Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why it Matters*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2011, 248 pp.

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Benjamin Ginsberg is a professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University, having begun his academic career at Cornell University in 1973 joining his current university in 1992. His career spans a period of great change in higher education, even if his gaze is from the eyrie of the relative academic privilege of a well-endowed private university. His book is a scathing account of the rising power of a cadre of university managers (and their underlings) and the expansion of their influence at the cost of faculty.

Much of the book is based upon well-sourced anecdotes about corruption, self-aggrandisement, bureaucratic excess and the re-direction of the curriculum toward the enhancement of banal transferable skills and other idiocies. It also documents the increasing cost of higher education for US students in terms of dramatically rising tuition fees, alongside budget cuts for teaching departments and increased investment in campus facilities to enhance the 'student experience'. Alongside the latter, comes an expansion in the number of administrative staff and administrative staff as a proportion of all costs and employees of the university. In the US, the number of students per full-time (equivalent) member of staff has remained stable for faculty at 16 in 1975 and 15 in 2005, while for administrators it has declined from 84 to 68 and for other professionals (IT, counsellors, development officers, etc.) it has declined from 50 to 21 [p. 26].

But it is not simply the resource hungry nature of the administrative and professional functions that raises his ire, but the way that it has distorted the values of the university and the role of academic faculty in determining its purposes and intellectual agenda. In this way, his book can be read alongside Bill Readings's account of the "university of excellence" [Readings 1996], where "excellence" is an empty signifier of an audit culture enacted by university management in its various guises (deans and "deanlets," as Ginsberg memorably describes junior managers) and divisions ("research and knowledge transfer," "student experience," "estates and infrastructure," "education," etc, each served by management teams). The "university of excellence" is on the march everywhere, but especially in the Anglophone world.

The language of management, and its identification with the university as a corporate brand to be enhanced and promoted, is at odds with the language of academics, engaged with and by their subject and its collegial networks beyond individual universities. For example, for many universities in the UK, the invisible college is to be replaced by a visible set of partnerships (international and local) among institutions of equivalent status. These "appropriate" networks are selected by senior management and become part of a policy where staff are encouraged to engage in research and other activities with sanctioned partners.

Ginsberg, then, is describing an "existential" conflict between the "invisible college" of academics and the "corporate enterprise" of managers and it is one that academics are losing. The hierarchical organisation of management is superimposed upon

the collegial organisation of departments and faculties, but the objectives of the latter are set by senior management. This shift is reflected in the strengthening of the executive management of the university and the ordering of deans and deanlets, and their administrative and professional staffs. under its hierarchies with a commensurate weakening of faculty powers (what would have been expressed through university Senates in the UK, but which are no longer effective bodies of debate and constraint of executive decisions, except in a minority of cases, like Oxford and Cambridge, where the counterweight of tradition offsets centralising tendencies to some extent).

In fact, the situation in the UK is more extreme than that described by Ginsberg, by virtue of being more systematic. His book has the weight of the accumulation of instances, but it lacks an account of the new system of academic governance of "performance under audit." Increasingly, academic purposes in England are being merged into managerial discourses and subordinated to them. At the same time, the managerial discourse expresses its own domination as a form of service – the task of management is to provide an "excellent" environment in which academics can be "excellent." So, departments have key performance indicators against which they are judged. These include the tariff scores of applicants, applicant numbers, proportion paying overseas fees, National Student Survey scores, RAE/REF scores, etc. These, in turn are converted into individual targets and objectives in annual performance review, in order to align individual performance with institutional objectives, overseen by senior management and their professional colleagues [see Burrows 2012 for a full account of metrics and performativity in the UK academy]. University performance is oriented toward the achievement of university goals, usually expressed in terms of better performance in various league tables of research, teaching, student satisfaction and the like.

But where has this all come from? Ginsberg is strong on example and outrage, but weak on explanation. On the one hand, he suggests that it may derive from the self-interest of bureaucrats in expanding their domain and their access to the resources to do so. He also connects it to the increased importance of public funding over the period, including at private universities like his own. This has led to calls for accountability measures. However, he also lays the blame at the door of the politics of 'group' interests, specifically those of race and gender, which have led to monitoring of appointments, the development of codes of practice etc, all delegated to management rather than faculty, since it is the practices of the latter that are seen to be potentially problematic. Ginsberg, then, lines up with conservatives in the "culture wars" and with other neo-liberals around the perils of bureaucracy, while being silent throughout the book on the deepening marketisation of the university.

It is at this point that this reader becomes uneasy. In effect, the book starts to look like a defence of a particular academy, that of the privileged private university. Indeed, it is noticeable that he is silent on the fate of public universities in the United States and, in particular, the California Master Plan for public higher education whose rise and demise is virtually concurrent with his own academic career.[1] He does mention its "author," Clark Kerr, but only to disparage and misquote him as someone who "suggested that

[1] See the resources at the website on the history and future of the California Master Plan at http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/~ucalhist/archives_exhibits/masterplan/. See also Meister [2012]

universities should focus on producing knowledge likely to be useful in the market place" [p. 168].

Kerr [2001] described the modern university as a "multiversity," as having multiple functions and communities. A contribution to economic development was one function, but it was no means the most important for Kerr. In part, however, the growth of that function was continuous with the rise of the research university, of which Johns Hopkins is an early exemplar. However, Kerr also described the risk of pathologies deriving from the unbalanced development of the multiversity's various functions – the latter included, teaching (under pressure from the rise of the research university) and the development of mass higher education and pressure it placed on public funding. Ironically, he was himself a victim of an early skirmish in the "culture wars," sacked in 1967 by Governor Reagan as insufficiently robust in his handling of student protest as the mass higher education gave rise to demands for the democratisation of its collegial structures. This, in turn, was countered by centralisation and the imposition of managerial hierarchy as the focus of the university toward the knowledge economy was reinforced.

The reason why this matters is that if we were to name the new regime of knowledge production that lies behind the developments that Ginsberg derides, it is that of a neo-liberal knowledge regime associated with a global knowledge economy. In its name, university education in England has been marketised with direct public funding of most undergraduate degrees withdrawn and replaced by fees (the situation is different in other parts of the UK because the devolved parliaments of Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland have jurisdiction over higher education). Fees have been allowed to rise, but with a cap (albeit one that means that, on average, they are the highest among OECD countries). It is clear that many senior university managers and chief executive officers (their university honorific title of vice-chancellor no longer seems appropriate) wish that cap to be lifted, in order for fees to rise to the same level as charged to international students (and, incidentally, charged by US private colleges). Some elite universities will benefit, but the cost will be the atrophy of other universities, unable to compete in the market, and compelled to participate in a wider reduction of education to training as a consequence of the entry of for-profit providers to compete with them to provide low cost mass higher education.

Under the neo-liberal knowledge regime, knowledge serves corporate interests and the university itself comes to resemble other corporations. In that the global knowledge economy is also one that entails widening inequalities, the social mission of the university toward social amelioration and adaptive upgrading of all jobs (part of Clark Kerr's vision) is curtailed. The university becomes one of the engines of widening inequality, where graduates pursue privileged jobs in the context of a deregulated labour market for others. "Elite" universities aspire to international rankings, but the national systems of education from which they are allowed to decline. Whereas, the public has an interest in the quality of the system, the politics of neo-liberalism directs public funding to the benefit of a few institutions, primarily those that serve a social elite and the reproduction of its privilege.

It is this that makes me sceptical of Ginsberg's book. His concern is to assert the autonomy of faculty, with that, in turn, associated with the autonomy of the university. He seems unaware that the latter has been transfigured. It is no longer an autonomy that serves academic freedom, curiosity and the capacity to produce alternative visions of

society that he endorses, but a wish to be free of government control and regulation. This kind of autonomy is no different from that claimed by any chief executive of any other corporation. The enemy is not so much the administration of the university, who govern it in the name of the functions that predominate. The enemy is the research university and what it has become.

Ginsberg's remedy is weak. It is a call to consciousness-raising among faculty – that university politics and committee work matters – and to the Boards of Trustees, to shift resources away from management and administration and back to the core teaching and research purposes of the university. Yet, the latter two purposes are themselves being absorbed into a neo-liberal knowledge regime as the British case shows clearly. Moreover, it is precisely the Boards – or in Britain, University Councils – that have willingly and actively presided over the strengthening of the executive officers of the university. They have done this precisely in order to facilitate an engagement with what they are pleased to regard as an internationally competitive global marketplace for education. The problem is not the "all-administrative university," but the university that has become a "knowledge corporation."

The future of higher education is no longer to be contested inside the university, but must be addressed more widely as an issue of neo-liberal public reason and its deleterious consequences for democracy and for wider publics and its protections of the privileges of the few.

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