



What benefits do universities offer locally and globally?

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Two themes ... where local and global connect

- ❖ Higher education and the public good
- ❖ Towards a more holistic education and more cooperative institutions

I. Higher education and public good

The separate functions of universities are replaceable, but it is the “common public purpose” what is essential in higher education.

*“Nothing lasts forever and, every so often, nation-states and societies discover that they can live without the institutions they have inherited. **When these institutions stand for nothing more, nothing deeper or more collective, no greater public good, than the aggregation of self-interest** (like the monasteries in China and England, that accumulated vast social resources but came to exist only for themselves and those who used them) then the **institutions are vulnerable**. Self-interest can be channeled in other ways. The institutions disappear and their functions are picked up elsewhere”.*

Simon Marginson in the article: Higher Education and Public Good. Higher Education Quarterly, Volume 65, No. 4, October 2011, pp 411–433.

The knowledge-related functions of higher education need to be grounded in its locality and identity.

Two opposite and essential elements of universities:

1. The first element is “universal-mobile knowledge” or the transmission and creation of knowledge and part of a larger international network of institutions “
2. The second element is “place-bound identity, locality” or community embeddedness.

*“Knowledge is the unique claim of higher education. It is at the core of every public and private good that is created in the sector. Nonetheless, the knowledge functions in themselves are not enough to embed the institutions in locality. **Higher education needs a rationale that grounds its continuing knowledge-related functions in real locality:** a rationale that binds together the two parts of its foundational antinomy. This rationale must embody deeply felt common values”.*

Three imaginaries of higher education:

1. The first imaginary is the idea of **higher education as an economic market**: education and research as products, higher education as national economic competition, universities as business firms, the WTO-GATS vision of a one-world free trade zone in learning and intellectual property.
2. The second imaginary is **higher education as a field of status ranking and competition**. Status is ubiquitous, especially in research universities. Higher education produces and allocates social positions, 'positional goods'.
3. The third imaginary is the **networked and potentially more egalitarian university world** patterned by communications, collegiality, linkages, partnerships and global consortia.

It is the third imaginary, which lends itself to open, democratic collaborative forms and gives authority to knowledge from anywhere.

Higher education needs to re-ground itself in the social and to find the way to make visible global public goods.

II. Towards a more holistic education and more cooperative institutions.

In the future global society will need more knowledge and technical skills, but this knowledge alone will not be able to respond to the most serious problems. At the root of these problems we recognize other challenges or shortcomings.

To contribute to address them from higher education we need:

- A more holistic education
- More institutional cooperation

Today different educators are calling for a more holistic education, that is less fragmented, while they are studying and identifying the practices that can support this purpose.

As Alexander Astin has stated, an institutional social justice agenda goes hand in hand with the development of qualities such as an ethic of caring and an ecumenical world view, which are related to global citizenship.

Alexander Astin et. al. Cultivating the Spirit. How college can enhance students inner lives. 2011. Jossey- Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Cultivating global citizenship

Practices or context conditions that have been found to help becoming “other directed” and to expand one’s horizons (Astin et al. 2011).

- Service learning
- The international experience
- Broad learning from different disciplinary perspectives
- A diverse community
- A university environment that serves to stimulate social interactions, not only among students, but also with teachers and other members of the community.

However to transform the system, we must consistently create spaces of greater integrality across the institution. These spaces and interactions are necessary to develop a shared purpose, aggregate knowledge and nurture the trust that we need to work collaboratively.

Rising to the challenge of cross-border issues

“Research universities are not marginal institutions in this human and ecological drama. Their huge intellectual resources already address global challenges and find solutions. But they will confront more sharply their moral responsibility to ensure that education and research serve the many not just the few; to do this, they need to rise to the challenge of cross-border issues by acting collectively, in a manner commensurate with the scale and seriousness of the issues”.

Chris Tremewan

Who will win the Global Hunger Games?. In “Death of the Public University?: Uncertain Futures for Higher Education in the Knowledge Economy. Susan Wright and Cris Shore (Editors). Berghahn Books, 2017.