Anticipation 2019

New Ideas Session Proposal (Revised May 2019)

How the university's possible futures are enabled or constrained by four contested ideas of the university

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This presentation explores how today's discourse about possible futures for the Western university is enabled or constrained by four co-existing, contested *ideas of the university,* tacit cultural constructs that shape understanding of the university's social role and purpose:

- *the traditional idea*, derived from Newman's *Idea of the University* (Newman 2012), now present in resistance mode in universities,
- *the managerial idea*, the dominant idea in the extant discourse, shaping the university as organisation,
- *the reframed idea*, emerging from within the university, shaping initiatives to create socially focused universities distinct from the managerial university; and
- *the dismissive idea*, emerging from outside the university, viewing the university's purpose today as having little relevance.

The primary research question is: how is the emergence of possible futures for the university enabled and constrained by contested ideas of the university in the present?

The research framework is grounded in a foresight ontology (Petrov 2010; Poli 2011; Miller 2018), a social constructionist epistemology (Phillips & Hardy 2002; Fuller & Loogma 2009; Karlsen, Øverland & Karlsen 2010; Fumasoli & Stensaker 2013; Barnett 2017) and a foresight methodology (Slaughter 2002; Giaoutzi & Sapio 2013; Popper 2013). Foresight methods used are: (i) the *Three Horizons* (Sharpe 2013; Sharpe & Hodgson 2017) to map the existence of the four ideas; (ii) *Causal Layered Analysis* (Inayatullah 1998; Conway 2012; Haigh 2016) to identify images and assumptions shaping the ideas, (iii) *Scenario Archetypes* (Inayatullah 2008; Curry & Schultz 2009; Markley 2013) that build on futures identified in the literature to develop possible futures for the university; and (iv) *Backcasting* (Quist & Vergragt 2006; Bergman, Karlsson & Axelsson 2010; Tuomi 2012) to identify new pathways for the university's futures to inform decision and policy making in the present.

The thesis connects with the current state of the field by identifying, analysing and interpreting five distinct literature sets:

1. philosophical perspectives on the idea - what a university is and should be (Jaspers 1960; Pelikan 1994; Scott 1996; Turner 1996; Delanty 1998; Smith 1999; Barnett 2003; Peters & Barnett 2016);
2. the idea as justification for resistance to the managerial university and the development of alternative university structures (Miller 1995; Amsler 2011; Bailey & Freedman 2011; Dreger 2017; Kalfa, Wilkinson & Gollan 2017; Goodman 2018; Manathunga & Bottrell 2019);
3. the university as organisation - what is does and how it does it, including structure, leadership, management and work (Marginson 1996; Bleiklie 1998; Greenwood & Levin 2001; Deiaco 2009; Jensen 2010; Smerek 2010; Campbell 2018);
4. the external context for change shaping the university in the present and its possible futures (Marginson 1996; Hayward & Voros 2006; Sardar 2010; Tight 2013; Stein & de Andreotti 2016; Hall 2016, 2018; Germov 2017; Scharmer 2017; King 2017; Navitas Ventures 2017; Ramirez 2017; Eshleman 2018; Richards 2018); and

5. possible futures for the university indicated by scenarios, images, metaphors and assertions in individual texts (Miller & Miller 2003; Vincent-Lancrin 2004; Pearce Snyder 2006; Adam & Groves 2007; Universiti Sains Malaysia 2007; OECD 2008; Huisman, Boer & Bótas 2012; Ithnin et al. 2018).

The presentation reports on the identification, analysis and interpretation of the four ideas in the literature, their underpinning assumptions and embedded futures:

- identifying the unchallenged "in-house assumptions" (Alvesson & Sandberg 2011) that underpin and sustain each of the four ideas;
- identifying the image of the university's assumed future embedded in each idea; and
- proposing a framework for expanding today's discourse that moves beyond the single 'way of knowing' the university in the present that each idea generates (Voros 2008; Judge 2010; Floyd 2012; Alvares 2014; Andreotti 2016) and allows the emergence of possible university futures.

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