The Dream Is Over
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The third University of California scholar who has made a front-rank contribution to the global understanding of higher education is Burton R. (Bob) Clark. Clark worked at Stanford, Harvard, Berkeley, and Yale, where he served as chair of sociology, and then became the Allan M. Cartter Professor of Higher Education at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1980. Of Clark’s major books and papers, *The Higher Education System* (1983) is the most important. As with the works of Clark Kerr and Martin Trow, the mark of the book is its close grasp of the realities of higher education and its relational dynamics. Each social scientist has a somewhat different vantage point on the problem, however. Rather than examining higher education at the level of society (Trow) or from the university president’s office (Kerr), Bob Clark sets out to “detail systematically how higher education is organized and governed” from the bottom up. Higher education is organized in “two basic crisscrossing modes: by discipline and by institution.” In discussing systems and institutions, Clark develops the perspective of the academic department. He identifies knowledge as the principal organizing and differentiating element in higher education. The generative effects of knowledge are largely missing in Trow’s study of growth, and they are discussed in general rather than specific terms by Kerr. Yet research repeatedly shows that faculty identify with their field. As Clark states, “the discipline rather than the institution tends to become the dominant force in the working lives of academics.” Higher education is continually diversified by the evolution of new fields and subfields of knowledge, which creates a problem of systemic and institutional coordination.

This allows Clark to define what is distinctive about the higher education sector when compared to other social sites. Higher education has become a relatively
independent sector with its own "action patterns."\textsuperscript{5} To understand its complexity requires us to "retreat somewhat from general theorizing across the major sectors of society and concentrate on analysis of particular realms."\textsuperscript{6}

It does not make much sense to evaluate business firms according to how much they act like universities, nor economic systems according to their resemblances to higher education systems. Nor does it make any sense to do the reverse; yet it is built into current commonsense and management theory that we do so.\textsuperscript{7}

The knowledge-centered nature of the tasks of higher education fosters diversity of outlook, the endemic autonomy of persons and groups, the peculiarly flat structures often found in academic communities, and also the uncertainty and ambiguity that is endemic to the sector. Reciprocally, the way higher education is organized shapes the way knowledge is bundled.\textsuperscript{8} "Knowledge materials . . . are at the core of any higher education system's purposes and essences."\textsuperscript{9} The centrality of knowledge, Clark concludes, is "the root cause of the many odd ways of the higher education system."\textsuperscript{10}

*The Higher Education System* investigates academic work, beliefs, power and authority, system integration, and the handling of change. Like Martin Trow, Clark was a comparativist and the book is grounded in a succession of empirical studies that he conducted in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and the Soviet bloc. "To define what is basic requires that we move among nations and confront their common and varied structures and procedures," he said. This is a corrective to "the unconscious assumptions that possess our vision when we study only a single country, generally our own," which Clark calls "the hometown view."\textsuperscript{11} Clark explains the role of symbolic factors, the integrating role of shared beliefs, the different permutations of system structure, kinds of hierarchy and status, forms of academic career, and modes of institutional and system coordination. If the book were to be prepared today, it would say more about competition, rankings, university brands as symbolic and integrating factors, and managed faculty behaviors, issues that Clark explored more fully in *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities* (1998), fifteen years later.

*The Higher Education System* is best known for its triangle of coordination. Clark locates three Weberian ideal types at the points of the triangle: systems driven by states, systems driven by market forces, and systems driven by academic oligarchies. He positions each national higher education system within the triangle, with the United States closest to market coordination, Soviet Russia closest to state control, Italy closest to academic oligarchy, and so on. Japan is the most difficult to place as it has strong elements of all three.\textsuperscript{12} Modes of coordination make a difference. For example, Clark observes that while state control tends to aggregate, markets tend to fragment. "The state system thereby encourages a student class consciousness: the market system restrains it."\textsuperscript{13} Clark's triangle is still widely used by doctoral students for analytical purposes. It is not without ambigu-
ity. Clark wrote the book before the full evolution of neoliberal systems in which government deploys quasi markets as means of allocation, control, legitimation, and performance management. Two points of the triangle, state and market, can overlap, as Clark himself suggests. Another problem is where to place the university executive: with the academic oligarchy, with the state, or at a point of its own? Should the triangle be a square? Despite these problems, Bob Clark’s triangle has yet to be superseded.

THE MULTIVERSITY AS CORPORATION

Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation (1998) has been cited more often than the Higher Education System. It appeared at a moment when universities in many countries were moving towards enterprising missions, corporate forms of autonomy facilitated by government, more active relations with stakeholders and local communities, and an emphasis on raising funds; these had long been features of the American university but were novel in institutions that had long been administered and funded by the state, as in Europe. Clark’s research was conducted in 1994–1997 in five universities that were early adapters of the entrepreneurial turn: Warwick and Strathclyde in the United Kingdom, Twente in the Netherlands, Chalmers in Sweden, and Joensuu in Finland. All had been successful, particularly Warwick. Clark focuses on the individual institution without regard to system dynamics—in the book he argues that a university-specific strategy has become crucial, so that the multiversity in effect becomes a firm competing with other firms. However, what lifts Creating Entrepreneurial Universities above the how-to-succeed-in-business textbook is Clark’s focus on the knowledge-related dimension. He argues not for the holus-bolus importation of business and public sector management into higher education but for the hybridization of executive-led organization with academic culture and faculty agency.

Clark identifies five elements crucial to institutional transformation: “a strengthened managerial core; an enhanced developmental periphery; a diversified funding base; a stimulated academic heartland; and an entrepreneurial culture.” All five universities had developed “a greater systematic capacity to steer themselves,” using varied local combinations of “centralized decentralization.” They had strengthened lines of authority from president/rector to dean to department head. Individuals and units were newly accountable, while at the same time the executive took an enhanced responsibility for the financial health of the institution as a whole. “Most important, the administrative backbone fused new managerial values with traditional academic ones.” In part this was ensured by drawing on the faculty when composing the leadership. For the new generation of professional managers and strategically focused executive leaders, the model was Clark Kerr’s multiversity president. In the “enhanced developmental periphery,” alongside
the traditional departments were new, temporary, and flexible units that handled commercial consultancy, outreach teaching, or cross-disciplinary research projects. This provided an enhanced responsive capacity in the face of the growing demands on universities. At the same time and most importantly, “impressive in the universities studied was the extent to which the heartland departments had been brought into entrepreneurial change.” Even the humanities and humanistic social sciences found ways to explore policy analysis and multimedia production, providing that they were selective and retained core academic identities—always provided that they could be subsidized by the units with higher income-earning potentials, such as the business school.

When Creating Entrepreneurial Universities was published, the case for the diversified funding base was becoming obvious in many countries. For Clark, funding from a range of sources created opportunities and protected autonomy, while allowing university presidents to protect less enterprise-focused disciplines—but in any case it was inevitable. The problems of public funding were a function of mass education:

The state mantra becomes: do more with less. It has become a virtual iron law internationally that national and regional government will not support mass higher education at the same unit-cost level as they did for prior elite arrangements. At the end of the 1990s, it was becoming an iron law in California also.