

The contributions of higher education 4: Contributions to national culture, and regional leadership

23 March 2023



00:27:56 Susan Robertson: Which theorists of culture are you drawing on? Listening to your account it sounds rather like Elias's take on culture. Stuart Hall's work on what theory of culture for cultural studies, however offers a very different starting point.

00:30:17 Pete Leihy: There's speculation that in the US, that the current worrying cultural schism isn't between states or multi-state regions, or even between ethnic groups, but rather between urban centres and the rural expanse - we could say something similar about other countries, too. How does the university fit in there?

00:33:17 Susan Robertson: H Pete - I've just finished a paper with a colleague on this with regard to China, but we also reflect on the UK case.

00:33:53 Pete Leihy: I must read it!

00:34:24 Pete Leihy: Are the ant tribes still a discussion point?

00:38:19 Susan Robertson: The idea of circuits of cultural capital might be useful regarding Sergey's account that helps distil the different cultural work that different kinds of HE institutions engage in (mass versus elite institutions).

00:42:08 Pete Leihy: konne - connexions - in Japanese; interesting that they chose a loanword

00:43:00 Jussi Valimaa: We are not really aiming to write a theoretical paper on culture but to focus on cultural relationships between higher education and society. Theoretically, we take support from Geertz and Harré.

00:43:14 David Mills: Thanks to Susan and Pete for getting the conversation going. More questions and thoughts welcome..

00:47:14 Susan Robertson: A paper that some of you might find useful on HE and culture - <https://universitiesandcrisis.org/2022/01/24/globalisation-culture-and-higher-education/>

00:47:39 Ian McNay: Given the role of universities in being a gateway to the dominant elite in both government and the capitalist system, what does that mean for their role in developing a set of values that is less committed to a sense of entitlement, less elitist in attitudes, more empathetic, aware of the wider world below them, committed to basic principles as in the standards of public life defined by the UK parliament but often not observed by them?

00:48:33 Susan Robertson: Excellent observation Ian...a very good question..

00:49:26 Susan Robertson: Jonathon Mijs offers some interesting thoughts on these issues.

00:51:16 Susan Robertson: In the UK the census tells us that those with a degree (England and Wales) is around 33.8%; in London it doubles. Hence the place issues.

00:54:05 Susan Robertson: So culture and cultural are possibly different things

00:56:41 Brian Pusser: For Sergey and Aleksei, Have you thought about disaggregating the data to distinguish between first degrees and graduate and professional degrees. I would argue that power is increasingly concentrated through higher education in terminal degrees in elite graduate and professional schools. As one example from the U.S., there are 9 current members of the U.S. Supreme Court. Counting first (undergraduate) degrees and graduate degrees in Law, they collectively have 19 degrees. 14 come from three institutions, Harvard, Yale and Princeton. None of the 19 degrees are from public universities. I'd also argue that courts and legislatures are key actors in contests over the power to shape culture.

00:59:28 Susan Robertson: Nice question Brian...

01:00:06 Michael Hoelscher: We just organized a review symposium on the role of higher education with regard to the political issue of "inter/re-nationalization". We should reflect on what we mean if we talk about national cultures (we can use the concept, but should be careful...)

01:00:09 Michael Hoelscher:
<https://online.ucpress.edu/gp/article/3/1/56926/194955/Universities-between-Inter-and-Renationalization?searchresult=1>

01:01:31 Vesna Holubek: Reacted to "https://online.ucpre..." with 👍

01:01:45 Susan Robertson: The idea of 'the nation' hopes to be hegemonic, though we see the fracturing at the moment

01:04:15 Susan Robertson: But we can also see transnational universities with multiple footprints in different parts of the world

01:08:26 Susan Robertson: Cite université in Paris is very interesting in that it was developed in the 1920 to represent national cultures - in their architectural representations

01:08:57 Michael Hoelscher: Talking about values as one important aspect of culture: Maybe also of interest are the contributions in the following book, especially the section on "Coding the Values": <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-67245-4>

01:09:51 Susan Robertson: So too in the Cathedral of Learning at the U of Pittsburg - room developed to represent local multicultures in the city

01:10:12 CGHE Webinars: Thank you for joining us today. A recording of this session will be posted on the CGHE site: <https://www.researchcghe.org/events/cghe->

seminar/the-contributions-of-higher-education-4-contributions-to-national-culture-and-regional-leadership/

Our next webinar, Knowledge Societies, Higher Education and Political Cleavages: Paradoxes in Search of Explanations, will take place on Tuesday from 2pm (UK). You can register here: <https://www.researchcghe.org/events/cghe-seminar/knowledge-societies-higher-education-and-political-cleavages-paradoxes-in-search-of-explanations/>

01:11:14 Susan Robertson: Kris Olds and I have also written on universities like Brazilia to carry a sense of the new nation

01:12:33 Vesna Holubek: Acknowledging that there might be some national cultural patterns in HE (as mentioned, e.g. Chinese, Finnish etc.) needs to be careful not to end up in essentialising; not seeing the internal diversity of cultures (in plural).

01:13:31 Brian Pusser: David, Thank you for moderating a fascinating discussion.

01:13:58 Ian McNay: Yes, Vesna. I do not want a conformity to a state dictat but letting a thousand flowers bloom.

01:14:08 Vesna Holubek: Reacted to "Yes, Vesna. I do not..." with 👍

01:14:12 Haifang Li: Reacted to "Yes, Vesna. I do not..." with 👍

01:15:54 Susan Robertson: Our free thinking are being challenged in the UK

01:16:36 Michael Hoelscher: Thanks for the very interesting and highly relevant input!

01:16:56 Susan Harris-Huemmert: Thank you !

01:16:57 Berge Traboulsi: Thank you!

01:17:00 Sergey Malinovskiy: Thank you for your questions and comments