. The “for profit” corporation

We are all “hybrids” now.
Why not a lifelong learning system?

(1) Assets

- HE diversity
- Professional accreditation
- The OU
- Adult education (e.g. the WEA)
- School-leaving age
Why not a lifelong learning system?

(2) Inhibitions

- Funding (and political) priorities
- Mistrust of the student market
- Hierarchy (and the “royal route”)
- Institutional practice
- Fear of regulation
Number of HE students by mode of study and level of course, 1979-2011

Stage 1: Complex Transitions

Source: Furlong 2008
What is to be done?

- **Institutional heads** need to be less precious about the linking of their status with that of the prior experience of their student body.

- **Senior academic leaders** (provosts, pro-vice-chancellors and others with responsibility for academic affairs) need to ensure that cross-institutional academic frameworks are transparent and fairly assessed.

- **Course leaders and tutors** need to think hard about learner autonomy and its implications.

- **Students** need to play their parts as well. The best modern learning environments are characterised by an atmosphere of purposeful and principled negotiation.
Towards Post-Institutional HE

If UK HE is going to prosper in the contemporary world, it is going to have to become messier, less precious, more flexible, and significantly more cooperative.