

# Universities as knowledge organisations

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# Aim

- Compare how universities (Denmark, UK, NZ) reformed as knowledge organisations in a knowledge economy
- Focus on Denmark
  - Imaginaries of governance – spaces, institutions, people/workers
  - Cases – how they 'work' in practice
- Tease our comparisons in discussion

# Knowledge Organisations

- Danish industry to be like Silicon Valley
- The new natural resource to be 'hewed' and exploited was 'knowledge'. Site of its mining – universities
- Exploitation of knowledge depended on
  - Networks of researchers – attention and resources focused on areas of high added value (nano, pharma, IT)
  - Quickly turn ideas into innovative products
  - Highly skilled graduates (Danish and 'best in the world') taking latest knowledge and international contacts into industry
- Failure of Danish universities
  - Academics not trusted to use research freedom on priority areas
  - Universities don't coordinate and focus resources on priority areas

# Image of Success – 'Enterprise webs'

- Robert Reich (1991) Clinton's Secretary for Labour
- High-value enterprises – web-like relations
- Small strategic centre of brokers
- Nodes – small, fairly autonomous groups – use their own knowledge of the field and networks to find problems, develop solutions, market them
- Workers – inspired by creative stimulus to make their mark on the world - boundary-less, devoted to work, continually developing new capacities (p. 89 these qualities sometimes found in univ. depts)
- Connections – diverse and new connections all the time
  - Business units, spin offs, spin ins, licenses, numerous contracts with independent suppliers and dealers
  - 'no 'inside' and 'outside' of the corporation – just distances from the strategic centre
- Ecology – reminiscent of Robertson and Old's charting for universities

# Charting universities' new ecology

(from Olds, 2010; Olds and Robertson, 2011; Robertson et al. 2012 )

## Examples of Emerging and/or Increasing Powerful Actors

PRIMARY SCALE OF OPERATION	ACTORS	GOAL/LOGICS	TEMPORAL HORIZON	KEY UNIVERSITY ENTRÉE POINTS
Global	Private firms (e.g., Thomson Reuters, The Economist Intelligence Unit)	Research services & insights, (e.g., citation indices) for profit; forecasting, benchmarking	Quarterly/yearly with strategic plan	Library systems, funding councils
	Private firms (e.g., Google, Cisco)	Enhancing access to information for profit	Quarterly/yearly with strategic plan	Consortia; Library systems; Personal computer web browsers
	Private firms (e.g., media)	Ranking to enhance profit	Once per year	All levels
	Private foundations (e.g., Gates Foundation; Soros)	Development	Short; longer term (e.g. Central Eastern University)	Faculty and administrators
	Private firms (e.g., Standard and Poors)	Risk analysis for profit; emerging markets	Client-driven	Senior administrators
	Private firms (e.g. Apollo Global; i-graduate)	Return from investment portfolio	Shareholder driven	All levels

	Multilateral agencies (e.g., IFC, OECD, UNESCO, WTO; IAU)	Development and system change	1-5-10 years	Ministries and senior administrators (universities and associations)
	Sovereign wealth funds (e.g., the King Abdullah University of Science & Technology)	Development and branding	5 years	Researchers and key STEM departments/universities
<b>Regional and Interregional</b>	Regional organizations (e.g., EU, ASEAN, APEC, ASEM, OECD, IFC)	Regional integration and development	1-5-10 years	Ministries, senior administrators (universities and associations), funding councils
	Regional higher education areas (e.g., the EHEA; UNILA)	Regional development and reform	1-5 years	Ministries, universities
	Regional funding councils (e.g. European Research Council)	Facilitating research	1-5 years	University research units and researchers
	Regional champions (e.g. Bologna Promoters; West Midlands in Europe)	Regional development and reform	1-5-10 years	Regional development agencies; university academics
<b>National</b>	Ministries of Trade	Enhancing trade	Singular (signing) and then term of free trade agreement	N/A
	Ministries and monarchies (e.g., Qatar)	Capacity building and branding	Post-economic crisis or during economic boom	Senior administrators
	Funding councils	Global research infrastructure	Irregular	Faculty and senior administrators
	Funding councils	Joint calls for proposals	Irregular or annual	Faculty and senior administrators
	Think tanks (e.g., Lumina)	Insights for development	Issue-specific cycle	Senior administrators
	Student mobility brokers (e.g. Gap year)	Creating safe travel products	Economic cycles	Families; university careers advisors

# Management of Enterprise Webs (Reich continued)

- Executives have little direct control or authority over their domain – don't impose their will over a corporate empire
- They guide ideas through new webs of enterprise
- Cannot operate as a hierarchy with layers of centralised administration

# Management of Enterprise Webs

'The high-value enterprise has no need to control vast resources, discipline armies of production workers, or impose predictable routines. Thus it need not be organized like the old pyramids that characterized standardized production, with strong chief executives presiding over ever-widening layers of managers, atop an even larger group of hourly workers, all following standard operating procedures.

In fact, the high-value enterprise *cannot* be organized in this way.'

R. Reich *The Work of Nations* 1991: 87

# Danish University Management Reforms 2003

- Culmination of history of turning decentralised universities into an 'organisation'
- CEO who stands for the organisation
  - interlocutor for government and industry (Ørberg 2007)
  - accountable for 'his' corporation (*koncern*)
- Hierarchical and 'unified' (*enstrenget*) management
- Centralised financial and budget control

# Global world and Competition state

- Cameron and Palan (2004) – 3 co-eval narratives reimagined spatial construction of the world
  - Globalised 'offshore' economy
  - Localised pockets of deprivation and exclusion- called 'neighbourhoods' or 'communities'
  - Competition state – mediates the other two
- World envisaged as competing units on every scale – global, regional, national, city, institutional, individual

# Role of Competition State

- Mobilise all possible productive resources and deploy them to competitive advantage (Pedersen 2011)
- Provide legal, regulatory, financial framework for
  - Opening up new frontiers of capital 'offshore'
  - Reforming the organisation and steering of education and other services so they contribute to economic competitiveness
  - Enable every individual to optimise skills and position in global labour market – so that the country will prosper as a result
- Manage a network environment - contracting state (Cerny 1990)
  - 'self-organising, inter-organisational networks', governance without government (Rhodes 1997)
  - Technologies to steer institutions' and citizens' agency and 'freedom' to achieve the government's political aims and moral order – governmentality (Miller and Rose 1990)
- UK - Not provide universal welfare (Jessop 2002)  
DK – Social cohesion (*sammenhængskraft*) gives competitive advantage

# Reconfiguration of Universities

- Competitive state expected universities to operate on all 3 imagined spaces of global world
  - As corporations in the global economy – ranking, trade in students, research contracts
  - Service other industries in national economy – provide knowledge and graduates/workers
  - Social role – overcome divisive effects of high skills economy – hold out hope for people seeking to leave the archipelago of exclusion and join global labour market
- Promote the image of their competitive country, city, individuals

# Changes to Universities

1980s and 1990s Reform of Danish welfare state

- Aim and Frame Steering
- Minister set aims for service
- Legal and budget framework for providing it
- Contracted out service provision to 'free' suppliers
- Performance indicators
- Output payments
- Scrutiny/supervision (*tilsyn*)

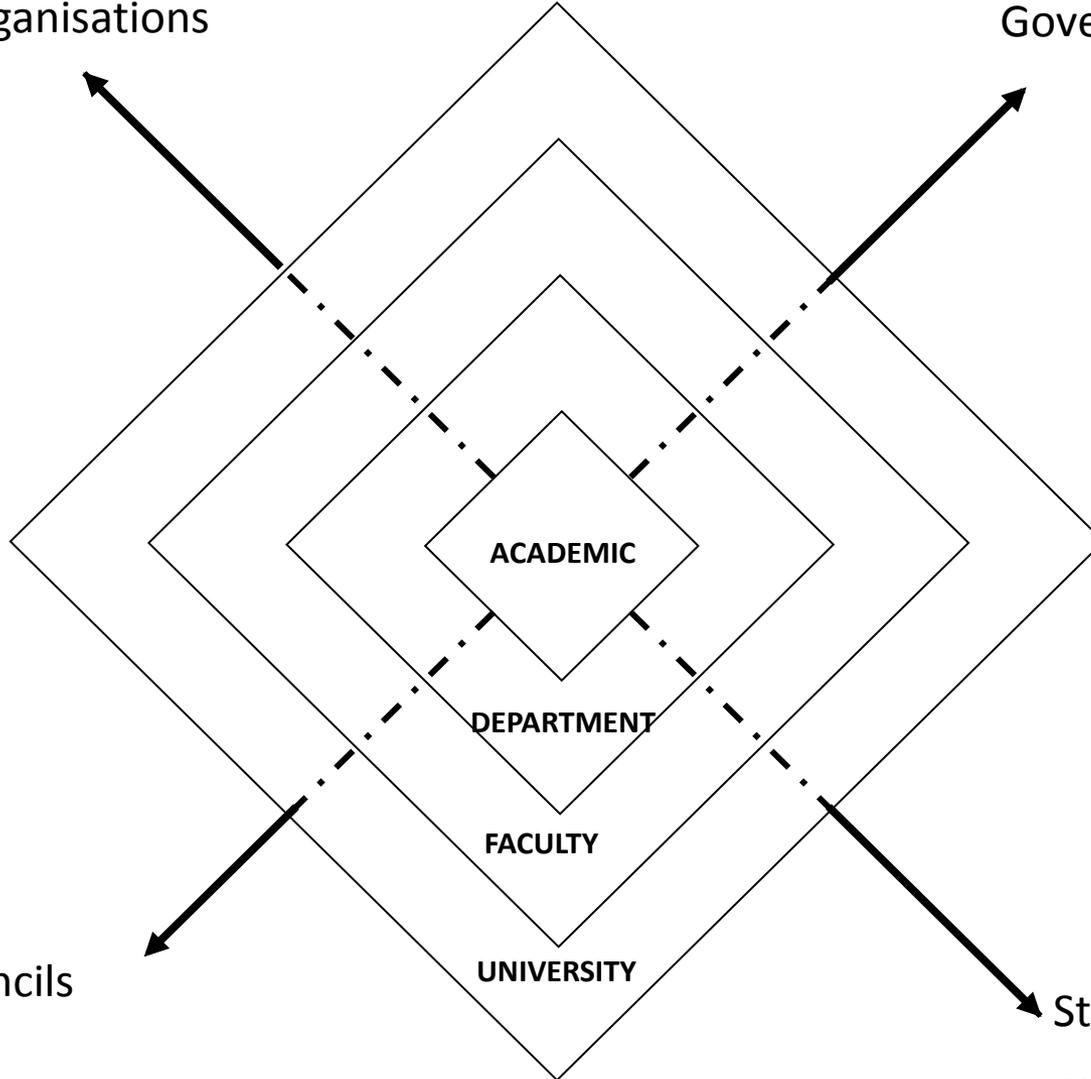
# Agentification – 'setting universities free'

- Public services turned into 'free agencies' or 'self owning institutions'
- Free = the individual (institution or person) responsible for finding own way in the world
- University open to demands from all sides – government, politicians, industry, society
- Up to the university to decide how to respond and negotiate with these demands
- 2003 law – university has research freedom and must defend that and ethics.

Industry

Public Sector Organisations

Government



Research Councils

Foundations

EU

Students

Civil Society

Industry

Public Sector Organisations

**Government's  
Steering System**

ACADEMIC

DEPARTMENT

FACULTY

UNIVERSITY

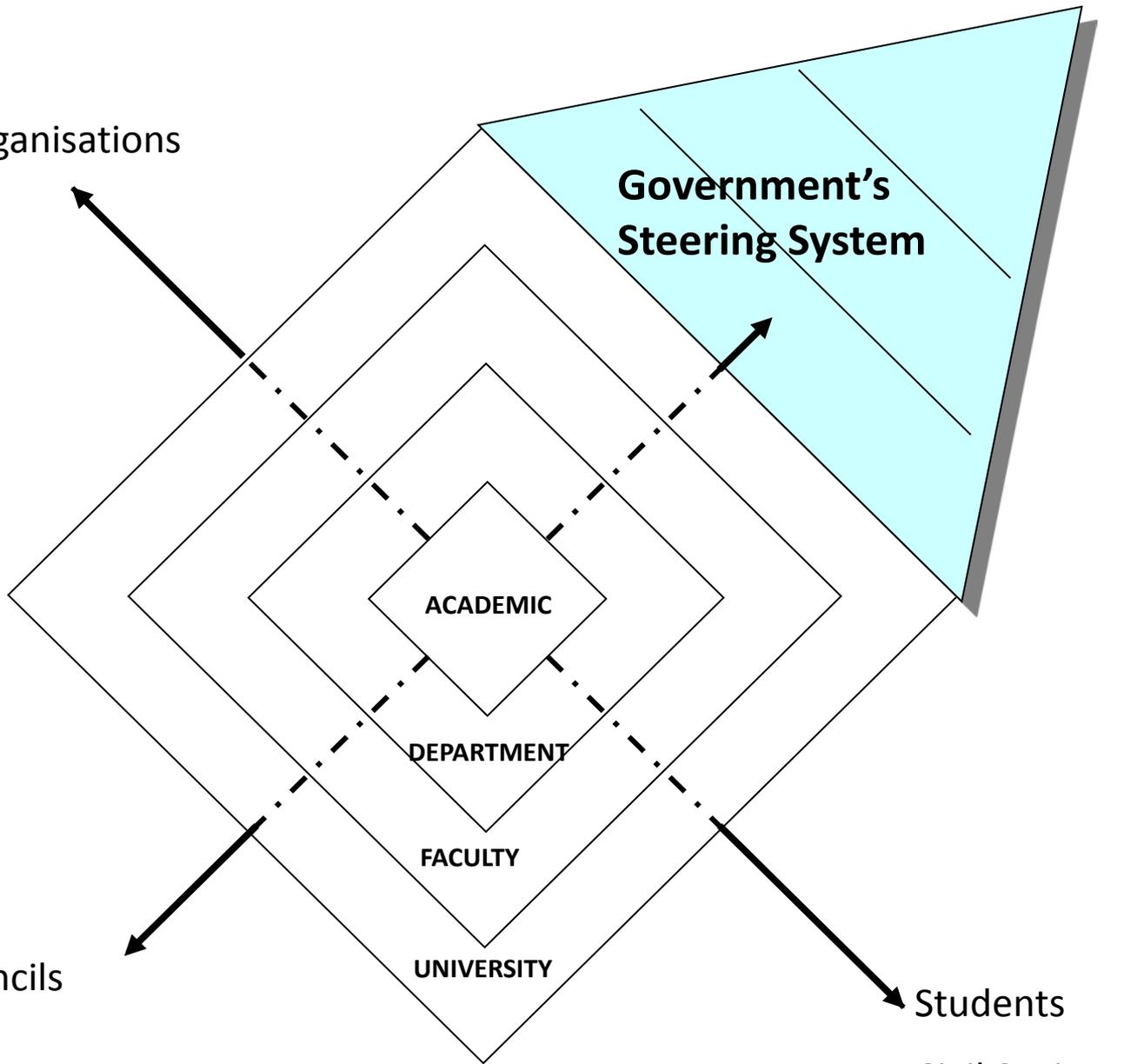
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# How does a University operate as a free agent in a competition state?

- Do(es) the university management/academics understand their positioning within the state?
- Who is the university?
- How does it protect its research freedom and ethics? What concepts and organs are deployed?

# Cases

- DPU (Nov 2005) – visit from Minister of Education – defence of university's independent research agenda?
- Contracts and PIs– 'forgive us, we knew not what we did'. Contradictions of BFI
- Penkowa case (March 2010-present)– protecting university ethics – rector mor(t)ally wounded
- Wind case (June 2011)– Defence of research freedom or freedom of expression?
- Koldau case (June 2011-March 2012)– 'Collegial confidentiality' versus 'Freedom of expression'. Why not academic freedom?

# Conclusion

- Not an enterprise web with leaders facilitating academics' using their research freedom, motivation and professional and ethical judgement to expand their contacts and contracts with surrounding society
- CEO of corporation – hierarchy of managers – chain of contracts-deliver PIs to Minister – concepts of 'unified leadership' and loyalty obligation (from civil service) – cuts relations with 'workers'
- Confusion over the concepts of research freedom, freedom of expression and academic freedom
- Rectors' soft response to attacks on university and academics
- Universities – no organ to defend the research freedom of the institution or individual
- Academics – very few speaking out in the university or publicly in the press – many afraid of being picked off in next firing round

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