Chapter 8
Lessons from Continental Europe: The Collegial Tradition as Academic Power

Introduction

In its search for the meaning of the collegial tradition this book has focussed predominantly upon the English experience of higher education. Even the small intrusion of the previous chapter into American territory presented only a very partial interpretation, one that concentrated on the seemingly wide appeal of the residential college. Despite the best efforts of admirers from Woodrow Wilson to Clark Kerr, the collegiate university – as opposed to colleges – did not take root in American soil. Indeed, in terms of its prestigious research universities, America's crème de la crème, German higher education with its strong research tradition, including its commitment to graduate studies has had a more potent impact.

It has been part of this book's purpose to pursue the understanding of collegiality beyond the classic Oxbridge model of the collegiate university. Thus the United States presents us with the residential colleges, the Universities of London and Wales with the federal model, the 'new' English universities (plus Durham) as pale replications of Oxbridge, and then there is the apparently universal managerial revolution posing a powerful challenge everywhere to the collegial understanding of institutional governance and administration.

The question, therefore, is what continental Europe – lacking for centuries any notion of a collegiate university and possessing but fragile replications of colleges – can offer our attempt to understand collegiality? The chapter will address this question that provides its central theme in three main segments: (1) by providing a note on the medieval continental universities; (2) by presenting a brief comparative analysis of the central themes in the three main traditions of European higher education (the Napoleonic, the Humboldtian and the Oxbridge collegiate model) that came to fruition in nineteenth century Europe; and (3) by addressing how in recent years the continental systems of higher education have sought to come to terms with new social, economic and political pressures that have impacted universally upon systems of higher education.

This chapter will approach the material with a comparative perspective, paying particular reference to how the continental models of European higher education differ from the English model, and more especially seeking to highlight the contrasts

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and similarities in the interpretation of the idea of collegiality. This chapter, like those preceding it, stresses the importance of an interactive process of change in higher education. It will conclude by raising the wry possibility that the continental systems of higher education, that still continue to be more state-moulded, have a better chance of preserving an interpretation of collegiality as the sustenance of academic authority than the market-driven Anglo-American model where historically collegiality can be said to have had its strongest representation.

Colleges and Collegiate Universities in Medieval Europe

In the seminal three-volume edition of Hastings Rashdall's *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, our attention is drawn to the mistaken perception 'of colleges as institutions peculiar to the English universities' (Rashdall, 1936: 498). Randall goes on to note that, 'The true home of the collegiate system is Paris' and it is 'from Paris it passed to those universities upon which it has obtained its longest and firmest hold' (Rashdall, 1936: 498). And Cobban confirms that, 'Paris must be regarded as the home of the university collegiate system in the sense that academic colleges of a kind arose there earlier than anywhere else' (Cobban, 1975: 126). Jacques Verger, in Rüegg's equally formidable *A History of the University in Europe*, claims that, 'In the years before 1300, a total of nineteen colleges were founded at Paris, six at Oxford, and one at Cambridge' (Verger, 1992: 60). Moreover, albeit on a somewhat lesser scale, colleges appeared in both Italy (notably at Bologna) and Spain (Cobban, 1975: 126). Verger goes so far as to assert that, 'It was rare indeed for a medieval university to have no college, as was the case with Orléans' (Verger, 1992: 61).

Although the medieval European colleges were founded primarily to provide a place of residence for students, their functions appear to have evolved over time. Schwinges (with reference to Rashdall) notes, 'During the later Middle Ages, however, university courses in all subjects, but especially in the arts and in theology, were transferred into the colleges themselves'. And, furthermore, 'At the end of our period, the situation over much of Europe was dominated by the colleges. . .; in Paris, in 1445, it was baldly said that the entire university was situated in its colleges, and that this statement held equally true for Oxford and Cambridge' (Schwinges, 1992: 214–215). Thus the residential European college transformed itself, which at Paris included intercollegiate cooperation on teaching (Cobban, 1975: 131), with even separate colleges for graduate and foreign students.

Evidently the collegiate model appears with varying degrees of development in the different national settings, but it also takes on contrasting characteristics, which, at least superficially, appear to be very important in ensuring its survival. Gieysztor claims, with reference to Paris, that 'external authorities' controlled 'college life' because they appointed the head of the college and filled the vacant fellowships. Moreover, college properties were more often than not managed by those who did not belong to the college. This was all very different from the circumstances that prevailed at Oxford and Cambridge where:

> . . . colleges had little administrative connection with governing bodies of the university; they organized their own endowment and benefited from the university's teaching and academic degrees; they elected their heads and co-opted the fellows who governed them under their own charters and statutes. Thus colleges in England did not follow the course taken by Paris (Gieysztor, 1992: 117).

And, in confirmation of the differences, Verger observed that, 'The English colleges were more independent and more democratic, their fellows being predominantly bachelors of arts and theology students' (Verger, 1992: 61).

Cobban provides a powerful concluding observation on the comparative status of the medieval universities:

> It is abundantly clear that the academic colleges in the medieval universities subsumed a diversity of types ranging from the autonomous, self-governing, landowning model usual in England to the humble institution frequently found in France and Italy, which was little more than a lodging house for students (Cobban, 1975: 124).

And what is the key variable that distinguishes the humble from the prestigious college? For Cobban the common explanatory thread is the endowed resources of the colleges: 'It is the endowed status of the college that decisively distinguishes it from hall or hostel, setting up the conditions of a permanent and stable existence within the university community' (Cobban, 1975: 124).

The historical evidence, however, throws up questions that the historians have failed to investigate in depth. Logically it would seem to follow that colleges with endowment resources, especially if they controlled them, would be more likely to flourish than colleges without either the resources or the control. The first issue is how to account for the fact that some colleges were generously endowed and others were not? Is it simply a matter of chance so that colleges with benevolent and generous founders survived while others lacking such good fortune steadily declined? What did colleges have to do to secure endowments? How important were the qualities of collegiate leadership in enabling some colleges to expand their remit to incorporate teaching duties while others remained mere lodging houses? Second, and more significantly for this chapter, why is it that the English colleges have survived (albeit with fluctuating fortunes) to the present, while the French colleges have not? It this regard, it should be noted that Cobban was prepared to include the College of Navarre, Paris, in the ranks of 'the sophisticated, highly-organized and prosperous societies' (Cobban, 1975: 124). Thus it was not only the poorly endowed and ineffectual continental colleges that perished but also those that were wealthy with strong identities and important functions.

Hastings Rashdall, by way of offering an explanation, points the finger at the French Revolution: 'And at the Revolution the collegiate system as a whole fell with the other institutions of medieval France – never (like so much of the *ancien regime*) to reproduce itself under altered forms in modern times' (Rashdall, 1936: 533). A view subsequently supported by Cobban who tersely remarks: 'The Paris colleges were suppressed at the French Revolution, and the university never reverted to collegiate lines' (Cobban, 1975: 132). The broader implication is that within post-revolutionary France the colleges no longer had a viable social role to play within the

new order and, like the universities themselves, were viewed with deep suspicion by the reconstituted French state. Given the ingrained ecclesiastical influence over the colleges and universities such hostility is unsurprising. In a somewhat unreflective eulogy to Oxford (perhaps unsurprising given his deep-rooted ties to the University) Rashdall drew the obvious contrast: 'During the last 100 years the college buildings and the college system alike have silently adapted themselves to the altered needs of the present with that power of spontaneous self-development which is the happy peculiarity of English institutions' (Rashdall, 1936: 533).

But, as Rashdall himself implies, it is difficult imagine the Oxbridge colleges 'silently adapting themselves' to traumas as extreme as the French Revolution and the rise of the Napoleonic state. No matter what the virtues of the French collegial institutions may have been (wealth, self-governance and effective performance) it was inevitable that they would be swept aside in such circumstances unless they could show they were in tune with the demands of new order, which they patently could not. In the case of France, medieval social institutions would be replaced by models that were sympathetic to the state and society of the early nineteenth century. And, following the same logic, it was critical for Humboldt to construct a model of the university at Berlin that would meet the needs of the emerging German state while embellishing a growing sense of a national culture. The contrast with circumstances in England could scarcely be more different. In no sense is Oxford or Cambridge integral to a process of nation building. The *Revolution of the Dons* (Rothblatt, 1968) is about the creation of 'donnish dominion' and the establishment of Oxford and Cambridge as centres of academic scholarship (and thus loosening the ties with the Anglican Church) while ensuring that they cement their links to the more elevated strata of the expanding bourgeois ranks in the professions, in the state, in finance capital and even in industry. This is about class reproduction and institutional regeneration in the nineteenth century and most certainly not about nation building. However, it should be said that Oxford and Cambridge did have a role to play in the earlier struggles between church and state (crown), which is unsurprising given the fact that as national institutions they would inevitably be drawn into the all-encompassing nature of the conflict.

Competing Models of the University: Is There Room for Collegiality?

The Napoleonic years witnessed not only the demise of the medieval colleges but also marked a period of decline for continental universities more generally, especially in France and Germany (Rüegg, 2004: 3). The question is what new traditions of higher education emerged and in what ways, if at all, did they embody any sense of collegiality? In order to address that question two models will be analysed – the Napoleonic and the Humboldtian – which came to dominate the continent as the nineteenth century unfolded. However, it is important to remember that, just as today there are varying national responses to the Bologna process, there were also national and local adjustments to these differing systems of higher education. There

was no neat and universal pattern of adaptation. Developments fitted local needs and undoubtedly would evolve over time, even in France and Germany, as circumstances demanded. Nonetheless, both models encompassed an idea of the university that continued to have considerable symbolic appeal long after universities and university systems moulded in their image had changed. With reference to von Humboldt, Nybom examines the long shadow he has caste over the development of continental higher education as a talisman for both the advocates of change and proponents of the status quo (Nybom, 2007: 55–79).

The Purpose of the University

To express the point boldly but narrowly, the central historical purpose of the university has been to educate undergraduate students in a manner that best enables them to assume a successful role in society. For many that successful role has gravitated around the extent to which higher education enables the graduating student to acquire a job and to pursue an effective career. The Napoleonic model comes closest to this interpretation as reflected in the creation of *les grandes écoles*, which had the task (and still have the task) of selecting and training rigorously a small cadre of students destined to occupy the commanding heights of the French state and society. In the words of Cécile Deer:

> Historically the task of the *grandes écoles* . . . has been to select, educate and groom the nation's elite, society's future leaders in strategic areas such as engineering, state administration, business and education (Deer, 2009: 220).

And, while the *grandes écoles* predate the 1789 Revolution, the 'post-revolutionary period reinforced the prominence of the é*coles* as opposed to the universities which were considered too close to the *Ancien Regime'* (Deer, 2009: 220). But von Humboldt also recognised that the state needed the universities to educate students who would fill posts in its expanding bureaucratic apparatus (Nybom, 2007: 64), and if Oxford and Cambridge had remained wedded to providing clergy for the Anglican Church undoubtedly they would have become anachronisms by the turn of the twentieth century.

The issue that needs to be explored is the precise character of the Napoleonic and Humboldtian models in terms of the core values embedded in their respective forms of higher education. Inevitably, there are links to the state and society but do the universities possess a self-identity that shapes how they can best service those links while also fulfilling goals they believe are intrinsic to their own needs? This is a question (particularly with reference to von Humboldt's work) worthy of the closest attention. In the context of this chapter, with its broader goals, it cannot be given the detailed attention it deserves. The intention is to explore the extent of its affinity with our understanding of the collegial tradition. Do we have a genuine synergy of values or merely a number of random similarities?

Halsey, in his analysis of the 'Ideas of the University' (Chapter 2 of his *The Decline of Donnish Dominion*), has written:

> However, what none of these three English pedagogues [Newman, Pattison and Jowett] ever squarely faced was what Weber saw as the fundamental struggle, in the adaptation of education to industrialism, between the cultivated man and the expert. . . (Halsey, 1995: 37–38).

By the embracement in his later years of the increasingly influential German idea of the research university, Pattison radically modified his view of collegiate Oxford, but certainly both Newman and Jowett remain as central figures in reshaping Oxford as a collegiate university. However, von Humboldt, so widely seen as the inspiration for the foundation of the modern research university, espoused a very subtle idea of the university, which the research university soon outgrew (Clark, 2006 – in a feat of immaculate scholarship – provides the most comprehensive overview of the development of the German research university).

There are numerous succinct overviews of von Humboldt's central thesis (Fehér, 2001: 33–37; Flexner, 1930: 311–315; Krejsler, 2006: 213; Nybom, 2007: 60–68; Rothblatt, 2003a: 34; Sweet, 1980: 53–76) but we will let man speak for himself.[1] von Humboldt argued that the central purpose of intellectual institutions (by which he meant both academies and universities) was 'the cultivation of science and scholarship (*Wissenschaft*) in the deepest and broadest sense'. Their task was to achieve for the individual the transition from 'the mastery of transmitted knowledge' to the pursuit of 'independent inquiry'. Moreover, this was 'an unceasing process of inquiry' that joined student and teacher together in a never-ending quest. It was this goal that formed the central purpose of the university: 'At the higher level, the teacher does not exist for the sake of the student; both teacher and student have their justification in the common pursuit of knowledge' (von Humboldt, 1970: 242–243). Thus the continuous institutional search for *Wissenschaft* was matched by an equally perpetual process of individual self-development – usually referred to as *Bildung* – through the co-operative pursuit of knowledge.

The blueprint is so idealistic that it is difficult to imagine it could be anything other than visionary. But the central ideas – the interpenetration of research and teaching, a learning process embracing both teachers and students (von Humboldt favoured a process of learning incorporating seminars as well as lectures) and a belief in the unity of knowledge with philosophy at its core – still continue to exercise a profound influence. Clearly the German universities swiftly evolved to embrace professional and disciplinary-based graduate studies, with overseas students flocking to their doors to undertake research that led to doctoral degrees rather than crossing continents to embrace either *Wissenschaft* or *Bildung*. Thus, by the time Weber came to make his famous observation on the tension between a tradition that gave us 'the cultivated man' and another that gave us 'the expert', it is clear that German higher education had moved beyond the idealism (almost other worldliness) of von Humboldt. The Napoleonic model therefore provides a more forceful case for the virtues of the expert – carefully selected, highly but narrowly trained and fiercely instructed in institutions dedicated to turning out 'the best and the brightest' to serve the interests of the state.

In our chapter that defined the collegiate tradition, we claimed that an intrinsic element is the belief that the experience of higher education should for the student

(especially the undergraduate) embody more than a formal academic training. It is not simply about the making of experts, and even today in England the acquisition of professional qualifications often follows on from – for example, in both law and medicine – relatively broad-based undergraduate degree programmes. The idea of undergraduate education embracing a measure of character training still persists in those universities where the traditional ethos lingers on, and which have the resources and infrastructure to sustain it. Note also, that in the United States, incorporating a tradition of liberal education, it is still common to talk of 'going to college'.

The State and the University

Integral to both the Napoleonic and Humboldtian models of higher education is the proposition that the interests of the universities and state are closely interrelated but again this assertion disguises very important differences. von Humboldt wrote that '. . . the state must supply the organisational framework and the resources necessary for the practice of science and scholarship'. However, it must do so in a manner that is not 'damaging to the essence of science and scholarship' for:

> The state must always remain conscious of the fact that it never has and in principle never can, by its own action, bring about the fruitfulness of intellectual activity. It must indeed be aware that it can only have a prejudicial influence if it intervenes. The state must understand that intellectual work will go on infinitely better if it does not intrude (von Humboldt, 1970: 244).

The key conundrum is what we are to understand by state intervention. Ironically, in a statement that could be seen as conveying the essence of the Napoleonic model, Humboldt wrote: 'The university always stands in a close relationship to practical life and to the needs of the state, since it is always concerned with the practical affair of training the younger generation' (von Humboldt, 1970: 248). Furthermore, 'The right of appointment of university teachers must be reserved exclusively to the state. . . The condition of the university is too closely bound up with the direct interest of the state to permit any other arrangement' (von Humboldt, 1970: 249). There was also a belief that if appointments were formally the responsibility of the state, this would counter the factionalism generated by academic rivalries (in-fighting within an academic oligarchy) and keep guild politics in check (Sweet, 1980: 64–65). So, within both models the professors, who have most institutional status and power, are state – not university – employees, in effect civil servants, a situation that continues to prevail in certain European countries (for example, Greece). The distinction, however, between being a state employee and being appointed by the state needs to be kept in mind.

The assumption in von Humboldt's writing is that there is a synergy of interests between the state and the universities, and the universities will best fulfil their functions, including those that touch upon the concerns of the state, if they are allowed to pursue their goals free from state interference. What the state receives in turn is not

only a cadre of appropriately educated young graduates but also the sustenance of a culture that acts 'as a basic force for sustaining the state' and as a unifying force for German society (Knoll & Siebert, 1967: 43). The Napoleonic model, however, was more explicitly concerned to further the interests of the state. The bureaucratic apparatus was guided by the premise that French higher education institutions needed to gel with the interests of the new social order (downplaying the idea that there was a natural harmony) and was prepared to curb academic freedom 'if it seemed likely to prove dangerous to the state' (Charle, 2004: 45).

However, although von Humboldt argued that the interests of the university and of the state could be reconciled harmoniously, he did attempt to secure a measure of financial independence for the University of Berlin. The implication is that he was sensitive to the possibility of the state using its financial leverage to achieve policy goals that would be unacceptable to the university, and that endowment income would provide some protection. It was part of von Humboldt's plans for the University of Berlin that it should have 'a permanent endowment in landed property' (Sweet, 1980: 58). But whether this was to act as a guard against undue state intrusion, or even to make the university independent of the state, is a matter on which the historians disagree. Sweet has suggested a more pragmatic interpretation:

> That Humboldt thought a permanent endowment would give the university a certain *kind* of independence is, to be sure, not to be denied.

But

> Above all an endowment would ensure that the university would not be the first budgetary victim if the state fell on hard times (Sweet, 1980: 63–64).

And we have already noted the importance of endowment income for the medieval colleges: recognising that it may have been a necessary prerequisite if the college was to function effectively but was no guarantor of its survival. Sweet is claiming therefore that endowment income ensures financial security rather than providing protection against political intrusion.

We will highlight further differences between the Napoleonic and Humboldtian models and collegiate Oxbridge, but it is important not to overdraw the contrasts in terms of the relationship between the universities and state and society. English universities, even those founded since the introduction of an annual public grant (1919), have always possessed a considerable measure of formal autonomy. They have been shaped more by an internally constructed idea of the university rather than required to conform to the demands of a state-imposed model. However, until *the revolution of the dons* both Oxford and Cambridge served the interests of the Anglican Church, and it should not be forgotten that the Church of England historically has been embedded in the English state. The patterns of religious exclusion that persisted on the continent found its parallel in England. Moreover, an Oxbridge education was perceived as part of a wider process of cultural formation for a certain class of Englishmen, that very class which for so long dominated public life. Furthermore, manufacturing interests supported the nineteenth century civic foundations in the

belief that they would serve the needs of the local economy. Consequently, the idea that the university can be constructed from within has persistently run up against the reality of these external pressures.

Who Has the Institutional Power?

In collegiate universities critical functions are shared between the colleges and the university, but if there are no colleges then the university assumes the sole responsibility for those functions. Furthermore, if the university is under the close supervision of a regulatory state, including the ultimate control of its core academic duties, then the opportunity for collegiality to re-invent itself within the confines of the university is circumscribed. But within both the Napoleonic and Humboldtian models a tacit deal appears to have been struck between the academic guilds and the state.

The professors in von Humboldt's model, although state employees, clearly exercised considerable control over the academic affairs of their universities. In effect they were the department and determined its academic shape. In contrast, in the Napoleonic model the university, as an independent institution that shaped it own identity and pattern of development, all but disappeared. The professorial faculty secured an authority that was independent of the university and the key relationship was between the guilds (above all the professors) and the ministry. Within this setting professors were very powerful (as long as they operated within the boundaries formulated by the state) and without their support it would be virtually impossible to create a broadly based sense of collegial decision-making. The universities, because they were not masters in their own house, were not in a position to govern themselves. While there was strong genuflection to academic authority within both the Napoleonic and Humboldtian ideas of the university, it resulted in the creation of personal fiefdoms rather than collegial models of governance, or even for that matter strong administrative authority with its power base within the university.

Collegial governance does presuppose that there are institutional loyalties – to colleges and universities as well as to departments and research centres – that are sustained over time. Indeed, the supposition is that the collegial mode of governance is central to creating both institutional identity and individual loyalty to it. The predominantly continental guild tradition has fragmented institutional identity by creating an alternative focus for individual loyalty. In fact it is stronger than that for the guilds have been used to enhance and sustain the authority of particular interests. The guilds (of students as well as academics) emerged within the medieval world but, in his seminal work on Italian higher education, Burton Clark remarks: 'From the twelfth to the twentieth century, the university has predominantly had the shape of a federation of guilds. Historically, the guild is *the* generic organizational form for the support of academic work' (Clark, 1977: 158). And the thrust of Burton Clark's book was to explain how the guilds (with a pattern of internal control that combined both collegiality and oligarchy!) were able to sustain an especially potent presence in the Italian universities. It is not, therefore, that collegial forms of

governance were absent in the continental universities but there were not structures of governance with clear lines of control that gave the universities overall institutional authority, and thus:

> The interests of senior academics were strongly fixed in the chair . . . and the collegial bodies that ruled the faculty and the university; [while] those of public officials were rooted in the central and field offices of the education ministry. And the organization of the interests of the professors had historical primacy (Clark, 1977: 168).

In recent years the reform of the governance and administration of the continental universities has been at the very core of the developments in European higher education, and central to that process has been the attempt to challenge the values associated with the guilds and the pattern of governance they spawned.

Therefore, although we have drawn a distinction between the three models of the university (the Humboldtian, the Napoleonic and the Collegial) in terms of both how the purposes of higher education are interpreted and how the relationship of the universities to the state and society has been constructed, it is with respect to institutional power that the sharpest distinctions can be drawn. This is a consequence of the unique internal organisational structures of the collegiate universities and the very contrasting historical contexts within which the three models have developed. For centuries the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were creatures of their colleges, the universities lacked a strong sense of their identities. The changes that came to fruition in the latter half of the nineteenth century put the college fellows, not the professors, at the heart of the universities with respect to who had both status and power. That has changed over time with the rise of university departments headed by professors who exercise considerable authority within their spheres of influence and now are also accorded a national, even international, status dependent upon their research output. But collegiate governance still retains a powerful hold both as an idea and in practice. It is most decidedly not only a symbolic touchstone, in the sense that Nybom believes is the case with von Humboldt's model, but rather a potent idea that impacts upon the policy-making process.

It can be argued that both the guilds and collegiality are parallel, even overlapping, manifestations of medieval forms of institutional governance (for a broad comparative overview see, Clark, 1977: 166–173). The question is why the academic guilds survived in continental Europe while the colleges, some of which – as we have noted – were flourishing institutions, did not? Again this is a conundrum mainly for the historians, but it seems plausible to argue that the post-revolutionary French state would have been intent on clipping the wings of all those institutions, universities as well as colleges that were perceived as unsympathetic to the new order of state and society. Colleges and universities were both an easily identifiable target and represented a particular threat because they were institutional representations of traditional values and interests. The guilds were more deeply embedded in the social order of medieval Europe and would be slowly undermined by the economic changes that developed throughout the nineteenth century, in particular the social relations of production associated with the spread of capitalism. In the meantime the academic guilds could be incorporated within the Napoleonic model of the university whereas the colleges could not.

All Change?

In this section of the chapter we will examine the more contemporary character of the continental model of the university, looking back to 1945 but with the predominant focus on the current struggles to restructure the governance of higher education at the level of the national system, and how those struggles have impacted upon institutional governance. But it is important to remember that the models, which we have been discussing, were reformulated in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In England there was *the revolution of the dons*, which reconstituted the collegial tradition at Oxbridge, and in continental Europe (more particularly Germany) stimulated the rise of the modern research university. Rothblatt and Wittrock's *The European and American University since 1800*, and more especially the contributions by Burrage (1993) and Wittrock (1993), provides an excellent comparative overview of the historical context within which the contemporary changes can be located.

In the words of Nybom:

> The second "revolution", the emergence of the modern research university, which in reality brought about a gradual restructuring and reorganization of all university systems . . . took place in the period between 1860 and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 (Nybom, 2007: 69).

Moreover, these changes were driven as much by developments in the pursuit of knowledge as by forces external to the university: 'The driving forces behind these fundamental and simultaneous changes came not least from *within* science and scientific theory' (Nybom, 2007: 69), which swiftly left outmoded von Humboldt's commitment to the unity of knowledge. However, as Nybom goes on to reflect, the remarkable consequence was not the demise of von Humboldt's legacy but rather his canonisation:

> However, in our context it is equally interesting and remarkable that this process of cognitive and institutional disintegration, which in many respects signified a fundamental break with the original Humboldtian ideals, was not only explicitly presented as the ultimate fulfilment of Humboldtian dreams, it also, ironically enough, marked the reinvention and even canonization of Wilhelm von Humboldt himself as the spiritual *and* practical founding-father of the German (European) University (Nybom, 2007: 70).

Although there are some who still seem intent on canonising von Humboldt (Elton, 2008: 224–236), the critical task is to ascertain the significance of his *oeuvre* upon contemporary developments by evaluating its impact upon current policy ideas and decision-making, rather than expressing uncritical admiration for his legacy.

But in the immediate post-1945 years not a great deal changed in the governance of European higher education systems. Economic reconstruction took priority and higher education was not a policy issue that figured prominently in the political agenda. The dominant political sentiment was 'left of centre' embracing most of the mainstream parties and offering support for an agenda underwritten by the belief in education, including higher education, as a public good that should be used to fulfil desired social goals. To this end, the state had an obligation to provide the required public resources and sustain its control of the universities (in the United Kingdom

the system of higher education was by now virtually dependent upon public funding and the UGC was given new terms of reference – mildly more *dirigiste* – in 1946). These are the years *par excellence* of donnish dominion and the subordination of university councils to academic senates (see Chapter 6). On the continent, however, the ministries retained their authority and in the universities professorial power continued to hold sway.

The initial challenge to this authority structure, although stimulated by external events, interestingly came from within the university itself. Initiated by the student estate it threw into the melting pot the structure of university governance – who should have power and how should it be exercised? And, as has been true of the changing model of university governance more generally, it is the Dutch who instigated the most sweeping changes. In the words of De Boer:

> Prior to the 1970s, Dutch university governance was, on the one hand, dominated by state bureaucrats and, on the other, by the professoriate (De Boer, 2009: 223).

As the 1960s unfolded there was a growing demand in the Netherlands '... for democratic participation in university decision-making by junior academics, non-academic staff and students'. The consequence was the passage in 1970 of the *Wet op de Universitaire Bestuurshervorming* (WUB) Act, which introduced 'a system of functional representation through university and faculty councils'. This legislative Body (University Council) had to work with a small Executive Board, which included the *Rector Magnificus*, with the respective responsibilities of the two bodies following the hazy dividing line between academic and non-academic affairs (De Boer, 2009: 223; De Boer & Stensaker, 2007: 99–117). The potential for conflict was very real but the model was not replaced until 1997, and then as much as a consequence of new pressures for change as to its inherent weaknesses. Rather than follow the radical restructuring of governance that the Dutch attempted, the wider reaction was to make token gestures to the excluded parties (especially to student organisations) either by augmenting or by instigating their representation on existing university bodies. Another strategy, which appeared somewhat later, was to shift the locus of institutional power so that the more representative bodies (for example, academic senates) became increasingly marginalised players in the decision-making process.

While in the 1960s/1970s there may have been comparatively limited innovations in university governance (with the exception of the Netherlands), the same cannot be said of the past 20 years or thereabouts. Across Europe there have been attempts to change patterns of governance, at both the system and institutional levels, dramatically. Moreover, it appears that in recent years the continental European systems of higher education have been under even more pressure to change than their Anglo-American counterparts. Why is this?

There is broad agreement as to what pressures that have led to global change in higher education (for two interesting overviews, see Paradise et al., 2009: 88–106; Padure & Jones, 2009: 107–125). And, while it may be a statement of the obvious, it does amount to an interesting mix of social, political and economic pressures. The significant question is why these should have impacted upon continental European

systems of higher education with *particular* force. In Europe the expansion of student numbers has been universal but more pronounced in many of the continental nations than in England. However, this is not within itself a significant pressure for change as long as increased participation is matched by other developments: the availability of funding, the relevance of degree programmes to the requirements of the job market, low non-completion rates and a reasonably short cycle of graduation. If these factors do not apply then severe difficulties are likely to ensue, perhaps most vividly illustrated by developments in Italian higher education in which (cynically) the university is viewed as a comfortable, long-term parking lot for young, middle-class Italians – and not so young when they eventually graduate (Michelotti, 2005: 76–91).

The crux of the financial issue is the level of public funding, and it is evident that almost universally this has failed to keep pace with the rate of expansion in student numbers (certainly in terms of expenditure per student). Higher education is an area of social policy on which governments in hard times can restrict expenditure with a measure of immunity from public displeasure. Student numbers increase while the product changes its character, and although standards may deteriorate, this takes time to materialise and in any case is not easy to substantiate – the parking lot simply becomes more crowded. Not only was the movement towards mass higher education more measured in England but also there was an earlier recognition that if public funding was an unreliable source of income then it was perhaps time to consider charging students fees. In addition, the universities needed to develop strategies to increase their non-public funding – to become, to use Burton Clark's term, entrepreneurial (Clark, 2004).

Humboldt's model clearly embraces the idea of student self-development (*bildung*) – he or she is free to move from university to university, to construct within very liberal parameters a degree programme and to decide when it is time to take the examinations needed to graduate. The idea of an institutionally structured course of studies is anathema to the tradition. Furthermore, for example in France, access to higher education has been seen as an individual right for those who have successfully completed their secondary school examinations (Deer, 2005: 34–36). In many European countries (see Aamodt & Kyvik, 2005: 28–29 with reference to Scandinavia), access to higher education was funded out of the public purse because it was politically accepted on a broad front that this was a desirable goal to pursue in the belief that it promoted individual social mobility while cementing the social order. Higher education was a public good that embraced social goals that were part of its purpose and, if not more important than its central tasks (transmitting and expanding knowledge), then these at least provided a political rationale for sustaining state expenditure.

But the context began to change as the broad political consensus that had underwritten the welfare state started to crumble. The question of the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education was increasingly placed in the spotlight. It was even more difficult to defend public funding when there was a growing body of evidence to demonstrate that this subsidised students from the relatively well-off sections of society rather more than it enhanced working-class mobility.

Universities, therefore, were required to show that the public resources they consumed really did represent value-for-money for the taxpayer, and some continental systems found this particularly difficult to do given the seeming mismatch between degrees programmes and the kind of qualifications needed to find a job, large non-completion rates and students who seemingly viewed being a student as a career in its own right. Almost certainly the most evident manifestations of this new ethos was to be found in the United Kingdom, symbolised by the repeated electoral victories of the Conservative Party under the leadership of Mrs. Thatcher and the shift of the Labour Party to New Labour, thanks to the reforms instigated by Tony Blair. And in Britain the new policy drivers were stimulated by increasing evidence of both political and the economic failure as the 1960s and the 1970s unfolded (Tapper, 2007: 3–8).

It has always been the case that universities have had a responsibility to make available trained manpower for the labour market – whether this be the medieval universities and the training of priests, Humboldt's university and ensuring that the state was amply supplied with public servants, or late nineteenth century Oxbridge and recruitment into the higher echelons of professional life. As the twentieth century drew to a close the universities were increasingly perceived by the state and society (and indeed by many who worked in higher education) as essentially an economic resource. It is partly a question of providing students with the appropriate qualifications (or, in the jargon, 'the appropriate transferable skills') and partly the pressure to undertake cutting-edge research, especially if it can demonstrate its potential economic utility.

The relatively poor standing of the continental European universities in the various 'world league tables' (in part explained by the fact that in the continental systems, research was not necessarily a prominent part of the institutional mission) has augmented the pressure to change. There is a powerful belief that economic competition is increasingly global in its scope and those nations with knowledge-based economies will be in the best position to compete effectively at its cutting edge. It is this article of faith, rather than any desire to resuscitate the status of German higher education, that explains the decision of the German Federal Government to provide additional research funding for universities that can demonstrate their potential to produce research that is likely to be classified as world class (Kehm & Pasternack, 2009: 113–127). Ironically, it is Oxford and Cambridge, the two most traditionally collegiate of the European universities, that have tended to rank highest in the various league tables. But whether this has much to do with their collegiate structures and values is a very different question.

One measure of the extent and significance of the restructuring of the governance of the continental systems of higher education is the amount of attention it has received in the literature, with almost as much space devoted to it as the Bologna Process itself. For example, there had been special issues on governance published by *Higher Education Policy* in 1998 (Volume 11, Nos. 2/3) and by *TEAM* (Tertiary Education and Management) in 2001 (Volume 7, No. 2), to be followed more recently by several scholarly books (Amaral, Jones, & Karseth, 2002; Maassen & Olsen, 2007; Amaral, Bleiklie, & Musselin, 2008; Huisman, 2009).

What is notable is the broad convergence between the developments charted in this body of literature and the picture we constructed in Chapter 6 in which we discussed the rise of the managerial ethos in a number of British universities. But let us start with a subtle difference. The replacement of the University Grants Committee in the United Kingdom by the funding council model of governance has been widely interpreted as representing a decline in the autonomy of British universities with the state intent on steering more tightly the future development of higher education (Kogan & Hanney, 2000; Scott, 1995: 27; Shattock, 2008). On the continent, on the contrary, the new public management model of governance has been seen as granting institutions more autonomy, providing them with enhanced opportunities to map their own futures (with reference to Sweden, see Askling, Bauer, & Marton, 1999: 175–195).

But the debate about institutional autonomy is soon bogged down in convoluted analysis. Does state steering in fact represent a more sophisticated, but equally constraining, form of state control? What is the distinction between close and distant steering and what is their differential impact, if any, upon institutional behaviour? Does it make sense even to think of institutional autonomy when systems of higher education cannot be analysed without being located in their historical contexts with all the entwining socio-cultural, economic and political encumbrances this entails?

It is more plausible to argue that what has taken place are measures either to redefine institutional identity (in the United Kingdom) or to make it possible for institutions to establish a stronger sense of their identity (continental Europe). British universities have maintained a sense of their institutional identities, but there was no idea of the university that transcended the academic estate. The university possessed a self-identity built upon the interests of its academic members. However, that is far less true today, and it is realistic to think in terms of the decline of donnish dominion accompanied by increased institutional autonomy, *notwithstanding* more pronounced state steering. By comparison, with reference to the French system of higher education, Musselin and Mignot-Gérard have reflected on the basis of their research:

> . . . that one should not give too much weight to the overwhelming discourse on the 'impossible reform' of French universities, on their endemic immovability, and even on the conservative nature of the academic profession. Change has occurred and university government has evolved in France (Musselin & Mignot-Gérard, 2002: 63).

And in what direction has it moved?

> A major conclusion, based on this analysis, is that the previous conception of French universities as kind of administrative groupings of *facultés* has been modified in favour of a more cohesive, collective, institutional conception (Musselin & Mignot-Gérard, 2002: 64).

Moreover, the changes in France have been made without constructing a new public management model of system governance or moving towards the 'new managerialism' within the universities.

The question, and with reference to continental Europe more generally rather than just France, is how this has been achieved? There are two interconnected developments. First, changes in the national models of system governance with particular

reference to how the new structures and procedures impact upon the individual institutions. Second, changes in the governance of the universities themselves, which have been stimulated in part by the new system models. Let us deal with these changes in sequence, although it has to be strongly emphasised at the outset that we are presenting broad trends rather than pinpointing any one national system of higher education.

1. System change: a shift towards (France notwithstanding) a new public management model of governance in which the intention is to steer, rather than dictate, how individual institutions manage their daily affairs and plan their futures. Although there may be targeted funding for particular projects, institutions are increasingly given a block grant to manage with considerable discretion how they distribute it. The steering bodies are quasi-state institutions that often have the role of both interpreting government policy and determining how it is to be put into effect.
2. Institutional change: the leadership cadre is appointed rather than elected with strategy determined by a small executive body usually chaired by the Rector/President. It is not unusual to have lay representation on the policy-making bodies. Management structures within the universities are more under the control of the university (rather than the ministry) and they provide professional career lines for full-time administrators rather than seconded academics. Even middle-ranking academic administrative positions (for example, the deans) are appointed posts and have been incorporated into the management structures, and Acherman (1998) stressed how important this had been in changing the culture of the University of Amsterdam. In administrative terms (including control of the university's academic affairs) there is more hierarchy and bureaucracy (Teichler, 2007: 77–78, stresses the particular significance of the managerial revolution in European higher education) but more confined collegiality and fewer professorial fiefdoms.

   In policy terms consensus is desirable but the decision-making process is not simply about reconciling competing factions to support the broadest common denominator. Finally, there is a recognition that the model can work effectively only if there is highly competent leadership – individuals who can help develop a clear and coherent sense of institutional direction (planning) while working effectively within the boundaries of the existing academic culture. Leadership is more than brokering an agreement among competing interests.
3. System and institutional interaction: this depends very heavily upon what particular steering mechanisms are adopted. There is some targeted funding with incentives offered to encourage institutions either to pursue favoured initiatives (for example, the widening participation and teaching/learning programmes in England) or to develop aspects of their institutional profiles (for example, the German 'Excellence Initiative' that provides the funding to bolster the research output of selected institutions). Universities are required to produce 'institutional mission' statements and to demonstrate that they are indeed providing value for money. A contractual relationship has developed between the universities and the

state, in which the universities have to demonstrate their effective use of public resources. Inevitably the quality assurance/accountability mechanisms are a key component in this interactive process, with ensuing struggles as to whether these should be institutionally centred or system driven. This is the price to be paid for greater institutional autonomy or state steering at a distance, which has led some to doubt whether this indeed represents the hollowing-out of the state or is in fact a more sophisticated form of state control.

Before turning to the question of how these changes impact upon interpretations of the changing governance of higher education – with, of course, particular reference to the collegial tradition – it is important to complicate somewhat the overly simplified picture presented so far. Important because the qualifications will have a bearing upon how we interpret what is happening to the governance of higher education in continental Europe. There is more to the picture than national variations in the pace of change,[2] although this is a convenient place to start. Austria and the Netherlands appear to have moved furthest and swiftest in embracing change, with France providing a powerful counterbalance at the other end of the continuum. But, regardless of the formal adoption of a new policy direction, invariably the enactment process itself has been protracted, at times incorporating a certain amount of oscillating practice. This has been due, not so much to resistance to change, but rather because within certain polities – and in this respect the Netherlands, Finland and Denmark provide good models – a long process of consultation invariably precedes policy implementation. Cerych and Sabatier (1986) present an interesting overview of earlier attempts to reform higher education in continental Europe and conclude – unsurprisingly – that the outcomes were mixed. It is also important to remember that this short discussion of comparative national developments is dependent upon the cases that are reported in the academic literature, and – an even stronger cautionary note – are published in English.

Interestingly several national governments (for example, those of Greece and Italy) have hidden behind the Bologna Process to justify change, seemingly as a way of shielding themselves from internal political opposition. The suggestion is that, although there may be widespread support for change, few are convinced what course it should take or are willing to bear the political consequences. Finally, there is as yet little clear evidence as to whether the new structures and procedures are producing changes in individual behaviour and, if so, whether this has contributed to making institutions more effective and efficient. With particular reference to the Netherlands, which observers would place at the end of the reformist continuum, Enders and his colleagues point to academic resistance, token compliance and how academic actors '. . . used their professional power and managerial roles to influence the enactment and implementation of new structures and processes' (Enders, de Boer, & Leisyte, 2008: 126). And the implication is that they have used that power to ensure their interests continue to be protected. But, in spite of their equivocal evaluation, these continental scholars do not deny that the world of European higher education – including its modes of governance – has changed significantly in the past two decades.

The Politics of Governance

In spite of all the academic equivocations about the precise character of the evolving systems of governance in European higher education, there is uniform agreement that new models of governance have emerged and are still evolving. As should be clear from the thrust of this chapter this is an uncertain process. Although there is some agreement as to the pattern of development – what has changed rather than what is emerging – the option widely adopted in the literature has been to list models of governance and then to present national case studies of reform. The purpose of this approach is not to argue that there is a general pattern of change but rather to look at how institutions, located within particular national settings, adjust to the pressures they face – including the pressure of system governance – as they try to fulfil their functions.

The volume edited by Maassen and Olsen (2007) presents a classic example of this methodology. They commence with 'four visions, or models, of university organization and governance', which are as follows:

> A rule-governed community of scholars
> An instrument for national political agendas
> An internal representative democracy
> A service enterprise embedded in competitive markets
> (Olsen & Maassen, 2007: 20).

And then, 'rather than assuming a single trend and institutional convergence . . . an institutional perspective invites the question, whether there are any general trends and whether there is convergence at all' (Olsen & Maassen, 2007: 20). The discussion we have presented in this chapter argues that there have been trends (although how general these are is open to debate) and that there has been a measure of convergence in the sense that increasingly different systems and institutions have come to adopt similar structures and procedures of governance and administration (the extent of convergence, however, is a matter of judgement).

Olsen and Maassen's 'four visions, or models' (of which various versions have been widely replicated in the literature) are to be found with different mixes in each of the European national systems. But the issue is not only about the changing composition of the ingredients but also about the politics of change for it is this that will determine the direction in which models of governance in higher education will evolve. Wright and Ørberg construct an interesting approach to understanding the change process, which is consistent with Olsen and Maassen's 'institutional perspective'. Contrasting their perspective with that of Neave and van Vught's *Prometheus Bound* (1991), which in their opinion presents a model of system governance that is too deterministic, they argue that:

> The meaning of the university will also change as new contexts arise and positioned actors will use the elements of the governance model . . . to negotiate the relation between control and autonomy and thereby enact the university in new ways (Wright & Ørberg, 2009: 85).

However, this anthropological interpretation – as they call it – of change (with Gulliver in Lilliput rather than the rock-bound Prometheus providing the mythological analogy) cannot avoid locating the university in its historical context with all the constraints of state and society that they imply (note that Gulliver was tied with ropes rather than the iron stakes and chains that bound Prometheus). Thus universities, like men, are not free to make their own histories. This institutional perspective needs therefore to interpret developments in the governance of higher education as a political process involving the interaction of institutional actors and those forces in state and society that constitute the dominant pressures for change. In doing so it may find that the ropes are more constraining than those of Gulliver's.

Conclusion: Collegiality as Academic Power

It would be difficult on the basis of reading our discursive overview to conclude that the continental universities have sustained a collegial tradition. Colleges and collegiate universities disappeared with the passing of medieval Europe while the nation states that evolved as the nineteenth century unfolded required institutions that would respond effectively to their needs – for trained public servants and for building a sense of national identity. However, regardless of what the state may have required, its demands had to be pragmatically negotiated. In effect, in both the Humboldtian and Napoleonic models a deal was struck in which state funding and formal control of the affairs of the academy were reconciled with the interests of the guilds.

For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the continental universities could maintain within this framework a particular tradition of collegiality – control of the daily affairs – especially the academic mission – of the institution. The universities sustained themselves through their continuous reconciliation of the major internal interests, which incorporated the expression of academic (essentially professorial) authority. *In this sense* it may be possible for the continental universities, given their past close ties to the state, to maintain themselves more effectively in the future as collegial universities than their Anglo-American counterparts. The state may yet prove to be a less-demanding taskmaster than the market when it comes to shaping the future of the university because (as von Humboldt consistently reminded us) there was, if not a natural affinity, then a coincidence of interests between the state and the universities. In part the issue will be resolved politically. Is the state prepared to support the universities with sufficient resources to enable them to resist the demands of the market or at least to accommodate the market in a manner that sustains academic power?

Indeed, the widespread support in continental Europe for the idea of higher education as essentially a public good does suggest a continuing powerful role for the state. The key question is whether the universities are going to be seen increasingly as independent corporate bodies (rather than as appendages of the state) that can determine for themselves how they should promote the public good? Or will that decision be arrived at through the accommodation of the traditional interests, with

the most powerful carrying the greatest weight? Although national trends vary, and the evidence is open to interpretation, the shift is clearly in the direction of stronger institutional identities with policy directions that are not simply the product of building a consensus out of competing interests. In this context institutional leadership and administrative structures have become increasingly controlling forces in both the formation and implementation of policy.

The collegial tradition was as much, if not more, about how the decision-making process worked rather than who controlled it. The spasmodic references to collegiality in the contemporary literature on the governance of higher education in continental Europe tend to overlook this distinction. However, if the focus of the academic guilds is concentrated essentially upon the management of their academic programmes, then the question of how that control is exercised becomes more visible simply because the scope for shaping wider institutional policy has shrunk. The proposition is that with the focus more upon academic affairs, then the greater the likelihood of collegiality. Certainly one can expect, especially given the historical legacy, professorial power will continue to be very important but almost by definition successful academic programmes have to be underwritten by collegiality. Thus, the state has an interest in promoting collegiality and sustaining the authority of the academic estate as long as that interest recognises the boundaries within which it should operate. Or to put the issue differently, will the academic guilds genuflect not only to state power but also to institutional authority in return for its support against the potential pressures of the market? We move therefore towards a model of governance within which the university becomes an actor independent of its various internal interests, while defending the right of those internal interests to maintain their control over important aspects of the university's mission. Moreover, this is accomplished in a manner that moves beyond the concentration of power in the hands of the professoriate to become more collegial within all those departments and research centres responsible for delivering the university's academic mission. This is the scenario that is currently unfolding with the outcomes likely to be as diverse as Europe itself notwithstanding either the Bologna Process or the broader pressures of globalisation accompanied by the spread of neo-liberal ideology.

Notes

1. The quotes in the following section are taken from von Humboldt's memorandum *On the Spirit and the Organisation Framework of Intellectual Institutions in Berlin*, which was apparently written sometime between the autumn of 1809 and the autumn of 1810, and is reproduced under the title *University Reform in Germany* in *Minerva*, Volume VIII, No. 2, April 1970, 242–250.
2. In this respect note how the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe stimulated a very significant wave of reform, including the rapid expansion of a private sector (Białecki & Dąbrowa-Szefler, 2009: 183–199).