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Beyond national states, markets, and systems of higher education: A glonacal agency heuristic

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Abstract. This paper offers an overarching analytical heuristic that takes us beyond current research, anchored in conceptions of national states, markets, and systems of higher education institutions. We seek to shape comparative higher education research with regard to globalization in much the same way that Clark's (1983) "triangle" heuristic has framed comparative higher education research in the study of national policies and higher education systems. Our "glonacal agency heuristic" points to three intersecting planes of existence, emphasizing the simultaneous significance of global, national, and local dimensions and forces. It combines the meaning of "agency" as an established organization with its meaning as individual or collective action. Our paper critiques the prevailing framework in cross-national higher education research, addressing the liberal theory that underpins this framework, the ways scholars address the rise of neo-liberal policies internationally, conceptual shortcomings of this work, and emergent discourse about "academic capitalism". We then discuss globalization and our heuristic. Finally, we provide examples of how states, markets, and institutions can be reconceptualized in terms of global, national, regional, and local agencies and agency.

Keywords: academic capitalism, comparative education, globalization, markets, methodologies, nation-state, neo-liberalism

Introduction

Globalization processes in higher education are under-studied and under-theorized. Although there is much comparative research, the dominant analytical framework for higher education scholars concentrates attention on governmental policies of the nation-state and on national systems of higher education. Studies map out developments in terms of coordinates such as the relationship between national governments and higher education institutions, the impact of governmental policies on that relationship, the structure of national systems, and the role of market pressures such as student and employer demands in those systems. Most comparative higher education research foregrounds nation states, national markets, and national systems of higher education. It offers cross-national comparisons of national patterns. Global forces are not so much analyzed or theorized as they are identified. Thus, scholars note that across countries there is a push for higher education

to be more efficient, self-sufficient, and accountable, but there is little analysis of what global forces promote the pattern.

In our view, the world in which we now live takes us beyond the conceptual confines of current comparative higher education scholarship. Today, higher education in every corner of the globe is being influenced by global economic, cultural, and educational forces, and higher education institutions themselves (as well as units and constituencies within them), are increasingly global actors, extending their influence across the world. Moreover, the political, economic, and educational contours of countries (and of regions and continents) are being reshaped by regional trading blocs that lead higher education to become more similar across national boundaries and more active in regional markets. Finally, at the same time these global forces press upon higher education, the legitimacy of nation states and of national higher education systems that express national cultures are being challenged by movements to preserve and promote local cultural identity and independence. The prevailing model and concepts neither capture nor explain these dimensions of higher education.

We are not alone in our critique of the literature. A 1996 special issue of *Higher Education* provides critiques by several top comparative higher education scholars suggesting that there is a need to utilize new conceptual categories and develop new conceptual frameworks to explain trans-national activities and forces in higher education (Clark 1996; Kogan 1996; Neave 1996; Teichler 1996). A recent special section of *Higher Education* (Vol. 41(4)) takes important steps in that direction, with articles (Tierney 2001; Stromquist 2001; Slaughter 2001) that draw on three of significant developments and traditions in social science – postmodernism, feminism, and political economy/political sociology – to frame future comparative study of higher education. Moreover, this current special issue of *Higher Education* provides empirical explorations of globalization, enabling a further advance of the field's conceptual boundaries.

Informed by the above work we fashion an analytical heuristic that takes us beyond current models anchored in conceptions of national states, markets, and systems of higher education institutions. We aim to conceptualize and shape comparative higher education research with regard to globalization in much the same way that Clark's (1983) "triangle" heuristic, extended by Becher and Kogan (1992), and by Kogan and Hanney (2000), has framed comparative higher education research in the study of national policies and higher education systems. Not unlike the three points on Clark's triangle (professional/collegial, governmental/managerial, and market),[1] our approach points to three intersecting planes of existence, emphasizing the simultaneous significance of global, national, and local dimensions and

forces. Not unlike the combination of structure and activity evident in Clark's concepts (e.g., "professional/collegial"), our approach combines the meaning of "agency" as an established organization (such as the World Bank) with its meaning as individual or collective action (i.e., human agency). Thus, we denote our approach a "*glonacal agency*" heuristic.

Before elaborating our heuristic, we critique the prevailing framework in cross-national higher education research. We address the liberal theory that underpins it, the ways scholars address the rise of neo-liberal policies internationally, conceptual shortcomings of this work, and emergent discourse about "academic capitalism". We then discuss globalization and our heuristic. Finally, we provide examples of how states, markets, and institutions can be reconceptualized in terms of global, regional, national, and local agencies and agency.

Liberalism, neo-liberalism, and shortcomings of higher education studies

Liberal theory. Liberal theory presents the state and the market as separate from and in opposition to each other (Smith 1776/1979; Hayek 1960). The market is understood as a terrain of natural private freedom that is prior to the state, and that functions according to natural laws. Such assumptions are deeply embedded in Western cultures (particularly Anglo-American ones), and have shaped higher education studies, in which much of the analytical focus and policy debate turns on the antinomies of nation-state regulation and higher education institutional and systemic autonomy. Thus, scholars typically characterize national systems of higher education in terms of a zero-sum balance of state and market control (Neave and Van Vught 1991, 1994). The more there is of one, the less there is of the other. Countries are classified on a continuum between state and market control.

Clark (1983) extended this model to include a third point in space, professional-collegial control. Countries are identified in two-dimensional space on an equilateral triangle defined by the points of state, market, and professional control (see Figure 1). Moving towards one is moving away from the others. The focus is on governance and policy. The triangle model is a heuristic for studying, comparing, and classifying national higher education systems according to the influence of nation states, national markets, and national professions in them.

Clark provides an additional schema for classifying professional-collegial control that consists of six formal layers of governance ranging from the basic academic unit to the nation state (Becher and Kogan 1980; Clark 1978). Thus, one can classify the professional-collegial control in a national higher

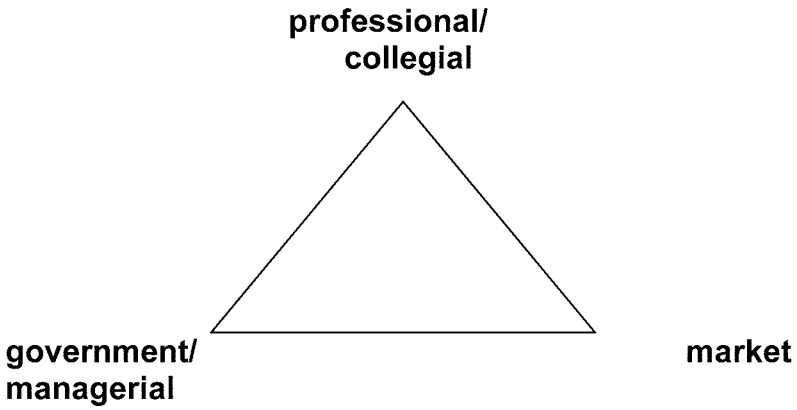

Figure 1. Clark's analytical heruistic. *Source*: Clark 1983.

education system in terms of where that influence is located organizationally: in departments or chairs/institutes; faculties or colleges; universities; multi-campus systems; state governments; and national ministries. Analytical attention is focused on the national character of formal political structures of institutions and government.

Neo-liberal policies. The worldwide proliferation of neo-liberal policies further reinforces scholars' bipolar focuses on states versus higher education institutions, and states versus markets. The neo-liberal pattern is to reduce state subsidization of higher education, shift costs to "the market" and consumers, demand accountability for performance, and emphasize higher education's role in the economy (Neave and Van Vught 1991). Higher education institutions are conceptualized as being embedded not only in a nation state and national system, but in a national marketplace. Studies focus on the impact of state policy on universities' independence or on universities' involvement in and responsiveness to national markets. With regard to the former, much recent scholarship focuses on changing relations between national ministries and higher education institutions (Gornitzka 1999; Kogan and Hanney 2000; Salter and Tapper 1994). With regard to the latter, scholars have focused on universities' entrepreneurial activity in and adaptation to external markets (Clark 1998; Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Sporn 1999). U.S. scholars have emphasized the emerging and growing private sectors of higher education that introduce market influences into national systems (Geiger 1986; Levy 1986). Australian scholars have emphasized the role of the state in structuring more market-like conditions for higher education systems and institutions, a neo-liberal paradox of "steering from a distance" (Marginson

1997; Meek et al. 1996), even as those same governments, defined by some as "evaluative" states (Neave 1998) increase their demands on higher education for accountability. Finally, in this context some scholars have studied the concurrent weakening of professional control vis-à-vis managerial control in higher education institutions (Currie and Newson 1998; Marginson and Considine 2000; Rhoades 1998).

Conceptual shortcomings and exceptions. Several shortcomings define the literature. The field lacks a framework for conceptualizing agencies and processes that extend beyond the nation state. In addition, for all the discussion of national states and markets, there is limited analysis of the complex agencies and processes that define them. Finally, in all the attention devoted to the general national character of higher education systems and of organizations within them, there is too little exploration of local demands and variations within nations, and of the ways in which local institutions extend their activities beyond national boundaries.

Current conceptualizations of comparative higher education lack a global dimension. Scholars note the prominence of neo-liberal reform across nations, but there is little theorizing about or empirical analysis of the *inter*-national and/or *regional* agencies and activities through which these common policy changes are effected (by "regional" we refer to a supra-national entity, *not* to regions within a country). The global is not a problem for study; it is invoked as a residual explanation for observed commonalties across countries. What forces push one nation after another to adopt various neo-liberal policies in higher education, such as introducing tuition? What agencies and mechanisms have led to the introduction of similar quality assurance efforts and increasingly common degree structures from one national system to the next? The field needs to enrich our understanding of global political and economic forces that shape national higher education systems, and the global dimensions and influences of those national states and higher education systems themselves.

In addition, despite a conceptual model that focuses on nation states and national markets, most comparative higher education studies offer limited exploration of national governments and markets. In Clark's (1996, p. 418) words, the research agenda "attends too much to the surface of current events, particularly to passing debates about formal policies and the enactment of laws." Scholars focus more on the outputs of the administrative state than on processes and structures of the legislative and judicial branches (Rhoades 1992). Although there are exceptions (see Kogan and Hanney 2000), we know far too little about the distinctive mechanisms and operation of different

nation states. What is their position within regional and international polities, and what balance between national traditions and regional/international trends is expressed in their policies? Similarly, little comparative higher education research examines the distinctive nature of different national economies, of their impact on nation states, and their position in relation to regional and international economies. Scholars note the subordination of educational to economic policies and concerns (Neave 1988), but with some exceptions (see Altbach and Selvaratnam 1989; Marginson 1997; Rhoades and Smart 1996; Slaughter 1990), we know far too little about the economic agencies, structures, forces, and actors that impact nation states and higher education policies in different countries; and the international position and role of national markets of goods and services, and of students, professionals, and graduates. Finally, little comparative higher education research considers the human agency that shapes nation states and higher education policies. Policies are about the mobilization of partisan politics, shaped by various interest groups and social movements, organized efforts by social classes and other groups to shape social opportunity. We know too little about this dimension of politics, the contest by social groups to shape and be served by national higher education systems.

A further conceptual shortcoming of the literature is that it fails to adequately address the local dimension, including the global activity of local institutions and agents. In Clark's (1996, p. 418) words again, "Largely pursuing macro trends and structures, it has undervalued micro dynamics and determinants." Much of the literature focuses on policies, remaining suspended at the level of the state, overlooking local responses and variations. As Kogan (1996, p. 397) notes, policy analyses "fail to have much force" if they lack "very fine grained analyses" of change in classrooms, departments, and institutions, in the actual practices of academics (see also Teichler 1993). Research builds on Cerych and Sabatier's (1986) effort to develop cross-national generalizations regarding higher education reforms. National systems and reforms are cast in terms of universal, ideal types and models of reform. Yet, in Teichler's (1996, p. 251) words, it should be possible, even as we note "the global spread of standardized educational models," to perceive "persistent peculiarities of higher educational systems and distinct national political options." Policy analyses should attend to policy implementation at various levels, down to the professionals who enact and formulate policies in the ways that they ration their time and organize their activity. We need work that attends to local response and reality, explores local institutions, and considers local practices. More than that, we need to study how local actors and institutions extend their activities to the international stage. In what ways do local universities and departments move in international circles, not

just subject to international forces, but being subjects that exercise influence regionally and globally?

Academic capitalism. Recent studies of "academic capitalism" take a step towards investigating global mechanisms in higher education. Slaughter and Leslie (1997) see the global economy as increasingly commodifying students, faculty, and intellectual products. Yet, their empirical focus is on national policies and funding patterns, not global agencies and agency. And in identifying a global pattern of privatization in academe they understate national and local forces that push higher education's continued performance of public, not-for-profit functions. Universities have not been reduced to businesses. If the profit motive has been inscribed in these not-for-profit entities, higher education institutions nevertheless continue to be many-sided entities performing a wide variety of roles for various constituencies. They are public and private, spanning the boundaries between these sectors and performing functions for each. Even as universities pursue technology transfer to private sector enterprises, they also continue to prepare public service professionals who staff and perform the educational and social service functions of the state. Even as close to the market fields such as computer science grow, students continue to be prepared in far from the market fields such as history. In nearly every country, universities still receive substantial funding from government sources (from 40–80% in industrialized countries) to fulfill public purposes, including the provision of subsidized higher education to a growing proportion of the national population.

The metaphor of academic capitalism reveals a powerful global trend but blinds us to the power of national traditions, agencies, and agents in shaping the work of higher education, as well as to the local agency exercised by students, faculty, non-faculty professionals, and administrators, pursuing prestige, knowledge, social critique, and social justice. In two regards, academic capitalism requires fuller conceptual development at the local level. First, higher education institutions are changing their internal management systems and governance. If Slaughter and Leslie speak to some implications of academic capitalism for managing universities, we must look to others for more in-depth treatment of changes in and struggles in regard to the management and control of academic work (Currie and Newson 1998; Marginson and Considine 2000; Rhoades 1998). Second, although Slaughter and Leslie argue that national policies promote academic capitalism among faculty and universities, they do not detail the global extent and scope of universities' competitive activities. To what extent, for instance, do students become the focus of global competition (Rhoades and Smart 1996)? To what extent do universities market their programs internationally? To what extent do they

establish international outposts of educational activity? We see universities as increasingly global actors, extending their influence internationally. They are globally, nationally, and locally implicated. Those multiple realities are central to our glonacal agency heuristic.

Globalization and our "*glonacal agency*" heuristic

Globalization. Inter-national influences in higher education have existed from the origins of formal higher education. The flow of students and professors across national borders took place from the earliest days of universities in continental Europe and the Arab world. So, too, the trans-national influence of specific dominant institutions and models on higher education has long been a key to understanding national higher education systems. The Catholic Church is a powerful example of global influence in the structural and ideological underpinnings of higher education. Over time, other imperial models of higher education gained influence, often through powerful (militarily and economically) nation states. The effects of British and French models are plain in former colonies; the Bonapartist model also shaped universities in Spanish-speaking America. The effects of the German model are equally evident in the U.S. and throughout Europe and Scandanavia. Most recently, the U.S. model, based on mixed public-private provision and mixed public-private funding of autonomous institutions, is a prominent force shaping the higher education systems and institutions of various countries.

We do not, then, see "globalization" as a new phenomena. In a field focused conceptually on the nation-state we simply argue that global forces and processes have a major and growing impact on higher education systems and should be a focal point of theorizing and empirical study. We use the term "globalization" to mean "becoming global," to refer to the development of increasingly integrated systems and relationships beyond the nation. Such systems and relationships are more than economic: they are also technological, cultural and political (Appadurai 1996; Held et al. 1999). As much as anything, globalization is the shrinkage of distance and time-delay in communications and travel, leading to increasingly extensive and intense global relations. In the current context, it makes sense to go beyond nation states and national markets and institutions/systems in studying globalization and higher education (Marginson and Mollis, forthcoming).

A glonacal agency heuristic. We offer a "*glonacal agency*" heuristic for comparative higher education research. One of our aims is to advance the significance of studying *glo*bal phenomena. Yet we do not see such

phenomena as universal or deterministic in their effects; thus, we also feature the continued significance of the *na*tional dimension. Further, as we do not see either global or national phenomena as totalizing in their effects, we feature the significance of the lo*cal* dimension. For these reasons, we construct the term, "*glonacal,*" which is phonetically pronounced, glow-nackal. The particular pronunciation depends on the type of English one speaks: it sounds different when spoken in one author's California U.S. English, versus in the other author's Melbourne Australian English. Indeed, the pronunciation clarifies the significance of the global (English), national (U.S. and Australia), and local (California and Melbourne) dimensions of existence.[2]

With the second term in our heuristic, "*agency*," we emphasize two meanings of the word. First, we utilize agency in the sense of an entity or organization that could exist at the global, national, or local level. There are international organizations such as the World Bank (or regional entities such as the European Union). There are also governmental units within nation states such as Ministries of Education and national legislatures. And there are local entities such as individual institutions of higher education. Each of these ***is*** an agency. Yet there is a second meaning of the term that refers to the ability of people individually and collectively to take action (exercise agency), at the global, national, and local levels. For example, there are international professional groups that extend across national boundaries, such as associations of physicists (and of higher education policy analysts), which shape national policy and local practice. There are also national groups such as Committees of Rectors or of Vice-Chancellors, and business-higher education forums, that work to influence national policy and local institutional practices. And there are local collectivities such as professors and administrators in a department or institution that influence local practice and undertake initiatives for their units to compete in international higher education markets. Each of these groups ***has*** agency. In short, at each level – global, national, and local – there are formal agencies and collective human actions that are central to understanding globalization and higher education.

In presenting our glonacal agency heuristic, we emphasize the intersections, interactions, mutual determinations of these levels (global, national, and local) and domains (organizational agencies and the agency of collectivities). We do not see a linear flow from the global to the local; rather, we see simultaneity of flows. In the stories that we want to offer and facilitate about higher education we do not see global agencies and agency as fully defining national and local agencies and agency. National and local entities and collective efforts can undermine, challenge and define alternatives to global patterns; they can also shape the configuration of global flows. At every level – global, national, and local – elements and influences of other levels

are present. A glonacal agency approach leads us to trace these elements and domains.

The latter point is critical to understanding how we intend for our heuristic to be utilized. As noted earlier, there are similarities between our approach and Clark's (1983) triangle model: both have three dimensions of existence and dual domains of structure and action. However, the aims of the two heuristics are different. It might be natural for readers to use our heuristic as Clark's triangle has been used, to classify countries in a fixed typology of influence – in our case, to identify their place in an international hierarchy of nations. But that would tend to perpetuate an ongoing focus on the nation state, ignoring the global and glossing over the local. The aim of our heuristic is to foster exploration and analysis of types and patterns of influence and activity, to reconceptualize social relations and actions globally, nationally and locally.

Thus, our glonacal agency heuristic can be pictured not as a triangle in two-dimensional space, but as a set of interconnected hexagons in three-dimensional space. These interrelated crystals represent a constellation of agencies and agency in a global system (see Figure 2).

The six sides of the central hexagon that is pictured represent the basic building blocks of our heuristic: global agencies, global human agency, national agencies, national human agency, local agencies, and local human agency. In addition, the figure provides three other hexagons, representing the foregrounding of any one of the three levels in our heuristic, as we move beyond nation state, national markets, and national systems/institutions of higher education. The six sides of these more specified hexagons again represent the basic building blocks of our heuristic: global government and non-governmental agencies, human agency in global polities, global economic agencies and markets, human agency in global economies, global educational and professional agencies, and human agency in higher education. It should be evident that one can go into greater and greater depth in the analysis, generating additional hexagons specifying, for example, multiple agencies of and agency in the nation state, or multiple agencies of and agency in local colleges and universities. The heuristic encourages a focus on specific organizations and collective action rather than overgeneralized conceptions of polities and states, economies and markets, or higher education systems and institutions.

In beginning to conceptualize and theorize multiple levels and domains, as well as multiple agencies and agency, we start by posing the connections and flows as marked by *reciprocity*. We then pose other dimensions of the activity and influence of organizational agencies and collective human

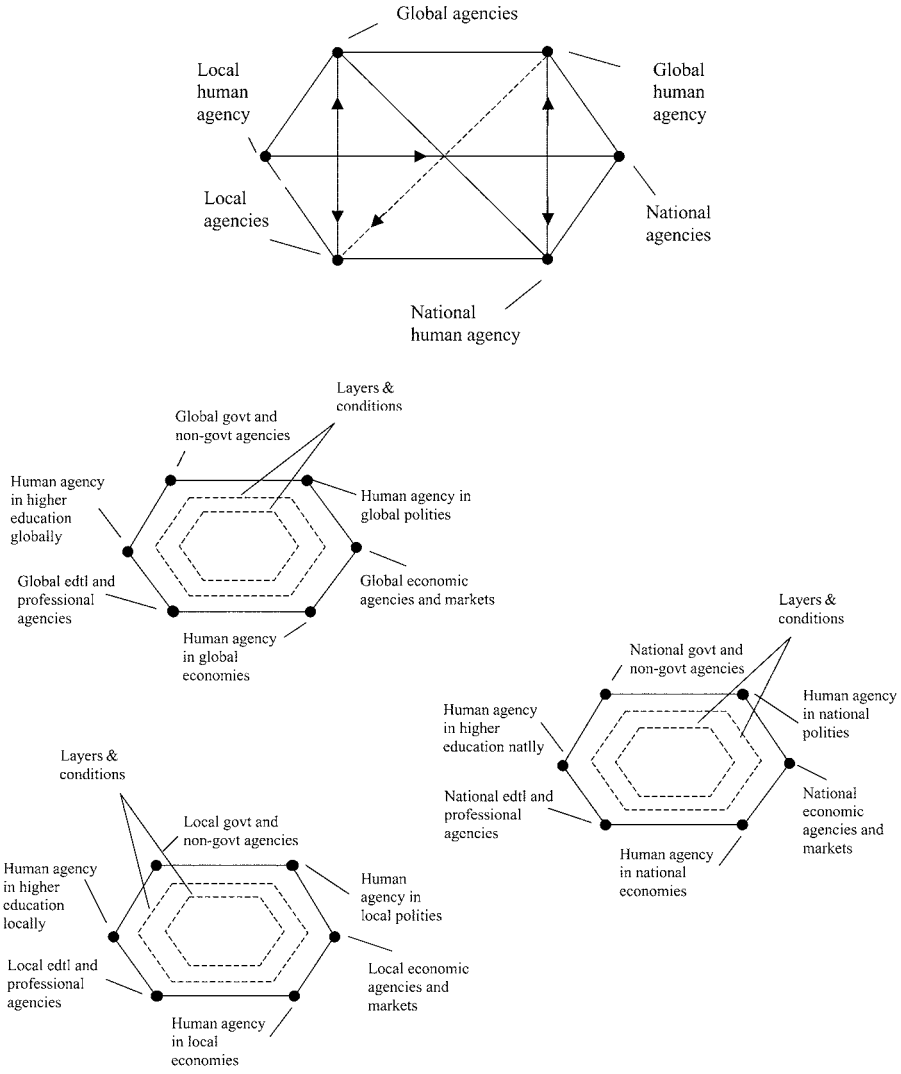

Figure 2. Glonacal agency heuristic.

action: *strength, layers and conditions, and spheres*. These dimensions are represented in our hexagonal figure(s) as follows.

Reciprocity refers to the idea that activity and influence generally flow in more than one direction. Consider the international migration of students. In some countries, such as the U.S. and Australia, there is a greater influx of students from other countries than there is an outflow of a nation's students to other countries. Yet the flow of influence is different than the flow of students.

By educating students from other countries, American and Australian universities are participating in global markets, thereby impacting those countries, whether the students return (with their American/Australian ideas) or not (then the impact is a brain drain). At the same time, the local American and Australian universities are themselves impacted by the global flow of students. There is reciprocal influence not only among countries, but also among the global, national, and local agencies and human agency, which are interconnected and interactive.

Our hexagon heuristic encourages conceptual focus on the reciprocal interconnections among the various domains, and among agencies and human agency. It suggests a two-way, not a unidirectional pattern. A hexagon is non-hierarchical, in contrast to a triangular pyramid. The global sides of the hexagon are not "above" the national and local sides – the hexagon can be rotated in any direction. Moreover, its sides are connected to one another, in two ways. The first connection is on the outside of the figure. A second connection is through lines of activity and influence between the six hexagonal points, which may, for example, directly link the top and bottom sides of the hexagon. Arrows signify the direction of influence.

Strength refers to the magnitude and directness of the activity and influence, as well as the resources available to agencies and agents. Links between levels and domains may be stronger or weaker, more direct or indirect. For example, in the case of an international agency such as a consortium of institutions surrounding the North American Free Trade Agreement, the influence may be fairly modest and indirect. By virtue of belonging to the consortium, institutions in different countries may develop relationships and agreements regarding the professional development of staff in Mexican universities (by getting advanced training and degrees from U.S. and Canadian universities) and the exchange of students and faculty among the three countries. Given the limited numbers of people and institutions concerned, the effects may be relatively modest. And the consortium's influence is indirect. Of course, it is important to determine the basis of strength in terms of the economic, cultural, or political resources of an agency or a group. For example, the ability of some private universities in the U.S. to achieve global influence is clearly influenced by the vast material resources that are available to them.

Within our hexagon dimensions of strength are portrayed in two ways. First, direct influence is identified by a solid line between two domains of the hexagon; indirect influence is identified by a dotted line. Second, strength is conveyed by the thickness of the line – from one layer of thickness to multiple layers, suggesting a stronger connection.

Layers and conditions refer to the historically embedded structures on which current activity and influence are based, and the current circumstances

that make it possible for lines of force and effect to move from one level to another, global, national, and local. For example, in the case of a national agency such as the Ford Foundation, the influence it has in shaping policy and practice in the U.S. and Mexico by philanthropically sponsoring models and curricula is layered on top of historically embedded structures and practices. In the U.S., universities have been shaped by models of colleges and universities in England and Germany, which themselves were built on a foundation of feudal systems of work and authority. In Mexico, universities have been shaped by Spanish and Napoleonic models, and by Mexico gaining independence. In addition to historically embedded layers, there are current conditions that affect agencies and agency. In the case of a global agency such as the World Bank, the influence it has in shaping national policy and practice is dependent on economic structures and circumstances, including the structure and condition of global, national, and local economies, as well as the existence of managers and professionals trained in various practices. Policies that encourage universities to generate revenues through privatization will be more effective in economies in which there is a sufficient availability of private wealth. The point is that higher education institutions, systems, and countries have long histories shaped through centuries of sedimentation of ideas, structures, resources and practices. Contemporary agencies and agency generally do not sweep all this away; their influence and activity is layered on top of powerful and resilient structures and commitments. It is also contingent upon and shaped by a range of current structural conditions.

In our hexagonal heuristic, the layers and conditions can be seen as lying within the external boundaries of the figure. Indeed, the outside lines of global, national, and local agency and agencies are in some sense constructed on an embedded internal structure formed of various stratums of historical layers and current conditions. Thus, the layers and conditions can be represented as part of the internal crystalline structure of the hexagon.

A final dimension is the *spheres* of agency and of agencies' activity, which refers to the geographical and functional scope of activity and influence. For example, in the case of an international agency, what parts of the world does it operate in, and what aspects of higher education does it impact? Or in the case of a local agency such as the Education College of a university, to what parts of the world do its webs of activity and influence reach, and in what ways does it impact the world beyond its own borders?

Here, the three-dimensional configuration of the hexagonal crystals is useful. It should help the reader conceptualize each of the levels and domains across space. In identifying a global, national, or local agency, our heuristic should trigger the question, what is the volume, the extent of this agency's reach, how much space in the world does this agency encompass?

A last point about our three-dimensional hexagonal heuristic is worth emphasizing. Although our figure presents each hexagon as similar in form, this is but an abstract model. In practice, we would expect the structures that are generated by our heuristic to be distinctive, in various ways, depending on the issue and settings in question, just as crystals are similar in general form but distinctive in their particular configuration. Most obviously, different *spheres* of activity and influence will make for smaller or more expansive hexagons. Similarly, depending on the particular issue and setting the hexagon will have a different internal crystalline structure of layers and conditions. So, too, the strength of the internal (fault) lines and connections will vary, as will their directional flow or reciprocity. We fully expect, then, that there will be differences in the particular hexagons that are generated from future empirical work. At the same time, we expect that there will be patterns to these differences, which can be the focus of propositions and hypotheses, leading to further empirical work and theorizing. In other words, the conceptual structure, the building blocks of our glonacal agency heuristic, are a starting point for triggering and guiding inquiry in comparative higher education, for elaborating new understandings of higher education phenomena.

Applying our glonacal agency heuristic: Moving beyond (and below) national states, markets, and institutions

In this section of the paper we walk the reader through examples of how our "glonacal agency" heuristic can be applied, illustrating how it takes us beyond nation states, national markets, and national higher education institutions and systems. In developing our examples we aim to feature and frame phenomena and conceptualizations that can guide future study.

Beyond nation states. The growing and changing potency of the global and the local has implications for nation states and national policy making in higher education. It leads us to rethink the relationship between universities and national governments, to extend our analysis of their negotiations upward to the regional and global level (and downward to the local level). In short, there are polities above the nation state.

The state of comparative higher education research in this regard is conveyed by a 1999 special issue of *Higher Education*, on "Changes in Higher Education and its Societal Context." One of the articles in the issue (Gornitzka 1999) seeks to generate a theoretical framework for analyzing organizational change in eight Western European countries. Two other articles (Harman 1999; Henkel 1999) present country based studies of

changes that are emerging throughout the world. Each represent an important contribution to the literature, and at the same time reveals the limitations of scholarship focused on nation-states. Gornitzka draws on resource dependency and institutional theory to fashion schemata of different models of states and state pressures. Yet she stops at the nation state, overlooking the fact that the "normative environment" that shapes what is valued goes beyond the nation state. What is defined as a viable higher education policy or university structure in one European nation is shaped by the policies and structures of other European nations, or of countries outside of Europe. Historically, the German model was a defining force for several of the countries Gornitzka considers – e.g., Austria, Finland, the Netherlands, and Norway; whereas currently, the U.S. model has considerable normative influence. Such global issues are left unconsidered. Similarly, Henkel and Harman point to significant restructuring of research activity and evaluation in the U.K. and Australia. Henkel (1999) tracks the modernization and stratification of research and higher education in the U.K., detailing the effects of the Research Assessment Exercise. The stories the articles tell are important ones. Yet the reader is left asking, why? What global mechanisms and processes helped lead to the introduction of the RAE, and similar efforts elsewhere? In opening, Harman (1999) hints at a connection, noting that the changes he traces in Australia can be found in many other OECD countries. That international agency is not the subject of Harman's careful empirical study of academic links to industry. But it could serve as a starting point for studying global patterns.

Our glonacal agency heuristic suggests that scholars need to explore polities above the level of the nation state. These can be governmental collectivities – e.g., regional trading blocs and associations such as the European Union or the North American Free Trade Agreement – or non-governmental organizations, such as OECD or the World Bank. Scholars need to study the ways in which these polities impact nation states' policies and local practices. They need to consider hierarchies within regional trading blocs, the differential influence of different nations on the work of international agencies such as the World Bank, and the ways in which local and national agencies and agency influence international agencies and agency.

Several of the articles in this special issue address the role of the World Bank and of trading blocs. Each of these entities have influenced national policies about: access and tuition (the World Bank's structural adjustment policies, and the industrialized world's neo-liberal policies promoted by regional trading blocs); degree programs (the World Bank push for short-cycle and distance education, and the EU movement to establish equivalency

among programs to facilitate the movement of students among EU countries); accountability/quality assurance (the World Bank promotes performance based measures, and within the EU various professional and managerial groups promote quality assurance); the management and control of institutions and of professional work (the World Bank promotes institutional independence and market-like behavior, as well as managerial flexibility and control, and such patterns are evident within and across the EU as well).

Out of such work, we can construct a picture of international agencies' different spheres of global activity and influence. We can also begin to identify the different capacities of these agencies, and of collective agency by groups of professionals and managers. Thus, the World Bank has more influence over the developing world, compared to the OECD, which most directly influences the Western, industrialized world, or the EU, which has largely regional, European influence. The source of these agencies and organizations' influence lies in quite different capacities, exercised through quite different mechanisms, with the World Bank's capacity lying in the monies it has for loans, and the EU's capacities being more political and cultural in nature, with its financial resources consisting more of monies that can be invested at the margins in various sorts of projects. The same can be said of international associations of professionals and managers. Thus, in the case of NAFTA, U.S. professional associations and accrediting bodies in engineering wield considerable influence on accrediting bodies and standards of engineering in Mexico, through their interactions with national and professional bodies in Mexico and by virtue of the Mexican's desire to enable their students to compete in regional employment markets dominated by U.S. multinational corporations.

In addition to tracking the spheres and capacities of international organizations and networks of professionals, we can also begin to identify differing conditions that will likely impact the success of various higher education policies. For example, World Bank policies are premised on the existence of sufficient private wealth to enable higher education institutions to generate their own revenues. Yet such conditions may not exist in Eastern Europe. Our glonacal agency heuristic also encourages us to attend to historically layered structures that would suggest different patterns of local resistance to global agencies' initiatives. For example, we would expect the local layers to be more resistant to World Bank policies in countries such as China, which have powerful, historically shaped indigenous institutional structures, than in some developing countries with less well developed local structures.

Beyond resistance, there is also reciprocity, a reverse flow of influence from the local to the global. As powerful as the World Bank is, its policies are influenced by some nation states, particular local experiences, and agency.

Some nations can create conditions for changes in the Bank's policies: structural adjustment can be adjusted. Its policies are also shaped by the agency of professionals, who individually and collectively fashion a discourse and pursue research agendas that offer ideas, data, legitimacy, and challenges to the World Bank.

The latter point suggests the importance of considering linkages among various global agencies and collectivities. In this special issue, for example, it is striking to see the commonalties among the higher education policies promoted by the World Bank in the developing world and those policies promoted by the EU and various collectivities in the industrialized world. How has that happened? We would suggest looking to flows of personnel and influence among global agencies. We would also suggest looking to ways in which various international agencies reflect the differential capacities and spheres of influence of nations and of national professional groups in the global arena.

Beyond national markets. In the study of markets, comparative higher education research is limited in several regards. First, to the extent that the effects of supra-national markets are considered, scholars tend to simply invoke their significance on state policy. Thus, although Slaughter and Leslie (1997) note global economic pressures and forces, for them the principal empirical focus is on national higher education policies. A second limitation is that although some scholars in the U.S. have gone beyond "the economy" to analyze academic labor markets (Bowen and Schuster 1996; Breneman and Youn 1988; Caplow and McGee 1958; Cartter 1976), there is little cross-national research along these lines, and little treatment of international academic labor, student, and employment markets. Thus, a recent special issue of *Higher Education* (2001) provides country-based studies of "The Changing Academic Workplace." Although the editorial introduction indicates that the issue's aim is to understand "the changing academic workplace worldwide," the focus is on nation based studies as a means of revealing global trends, rather than on international markets of faculty, or on international mechanisms that structure academic labor markets. Finally, comparative higher education studies generally conceptualize markets as being separate from the state, shaped by an "invisible" hand or by the rational choices of individuals in the "marketplace." Thus, it is marked by a disembodied view of the market.

Our glonacal agency heuristic takes us beyond these limitations. We look to the specific mechanisms by which global markets influence national and local markets, practices, and experiences. We consider the choices available to higher education institutions seeking to capitalize on global employment

markets, for markets are shaped by agency, by patterns in choices. Here lies a local mechanism by which global markets operate. Three examples illustrate our points. We examine the linguistic coin of the realm in the global educational marketplace, and its impact on academic work. We consider academic careers, structures, and labor markets, internationally. And we examine choices facing U.S. community colleges in the employment markets to which they orient their academic programs and investments.

A baseline for understanding the international marketplace in higher education is to explore the effects of the prevailing terms and currency of exchange. Just as global economies are shaped by the languages and currencies of the dominant national economies, so it is with the higher education economy (indeed, the patterns are related). To be a player in the international economy of higher education, whether through conferences, travel, exchanges, or other forms of communication or interaction, one must be conversant in English (Altbach and Selvaratnam 1989). More than this, a prevailing coin of the realm in higher education internationally is scholarly publication in English speaking academic journals, which literally pays more than publication in non-English speaking outlets, not only internationally, but in national higher education economies. For example, in Mexico publications in U.S. journals or with English speaking presses pay off more than publications in Mexican or Latin American sites in terms of membership in select national societies of researchers, and in terms of an academic's pay. Or publishing in English speaking journals may enable an academic to establish and work through international networks of researchers, thereby enhancing their national and local standing.

In non-English speaking parts of the world, such an incentive structure encourages scholarship that is of interest to English speaking more than to national or local audiences (and a form that is privileged in the English speaking world, the academic journal article). Thus, scholars should study the ways in which such incentive structures are established (e.g. how are international agencies implicated), and how they shape the orientation of academics' work. Of course, there may be a reciprocal flow of influence: as more scholars from various parts of the world contribute to English speaking journals, the range of international issues addressed by scholars native to English speaking countries may expand.

The study of academic labor markets, nationally and internationally, represents a second example of the value of our glonacal agency heuristic. As noted above, a recent special issue of *Higher Education* offers a comparative perspective on academic careers and markets: eight of the articles, each based on a Western, industrialized country, track changes in academic positions in the types of appointments held by academics. What is striking is the conver-

gence of the patterns, towards fewer full-time, permanent academic positions and increased fluidity in the careers of academics (Altbach and Chait 2001). From one article to the next, there are subheadings about tenure and the more "hybrid" forms of employment in academe, more akin to private sector patterns of employment. Why are these countries, with such distinctive higher education traditions and structures of academic employment, moving in such similar directions in academic employment? Articles in the special issue refer to increased numbers of students and constraints on public resources, and to public policy trends that emphasize performance and are embodied in so-called new public management (e.g., Enders 2001). But what mechanisms and processes generated these pressures and led to their diffusion throughout the Western world? Our glonacal agency heuristic leads us to consider the international agencies and agency that contribute to the diffusion of pressures and ideas. For example, what is the role of various international agencies that gather comparative data on national higher education systems in impacting policy discussions? Data gathered by international agencies such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, not to mention the various conferences and publications of these agencies, contribute to a climate in which national comparisons seem "natural." Similarly, what is the role of various international agencies, and what is the agency exercised by various groups of public sector (and higher education) managers, in shaping policy discussions about academic employment and careers? Government and higher education leaders and managers network with each other, they go to conferences where such issues are discussed, and in some cases they draw on an international pool of consultants about how to reform their systems. We need studies exploring how policy ideas are diffused throughout the world, to map the spheres and strength of various agencies and networks. For example, Altbach (2001, p. 206) notes, academic freedom is "not high on the international agenda, and does not appear on the declarations and working papers of agencies such as UNESCO or the World Bank." That is a political choice that impacts academic employment. Academic labor markets are shaped by political actions and choices.

Our heuristic leads us to consider not only global patterns, but the nationally and locally embedded layers of structures that will likely effect considerable resistance to the current trends. We are sensitized to the fact that globally shaped patterns are layered on top of existing structures, and lead to varying patterns of national and local adaptation and resistance. We are also sensitized to the possibility of counter trends, initiated through the agency of various groups internationally. As Altbach suggests, it is possible to effect different political choices, and he offers ideas for developing networks of

professionals that define and advance academic freedom internationally, and through their agency put it on the global agenda.

Our third example relates to the prevailing view that national higher education policies are defined by the country's position in the global economy. By contrast, we believe choices are possible. Thus, historically black universities in South Africa, by virtue of their history in a country defined by apartheid, may focus more on contributing to the social, political and economic development of local communities than on integrating into the global economy (Subotzky 1999). There are also choices available to community colleges in the U.S. in the employment markets to which they orient their programs and investments. Consider community and technical colleges in two distinct regions of the U.S., the Silicon Valley of California and the comparatively poor region of north central Kentucky. The global economy is locally present in each setting, yet the cases clarify that there is not one global imperative but multiple economies and multiple choices. In both the Silicon Valley and north central Kentucky there is the lure of high tech jobs in the new economy, and rapidly growing immigrant populations, largely from Pacific Rim countries in the case of California, and from Eastern Europe in the case of Kentucky. In this context, the colleges face a choice: should they invest more of their scarce resources in high tech fields or in ESL (English as a Second Language) programs? At a college visited by one of the authors not long ago in California, the path chosen was clear, in a massive high tech facility that housed various programs, many of which turned out to be underenrolled (the new economy may be more driven by selected skills than by formal education and certification). Although vast numbers of students were clamoring for entry into ESL programs, the college had invested its resources elsewhere and the program could not accommodate student demand. However, there are other choices. In talking recently with a faculty member of a Kentucky community college, the same author related the story of the California college. She responded: "Don't they realize that most of the ESL students want jobs in the new economy," she asked? They should be coordinating the programs in such a way as to invest in them both. Her framing of the issue points to the significance of agency.

As with our other examples, our glonacal agency heuristic leads us to consider local resistance to global patterns. There are historically structured patterns of response to immigrants: in California, which has experienced various waves of immigration, there are longstanding patterns of racist response; in Kentucky, there is a history of immobility (it has the largest proportion of state natives in the country), leading to backlash against immigrant populations. (There also is a reciprocal flow of influence from the immigrants, evident in California after several waves of immigration.)

Beyond and beneath national institutions and systems of higher education. Current comparative higher education scholarship is increasingly focusing on universities as innovative, entrepreneurial, adaptive organizations (Clark 1998; Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Sporn 1999). In most countries, universities have increasingly become market actors of a sort. They compete with other institutions in their countries for students, public monies for instruction, research monies, and private funds (Marginson 1997; Williams 1992). Thus far, studies frame university activities as an effort to enhance institutional revenues or position within the national higher education system. Such a perspective underplays the global dimension of, and overlooks the local constraints on and character of such institutional efforts.

We see colleges and universities as increasingly global and at the same time local actors. It is important to explore the global activities, competition, and stratification of higher education institutions. We offer two examples: U.S. universities establishing MBA programs abroad, and U.S. and Australian universities competing for international students from Asia. In exploring these global activities it is also important to explore local constraints on (and effects of) global competitive activity, and local dimensions of such activity within the institutions. That means not only looking at colleges and universities in their local environs, but looking within them, recognizing significant variations among university units. Entrepreneurial or capitalistic universities are not single enterprises, but are conglomerates, with some units devoting more energy to local or national activities and others more pursuing regional and global activities.

In their recent work, Clark (1998) and Slaughter and Leslie (1997) each provide examples of institutions' international activities. Clark notes the international entrepreneurial activity of universities such as Warwick, which set up "satellite operations" in Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur, and which actively sought out foreign students (who paid higher student fees than did students from the U.K.). Slaughter and Leslie connect academic capitalism to shifts in the global economy. The structure of each of the books' story line features analysis of institutions diversifying revenues in response to shifts in national policy and resource patterns. However, such work does not feature the international expansion of and competition among higher education institutions. Universities increasingly market their programs not only nationally but also regionally and internationally: what, then is the international stratification system among *institutions*? The potential is there to go beyond normative discussions of which countries and universities have the highest quality education, to empirical studies of institutions' international market share, and/or international market prestige of various curricular and research domains. Such work would enable us to speak about interna-

tional and regional hierarchies of universities in engineering, life sciences, sociology, and a range of other fields. With the growing significance of regional trading blocs, and reciprocity agreements among the higher education systems of countries within those blocs, it makes increasing sense to study the stratification of higher education across national boundaries.

In specifying particular fields of study, we are emphasizing that not only institutions but departments and colleges can be international in their activities, entering and seeking to monopolize foreign markets by establishing footholds abroad. An excellent example is the masters degree in business administration (MBA). In recent years U.S. MBA programs have established sites in various parts of the world, competing with national and local business and economics faculties. Such programs should be conceptualized as part of an international higher education competition and stratification system. What are the spheres of influence and activity for U.S. MBA programs, and how might we map different spheres for other programs in U.S. institutions, and for universities in other countries? One of the key sites is continental Europe (Sporn et al. 2000). To understand why MBAs have been successful in Europe, we need to understand the historically layered structures that leave this market niche open. Although there are business schools in Europe, the MBA sort of masters degree has not been part of the European tradition (that is now changing). In addition, the prominence of U.S. multinational corporations, and the related value of the MBA in this employment market, creates a niche market for U.S. programs abroad. To operationalize the strength of these programs' influence we might focus on the market share of students they establish (direct influence) as well as the extent to which any emergent indigenous MBAs are modeled on U.S. programs (indirect influence). And we might detail material and cultural resources available to different programs, which might help explain the differential involvement of U.S. programs in Europe. Finally, research should attend to reciprocal flows of influence and activity related to U.S. MBA programs, and other internationally marketed programs in higher education. One response might be efforts by nations and local institutions to develop their own MBAs. Another might be efforts by European institutions and programs to establish their own cross-national outposts, across Europe, and perhaps in the U.S. In short, applying a glonacal agency heuristic to the study of U.S. MBA programs in Europe would involve mapping out the coordinates of global, national, and local activity.

Similar suggestions would apply to studying the efforts of U.S. and Australian programs and universities to attract international students from Asia. Existing research on international students focuses on international flows, and in some cases on national orientations to such students, but it does

not tend to focus systematically on the international entrepreneurialism of higher education institutions and programs. For example, Chen and Barnett (2000) use World Systems Theory and network analysis to study international student flows in 1985, 1989, and 1995. Their results identify countries that are at the center or core of "exchange networks" and those that are in the semi-periphery or periphery. Thus, the analysis yields countries' place in an international stratification system. In comparing policies and practices in Australia and the U.S. towards international students Rhoades and Smart (1996) challenge the presumption that the U.S. is the principal, exemplary site of entrepreneurial activity. Yet their results still relate to a classification of countries in terms of entrepreneurial policies and practices.

We are suggesting the need to go beyond nation states and systems to focus on institutions (and on programs within them) as international agents. Such a focus sharpens the significance of the regional and local in the global. In comparing U.S. and Australian college and university efforts to attract students from Southeast Asia, we can focus on specific spheres of influence. Rather than comparing the centrality of the two countries in an international flow of students, we would focus more on the activities of higher education institutions in the two countries in a particular regional sphere. In doing so, we might come to a more sophisticated understanding of global activity than by simply identifying core and peripheral nations. Consider the conditions affecting the influence of Australian and U.S. higher education institutions, and the related capacities of those institutions. U.S. institutions certainly benefit from the prominence of U.S. corporations in the Southeast Asian economy, which make an education in English attractive, but so do the Australian institutions, which have the added facilitating condition of geographical location. Similarly, U.S. institutions certainly enjoy more substantial available revenues to support their recruitment efforts, but Australian institutions actually offer academic units greater academic incentive (and resources) to engage in recruitment (and in the Australian context new institutions – colleges teaching students English – emerged to tap into Asian student markets). Rather than simply identifying place in the international higher education economy, our heuristic concentrates attention on dimensions and mechanisms of global influence and activity by local agencies and agents, such as universities, programs, and faculty. We can thereby come to an understanding of how there may be many agents with a significant global role, in a particular region of the world.

Moreover, our heuristic draws attention to the reciprocity of influence, the distinctiveness of locales, and the response to global patterns of influence. For all the discussion of higher education systems moving from elite to mass

to universal access, and the impact it has on universities, there is little study of the proliferation of international students in the last two decades and of the implications that has for universities and students. In tracking the flows of students internationally, there is a sense that the principal influence is of the institution on the student. But to what extent do changing student populations impact institutions, educationally, materially, and culturally? Changes in the proportion of international students may influence educational processes in classrooms. Such students may also impact institutional resource allocation, in the tuition they pay, and the costs of additional services that must be provided to them. Further, international students may have a cultural influence. They are not only acted upon by the culture of the institution, these students themselves help shape that culture.

In addition, locale matters. It matters whether an international student does an MBA at Harvard or MIT. By focusing on individual institutions, we move away from totalizing the influence of "studying in the U.S." The brand of business education one learns varies by institution, with Harvard preparing more for Fortune 500 employment, and MIT preparing more for employment in smaller, innovative enterprises (Van Mannen 1983).

Further, local communities respond to and shape the global activity of local institutions. The flow of activity and influence is not simply one way, top down, from global to local. Even as universities position themselves globally, there is heightened local and state governmental and public pressure to expand their involvement in local contexts. For example, in many states of the U.S. there is strong policy pressure to limit the proportion of out-of-state students, not to mention international students, in public universities. The idea is that state tax dollars should be used for state residents. In fact, there has sometimes been hostile reaction to "foreign" teaching assistants. Moreover, universities are increasingly being challenged by groups demanding that they be more sensitive to and promotional of local variations in and diversity of cultural heritage. Thus, it is important to not only move beyond national systems but to move below the level of the nation state in studying universities globally.

In regard to institutions, then, our glonacal agency heuristic focuses on colleges and universities (and units and faculty within them) as global agents, encouraging studies of activity and stratification regionally and internationally. The international system may be consistent with patterns of stratification within nations, or less prestigious and specialist schools may move into international niches as a way to bypass (or move up within) national stratification systems of higher education. We are led to recognize the possible international influence of institutions located outside the "core" countries in the

global economy. Further, we are led to consider the local in exploring the global, to search for the reciprocity in international relations.

Conclusion

We believe that comparative higher education requires a new analytical framework, one that can take us beyond the hitherto almost exclusive reliance on national policy and national markets as the horizon of possibility. In using the nation-state as the dominant unit of analysis for international comparison, global forces remain shadowy, local variations are flattened out, and issues of "street level" implementation are obscured. Further, analysis tends to lock into recurring antinomies of state/market, and global/national, in which the relationship between the elements in each pair is understood in zero-sum terms. Thus, it is often assumed that global linkages and convergence subtract from national and local dimensions.

We offer a Glonacal Agency Heuristic to frame comparative higher education research. 'Glonacal' incorporates three constituent terms – *glo*bal, *na*tional, lo*cal*. "Agency" refers to organized agencies and to the agency of human action. Within these domains, we focus on the concepts of reciprocity, strength, layers and conditions and spheres.

Our heuristic highlights the growing saliency of global agencies and relationships, including meta-national regions, in both the national and the local domains. At the same time, it emphasizes the continuing fecundity of local institutions and other agents at the national and global level. And it takes us beyond nation states, national markets, and national systems and institutions of higher education to consider organizational agencies and human agency at various levels. Such agencies and activities operate simultaneously in the three domains or planes of existence – global, national, local – amid multiple and reciprocal flows of activity.

The Glonacal Agency Heuristic allows us to more clearly imagine polities, markets and professionals – the three elements earlier identified by Clark (1983) – as operating in all three domains and not just at the national level. They are analytically distinct, yet interconnected and interdependent. We can consider global systems of activity and regulation, alongside national policies and administration and local political relationships, and we can examine the inter-relationship between different global agencies. We can more effectively observe international markets and consider the shaping roles they have on higher education institutions, operating across national boundaries, and yet shaped in practice by national and local polities, economies, and professional conditions. And we can give due weight to the globally networked character

of much university and faculty activity, noting the weight of an international coin of the realm in English-language networks of scholarly practices, even as we acknowledge and analyze the ongoing significance of national and local professional economies.

In this paper we have played out but a few examples of how our glonacal agency heuristic can take us beyond national states, markets, and systems of higher education institutions. We have offered a few concrete examples of how we might enrich our understanding of global, national, and local phenomena, of how our heuristic leads us to pose new questions and explore new issues comparatively. The conceptual building blocks of our heuristic can take us in many directions as we specify more and more agencies and human agency at global, regional, national, and local levels, and as we consider the interactive and reciprocal flow of activity and influence among them, the varying strengths of these interconnections, the historical layers and conditions on which they are grounded, and as we map their spheres of influences across space. We hope that our hexagonal glonacal agency heuristic will trigger ideas for much future research, and that other scholars will join us in more fully exploring its potential.

Notes

1. Although used comparatively, the notion of academic "profession", *per se*, is an Anglo-American concept (see Neave and Rhoades 1987).
2. In Marginson's case, the city (Melbourne) dominates the state (Victoria) culturally (and demographically), although there are traditional rural accents, which are much broader with more "twang."

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