

CONDITIONED DEMAND AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE

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ABSTRACT

This article draws attention to two basic features of British higher education which may influence the workability of certain Leverhulme proposals. These are vertical integration and professionalism. It is suggested that a consideration of these is crucial given the nature of the Leverhulme strategy. Many of the Leverhulme proposals are grounded in assumptions about the behaviour of institutions and actors in British higher education. An examination of vertical integration and professionalism in the system indicates that such assumptions may be unfounded. The discussion focuses both on how the proposals themselves are shaped by the professionalism of British higher education, and on how the feasibility of the proposals may be affected by the system's vertical integration and professionalism. Both the basic proposals of Leverhulme as a whole as well as of the monographs on access, teachers and learning, and institutional change are examined. In concluding it is noted that the treatment of vertical integration and professionalism provide policy makers and reformers with important levers of control to grasp in the future.

Introduction

Systems of higher education are subject to a variety of stimuli, internal as well as external. In significant respects the nature of external demand itself is conditioned by the system of higher education. Moreover, external demands are reacted to and translated by institutional members in ways often not entirely consistent with the original demand. In part this is where the internal stimuli come into play. Not only the demand itself, but the response to it, is shaped by the system. Two features of higher education systems contribute to this - vertical integration and professionalism. To some extent virtually all systems of higher education are professional, vertically integrated systems. But this is particularly true in the case of the United Kingdom.

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In affecting demand and response in higher education these characteristics influence the operation of the higher education market. For they shape the activity of actors and institutions in the world of higher education. To the extent that reforms are grounded in assumptions about the actions and choices of actors in the higher education market and about how they will respond to certain incentives, an analysis of that system's vertical integration and professionalism can facilitate the formulation of more feasible and effective strategies and programs of reform. The Leverhulme strategies and proposals are so grounded. In fact, they bear what might be called an "American imprint". In the following pages some of the recommendations and strategies of the Leverhulme programme of study are considered in light of the vertical integration and professionalism of British higher education. There is a particular focus on the following volumes: *Access to Higher Education*, *Professionalism and Flexibility in Learning*, *Accountability or Freedom for Teachers*, and *Agenda for Institutional Change in Higher Education*.

Before moving to this detailed discussion the focus turns first to a brief, general treatment of the concepts of vertical integration, professionalism, and of the basic issues and recommendations of the Leverhulme programme.

VERTICAL INTEGRATION

In characterising systems of higher education as vertically integrated reference is to the relationship between a system of higher education and the systemic source of its input. The input is entering students. The major producer of students entering higher education is the secondary school system. Vertical integration, then, refers to the relationship between systems of secondary and higher education.

However, the concept of vertical integration is not to be confused with the notion of articulation. The latter tends to be interpreted as the linkage between sectors of education in terms of the matriculation of students from one stage to another. A system like that of the United Kingdom, in which the vast majority of secondary school leavers do not continue in full-time higher education, would be represented as a poorly articulated system lacking a smooth linkage between secondary and higher education (see Brock, 1981). Characteristic of a poorly articulated educational system is a major break between different levels of education, a situation in which by means of examinations or otherwise one level's output (students) is selected before being accepted as the next level's input. But this same system may be highly vertically integrated. And this is true in the case of the United Kingdom.

How can this be? Vertical integration refers to the influence higher education has on the output of secondary education by virtue of its influence on the structure, curricula, etc., of secondary school systems, its effect on the

manner in which the “product” of secondary education is “processed”. It implies virtually nothing with respect to how much of that output will be accepted as input for the higher education system. Vertical integration and articulation are independent descriptive dimensions.

It is clear that higher education is influenced by the nature and demand of secondary education’s output. But the fact that higher education also influences secondary education and thereby conditions student demand complicates the picture. Reliable estimations of the actions of higher education consumers should be based on an understanding of the fact that secondary school leaver student demand is not independent of higher education. The vertical integration of the system plays a major part in this.

PROFESSIONALISM

The influence that higher education has on secondary education by virtue of the system’s vertical integration is augmented by the degree of professionalism in higher education. There is an interaction between these two features of higher education systems.

The concept of professionalism is fairly straightforward in its application to the academic profession and systems of higher education. For the purposes of this article reference is to two dimensions of professionalism. First is the realm of institutional control – that is, the degree of professional influence in policy making for and governance of both individual institutions of higher education and the system as a whole. Second is the normative realm, which is also in part a factor in or an aspect of the power of professionals. This is a matter of the degree to which higher education professionals share and adhere to certain norms and values.

A high degree of professionalism in higher education serves to enhance the effectiveness of mechanisms of vertical integration. For instance, one mechanism by which higher education affects secondary education is through the training of secondary school personnel in institutions of higher education. The more powerful higher education professionals are in overseeing and influencing the provision of teacher training, and the more they agree on what the nature of this provision should be (that is, the more normatively integrated they are), the greater the influence higher education will have on secondary education. For it will be a more unified and thus stronger impact. In this way professionalism can contribute to the conditioning of student demand.

But professionalism has an even more central role in what is the other side of the coin, the response of systems to demand. Institutions and systems of higher education are actively involved not only in the generation of demand, they also are active in fashioning their response to this demand. Professionalism contributes in at least two ways to the tendencies for institutions and systems to

shape responses to external demands. It does so first, through professional norms and values that emphasise professional self-determination, and second, through the dynamics of professional influence on policy making and governance which enable professionals to defend their normative commitments. Professionalism tends to make for an imperfect market situation. For the professionals who influence and guide institutions and systems of higher education march more to the beat of their professional peers than to the demands of their clientele.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

This picture and pattern of internal determination should not be overdrawn. Professional, vertically integrated systems do not function in isolation. They exist and operate within often vibrant social, economic and political contexts. Some appreciation and understanding of this environment is necessary if many of the themes and proposals of the Leverhulme programme are to be comprehensible. Higher education is a system currently under fire, especially in the United Kingdom. In Britain, at least, this is not merely a matter of declining resources, of funding cuts in the government's provision for higher education, although that would in itself be a serious enough threat. Rather, it also concerns a relatively hostile environment that higher education confronts. Witness the subtitle of Gareth Williams and Tessa Blackstone's (1983) final Leverhulme monograph, *Higher Education in a Harsh Climate*. Harsh indeed. And demanding. External groups are demanding far more for their money. Of course, it may be that the very fact of British higher education being a professional, vertically integrated system has engendered hostility and demands for social relevance and responsiveness. But whatever the reason, higher education professionals are being forced at least to listen and to give the appearance of dealing positively with these demands. The very titles, not to mention the substance, of many of the Leverhulme papers and monographs reflect this.

In his Foreword to the first Leverhulme monograph, *Higher Education and the Labour Market*, Sir Michael Clapham identifies two extreme views of education. One, implied by Plato and stated by Aristotle, is that the object of education is simply virtue. At the other end of the scale is Adam Smith's view, that the purpose of education is to serve the market, and that market forces will improve education. Clapham notes that the Robbins Report was characterised more by Aristotelian assumptions, whereas the tenor of the first Leverhulme seminar was nearer Adam Smith than Aristotle. A call for making higher education more responsive to social needs and market demands was a refrain played many times in the Leverhulme programme. It was born largely of the external pressures being experienced by the higher education system. Because

for all this British higher education is still a professional, vertically integrated system. And this is plain in the recommendations of the Leverhulme seminars, which were dominated by academics.

BASIC LEVERHULME THEMES

Throughout the course of the Leverhulme programme of study underlying themes and issues repeatedly reared their familiar visages, regardless of the particular topic at hand. Again and again papers that on the surface were oriented towards different specialist topics confronted the fundamental choices systems of higher education are forced to make. Essentially these involved choices with respect to fundamental principles and values. Just how responsive should higher education be to external demand, and how can this be balanced with the necessity for professional autonomy, academic freedom, and the maintenance of academic excellence? How much central coordination should there be in higher education, and how can this be balanced with the need for allowing and encouraging initiative, innovativeness, and the continuing discretion of the individual institution? These choices are manifest in the basic recommendations of Leverhulme as a whole, as well as in the different monographs and papers.

No better expression of the issues that each specialist seminar wrestled with could be found than the title of the final report of the Leverhulme programme, *Excellence in Diversity*. Whether discussion is of access, change, teaching, resources, or whatever, there is always concern for promoting diversity. But it is a diversity that is tempered by a concern for excellence. Leverhulme ends up modifying the pursuit of diversity, qualifying it with an adjective that stresses quality. At the same time that diversity is promoted in any number of realms a basic “core” is preserved and protected largely in the name of excellence. The recommendations of the Leverhulme programme, then, like the British system of higher education itself, may best be characterised by a “moralising metaphor” such as “restrained pluralism”. Unwilling to promote pursuit of a policy of unchained diversity, fearful of the adverse consequences of the excesses of fragmentation, participants suggest a conditional diversity resting on the condition that a common, standard core of institutional practice is maintained. Coordination in the name of quality counterbalances and conditions diversity.

The diversity that Leverhulme promotes is conditional in another sense. Encapsulated in the phrase “excellence in diversity” are the basic tensions between external demands that academics are trying at least to appear to be addressing, and internal professional imperatives academics are seeking to protect. Excellence is equated with or translated into professional coordination as far as the Leverhulme participants are concerned. So the second condition of diversity and responsiveness to external demand is that professionals regulate the process.

In many respects the Leverhulme recommendations are the higher education system's initial offer to society in the exchange between external and internal groups. Leverhulme's "response to adversity," and its bargaining strategy, is "excellence in diversity". And in setting this agenda it is plain that the professionalism of the British higher education system affected the very nature of the reform proposals.

Beyond this it is worth considering the effect that the vertical integration and professionalism of the British system might have in terms of the practicability of some of the Leverhulme proposals. One of the more surprising threads of continuity running through the Leverhulme seminars and recommendations is the "American imprint" that many of the themes and proposals bear. Many of the specific recommendations of the Leverhulme papers as well as the general nature of some of the policy strategies proposed were either directly drawn from or bear the mark of the American experience and situation. Of particular interest in this regard is the way in which many of the recommendations rely on certain incentives, largely financial, to guide the actions and choices of actors in the higher education market. The Leverhulme volumes are peppered with statements like, "Skilled use of financial incentives is a powerful way for government to overcome the inertia of academia". The question is, just how feasible are these kinds of incentives and strategies in the context of British higher education.

The article is organised into two sections, one on vertical integration and one on professionalism in British higher education. Attention is directed both to the effect these aspects of the system have had on the formulation of the recommendations themselves, and to the effects these feature of the system might have on the workability of the recommendations coming out of the volumes on access, teachers and learning, and institutional change, respectively. Specific recommendations are examined in this light with part of the discussion devoted to alternative policy possibilities.

The Conditioning of Demand

As Farrant (1981, p. 45) indicates, "social demand is not the natural expression of preference by young people". Rather, it is a function of various conditions, and one set of these must certainly be the nature and structure of the secondary education system. The thesis presented here is that through a variety of mechanisms higher education influences the provision of secondary education and thus itself conditions student demand for higher education. The "feedback" that is assumed by many to be provided by student demand is not an input that is independent of higher education, thus limiting how much higher education can "learn" from this input. This calls into question the idea that responsiveness to

student demand fosters significant change. For by conditioning student demand higher education in a sense pre-selects the kind of demand it will be responsive to. The implications of this situation are critical both for the specific recommendations of the volume on access and for one of the major proposals of Leverhulme as a whole, the establishment of a two-year degree course by both universities and the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA).

The organisation of this section is as follows. First, the recommendations are examined, the initial focus being on the strategies and aims of the proposals in light of the professionalism that characterises British higher education. A brief contrast between the United Kingdom and the United States is drawn. Then the discussion turns to what meaning the vertical integration and professionalism of British higher education has for the implementation of the Leverhulme proposals. Subsequent to this the nature and mechanisms of vertical integration are detailed. Finally, on the basis of the preceding discussion of what might be considered points of blockage to certain types of reform, suggestions for alternatively policy options are proffered.

EXPANDED ACCESS AND DIVERSITY

The Leverhulme monograph, *Access to Higher Education*, is explicitly expansionist, advocating the widening of access to higher education. Yet this statement needs to be put into perspective, that being the existing nature of higher education provision in the United Kingdom. Compared to its European counterparts a relatively low proportion (16.3 percent) of the relevant age group enters higher education. As Cerych (1983) notes, such comparisons are confounded by the ways numbers are counted in the different countries. For instance, in Britain part-time students are converted into full-time equivalents, whereas in most other West European countries all students are counted as identical units regardless of their attendance status. However, even compensating for this difference, the proportion of the relevant age group is still somewhat lower in Britain than in France, and is considerably lower than in Sweden, Japan, and the United States. The point is that “expansionist” is a label that has to be taken in context.

A second point along these same lines is that the expansionism of Leverhulme should be distinguished from a Robbins-type expansionism. The Robbins Report called for a considerable increase in the absolute number of students. The Leverhulme proposal calls for an increase in participation rates. But with the anticipated demographic decline even a marked increase in the participation rates of 18-year olds or older students does not imply an increase in total student numbers. In addition, while Robbins called for more, it was more of the same. Basic to the Leverhulme proposals is the promotion of diversity, in entry, students, and provision.

Leverhulme launches a three-pronged attack on the problem of increasing access. A first step is diversifying the means of entry to higher education. It is suggested that all admitting units should admit at least 25 percent of their students using criteria other than the 'A' level qualification or its equivalent. This would mean utilizing criteria such as aptitude tests, 'O' level or CSE grades, assessments of prior learning, and personal "learning contracts". But simply making entry easier might merely increase the participation of academically marginal students from the same social categories that are currently over-represented in British higher education. To address this need a second proposal calls for all institutions to "undertake significant experiments with positive discrimination in favour of candidates whose circumstances may have prevented them from competing for entry on equal terms with the majority of applicants" (Fulton, 1981, p. 37). Social justice is to be served not just by increasing access but by increasing the access of certain disadvantaged student populations, by diversifying the higher education student body by class, ethnicity and age. So, for example, there is an additional proposal encouraging institutions to increase the participation rate of mature students at all levels of higher education.

Working on the assumption that in the near future there is little hope of a significant increase in demand for the existing pattern of courses in higher education, the access monograph advocates the diversification of the academic programme of higher education. To simply make access to existing courses easier is regarded as not enough. Believing that a different kind of higher education could find a large, untapped pool of students, the seminar participants recommended the eventual diversification of courses and course structures along with a system of credit transfer in order to increase participation rates. It is suggested that as an easy first step universities, polytechnics, and colleges should issue students certificates of partial completion, much as the Open University already does in effect with its Ordinary degrees and single course units (*Excellence in Diversity*, p. 42).

This is the second feature of the Leverhulme strategy to increase access. Beyond the obvious goal of social justice this proposal serves the dual goals of efficiency and responsiveness, goals that systems of higher education throughout the world are being compelled to address. Given the fact that the correlation of 'A' level grades with degree results is relatively low, whereas that of first-year examinations is higher (Entwistle and Wilson, 1977), it makes sense to allow for exclusion and change after the first year of higher education (rather than excluding at entry) through a system of credit transfer and partial completion (Fulton, 1981). Such a system provides for a more efficient matching of students to courses. And it links higher education to external demand, or in this case, potential student demand.

The third part of the effort to promote increased access involves the use of financial mechanisms and incentives. The proposal is to replace the present grant

system with a system combining grants and loans. Under the new system citizens would be entitled to an age-related maintenance grant and remission or reimbursement of fees for four years of full-time education (or its part-time equivalent) after the compulsory school-leaving age of sixteen. The entitlement would be supplemented by a system of loans. Those students on higher level courses would be dependent on government-backed loans unless they qualified for merit-based scholarships, for merit-based grants in areas of special local or national need, for special grants for those suffering from long-term structural unemployment, or unless they attracted sponsorship from prospective employers.

This scheme serves a couple of purposes. First, in the name of equity it subsidises full-time education from age sixteen to eighteen, when it appears financially less attractive than work or unemployment benefit, rather than subsidising higher level study which brings large economic returns. This funding pattern is geared to keep more students staying on in school past the level of compulsory education, enabling more of the relevant age group to take 'A' level exams and have the opportunity of moving into higher education. As Gordon (1981) indicates, the critical point in the educational process is the school-leaving age at sixteen. This is where the working class is "lost," and it is in this crucial period from sixteen to eighteen that students have to be encouraged to stay on at school.

The other purpose of this scheme is to encourage institutions of higher education to experiment with alternative modes of course provision and study. By providing a maintenance grant for students on all kinds of courses, potential students can select from a variety of courses and thus provide potential demand for institutions to reach out to. Most important of all, this pattern of financing would be a powerful incentive for experiments with two-year degrees (*Excellence in Diversity*, p. 43). This is one of the main proposals of the Leverhulme programme, the establishment of an initial degree course of two years of full-time study to coexist with or replace the traditional three-year honours degree course. Making the end of these two-year degrees the upper limit for mandatory maintenance grants is designed to encourage students to seek and institutions to provide two-year degree courses. By altering the financial arrangements of the system Leverhulme participants aim to promote the system's responsiveness to changing social needs. Diversity is to be generated largely through incentive based reforms.

CONDITIONAL DIVERSITY

As noted earlier, however, the diversity promoted by the Leverhulme proposals is conditional. One of these conditions is the continuance of a basic "core". For instance, although various new criteria for entry to higher education are proposed, it is recommended that the 'A' level qualification or its equivalent

should continue to be the primary criterion, and effectively the only criterion for 75 percent of entering students. And this from seminar participants who admit that the position they espouse is a minority one, at least among university academics.

This reflects an overriding emphasis on academic excellence and the maintaining of standards. Meritocracy is the defining principle, even in programs that are explicitly geared towards the promotion of social justice. Take, for example, what Americans call “affirmative action”. The very terminology utilized by the British is revealing. Such programs are referred to as “positive discrimination”. While such special programs already exist to a very limited extent in Britain they are still largely based on merit. And entry is still very rigorous and competitive.

It is interesting that in the derivation of some of these proposals, such as the entry standards and the two-year degree, there are explicit references to the American system. And Americans were invited to present papers in a number of the seminars, including the one on access. But the British cannot bring themselves to take even such specific proposals to the American extreme. The pursuit of diversity is constrained by a concern for standards and quality. This latter is a professional imperative, and one that is far stronger in Britain than it is in the United States.

It is instructive in this regard to contrast the major recommendation of the American contributor to the access monograph with the proposals of the British participants. In concluding his comparative examination of access Martin Trow proposes establishing an open-door, full-time, degree granting British university. Granting that this might not be a practical idea in the context of the values and institutions that make up the web of British higher education, Trow suggests that it might be revealing to determine which of the elements of this idea are least acceptable and which are potentially adaptable to existing structures of higher education. But what turns out to be revealing is that the British did not take up this proposal. Their idea for promoting diversity was to implement some new practices in all institutions, with the basic core of entrance standards left intact.

Even what is probably the most “radical” of the Leverhulme proposals, the introduction of a two-year degree course, is structured by the relative normative integration of British academia. The two-year degree course is mentioned in a number of the Leverhulme monographs, with three versions being suggested. One is to contract the traditional three-year honours degree into a more intensive two-year course (with a longer academic year) that matches the standards and undoubtedly the provision of the three-year course. A second version is to set the two-year course up alongside the traditional honours degree. Finally, there is a proposal to set up the two-year course in all institutions as the initial degree, comparable to the “first cycle” in French universities. The first two proposals can hardly be characterised as significant changes in the basic course provision in higher education. The third is clearly the most radical version. It would require a

systematic restructuring of the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum. But the Leverhulme participants really took no steps in this direction.

However, if the reader will pardon the expression, this may all be academic. For it is far from clear that the two-year course is favourably regarded by the majority of the Leverhulme participants. And it is even less certain that a majority of academics would be favourably disposed to its introduction in any form. In fact, even some who took a positive view of the Leverhulme recommendations in general are anything but advocates for the two-year initial degree course. For example, in a commendatory editorial on the Leverhulme programme in which he endorsed the major themes and messages of the final report, Peter Scott (1982) downplayed the two-year degree course, suggesting that it "might be a mistake to focus too closely on two-year degrees". A fascinating bit of British understatement given the reaction of Scott and the higher education community in general to the National Advisory Body's (NAB) proposal last year for two-year diplomas.

The professionalism that characterises British higher education thus influences both the very proposals that are proffered and the receptivity of academics to them. And through its interaction with the vertical integration of the British system the feasibility of reform programs and strategies are profoundly influenced. This is particularly important in light of the fact that so many of the Leverhulme proposals are incentive based and are grounded in certain unexamined assumptions about how actors in higher education will respond to these incentives.

INCENTIVE BASED REFORMS AND HIDDEN ASSUMPTIONS

One of the basic premises of the access monograph is that "by giving greater financial leverage to the student and widening the range of acceptable qualifications, institutions may be persuaded to adapt more readily to new needs" (Fulton, 1981, p. 20). This approach is not taken to the extreme that it allegedly is in the United States, where higher education is in some respects akin to a highly competitive industry, with power being placed in the hands of the consumer (students) to ensure institutional responsiveness. But the essence of the approach is adopted, with market mechanisms being grasped as the levers of control, and student demand being relied upon to foster institutional accommodation and change. Institutions are to be changed by changing student demand. And markets are to be simulated through the central use of financial mechanisms.

Financial incentives are to be used to encourage secondary school students to stay on in school past the level of compulsory schooling. Educational entitlement is to be geared to subsidising education from the critical ages of sixteen to nineteen. In part this is intended to increase working class participation in higher education. But at the same time it is hoped that this will have the effect of

changing the clientele for higher education and thus ultimately changing the nature of higher education itself. For it is assumed that the demand of this new clientele will be significantly different from that of traditional students.

The same sorts of incentives are to be used to encourage students to enroll in two-year degree courses and institutions to offer them. The pattern of provision of student grants and loans is to be arranged such that two-year degrees will be attractive to both students and institutions. Part of the assumption is that a different kind of higher education could capture a new student market. By building that market it is hoped different course provisions will be ensured. And evidence is cited from the United States to demonstrate that in fact there may be large pools of unsatisfied demand waiting to be sought out.

Unfortunately, the logic of the approach developed in the Leverhulme seminar on access is flawed. Broadening student demand in terms of the age, class, and ethnicity of applicants may change demand quantitatively, but it will not necessarily generate a qualitative change in the nature of demand. This is particularly true if the new pool of talent is “processed” in the same secondary education system as former pools of applicants. The school socialisation process may be more significant than the social composition of the pool. Having gone through the same school socialisation process, is it not likely that members of the new pool will be assimilated to the patterns of aspiration of members of the old pool? Will they not be likely to desire and strive for similar courses of higher education? Past evidence of efforts to meet “untapped” student demand in Britain with new course provisions do not inspire confidence that a qualitative change in student demand will be fostered by tinkering with student grants. As Peter Scott (1982, p. 32) concluded, in noting British higher education’s history of difficulty in establishing viable two-year courses such as the Diploma of Higher Education:

There is a lot of loose, even naïve, thinking about the practicability of putting more emphasis on two-year courses in higher education. It seems to be based on the shaky belief that student demand can be easily transferred from one category of course to another, and an alarming failure to analyse carefully the educational and employment value of such a shift from three to two-year courses.

System planners’ ability to identify new student markets is no more impressive than their record in manpower planning.

To some extent employment and financial factors have at least been considered in some of the Leverhulme seminars. But there is precious little systematic investigation of factors that may influence student choice and thus student demand. For instance, it is basically assumed that working class students will “choose” certain kinds of higher education provision, simply because they are largely relegated to these courses now. But the literature is far from definitive in this regard. Lex Donaldson (1975), for example, challenges the notion that

working class students have an affinity and preference for the more non-conventional forms of higher education. And he cites Spencer's (1972) findings in support.

There are other sorts of influences that are loosely identified in the Leverhulme papers. But they are not really explored in terms of their implications for seeking to generate increased access and demand. For instance, Farrant (1981) devotes a couple of paragraphs to regional variations in age participation rates in higher education. In part, the different participation rates for England and Wales versus Scotland (with the latter being higher) are reduced to school leaving age and higher education subsidies. Yet as Farrant notes, this fails to explain regional variations within England. There are probably cultural factors that come into play here, but they remain unexamined.

Of equal importance in the England/Scotland comparison is the nature of secondary education, not just the school leaving age. The upper-secondary curriculum in Scotland is somewhat broader and less specialised than that of England. Just how significant this difference is may be open to question, as a recent book by Gray et al. (1983) demonstrates. Nevertheless, the question is an important one, for it raises the issue of secondary education's effect on secondary school leaver demand. This, like the other factors that influence student demand, occupies little Leverhulme attention.

VERTICAL INTEGRATION: A MAJOR LEVER OF CONTROL

There are serious problems, then, with such incentive based reforms, both with respect to the actions of the consumers and providers of higher education. In the following pages aspects of student demand and features affecting it are considered. Then in the following section institutional interpretation of and response to demand is considered. Such incentive based reforms may be effective in some countries but not in others. This is not the place to investigate and attempt to answer the question of to what extent reality fits the mythology of American higher education – mythology concerning its market-driven nature and its responsiveness to student demand which in turn fosters institutional change. But even if the mythology is in fact accurate it is nevertheless clear that student demand is formulated and operates in an entirely different context in the United States than in the United Kingdom. And this is more than a matter of American higher education's credit and transfer system. A major part of this context is the degree of vertical integration that characterizes British higher education, compounded by the extent of its professionalism. Before introducing incentive based reforms into the British system it might be well to consider just how vertical integration and professionalism – which are far less characteristic of American higher education – can undermine reform strategies that are in effect efforts to simulate the market. The point is that mechanisms of vertical integra-

tion may be key levers of control that reformers should attend to and grasp. The discussion now turns to a detailing of some of these mechanisms of integration, the abstract analytical categories being “fleshed out” with empirical cases. Out of this may be derived certain suggestions as to how student demand may come to be “freed” of higher education’s domination. New options for reform are identified.

In describing educational systems as sequential in nature Lon Hefferlin (1969, p. 14) draws a parallel between them and cottage industries in terms of their integration into a system.

Many institutions of higher education operate in the tradition of a cottage industry – independently doing piecework as part of a large system, but with few options open to them. They must receive students, care for them, educate them, and send them along in good condition to the next stage of the process.

Lon Hefferlin applies this description mainly to the relation between undergraduate and graduate education. But it could just as easily describe the relation between primary and secondary or secondary and higher education.

In current usage vertical integration is a term commonly applied not to cottage industries but to major business enterprises, particularly industrial concerns. It characterizes a relationship between a company and what would otherwise be its independent suppliers. Perhaps the prime example of vertically integrated business concerns is to be found in the major international oil companies. Companies like Mobil, Gulf, and Standard Oil of New Jersey and California each have production, refining, and marketing facilities in several countries. They control the product from the wellhead to the pump, largely through ownership of affiliated companies. Vertical integration to some extent also characterises the major automobile companies which have various sorts of contractual arrangements and relationships with suppliers of parts which are used in the construction of cars and trucks. The goal is to establish some control over the external environment, and in this case to ensure the steady supply of inexpensive parts. And the output of the suppliers is designed to meet the input needs of the “processor” of the product. Supplier output is designed to meet certain specifications. In some situations the auto company may even move to in-house production of certain components. Whatever form integration takes, the goal is always to better link supply with what the company needs to carry out the manufacturing process effectively.

The connotations are somewhat similar in applying the concept to systems of higher education, with pressure coming from above to ensure that higher education’s “suppliers” do their job and provide the system with a quality product that meets certain specifications. But the mechanisms of integration are different, and the control over the suppliers may be somewhat less overt and conscious than in private business. Vertical integration between higher and

secondary education systems is not achieved, as in the case of private business, through ownership, contractual relationships, or the actual taking over of certain functions. The ownership, administration, and financing of higher and secondary education are distinct, even in those countries where both sectors are overseen by the same national ministry or department of education. There are two channels of influence by which vertical integration between higher and secondary education is effected. One is a structural dimension. The other involves personnel or instrumental linkages [1]. Vertical integration consists of more than simply the structurally sequential nature of educational systems. The latter characteristic contributes to but is distinct from vertical integration.

The structural dimension of influence takes at least two forms. First is the very organisation of higher education institutions into disciplines and professional areas of study. A second dimension, which interacts with and compounds the first, is the strongly sequential nature of certain disciplines in higher education. Each of these characteristics of organisation and knowledge provide secondary education with certain imperatives and models.

It is no secret that there is a downward pressure from higher to secondary education in Britain encouraging subject specialisation in the secondary schools. The persistent fragmentation of knowledge in higher education further increases this pressure, making it more and more difficult for secondary schools to provide a liberal arts curriculum or general education. This downward thrust is even more powerful in those disciplines like mathematics in which the nature of the subject matter apparently provides a clear design for the sequence of learning and thus for a preparatory curriculum. Learning the subject matter is a building block process of constructing a solid foundation upon which later learning is based. It seems only logical in this case for secondary education to also provide disciplinary-grounded course offerings, and for secondary schools to be organised into departments by discipline or groups of disciplines. The predisposition in this context is for secondary education to be geared towards providing the subject-based foundation upon which departments in institutions of higher education can build.

This top-down imperative is strengthened by the way in which the break between secondary and higher education is regulated. In Britain the graduating secondary school student does not have a "right" to a certain kind of higher education or to entry into the university of his or her choice. Rather, it is the institutions of higher education that have a right to select from the pool of qualified applicants. More important is the academic unit which regulates the transition from secondary to higher education. In universities, applicants are admitted by departments; in polytechnics, by units like schools of studies, below the level of the institution as a whole. Specialisation is such that, as Williams and Blackstone (1983, p. 41) note, "Three-quarters of the students entering British universities register for a specialised degree in a single subject." Since entry is to a

specialised unit this encourages secondary education to organise itself accordingly, in order to raise the level of knowledge of students in particular subjects.

The existence of specialised access-regulating bodies creates an imperative that can be a powerful force even in a system that is reputed for its emphasis on the pursuit of social justice and the opening up of access. Thus, in Sweden applicants must meet two kinds of prerequisites to enter higher education, general and special. The former must be fulfilled by all applicants regardless of what programme of study they choose. The special prerequisites are linked to each study programme and are subject-competency based (Ekholm, 1983).

But predispositions and proclivities that are generated by certain structural arrangements are not determinate, as the case of West Germany illustrates. The same imperative for specialisation at the school level exists in German higher education in terms of its structural organisation. Knowledge is organised in a highly specialised fashion at the higher education level. And yet there is a pressure from higher education for the secondary level not to specialise. There is a strict division of labour between the two, and the view is that secondary education should provide general education (Teichler, 1983). The values and strategies of actors in higher education are critical. Structural conditions may be necessary but they are not sufficient to effect certain influences [2].

Another important aspect of higher education's organisation combining the influence of structures and values is the hierarchy of prestige into which institutions of higher education are arranged. In this regard Britain is very centralised, and is focused on the "university ideal" to which other institutions aspire. Of course, universities are not the only kind of higher education institution in Britain. There is a strong so-called "public sector" of higher education with polytechnics as the "flagship" institutions. But the label of binary system that is applied to British higher education is a misnomer, both in the respect that it underestimates the system's heterogeneity and at the same time underestimates its homogeneity. There is an academic centralisation that pervades the British system, a centralisation that is in part a reflection of the relative normative integration that characterises British academic professionals when it comes to how quality higher education is defined.

There are no "real" alternatives of the kind provided in a variegated system like that of the United States, or even of the sort found in a highly segmented system like that of France. It is not just a matter of the existence of different institutions of higher education. It is also a question of the existence of alternative ideals of what form and substance higher education should take. In these systems there is at least the potential for the secondary system to attend to distinct pressures from different institutions and sectors of higher education. Not so in Britain where the dominance of the university ideal is replicated in the dominance of the sixth form which is explicitly geared to influence the rest of the secondary school of which it is a part. The identity of a secondary school is

wrapped up in the size and quality of its sixth form, just as the identity of an institution of higher education is wrapped up in its honours degrees. And the sixth form is characterised by specialisation and subject-mindedness, responding in the extreme to the disciplinary imperatives stemming from the structure of higher education [3].

Having identified the structural dimensions of influence, referred to the interplay between them and actors and their values, and cited a case of this in the prestige structures of educational systems, the discussion now turns to a treatment of personnel or instrumental linkages between higher and secondary education that effect vertical integration. The personnel or instrumental linkages are generated by higher education professionals in four types of activities sometimes within, and sometimes outside of, higher education institutions themselves. In their teaching and training role higher education professionals select, train, socialize, and orient future secondary school teachers and administrators. In their tutelary and examining role higher education personnel sit on examining and accrediting boards, visiting committees, and the like, and help to construct examinations that are critical to higher education entry (and therefore influence secondary school teaching and curricula). In their scholarly role professionals in higher education publish and disseminate ideas and promote certain pedagogical and organisational principles with respect to secondary schools and education. Finally, in their political role higher education personnel influence policy and decision making in secondary education, acting as political advocates for certain policies and programmes.

PERSONNEL LINKAGES AND PROFESSIONALISM

In these various capacities higher education personnel impact on and shape the secondary school system. What is remarkable about the British case, and this is an important point of contrast between the United Kingdom and the United States, is the pervasive influence of university personnel. Their influence is concentrated and strengthened by the role they have in the United Kingdom in policy making, educational governance, on bodies like the Examinations Council, and in overseeing teacher education. This is not a situation characterised by one-way, top-down determination. Certainly there is resistance at the schools level to university domination, and there is a reciprocal interaction between school and university personnel. But higher education personnel have the upper hand. And as noted earlier, the professionalism of the British system, both in terms of this power in policy making and in terms of normative integration, compounds and contributes to the vertical integration of the system. For the pressure from above is stronger and more unified in this professionalised context.

Even non-university actors in the system such as Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs), who cannot be categorised as members of higher education institutions,

are university trained and are clearly committed to virtually the same basic value system and preferences as university professors. They are professionals protecting excellence, and they often apply pressure on secondary education similar to that of university personnel. This is another dimension of higher education influence. Again, the influence is by no means determinate, but it is significant. Certainly people outside institutions of higher education though still within the system develop their own institutional loyalties. Yet the way they think about higher education issues is strongly influenced by the system they were socialised in.

The case of teacher education provides a good example of the importance of these personnel linkages and of how they contribute to the imperatives derived from the structural dimensions of the system. In light of the recent controversy over teacher training cuts in Britain this is a particularly relevant subject. Briefly put, teacher training colleges, later denoted Colleges of Education and then reorganised into colleges and institutes of higher education forged out of the contraction of teacher education, are in a tutelary relationship with schools and institutes of education in universities or with the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). This is in striking contrast to the situation in the United States. There teachers are trained in an uncoordinated myriad of institutions. Far from being overseen by universities, many of these institutions lack any research capacity and are not linked to institutions with any research capacity. It is in these independent and often isolated institutions, characterised by diverse missions, orientations, and atmospheres, that teachers are trained.

In Britain such academic apprenticeship under the guardianship of universities has been maintained both in the name of ensuring academic excellence and in order to ensure that teachers are prepared for innovation (Silver, 1981). The result, not surprisingly, is the dominance of the academic tradition in these institutions as in secondary education. Such dominance not only persists, it is on the rise. Since the mid-1970s two 'A' levels, the traditional qualification for university entry, has been the normal requirement for entry to teacher training courses. Never mind that no evidence has ever been amassed of a positive relationship between academic credentials and teaching ability. In the name of the preservation of quality, persons entering into the teaching profession must have the appropriate qualifications. Otherwise, how can they adequately prepare students for college study in the relevant subject. Just the way policy makers think about quality, and the way they define it and believe it is assessed, is profoundly influenced by an academic view derived from higher education personnel and the structure of higher education itself.

Recent developments in the teacher training situation reveal some underlying assumptions about teacher education, and some of the imperatives that are a part of university tutelage. There are two basic routes of teacher training. One is the Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree, a four-year degree course in education

set up only within the past decade. The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) is the other. This is a one-year postgraduate course taken by students who have already received bachelors' degrees. It should be noted, first of all, that the development of the BEd was overseen by the universities, and not just by the members of institutes of education. And in the process of planning and developing this degree university members played a significant role in such bodies as the joint planning committees and the subject working parties. Through these mechanisms certain disciplinary imperatives were articulated. For instance, in some cases the pressure from the university members was for there to be a subject focus in the last year of the BEd, rather than a focus on education as a subject (see Howell, 1979). As for the PGCE, it is plain that prospective teachers taking this route will be grounded more strongly in particular subjects, having earned a single subject degree.

The teacher training cuts announced by the government would serve to further increase both the tutelary role of the universities versus the public sector institutions in teacher education, and the disciplinary imperative in the route of training emphasised. In reducing both secondary BEd places and postgraduate training places in the public sector the cuts will increase concentration of secondary training in the universities, relegating and confining primary training to the public sector. Some public sector institutions have completely lost teacher training places. Perhaps more importantly, the cuts favour the PGCE route. The secondary BEd may be termed a casualty, a casualty prior to its even reaching adolescence. Relatively few numbers of subjects remain at the secondary BEd level (see THES, 10/9/82 p. 9). Yet while the PGCE route is favoured in the cuts, the secondary PGCE has been seriously cut in the public sector, both in terms of subjects retained and the absolute number of places. At the same time university places are increased. This despite the fact that university PGCE courses last only between 24 and 30 weeks, while in the public sector they are regulated to 35 weeks. And this despite the fact that in terms of mastery of professional skills there is no evidence of a significant difference between PGCE and BEd trained teachers.

The hidden agenda underlying these cuts is not so difficult to discern. Nor is it an agenda confined to the civil servants in the Department of Education and Science (DES) and to Sir Keith Joseph. For it is an academic agenda. The policy renews a principal emphasis on organising teacher education around academic subjects. Professional pedagogical and technical teaching skills are, as ever, undervalued [4].

PITFALLS OF MARKET SIMULATION

The implications for the structure, curricula, and atmosphere of secondary schools are plain [5]. But apart from contributing to a better understanding of

secondary education systems, why is it useful to examine higher education's impact on the teacher training process and other channels by which it influences secondary education systems? In particular, what import does it have for reform efforts aimed exclusively at the level of higher education? The answer lies in the Leverhulme effort to simulate the market, to introduce incentive based reforms to influence student demand and thus encourage diverse higher education offerings. One of the lynchpins is student or "consumer" demand.

In the context of the economic marketplace the conventional wisdom is that the fact of having to respond to market demand promotes the development by companies of innovative and better products. Much the same is true of the Leverhulme approach. Yet it is evident that responsiveness to short-term market demand does not necessarily lead to significant product changes in private enterprise, for instance, to technological advances [6]. One of the fundamental reasons for this in the economic sector is that companies have become proficient at shaping market demand. By means of advertising they can influence and even create demand. With the tremendous bombardment of consumers with advertising pitches just how "free" are consumers to "choose"? Does it make sense to speak of consumer demand as if it were entirely independent of the actions of those providing the products? The answer is a resounding "no" in both the economic and higher education "marketplaces".

Earlier, reference was made to vertical integration as a feature that characterised many major business concerns, a feature that enabled companies to exercise some control over and to bring some order to its environment. In this case the focus was on its suppliers. By means of vertical integration companies were able to ensure that the products of their suppliers met their specifications. In the case of higher education the suppliers and consumers are one and the same. They are a part of and are processed in a vertically integrated system. Students are affected by the systems they are processed in; they are affected in terms of their preferences and values and this in turn conditions their demand. In the Leverhulme monograph on higher education and the labour market Robert Lindley (1981) refers to this phenomenon, stating that "the perceptions of aspiring students are distorted earlier on in the educational system" – for instance, by virtue of the bias of schools towards conventional academic subjects. One aspect of the strategy he suggests is the gradual removal of these distorting factors.

This is where a discussion of the mechanisms of vertical integration is important. For the greater the influence higher education has on secondary education through these channels, the greater will be the "distortion" and inflexibility of student demand. What this suggests in part is that, as Martin Trow (1981, p. 98) puts it, "we need a social psychology of 'student flows,' appropriately disaggregated, and rooted in the varying organisational forms and processes that characterise our different national systems of higher education".

This prescription can be applied just as effectively to the relations between secondary and higher education. Rather than considering student demand solely from a psychological standpoint, and in terms of what Trow identifies as a social psychology of the economist, what is needed is a consideration of the institutional structures and arrangements that influence student attitudes and behaviours.

Leverhulme failed to address these problems or to grasp these levers of control. The agenda and policies it establishes are based on a rather insubstantial foundation. It seeks to change course structures without considering the forces that affect the persons selecting and offering those courses. A truly long-range, far-sighted approach to policy making, which Leverhulme is purported to be, should be predicated on an understanding of the actors in the system, of the values and structures that influence and guide their behaviour, and of the powers they exercise. This is true not just with respect to the consumers but also the providers of higher education as well, as is discussed in the next section.

The Professional Condition, and Response

It has been said that “The quack is the man who continues through time to please his customers but not his colleagues” (Hughes, 1958, p. 98). The principal reference group for professionals is their peers. It is primarily the norms, demands, judgments of this reference group that professionals are responsive to. For professionals to allow their work to be controlled and guided by laymen would be to violate the most basic precepts of professionalism. Laymen are considered ill-qualified to render proper decisions in such matters. They lack the necessary expertise. Such external determination would be regarded as illegitimate. This is particularly true in the United Kingdom where, for instance, academic professionals extend the notion of academic freedom to include the right of academic bodies (for example, departments and senates) to select not only their colleagues but their students. It is not so true in the United States where lay groups have in some sense the “right” to intrude, and where responsiveness to external demand and need is not so disparagingly defined even within the academic profession.

Two dimensions of professionalism were identified in the introduction of this article: the extent of professional influence with respect to policy making for and governance of institutions and systems of higher education; and the degree of normative integration in the profession. In the United Kingdom, through the pervasive and dominant influence they have over the institutions and system they work in, academic professionals can defend and perpetuate structures and conditions consistent with their norms and values.

The influence of academics is such that it is hard, in contrast to the United States, to identify an articulated institutional interest that is separate from the

interest of academic professionals in the institutions. In the United States the higher education associations most influential with respect to policy making in Washington are institutional associations which represent the interests of certain groups of institutions [7]. And these would tend to be dominated by the presidents of these institutions. These institutional associations have far more influence than professional associations, whether reference is to different disciplinary associations or to the American Association of University Professors. In the United Kingdom the most influential bodies in higher education policy making, such as the University Grants Committee (UGC), are made up of individual academics serving as members of the profession rather than as representatives of certain institutions. The closest thing to an institutional association would be the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP). But their role has been a relatively minor one. Similarly, at the level of the individual institution in the United States there is a separate institutional interest articulated and protected by powerful presidents and by an administrative apparatus that is in many respects relatively distinct from academics, whose power is generally grounded primarily at the departmental level. This is not so true of the United Kingdom, where vice-chancellors have not nearly as much power as presidents, where the faculty conducts a good deal of the administration and is quite powerful at the institutional level, and where a separate bureaucracy, to the limited extent it exists, is truly in the service of the faculty.

It is through their position in higher education that academic professionals can shape the response of the system to external demand. It is in the nature of the professional condition to do so. And just as there is some question as to how flexible student choice and demand is to certain incentive based reforms, so there is considerable question as to how responsive professionals will be to that demand as well as to incentive based reforms. As Maurice Peston (1981, p. 139) notes, higher education offerings are not based even largely on meeting demand. Adjustment to demand is slow and partial, for "colleges have other aims and possess the monopoly power to meet them to some extent". Their responsiveness is conditional. And the conditions are quality and professional control and regulation of the process. The Leverhulme programme itself is reflective of this, as noted earlier.

The ability of professionals to impose these conditions is enhanced by the fact that higher education in the United Kingdom operates in what could be called a "seller's market". The demand for higher education places outstrips the supply of them. As Halsey et al. (1980) indicate, supply is so tightly restricted that the authors could not develop a "rational choice" model to explain changing attendance rates. In such a system, which is reflective of the professionalism that characterises British higher education, it is the institutions offering the service that have the leverage, not the customers. Indeed, in Britain higher education institutions are expected to be selective; it is the road to institutional upward

mobility which is encouraged. The result is that demand does not produce an automatic response that is consonant with the demand.

This section is organised around a consideration of the Leverhulme monographs on teachers and learning, and on institutional change. The focus is twofold. First, attention is directed to the proposals themselves and to their fundamental aim of maintaining excellence while promoting diversity. These are examined in terms of the professionalism that characterises British higher education. The second focus of concern is the feasibility and likely outcomes of these proposals. Considering certain proclivities and points of blockage in the system alternative policy options are proffered.

REFORM BY NOBLESSE OBLIGE

The recommendations of the Leverhulme monographs, *Professionalism and Flexibility in Learning*, and *Accountability or Freedom for Teachers?*, are quite revealing with respect to the underlying tension in the Leverhulme seminars between diversity and excellence, and between responsiveness and self-determination. It is clear where the Leverhulme participants stand. The catchword is professional development. The key word is professional. Throughout the papers there is talk of flexibility (in careers, assessment procedures of students, and teaching methods), responsiveness to and the meeting of student needs. But it is reform by noblesse oblige, for it is the professionals and not the clients who articulate just what these needs are. These professionals will respond not to clientele defined demand but to what the professionals think their clientele need.

Basically what is called for is the improvement of professional standards and the creation of new opportunities for learners and teachers. There are repeated proposals for the professionalising of teaching. A number of the papers suggest the establishment of professional development units that will concentrate upon the induction, training, and development of new staff. Such units would also train certain specialists. It is proposed that institutions should encourage faculty boards and academic departments to appoint or designate staff with special expertise in the teaching and learning of their subject. These specialists would exercise responsibilities for course design and management. Throughout there are repeated calls for student-centered teaching and learning, and for new methods of teaching and student assessment.

As the final report notes, all these recommendations will be ineffective "if there is no mechanism to evaluate professional standards and to assess the new opportunities" (*Excellence in Diversity* p. 63). What is the Leverhulme solution to this? Professional peer review. No new evaluative mechanisms are proposed to replace or to complement this traditional mechanism. The only change will be that the process of professional peer review will be made more systematic and open. One of the principal proposals is that "Institutions of higher education

should ensure that the design of courses and the processes of teaching, learning and assessment are more open than they are at present, and are subject to regular peer reviews" (*Excellence in Diversity* p. 63). The condition of diversity, change, and improvement is that professionals continue to regulate the process. Teaching and learning is to be "student-centered" but in no way will be student-designed or student-determined or even student-evaluated.

The levers of control grasped by the Leverhulme participants, and the options proposed, are limited. For instance, one option, which was raised in the monograph on teaching but was not taken up in the final report, was that training for teaching be part of the PhD requirement. Hoggart et al. (1982) raise this possibility in the context of training teachers for continuing education. Financial considerations aside, the problem of this is that most academics are either indifferent to or decidedly hostile towards the idea. So the professionalism of the British system, and the values and attitudes of professionals, provide real constraints in terms of what options will even be considered.

Professionalism may block innovation in teaching in another respect. It may be that the surest route to change in teaching is the setting up of a very unique university. For instance, Moss and Brew (1981) examine groups like the Nuffield Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education, and other organisations which set out explicitly to promote or disseminate innovative ideas. They compare the influence of these efforts to that of the Open University, which had no explicit goal of disseminating new teaching ideas and strategies. What they find is that "comparing the take-up of OU ideas in other institutions of higher education with the take-up of ideas emanating from organisations which have a positive policy towards dissemination, or with the extent to which ideas are exchanged within and between other universities, then the degree of OU infiltration is remarkable" (1981, p. 147). What this suggests is that the most effective strategy for generating innovation in teaching may be to set up a new kind of university, perhaps along the lines that Trow (1981) suggested. However, this is not a strategy the British will be likely to accept. For, as noted earlier in the section on access, such a proposal goes beyond what the British are willing to do in the way of introducing diversity into the system.

Professionalism sets up a further obstacle as well. For instance, perhaps it is not too surprising, but it is disappointing that student evaluation of teachers was not proposed or at least considered as an option. For as Black and Sparkes (1982, p. 159) indicate, the exposure of teachers "to critical discussion by peers and students is an essential step towards raising the level of discourse amongst teachers about their work". Complete reliance on peer evaluation has its risks. In considering the literature on alternatives to student ratings of college teaching in the United States, Greenwood and Ramagli (1980) found that peer and administrative ratings correlate only moderately with student ones, and tend to be both less reliable and more generous in their appraisal of college teaching. It is quite

possible that such findings would not apply to British higher education. But student evaluation is an issue Leverhulme did not even consider. What is more important, given their reliance on the peer review mechanism, is the absence of a paper on the effectiveness of the external examination process. The impressions that Elton (1982) provides as to how effective the process is are far from reassuring. The point is then that the professionalism that characterises the British system holds little promise when it comes to the professionalisation of teaching.

What it comes down to of course is that as Martin Trow (1981) suggests, the British do not trust the competency of the consumer. To return briefly to the example of teacher training, it says something about priorities in the British system that the route of teacher training that is being drastically cut (the BEd) is the one for which student satisfaction has been highest. Professionals fear the power in the hands of consumers might compromise the standards and quality of their institutions and national system.

But not only do they not trust the competency of consumers, they also do not trust the judgment of professionals in search of consumers. Thus, in reviewing the Leverhulme proposals concerning the maintenance of academic quality the final report, *Excellence in Diversity*, having just referred to the maturity and experience of public higher education institutions' staff, poses the following problem.

On the other hand, along with some universities they may in the future find themselves under pressure to compromise academic quality in attempting to maintain student numbers or earn income from other sources (p. 14).

THE CONDITIONS OF DIVERSITY, AND COORDINATION

Throughout the Leverhulme volumes the British seek diversity yet it is clear that they are fundamentally uneasy with its effects as well as with exposing higher education to the whims of the market. In the monograph, *Agenda for Institutional Change in Higher Education*, recommendations center around encouraging initiative and decision making at the level of the institution rather than the system of higher education. As a means of fostering stronger management within institutions one recommendation suggests considering the types of training required by actual or aspiring institutional leaders. This led to one of the major recommendations to come out of the Leverhulme programme of study as a whole – that is, that a centre for higher education management and policy studies be established. This centre would both promote the study of emergent policy issues and “provide facilities for the professional development of leading members of universities, polytechnics, and colleges” (THES, 27/5/83 p. iii).

In part, this kind of recommendation is a means to an end, the end being

innovation and responsiveness. So, for instance, another proposal is that a small proportion of the funds available for higher education (for instance, 3 percent) be used as what might be called “seed money”. Individual institutions would bid for the money with proposals for innovation. The conviction underlying this is that innovation comes from below and cannot effectively be imposed from above. And the same belief applies to responsiveness. That is, it is assumed that institutions of higher education are more flexible in responding to external demands and changes than are systems of higher education. There is some suggestion that this is all the more true in times of contraction. Taylor (1982), for instance, suggests that during periods of growth adaptation and change take place largely within systems rather than within institutions, but that periods of contraction demand a response from individual institutions of higher education. Along these same lines there are calls within both the monograph on change and the one on structure and governance for more strategic planning at the institutional level, to the point of developing mission statements for individual institutions.

The outcome of these measures is surely intended to be some measure of diversity within the system. And this outcome is reinforced by the commitment of the seminars to the value of institutional autonomy. The bottom line is the belief that continuing and considerable discretion should be accorded the basic unit providing higher education.

But this freedom and attendant diversity is conditional. For when maintaining standards of quality and a “common core” in the system are compelling concerns, meaningful and effective forces of integration and coherence are favourably regarded. To the British the dangers of disorder – in terms of qualitative academic decline – are at least as disturbing as the potential excesses of coordination. It should therefore not be too surprising that a programme of study which repeatedly stresses the need for institutional autonomy and diversity also recommends the establishment of an academic review body by and for the universities that would collaborate with the CNAA. Some of the functions of this body would include ensuring that “academic standards for similar activities do not diverge too widely between institutions, . . . that students are assessed fairly and in an equivalent manner throughout higher education, . . . that criteria for student transfer are efficient and fair . . .” (*Excellence in Diversity*, pp. 14–15). Hardly a recipe for diversity.

The answer for those who fear the market is coordination. Yet although such coordinating mechanisms involve increased centralisation, the Leverhulme recommendations are for academic centralisation. The coordination of arrangements concerning quality are to be under academic control. For instance, like the CNAA, the proposed review body set up by the universities would consist of academics. Perhaps more significant in terms of academic control is the proposal of one Leverhulme monograph that the staff of the UGC and NAB should be

appointed independently of the DES, and that a majority of their respective staffs should be drawn from higher education itself. Academic relative to administrative control is increased at the same time and as a part of the effort to encourage coordination in the name of quality. Another example of this is the proposal that a higher education policy studies centre be set up to act as an independent source of advice for the DES, other government departments, and various bodies in the system of higher education. The centre is clearly a means of promoting the role of academics in policy making.

PROFESSIONALS AND MARKET BEHAVIOUR

Herein lies the problem with the policies proposed in the Leverhulme monographs. Many of the Leverhulme proposals, although they reflect in their very nature the professionalism that characterises British higher education, give little heed to the effects of this professionalism in the implementation of the Leverhulme proposals. For example, many of the proposals geared to promoting institutional change are incentive based. In fact, one of the recommendations of the change monograph is that "instruments of finance and resource allocation should be used as the most effective method of inducing change in higher education". But this is highly problematic in the context of British higher education. It would seem that the danger there is not as it perhaps is in the United States that in linking higher education to external demand and financial incentive institutions will be overly responsive and academic standards will decline. Rather, what seems likely is that British institutions of higher education will be selectively responsive, if they are responsive at all.

Given the nature of British higher education it is questionable to what extent the market can be simulated by financial incentive structures. To treat such a system of higher education as a sector of private enterprise in which competing enterprises rapidly generate innovations in response to the shifting demands of the market or the shifting incentives of the central government, and to reform by incentive accordingly, is to ignore the realities of professional commitments and professional influence. It ignores one of the defining characteristics of the British system, its high degree of professionalism, both in terms of normative integration and professional influence.

Conclusion

The principal thesis of this article is that certain contextual features of the British higher education system may play a critical role in affecting the implementation of reform proposals. Focusing on the vertical integration and professionalism that characterises the British system, the suggestion has been that these

constitute obstacles both to the strategies proposed in the Leverhulme monographs on access, change, and teachers and learning and to the major recommendations of the Leverhulme programme as a whole. One of the threads running through the programme is the use of systems of financial incentives to promote certain reforms and to achieve certain goals. The success of many of the Leverhulme proposals is contingent upon crucial assumptions concerning the choices and actions of the consumers and providers of higher education, students and professors. But these assumptions may be ill-founded, particularly given features of the education system which may influence the behaviour of these actors.

The problem is that the Leverhulme proposals are grounded in something of a Skinnerian conceptualization of education systems and actors within them [8]. Certain stimuli or incentives are believed to generate certain responses. What this article has attempted to point out is that at least one kind of demand (student demand) confronted by higher education is actually conditioned by higher education through a variety of channels by which higher education affects secondary education. To rely on student choice to change the system and support fundamental changes ignores the role the system has in influencing this choice. Moreover, the fact of the system's professionalism structures its responses to this demand. Much of Leverhulme seems to assume that professors will seek out and/or respond to new demand and new incentives. But this ignores the very nature of the professional condition, and the very power of British academics. It ignores the basic values of the actors in the system which support existing financial arrangements.

A consideration of these features of the system might lead to the formulation of strategies and proposals that grasp other levers of control. For instance, it may be that the surest way towards opening up student demand and thereby creating new pressures on the higher education system is to break or at least diminish the influence of higher over secondary education. This would entail addressing the various means by which higher education shapes secondary education. Even something as simple as having universities rather than departments be the admitting units might reduce the pressure of early specialisation and help open up higher education institutions to new sorts of demands for it to meet broader educational needs. And dealing with the channels of higher education influence could result in the development of a secondary level with a relative degree of autonomy and an integrity of its own, a secondary system which would have as its primary purpose something other than specialised college preparation. This in turn could generate a truly diverse student demand that would call for significantly different patterns of provision. For instance, it might serve to alter students' traditional preference for single subject courses and degrees. At the same time it is necessary to confront the professionalism that pervades the British system. For instance, consider the proposal to improve the

training of institutional leaders. This suggestion implies that the major obstacle to strong institutional leadership in British institutions of higher education is the vice-chancellors, directors, and principals' lack of leadership abilities. But the problem at least in the universities may not be the training of these leaders. It may be instead the amount of power the vice-chancellors have vis-à-vis professors within their institutions. It may be that before institutional initiative can be relied upon to generate significant change, the power of academics within universities will at least to some extent have to be counterbalanced.

There is no question that many of the goals of the Leverhulme programme are commendable. They certainly are. Increased access, institutional initiative and innovation, and variety in course provisions are aims all systems of higher education should be encouraged to pursue. And there is no question that the process by which the recommendations were generated was managed superbly, providing the reader with a tremendous amount of information about the British system as well as proposals for its reform. But there is considerable question as to the practicability of the Leverhulme recommendations' implementation. Even the modest proposals of Leverhulme may not be pragmatic enough because they do not systematically attend to the underlying dynamic of the education system in Britain. The suggestion here is that it might be useful to couch the proposals in the context of value commitments and power structures embedded within the system.

Notes

- 1 This typology of channels of influence was generated by the author and Burton R. Clark in formulating a research proposal for the study of the relation between secondary and higher education, now being funded by the Lilly foundation. The discussion of these channels, and the structure of the paper itself owes much to helpful comments provided by Bjorn Wittrock and Sydney Ann Halpern.
- 2 The same point holds with respect to what might be called the "linearity" of subjects. Linearity refers to the apparent sequential nature of certain disciplines like mathematics. But linearity may not in fact be inherent in the structure of the subject. It may instead be a social construct, and higher education professionals may have a major role in this. So again, one must look beyond the structures to the actors and their values, and thus to personnel channels of influence. This idea that the linearity of certain disciplines is largely a myth is drawn from comments made by T. Becher and M. Kogan at the conference "The Relation Between Secondary and Higher Education: An International View," held at UCLA July 25-28, 1983.
- 3 See Maden (1983) and Ball (1981) for a discussion of the 6th form and secondary schools.
- 4 The cuts are important as an indicator of a trend. While it is true that they will affect only a small proportion of the teaching force it is also true that the BEd is quite a new development. The secondary school teaching force has already largely been trained in the "3 + 1" fashion (the PGCE route). The recent cuts serve to strengthen the emphasis on disciplinary qualifications versus professional teaching skills; they reinforce a bias that already exists in the system.
- 5 See Ball (1981) for a discussion of occupational cultures in comprehensive schools.

- 6 See, for instance, Hayes and Abernathy (1980) on American businesses and technological innovations.
- 7 See King (1975) for a discussion of these associations, the major ones of which are: American Association of Universities, American Association of Colleges, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Association of Colleges and Junior Colleges, and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.
- 8 Burton Clark coined this term at the UCLA summer conference "The Relation Between Secondary and Higher Education: An International View," held from July 25–28, 1983.

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