Policymaking and the politics of change in higher education: The new 1960s universities in the UK, then and now

Ourania Filippakou[*]
University of Hull

Ted Tapper
Oxford Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (OxCHEPS)

> Through an analysis of the foundation of the so-called 'new universities' in the UK, this article offers an interpretation of the change process in higher education. The argument is that although change is driven by economic and social forces, it is the political interpretation of these forces that steers the change process and, therefore, determines the shape of new institutional structures and how they are supposed to perform their tasks. The article contrasts the original steering of the change process by state and quasi-state institutions with the more recent emergence of state-regulated market pressure as the force for change in higher education.

> **Keywords:** governance; higher education policy; quasi-state; pressure group politics; marketization

Introduction

Since 1945, English higher education has been in a constant state of flux, transforming from an elite university system into a system of mass tertiary education (Trow, 2007). The process of change has been complex, incorporating the interaction of government departments, quasi-state institutions, higher education pressure groups, the established higher education institutions (HEIs), and now market forces stimulated, in part, by political action. However, overviews of both system change and the various individual institutional innovations have tended to describe what has changed rather than *how* the change process functions.

Focusing on the foundation of the seven so-called new English universities of the 1960s – East Anglia (UEA), Essex, Kent, Lancaster, Sussex, Warwick, and York – the purpose of this article is to elucidate the processes of change in post-war English higher education. It is not that these universities necessarily represent the most radical innovation in the post-war development of English higher education (that accolade almost certainly belongs to the Open University) but there are good reasons to make them the focus of the article. Firstly, for many years they were invariably labelled as the *new* universities (Perkin, 1969). This partly reflected the fact that at the time they were the only British universities to be founded as new institutions. They did not emerge out of prior incarnations. Secondly, and more controversially, they were also new because supposedly they offered a different 'map of learning' as a new way of organizing knowledge (Daiches, 1964). Thirdly, it is impossible to deny that the sheer scale of the change was very significant, embracing at least seven universities (to which Keele, as a precursor, and the University of Stirling, in Scotland, and the New University of Ulster, based in Northern Ireland,

* Corresponding author – email: O.Filippakou@hull.ac.uk

are often added). Furthermore, their emergence was spread over the best part of a decade, from the late 1950s to the late 1960s.

The analytical dimensions of the article embrace three themes: an examination of the pressures that were responsible for the foundation of these new universities; a dissection of the process by which those pressures were translated into functioning institutions; and an evaluation of the contention that they represented a new model of the English university. The article suggests that the University Grants Committee (UGC), as the dominant political actor, determined how those change pressures should be translated into concrete action and that it was the UGC's interpretation of the pressures for change that created the new universities. Thus, it will be argued that it is the politics of the change process that determine the responses to the pressures and – in the context of historically mature systems of higher education – that change can be more a restructuring of the past than the creation of the new. The article will conclude with a brief note on how these new universities themselves have been restructured within the increasingly marketized environment that now envelops English higher education.

The change process: Evolving pressures

In its report, *University Development, 1957–1962*, the University Grants Committee noted that 'Our predecessors reported to the Chancellor of Exchequer in 1946 that they did not consider the establishment of new institutions a necessary part of the policy of expansion' (UGC, 1962: 91). The reasons for this decision were partly the consequence of a lack of resources, and partly the belief that the existing universities could meet not only 'the demands of the returning ex-service men' but also fulfil 'the recommendations of the report of the Committee on Scientific Manpower (the Barlow report) which had been issued in May, 1946' (UGC, 1962: 91). Although the UGC had claimed in its report on *University Development, 1952–1957* that 'The major change which has come over the university scene since 1953 is the increased pressure on the universities to admit higher numbers of students' (UGC, 1962: 74), it was, nonetheless, confident that the current university system could cope until the early 1960s. But thereafter, 'the possibility that new institutions might be needed began to emerge when the situation that was likely to occur in the later 1960s and 1970s was being considered' (UGC, 1962: 92). Thus, the main pressure for the founding of the new universities was this expansion of demand for places, which resulted from an increase in the size of the age cohort most likely to apply for a university place (the so-called 'bulge') coupled with an expansion in the numbers acquiring the requisite qualifications for university entry (the so-called 'trend') (Shattock, 1994: 75–8). The question, however, is: if the universities had been capable of meeting expanding demand in the early post-war years, why, in the UGC's judgement, could this not continue into the 1960s, as to found new universities was, in the words of John Carswell (the UGC's Secretary from 1974–7), 'a slow and expensive form of provision' (Carswell, 1985: 61). As Shattock (quoting Perkin, 1969: 61) argues, the new universities 'owed their origins more to the need for the expansion of student numbers than to the demand for educational experiment' (Shattock, 2012: 46), and so the UGC's argument in favour of new forms of higher education can be interpreted as a manoeuvre designed to help it secure its policy goal of expanding student numbers.

According to Asa Briggs (the second Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex, who was actively engaged in the foundation of the new universities), the decision was reinforced by the unwillingness of the existing universities to increase significantly their numbers (Briggs, 1991: 313). Moreover, Perkin refers to an explosive reaction at the Home Universities Conference, held in the Senate House of the University of London in 1955, to the UGC's apparent complacency that expanding numbers could be readily accommodated in the existing universities (Perkin, 1969:

60–3). The implication is that the conference almost forced the hand of the UGC to accept that much of the ambitious target for expansion would need to be incorporated in newly founded universities.

Indeed, the evidence from the mid-1950s suggested that while the birth rate had expanded rapidly in the immediate post-war years, it had stabilized after 1948 and apparently there would be only a short-term expansion of demand due to the increased size of the age cohort. While a steadily increasing number of applicants with the necessary qualifications to secure a university place could be anticipated, to base policy on this would be to act on predicted, rather than actual, outcomes. Nonetheless, it appeared that a strong trend had been set in motion.

The opposition of the established universities to a rapid expansion of student numbers (albeit with the *hard* evidence at the time suggesting only a short-term 'crisis') was both pragmatic and value-laden. The pragmatic opposition was generated by practical problems arising from the accommodation and teaching of a larger body of students. Would the resources be forthcoming to secure a smooth transition to enlarged universities? Even if the public resources were forthcoming, how practical would it be for the universities, especially those located in the large conurbations, to expand rapidly?

It has never been an ingrained element of the English idea of the university that 'small is beautiful' but there was, nonetheless, antipathy to rapid expansion. Steady growth would enable the new to be integrated within the framework of the established institution, whereas rapid expansion could well destabilize the university by challenging how it currently functioned. It was possible that expanded numbers would require not only additional resourcing but also that they could require different modes of delivering higher education. A large, sudden increase in numbers, therefore, could be a harbinger of unwelcome change in how the universities were to organize and deliver knowledge.

As the 1960s approached, and the demand for higher education increased, so certain choices had to be made. It is not inconceivable that the pressure of the increasing demand could have been resisted (especially as demographic trends had implied that it would be only short-term). This would have meant intensified competition for scarce places, put greater pressure on applicants to be even better qualified, and almost certainly would have ensured a continuing narrow social basis in the recruitment of undergraduates. Alternatively, pressure could have been applied to encourage the established universities to expand in order to avoid the slow and expensive option (Carswell, 1985: 61) that was selected.

Moreover, the government, working through the UGC, and perhaps the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP), could have applied pressure to the universities to encompass rapid expansion by a possible combination of exhortation and financial incentives, with threats for non-compliance. However, given the recognition of the universities as autonomous bodies that determined their own futures (which still carries some weight), it is difficult to imagine that the universities could have been compelled to augment their student intake without a fraught politicized struggle.

The decision to establish new universities to accommodate at least some of the projected increased demand appeared to be the option that commanded the widest support, although it was not necessarily the best, and almost certainly not the most economical, course of action. It would have been difficult for any government to have accepted with equanimity an increasingly elitist university system in which qualified applicants were being denied places. Significantly, education was widely perceived as a critical means to promote social mobility, and for that reason alone it would have been politically difficult for any government to be seen as failing to broaden access to higher education. For the established universities the solution was ideal. It would enable them to claim that this was a vindication of their commitment to an expanding university sector (which,

as Perkin notes, they had strongly supported at the 1955 Home Universities Conference), while, at least in the short-run, being able to avoid some of the problems that were assumed to follow from rapid institutional expansion.

The potential loser was the UGC, which was a strong supporter of expansion but for a long time assumed that the existing system was capable of embracing the increase in numbers. However, it was in the UGC's own *University Development, 1957–1962* report that a new variable was introduced into the equation:

> In the rapidly changing world of today, when the growth in scientific knowledge creates ever more difficult problems for the educator, there is need for constant experiment in the organisation of university teaching and the design of university curricula. New institutions, starting without traditions with which the innovator must come to terms, might well be more favourably situated for such experimentation than established universities.
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> (UGC, 1962: 93)

This represents at the very least an embellishment of the UGC's support for the creation of new universities. The implication is that the new universities would not only meet much of the burgeoning demand for higher education but that they were also likely to be more experimental 'in the organisation of university teaching and the design of university curricula' (UGC, 1962: 93). Although it was an opinion unlikely to find much favour in the established universities, it lent at least a gloss of respectability to augmenting student numbers through the creation of new universities. Without question, the seven foundations of the 1960s could claim to be new universities. They had been created as virgin institutions, but now they had to bear the burden, or seize the opportunity, of demonstrating that they were, indeed, *new* in more substantive terms. They were committed to ensuring the transmission and enlargement of knowledge in innovative ways, allegedly more in tune with the academy's contemporary needs.

Translating the pressures into viable universities

In February 1957, the UGC was authorized by the Conservative Government to proceed with the Sussex venture 'provided that the capital required could be fitted into the general capital programme' (UGC, 1962: 93). In effect, public revenue was to be made available to fund a new university but the form it would take was essentially in the hands of the UGC. In the post-war period, supported by the CVCP and strong government backing, the UGC had assumed the major responsibility for, if not planning, then at least steering the development of higher education in Britain (Shattock, 2012: 9–19). Regardless of the evaluation of the contribution of these new universities to the overall development of British higher education, it would be hard to deny that this was a very significant initiative for the UGC.

The most thorough, albeit succinct, official account of the UGC's role in the instigation of the seven new English universities is to be found in its own overview of university development between 1957 and 1962 (1962: 91–113). Since 1945, the UGC had received several proposals to create new universities, exhibiting, not surprisingly, differing levels of thoroughness in their preparation. The decision to back the Sussex initiative was in part a consequence of its careful genesis. The provision of a site of over 200 acres (a minimum UGC requirement) had been secured, along with the even more important financial commitment from the Treasury. Almost inevitably, the Sussex decision stimulated other approaches to the UGC. The UGC set up a New Universities Sub-Committee, which consisted of only seven members, including Keith Murray, the chair of the UGC, not only to evaluate these other approaches to be considered for new universities, but also to oversee the transition of existing higher education institutions into universities (for example, the awarding of the university title to the Colleges of Advanced

Technology). In a comparatively short period of time the sub-committee selected the six other English applicants that, along with Sussex, were to be awarded UGC support.

The UGC, through the creation of Academic Planning Boards, laid down the parameters within which the successful applicants would have to work and strongly influenced the process they were to follow as they moved towards the fulfilment of their proposals. Firstly, given that expansion was to come through the establishment of new universities rather than the expansion of existing institutions, it was to be expected that the new providers should offer at least some variation in the organization and delivery of knowledge. Secondly, they needed to commit themselves to swift expansion by planning for a minimum of 3,000 students each. This was relatively large for a British university at the time, and, indeed, it had been the relatively low student numbers in existing British universities that had led some to believe that expansion could be achieved through the established institutions. Thirdly, there had to be a clear expression of strong local support: the offering of a site of at least 200 acres; a positive commitment from all the local authorities in the neighbourhood, including a willingness to provide some financial input; and an expression of approval by both local notables and educational interests, such as the head teachers of local schools with large sixth forms.

Of equal significance to the guiding principles was the process designed to secure how the proposals were to be brought to fruition. Once the UGC had received a request, then the first stage was for its New Universities Sub-Committee to decide whether it was a sufficiently robust proposal to secure its backing. Then in each approved case, following the model established for Sussex, an Academic Planning Board was established. The boards, composed of important local personnel and UGC nominees, took responsibility for drafting the charters, shaping the academic programmes and structures of the new universities, and overseeing the appointment of key individuals including the vice-chancellor. Incidentally, the Academic Planning Board for Sussex made the decision to apply for the title of university, rather than settle for the status of a university college, a move that was subsequently followed by all the other boards.

The UGC was careful to ensure that its New Universities Sub-Committee consulted with a range of interests to determine which bids to sanction, and likewise the Academic Planning Boards would reach out to locally organized parties as they undertook their duties. It was important to ensure that there would be a serious attempt to construct a consensus, and above all that the major organized interests in English higher education at the time – the CVCP, the Association of University Teachers (AUT), and the National Union of Students (NUS) – were on board. There is little reference in the debate, however, either to the question of whether the existing universities were capable of providing these desired new forms of knowledge or to the Scottish model, in which a broader curriculum already prevailed. As Shattock (quoting Perkin, 1969: 61) argues, the new universities 'owed their origins more to the need for the expansion of student numbers than to the demand for educational experiment' (Shattock, 2012: 46). So, the UGC's argument in favour of new forms of higher education can be interpreted as a manoeuvre designed to help it secure its policy goal of expanding student numbers.

Besides the UGC's own presentation of the founding of the seven new universities, there are a number of converging commentaries that present essentially the same interpretation (Bosanquet and Hall, 1964; Beloff, 1968; Perkin, 1969; Shattock, 1994; Rich, 2001). Thus, more important than the fact of the increasing demand for higher education, were those policy decisions that determined how that demand would be met. The UGC's support for innovative new universities was a political response to the policy conundrum of how to secure the expansion of the English university system without the cooperation it needed from the existing universities. It was calculated that these universities' plans for the expansion of student numbers fell 25 per cent below the overall projected increase in demand (Shattock, 2012: 47).

Long before it became fashionable to talk of 'the hollowing out of the state' thanks to the rise of quangos (Rhodes, 1994; Rhodes, 1996; Skelcher, 2000), for some decades the UGC was in effect a quango that had steered the development of British higher education, influencing both policymaking and, to an even greater extent, policy implementation. The founding of the new universities represents a classic example of this model of governance in operation. It is also a powerful example of corporate governance in action: governance by established insider interests, with the UGC orchestrating the policy inputs of the important pressure groups, most of which were firmly located in the higher education sphere. In effect, the UGC had become part of the state.

Critically, other than sanctioning the UGC's actions by providing the requisite public funding, the government of the day was virtually excluded from the process. In fact, it excluded itself. Moreover, there is no record of much input from parliament, parliamentary committees, or the political parties. This was 'an insider's job' that involved public funding with virtually no open public debate. It was a mode of governance that evidently suited the dominant interests within higher education, especially the CVCP. The process worked very efficiently, resulting in the smooth emergence of seven universities, and it could be argued that they have made an effective contribution to English higher education (Watson, 2014). The process was embedded in procedures sanctioned by the political system but it was essentially a 'closed' model of decision-making.

Another facet of the change process upon which there has been little comment is the input of particular individuals. In his reflections on the founding of the new universities, Asa Briggs (himself a member of both the UGC and its New Universities Sub-Committee) writes:

> … I have brought with me what I regard as being the *fundamental* UGC Paper, 48/60, a memorandum produced in March 1960 and written by Keith Murray [at the time the chair of the UGC].
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> (Briggs, 1991: 312, emphasis added)

Briggs goes on to outline some of Murray's work on the new universities project, including his discovery of the fact 'that many universities were completely unwilling to do anything to increase their numbers' (Briggs, 1991: 313).

The change process: Interpreting the early outcomes

It is the fact that these seven universities of the 1960s were virgin foundations that constitutes the indisputable reason why they can be labelled as *new*. The question, however, is whether they have more substantive claims to the title? Would they, in the UGC's own words, be more favourably situated than the established universities to experiment in the organization of university teaching and in the design of university curricula? Most analysts (Bosanquet and Hall, 1964; Beloff, 1968; Perkin, 1969; Perkin, 1991; Rich, 2001) point to two distinctive characteristics. The first is, indeed, the introduction of innovative undergraduate curricula: the structure and content of degree programmes, modes of examination, forms of pedagogy, and the sharing of day-to-day responsibility for such matters between schools of studies and departments. It was an attempt to move away from the department-based model of the civic universities, allegedly increasingly committed to single-honours degrees, and to introduce more broadly based curricula with shared responsibility for their delivery. Academic authority continued to be firmly located in the universities but it was organized in a way that lessened the role of departments in academic affairs.

The second major departure from the civic university model (created in the nineteenth century in the expanding cities – Goddard and Vallance, 2013; Palfreyman and Tapper, 2014:

79–88) was the stress placed upon the university as a community. All the new universities were founded on self-contained campuses located in green-field sites on the edge of small cities. The sites provided residential accommodation, with many students living on campus. In fact three of the universities – Kent, Lancaster, and York – established colleges. Academic authority resided within the universities, but the colleges were linked to different disciplines by providing them with both office space and teaching facilities, and socially the colleges reinforced the universities as residential communities. The universities were looking beyond the Victorian civics to a more collegiate legacy, embracing the past – albeit in a different guise – rather than creating the new.

Were these sufficiently robust changes to enable the label of 'new universities' to be applied to these seven institutions? Unsurprisingly, evaluations differ. At one end of the continuum is Asa Briggs, who has written:

> I think the record of the new British universities is a very good one. They made a real contribution to educational advance on a broad front. If there had been only one university – and if it had been the University of Sussex – it would not have affected the operations of the system at all. It would have been purely incremental as Keele, despite its radical attempts to change the curriculum, had already been. With seven, something was inevitably bound to happen. The dynamics were changed.
> (Briggs, 1991: 332)

Thus, Briggs is claiming that not only did the new universities represent examples of institutional innovation but that they also helped to bring about wider changes in the system of British higher education. They acted as a critical mass that stimulated innovation beyond their institutional boundaries, although he fails to elaborate upon what precisely these changes were and how the presence of the new universities actually stimulated them.

Other commentators have strongly disputed the claim that the seven new universities represented new models of the university. For example, Robinson described the new universities, with particular reference to their campus bases, as representing nostalgia for an 'academic playpen' (Robinson, 1987), and the eminent sociologist Halsey asserted that the new universities demonstrated the 'continued vitality of Victorian Ideals', which made the label 'of new universities that they had received in the 1960s meaningless' (Halsey, 1995: 17). Thus, both Robinson and Halsey claimed that the new universities in fact contributed nothing new to British higher education.

In his comprehensive *New Universities in the United Kingdom*, Harold Perkin has offered a circumspect evaluation of the extent to which the 1960s new universities broke the prevailing mould of British higher education (Perkin, 1969: 239–47). Perkin undertook a thorough evaluation of a range of variables: student recruitment; the layout and architecture of the campuses with their student residences; the new maps of learning, university governance, and administration; and the procedures they adopted to determine their own future development. He arrived at the following conclusion: 'On the side of new ideas, the New Universities have put their newest and best into the "new maps of learning" which they have drawn and guided themselves by' (Perkin, 1969: 241). Regarding the range of criteria that he believed it was important to evaluate, Perkin felt that the universities were better described as 'innovative', rather than as 'new', foundations. In Perkin's judgement they were pursuing a path that supported the UGC's claim that these new foundations would have a better chance than the existing universities to introduce different ways of organizing knowledge and initiating innovative pedagogy, that is to introduce 'new maps of learning' (to use the phrase of Daiches, 1964). In that limited sense, their foundation could be seen as something of a triumph for the UGC.

The evaluations of the impact of the new universities demonstrate considerable confusion as to how change is to be interpreted. For example, what is the boundary between the new and the innovative university? How much innovation has to be in place before the new can be

said to have arrived? Regardless, there was certainly enough difference in the critical area of the organization and delivery of knowledge to have satisfied both the UGC and those, like Briggs, actively engaged in the founding of the new universities.

Furthermore, as this article has argued, these seven 1960s universities, besides being founded as new institutions, were first and foremost meant to meet an expanding demand for higher education. They were a convenient political fix, rather than a panacea for reforming the higher education system at large. They diversified somewhat the character of the overall system of British higher education but the fact that they had been created by the institutions of the established order meant they would function within its parameters.

Funding for both capital and recurrent expenditure was to come overwhelmingly from central government, with further support (mainly in the provision of a site sufficiently large to accommodate a university) to be provided by the local authorities. The UGC may have favoured pedagogical and curriculum experimentation, but inevitably there were boundaries to what it was prepared to sponsor. The composition of the Academic Planning Boards ensured that the final stages of the policy implementation process were in safe hands. They may have been new universities but they could not possibly be too different from the representatives of the prevailing model if they were to merit the university label. To be considered as bona fide members of the English university club meant that they would need to embrace its core values and practices.

The idea of the university has become more eclectic over time, but in the 1960s it still retained a relatively narrow identity. Even today, supposedly new models of the university are not exempt from parading their loyalty to traditional values – combining an alleged commitment to high-quality teaching with at least a genuflection to the incorporation of a research mission. The 1960s new universities wanted from the outset to possess the university title (rather than to be known as university colleges, as was initially proposed); the right to offer a full range of degree programmes, postgraduate as well as undergraduate (as had initially been denied Keele); and to be publicly funded via the UGC as a recognition of their autonomous status. (Note that the Open University was more closely tied to the state, thanks in part to receiving its funding via a departmental channel rather than the UGC.) Indeed, if you wanted to be seen as a university, there were limits on how different you could be from the established model.

The changing policy context: The new universities in a different era

If the critical pressures for change in higher education invariably come from social and economic evolution, the next key issue is how those pressures are translated politically into institutional innovation; whether that should be – as in the nineteenth century – the absorption of professional training (lawyers, medics, and the applied sciences), and subsequently the expansion of new forms of knowledge (for example, the social sciences), or the pressure to admit more students (as with much of the post-1945 growth in higher education). Perkin therefore felt that the universities were better described as 'innovative' rather than as 'new' foundations. The universities change because it is the only way that they can ensure their long-term survival. The alternative would be to encompass a steady demise as other institutions would take over the roles they fulfil.

The mechanisms of change evolve over time, as the structures responsible for transmitting the pressures into action assume different institutional goals. The political translation of the pressures is as important as the pressures themselves in determining change, if not more so. During the years 1945 to 1988 it was the UGC that steered the development of British higher education, including the decision to meet some of the growing demand for student places in the form of founding new universities. At the time the UGC was the main instigator of change. The

various facets of the formal political order, including the governmental institutions of the day, occupied essentially the role of observers.

The policymaking context is now different. The funding councils have replaced the UGC, and undertake more of a regulatory role rather than engaging in either policymaking or distributing funding (Filippakou *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, teaching and learning is underwritten by the payment of student fees, although the fees regime is determined by government policy and regulated by the state. While the universities still formally retain their autonomy, their development takes place within the boundaries prescribed by government policy. Moreover, there is a more open and explicit politics of pressure groups in action. Much of the lobbying, certainly with respect to policy implementation, is not undertaken by individual universities acting alone but by various pressure groups, often the so-called 'mission groups', into which the higher education institutions have organized themselves (Filippakou and Tapper, 2013). The universities appear to be 'freer' to plot their own development than was the case when the UGC was the national planning body of the higher education system. Thus, although the UGC favoured new maps of learning, it was in part responsible for the thwarting of initiatives in favour of closer cooperation between local higher education institutions at Sussex, Warwick, and Norwich (Shattock, 2012: 53).

The emergence of the organization of the English universities into mission groups, as a new type of pressure-group politics, was in part a response to this new environment. For much of its time, the core membership of the 1994 Mission Group, representing the smaller research-intensive universities, was the new foundations of the 1960s (with, at one time, all but the University of Kent as members). By the time of the 1994 group's demise in November 2013, both the universities of Warwick and York had deserted its ranks to join the Russell Group as, obviously, they wished to be seen as belonging to the mission group that sees itself as consisting of Britain's most prestigious and research-intensive universities (Russell Group, 2014).

This is a new context, driven by the desire of institutions to augment their reputations, and possibilities of survival, by making sure that they belong to the most prestigious mission group in what is now the era of marketization. The new universities, following the general trend, have sought to make themselves more cost-effective managed institutions in order to sustain their financial viability. In part, this has meant reshaping somewhat their academic identities. Thus, the University of Sussex closed its linguistics department but now has degrees in business studies (Thomas, 2014). The University of Warwick is now better known as an 'entrepreneurial' university, rather than as one of the 'new' universities (cf. Clark, 1998), while on its website the University of Kent primarily labels itself as 'the UK's continental university' (University of Kent, 2015).

Conclusion

There is an English system of higher education that, like all systems, is rarely static. Rather, it moves forward in stages and the process of analysing change in higher education has to be contextualized by the boundaries that mark the significant shifts in the composition of those organized parties that constitute the most important policy participants. There are no predetermined responses to the pressures for change and the outcomes are often decided by the political interpretation of those pressures. In the case of the new 1960s universities, it was perceived that the UGC was best placed to determine what were considered as the effective responses, and it acted in a manner that was essentially political in nature in order to ensure that its desired outcome prevailed.

The foundation of the 1960s new universities was but a manifestation of a stage dominated in the post-1945 years by the UGC in an era of economic growth and broad political support

for educational expansion, and the UGC acted as a national planning body for higher education. The recent history of the new universities illustrates the emergence of a particular policymaking context, one that requires institutions to respond to policy initiatives constructed at the centre by governments that are more enamoured of requiring universities to function in a state-regulated market.

Notes on the contributors

Ourania Filippakou is a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Hull. Her main interest is in the theoretical condition of higher education – the theory, the epistemology, and the methodology of higher education – with particular reference to comparative historical analysis, a perspective that seeks to combine the methods of history with the theories and concepts of social science. She is a council member of the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE), and visiting fellow at the Oxford Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (OxCHEPS), New College, University of Oxford.

Ted Tapper has spent nearly all his academic career at the University of Sussex (1968–2003). His research has developed in two broad fields: the politics of secondary schooling, with a focus on the increasing authority of the central state; and the politics of higher education, encompassing a reasonably large body of work on the governance of higher education and the politics of policymaking. More recently, he has examined the role of ideas in the process of change in higher education.

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