

The co-option of the traditional university: a narrative analysis of 20 years research and innovation policy in the UK (0208)

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The diffusion of the language of strategy within current public organizations has been noted (Ferlie, 2002). It is argued here that what has supported this diffusion is that strategy as narrative inscribes a discourse of direction (Barry and Elmes, 1997), a powerful and pervasive understanding of where an organization has been and where it is going (Fenton and Langley, 2011). Strategy as narrative arises not from monological authorship but in dialogical exchange and is a potent political form (Rhodes and Brown, 2005). Notably, narrative can draw from politically and ideologically constructed settings, reinforcing dominant ideology (Greckhamer, 2010). Conducting our study within the broader ‘linguistic turn’ in organizational studies (Ricoeur, 1984; Czarniawska, 2004), we build on the work of Barry and Elmes (1997) and others who have developed the narrative approach to strategy (Deetz, 1986; Czarniawska, 1997). Here, there remains a gap in understanding of how strategy draws upon the setting in which it is produced (Fenton and Langley, 2011), including higher education. We conceptualise the gap as one of how strategy maintains thrust and direction as an intertextual narrative, exploring it using the concept of narrative infrastructure (Deuten and Rip, 2000; Fenton and Langley, 2011).

In an empirical study of policy and strategy with UK higher education (HE), we investigate how thrust and direction in strategy is maintained. When considering the HE setting, it is the narrative of the university that is regarded as strategy in the sense that ‘it tells how the organization and its members should be’ (Law 1994: 250). The narrative of the university has a wide *temporality*. It is neither simply future focussed, nor is it solely at the mercy of the present. It is also associated strongly with the past (Barnett, 2011; Martin, 2012). There is also a great *plurivocality* in HE in the UK, with many equally powerful, autonomous and usually public agents, each with voice and practiced access to an established narrative infrastructure and the differing and competing narrative building blocks within it (Shattock, 2012). This makes the setting of HE theoretically different from those previously studied, which have largely been ones in which strategy is made toward an unambiguous direction, that is not

open to more than one direction, within a relatively short time horizon and where plurivocality has been constrained (Llewellyn, 2001; Vaara et al., 2006). We note that narrative infrastructure is an aggregation of narrative building blocks, which are taken up in further narrative, if available and resonant (Eco, 1981). This ‘take up’ is at the heart of the intertextual production of strategy as narrative. We make the case that existing studies underestimate framing of this ‘take-up’, largely as a result of the nature of their temporality and plurivocality. We contend that a study within UK HE addresses such shortcomings.

As appropriate to the research focus, a narrative enquiry (Rhodes and Brown, 2005) has been carried out. Data has been constructed over a period of eighteen months starting in August 2011. Research, science and innovation policy, as central to the two prevailing narratives of the university (Martin, 2012), the enterprise university and the traditional university, has been reviewed for the period 1992-2012. In addition, interviews were carried out with 42 participants including policy-makers and senior managers and other academic staff, within two participating research-intensive universities and the wider policy nexus. Corporate documents covering a strategic planning period of eight years (2008-2015) within the two universities were also reviewed. We analyse the intertextual production of the university, through three facets of intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992; Riad et al, 2012). A summary of the process and theoretical categories used is presented in figure 1.

INSERT figure 1 about here

We show the intertextual production of the university, both in public and in private, is enabled through the intertextual themes of innovation, economic growth and social benefit, within constitutive intertextuality. This show how the narrative of the traditional university is progressively co-opted in the service of the enterprise university, as well as a greater intertextual reach for the enterprise university in private than highlighted on previous studies (Bridgeman, 2007). The two dominant narratives of the university also co-exist, without an apparent loss of direction or thrust. In manifest intertextuality, we show that how this co-option is enabled within an emotional register of fear (in public but not in private) and hope (in both public and private). However, availability and potential opposition is still available in the emotional register of fear in private, but also without apparent loss of thrust or change

in direction. It is in ideological intertextuality that a fuller explanation can be made of how co-option is enabled and how of thrust and direction is maintained.




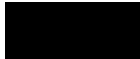
There is framing in ideological intertextuality that supports unifying resonance and wide availability within strategy as an intertextual narrative thereby maintaining thrust and direction. Firstly, it is a framing that placed the university as a modern day as well as an ancient place of salvation, a sacred place for both civilization and the market, ameliorating the shortcomings and demands of each, at the heart of our civilized (and civilizing) culture and anchor institutions in the globalised world. This framing and the link between ancient and modern is a formidable strengthening of narrative time within strategy. Secondly, it allows a multiple interpretation of the university without their being in opposition, thereby maintaining plurivocality. Thirdly, it addresses the issue of intertextual distance that has been raised in discussion with respective narrators within the setting. It is a framing that allows the simultaneous mapping of order out of chaos (Barry and Elmes, 1997) in which there are different public and private locations of chaos, yet the ordering is the same. This in turn addresses the strategist's key problem, which is as much one of crafting an inviting cartographic text as it is one of highlighting the right path (Barry and Elmes, 1997).

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Figure 1 Coding categories and analysis

The narrative of the university		Underpinning the narrative of the university	
Intertextual themes		Theoretical categories A (social) moving, stirring, agitation Promoting take up- resonance	Theoretical categories Supporting (ir) rational argument Availability Supporting take up- resonance
DESCRIPTION		EMOTION	IDEOLOGEME
<i>Science partner --- part of innovation process -- central to innovation ecosystem</i>	INNOVATION	<i>Time-bound</i> Falling behind Threat to Britain Losing out in a race <i>Existential</i> Losing civic status and values Danger	MARKET Primacy 
<i>National growth Regional growth</i>	ECONOMIC GROWTH	 FEAR HOPE 	GLOBALISM  CIVILISING/ CIVILISATION Primacy
<i>Extensive Restrictive</i>	SOCIAL IMPACT	<i>Time-bound</i> Forging ahead Saving Britain Winning the race <i>Existential</i> Saving civic status and values Saving the world	
Constitutive intertextuality		Manifest intertextuality	Ideological intertextuality