Multilevel Pedagogical Leadership in Higher Education

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Multilevel Pedagogical Leadership in Higher Education

A Non-Affirmative Approach

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The present volume is the third in a row from a research initiative that stepwise developed into a research program on Non-Affirmative Education at Åbo Akademi University, Vaasa, Finland. The initiative started as a cooperation between University of Arizona and Åbo Akademi University in 2012. The initial symposia at ECER 2014 in Porto and at AERA 2015 in Chicago laid the ground for the first volume, published in 2017. It was an online volume edited by professor Michael Uljens and professor Rose Ylimaki, now at Northern Arizona University. It focused on applying non-affirmative theory of general education or general pedagogy as a foundation for bridging curriculum theory, Didaktik and educational leadership.

The second edited volume, *Non-affirmative Theory of Education and Bildung*, was launched internationally at the Humboldt university in Berlin, on August 30, 2023. This volume brought together a number of international scholars representing various approaches to, interpretations of and applications of non-affirmative theory of education and Bildung. The volume centers around professor emeritus Dietrich Benner's lifework contributing and renewing the longstanding European tradition of non-affirmative education and Bildung.

The present volume was supported by a larger research grant allowed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland. Its immediate context was the research-supported developmental project *Higher Education Learning Lab* (HELLA). The funding for this initiative was originally administered by Armi Mikkola (1952–2020). She received an honorary doctorate at Åbo Akademi University for her outstanding work with Finnish teacher education.

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Chapter 1
Grounding Higher Education Leadership Research in Non-affirmative Education Theory

Michael Uljens and **Janne Elo**

Abstract This chapter argues that higher education leadership research lacks sufficient theoretical underpinning and requires a more comprehensive theoretical framework. We propose that establishing a solid theoretical foundation involves a systematic exploration of three key perspectives: the why, how and what of leadership. First, recognising that leadership in and of educational institutions is relational and contextual, shaped by historical evolution, we advocate for a clarification of universities' roles and responsibilities from societal, cultural, disciplinary, economic and individual perspectives—the *why* of higher education curriculum leadership. We argue that education theory provides valuable insights into understanding how the university, as an institutional context, and its tasks relate to these dimensions. Second, considering higher education institutions as knowledge-intensive organisations, leadership's fundamental role is seen in facilitating the professional and personal development of both staff and students. Consequently, higher education leadership should articulate its position on pedagogical influence across various levels—the *how* of higher education curriculum leadership. Third, recognising that the primary focus of higher education leadership at different levels is the academic and professional learning of students, it involves providing direct and indirect support for leaders and teachers, as well as shaping the curriculum and organisation of study programmes. These aspects collectively constitute the *what* of higher education curriculum leadership. In light of these three perspectives, this chapter outlines the theoretical grounding for research on the pedagogical dimension of multi-level higher education leadership within the framework of non-affirmative education theory.

Keywords Higher education leadership · Multi-level leadership · Leadership for learning · Non-affirmative education theory

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Introduction

What is a university, what is it for and how is it led? These questions have been central topics of debate throughout the history of the university, and the answers have indeed varied and evolved over time (Barnett, 2004). Today, how these questions are practically answered is reflected in higher education leaders' activities. Most of these activities are founded on these leaders' professional identities, including their explicit or implicit ideas of how they understand higher education and the conditions under which universities operate. In addition, empirical research on higher education policies provides us with answers of this kind. However, in our search for a convincing vocabulary of what the university is and how it is led, we do not primarily turn to empirical research on education leaders' ideas or their practices. Rather, in this volume, we are searching for a theoretical grounding for higher education leadership research. The reason for this is that we find educational leadership research, in general, to be under-theorised.

Our central claim is that such a theoretical grounding requires addressing three perspectives. First, we need to conceptually clarify the *university's relation to other societal and cultural practices* because how we as researchers explain this relation is intimately connected to how we view its leadership. In this sense, we take seriously the idea that leadership in and of educational institutions is relational, contextual and a historically evolved practice. Second, *leadership is always the leadership of something.* We thereby claim that any leadership is always partly related to its object and cannot be fully understood as a content- and context-neutral generic activity. From this perspective, to theoretically explain what higher education leadership is about, we need an articulated position regarding pedagogical influence in education, teaching and studying. Another aspect of the importance of an articulated position on pedagogical influence is that all leadership in knowledge-intensive organisations feature activities facilitating professional and human growth this *leadership has a pedagogical dimension* to it. We argue that while leadership influencing learning activities is often identified as crucial in knowledge-intensive organisations, the literature on leadership too often lacks elaboration on the pedagogical qualities of leadership. Third educational leadership, and the pedagogical dimensions thereof, is a complex undertaking simultaneously operating at different interrelated levels that must be dealt with in a theoretically and conceptually coherent manner.

Given the three perspectives described above, the mission of this volume is to theoretically ground research on the pedagogy of multi-level higher education leadership in non-affirmative education theory. Parallel to this, this volume problematises the approach by bringing it into dialogue with previous significant and highly esteemed contributions to higher education leadership research.

This volume contributes to the international research programme on non-affirmative education (Non-affirmative Education, 2023). The programme is based on Dietrich Benner's interpretation of the non-affirmative theory (NAT) of education and Bildung (Benner, 2023). Dietrich Benner has developed this position since the 1970s but has primarily published in German. This approach garners

steadily increasing international interest. Due to its character and its grounding in modern European *Bildung*, the position is regarded as a promising language for education in the twenty-first century, drawing interest from researchers across the Western, Eastern and Southern global regions. How the approach has gained interest is described in Uljens and Ylimaki (2017) and Uljens (2023a). The present volume is the third in a series, published by Springer. The volume from 2017 discussed how non-affirmative education theory succeeds in bridging research on teaching, curriculum and educational leadership. A recent volume digs into the conceptual core issues of the approach and investigates how this tradition of thought has influenced, and relates to, other approaches (Uljens, 2023b).

A Short History of University Leadership

The history of the university dates back to the Middle Ages, when universities were teaching institutions, often connected to the church and mainly concerned with reproducing societal elites. Since the seventeenth century, through a stepwise movement towards modernity, the educational task of the university has shifted from socialising to an existing teleological order in premodern societies to a *modern* view of a non-teleological development of society whereby the task of higher education is to educate for a future that is neither known nor knowable. The establishment of the modern Humboldtian research-based university marked a difference between the pedagogical activities in schools and those in universities. While schools typically focused on teaching based on a predetermined curriculum or syllabus, the new universities emphasised the teacher's autonomy to construct a curriculum that was not only to be taught but that would serve as a point of departure for students, who would incorporate a critical treatment of its content into their studies. A unique difference between schools and universities is that both students' *and* teachers' personal learning is crucial in universities. The double and related processes of teachers' and students' *Bildung* provide a certain twist to educative teaching at universities. However, without digging into the sociological literature of professions (Abbot, 1988), it can be said that the differences between the disciplines are significant. The study of some disciplines aims at the achievement of qualifications for given professions, while that of others provides a more general understanding of a given field of knowledge structured as a discipline. In this respect, universities have always been connected to the labour market and citizenship in multiple ways.

In Europe, in particular, the nation-state became the dominant frame of reference, alongside working life, for universities. Education in general, with universities being no exception, became a key means of developing national identities 'from within' in many nations. Universities have played a special role in the education of the societal elite (state bureaucrats, officials, teachers and leaders) upholding, leading and developing nation-states. In this respect, universities have played a conservative and reproductive role in society.

With the gradual shift from a premodern teleological worldview to a modern view of the future as open, research has become one of the central tasks performed by universities. In the Western tradition, when knowledge was no longer perceived as something given from above or found within, but rather as something created or discovered by humans, research as an activity started to make sense. Although higher education institutions eventually became, and still mostly are, located in a nation-state framework financially, legally and policy-wise, the traditional Humboldtian idea of the university in the Western hemisphere has been that it is intended to provide *universally* valid knowledge that is public and accessible for all. The modern idea of educating the individual was directly dependent on the universal validity of shared knowledge. It was through this universally valid knowledge that the individual could be emancipated from the primary context, culture and socialisation. Moving into the sphere of universally accepted knowledge also gave rise to a new collective of intellectuals. Universal knowledge thereby, in a way, replaced religion and became connected to a new idea of humanity in the modern world. This view regards research as a *common good* that aims to benefit humanity, not merely as useful for single nation-states, nor did the Humboldtian idea view knowledge as a commodity or a private good on an exchange market. Although higher education institutions, in many ways, remain rooted in national frameworks, higher education has become increasingly interwoven in both local and global networks of influences, policy-wise, culturally, and economically. Paradoxically, parallel to various globalisation processes over the past three decades, universities have been localised and given a third mission: to instrumentally serve regional and national needs.

While we still very much live by the modern ideas of being and becoming an encultured and educated citizen, where acting out a self-directed will in relation to others' interests is crucial, the operational environment of today's universities is quite different from that of Wilhelm von Humboldt. With the move into a post-industrial economy, higher education has become a focal point for economic and labour market policies on a global level, and globalisation generates increased instrumental requirements in terms of the effects and use of knowledge produced, as knowledge is expected to serve regional needs for economic ends (Dobbins et al., 2011). Global discourses of a competitive knowledge economy, new public management and the entrepreneurial university affect higher education worldwide, although at varying speeds and in varying ways (Bruckmann & Carvalho, 2018; Frost et al., 2016).

In an era of academic capitalism, universities are not only expected to provide competence and innovations for a competitive market; they are also competing for fee-paying international students, research funding, rankings, prestige and the most productive and competitive scholars in a global educational and academic market (Kandiko & Blackmore, 2012; Kwiek, 2016; Maassen, 2017). During the twentieth century, especially after World War II, universities developed from institutions of elite education, clearly distinguishable from the rest of society, to institutions of mass education interwoven in many ways with the surrounding society (Barnett, 2004). The task of the mass university is to prepare a much broader range of societal

elites, including the upper strata of all of society's technical and economic organisations (Trow, 2007). The interpenetration of the university and the surrounding society has, in many ways, eroded the basis of the Humboldtian idea of the university as an institution. For instance, the creation of new knowledge through research is by no means the privilege of universities in a knowledge society, and the boundaries between universities and businesses have, in many cases, vanished through the emergence of the knowledge economy (Barnett, 2004).

If universities originally had a strong connection to the church, followed by a close affiliation with the state, at least symbolically, their affiliation with the state has, in many cases, been replaced by one with the market, for instance, through privatisation reforms. The increased formal autonomy of higher education institutions is often accompanied by increased control and steering mechanisms that involve more accountability and a diversified funding base (Christensen, 2011). Thus, increased autonomy has mainly been instrumental and efficiency-oriented and has seen the introduction of new managerial steering mechanisms within higher education institutions, resulting in the monitoring of leadership behaviours and functions. Research funding is largely guided by policies or other external instrumental interests. Institutionalised nation-state education, in general, is influenced by globalisation, technology and transnational policy-making and policy-borrowing, accompanied by a neoliberal shift towards new forms of governance that focus on the indirect regulation of the self-governance of institutions and researchers within and across countries (Lingard & Rizvi, 2009). In many cases, these trends have led organisational logic in higher education to be based on managerialism and marketisation (Bruckmann & Carvalho, 2018; Frost et al., 2016). As higher education institutions are developing from loosely coupled to more vertically connected systems, higher education leadership is increasingly in focus from many perspectives (Maassen & Stensaker, 2019).

Based on the short historical description above, it can be concluded that higher education is currently a focal point of interest for numerous actors and stakeholders in global society. It faces a multitude of expectations, ranging from economic and labour market considerations to political, social justice and environmental perspectives. In other words, many different and new actors in society want a say in how and where higher education should be led and developed, and the question of what a university *is* is itself on the table. Different views on what universities are are reflected in different positions regarding how they should be led and governed. The massification of universities, combined with the interpenetration of universities and the wider society and differentiation into sub-disciplines, has resulted in universities being, on the one hand, more internally heterogeneous and, on the other, more interwoven with different fields of societal practice than ever before. Thus, the questions of what higher education is and what it is for are at the forefront from several perspectives. Paradoxically, however, higher education leaders' increased focus on managing the performativity and productivity of universities has turned their attention away from an internally driven discussion of the idea of the university itself.

Contemporary Perspectives on Higher Education Leadership Research

Partly as a consequence of the increased and diversified societal interest in higher education, the *research* interest in higher education leadership has been growing in recent decades, with a substantial number of articles and volumes published on the topic. Grasping the field of leadership in general, and higher education leadership in particular, is, however, a challenge. In addition to the inherent complexity of the university as an object of study, a multitude of approaches, theories, models and doctrines applied to the study of this complex phenomenon coexist. Transformative, transformational, transactional, shared, distributed, heroic, systemic, curriculum, ethical and various other concepts and theories of leadership attempt to illuminate aspects or perspectives of this elusive topic. Many scientific disciplines apart from education focus on leadership, for example, policy research, law, organisation theory, sociology, psychology and economics. Higher education leadership is currently approached from various theoretical or ideological standpoints, ranging from instrumental efficiency-oriented approaches to critical emancipatory perspectives. All of these approaches can produce valuable insights into higher education leadership but simultaneously have various limitations.

Adding to this complexity, higher education leadership is recognised as a phenomenon occurring at many levels, being exercised in various forms from the transnational policy arena down to the individual teacher level. Grasping higher education leadership as a holistic phenomenon requires the ability to handle its multilevel character in a coherent way. For instance, actor–network theory (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005), discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008), refraction (Goodson & Rudd, 2012), ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), Europeanisation research (Maassen & Musselin, 2009), curriculum theory (Wraga & Hlebowitsh, 2001) and complexity theory (Morrison, 2006) provide examples of approaches to studying educational leadership as a multilevel or multidimensional phenomenon. What most of these approaches have in common is that leadership is portrayed as a mediating activity between different levels and actors. A hermeneutic dimension of translation is demonstrated in the element of interpretation always present in the mediating of interactions, negotiations and discourses (Mielityinen & Uljens, 2023). Our view, however, is that such approaches are not sufficiently distinct. Most previous multilevel approaches to educational leadership have generated vocabularies that are general and neutral with respect to the context or practice in question. The same conceptualisations can be applied to understand, for example, healthcare, education, private businesses and policies for public transport. The strength of these general frameworks—that is, their general validity—is simultaneously their weakness.

The various leadership theories mentioned above and the various approaches to leadership as a multilevel phenomenon have a limitation in common when it comes to the leadership of education: they all lack a specific vocabulary for the studied object, namely, education, pedagogical interaction and pedagogical leadership.

Although they provide valuable perspectives, these theories are thus silent on the key questions of how we can understand what education is and what it is for. What is the societal role of the university in a liberal democracy? Given recent geopolitical developments, this is a highly relevant question that we argue that higher education leadership research needs to be able to handle conceptually and theoretically. While organisational, political, psychological, economic and sociological perspectives, for example, are important, they are not sufficient as a foundation for studying the leadership of *education.*

In addition to not fully meeting the challenges posed by conceptualising what education is, leadership theories also lack concepts for elaborating on what constitutes pedagogical influence. Such theories often state that leadership is about influencing the perceptions and understandings of others but remain silent on what constitutes this influence. As leadership theories lack a language for pedagogical interaction, they also lack a language to talk about the object of educational leadership: teaching and studying. This volume targets these perceived shortcomings and aims to explore how educational theory could be a fruitful point of departure for understanding leadership in and of education at various levels. We argue that the NAT of education and *Bildung* (Benner, 2015, 2023) could provide points of departure that can overcome some challenges associated with current higher education leadership research. In the following section, we develop this argument by pointing out three challenges that current higher education leadership research has not been able to deal with sufficiently.

Three Conceptual Challenges for Higher Education Leadership Research

As argued elsewhere (Elo & Uljens, 2023; Tigerstedt, 2022; Tigerstedt & Uljens, 2016; Uljens, 2015; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017), current research on educational leadership struggles to handle leadership of and in education at different levels in a theoretically coherent manner. We identify at least three dimensions of these challenges.

Challenges Related to the Societal Role of Higher Education

Leadership of and in universities always occurs in relation to, and in complicated dialogues with, different stakeholders in society. From a historical and contemporary perspective, most research agrees that higher education leadership and curriculum work cannot be understood in a decontextualised fashion (McLendon, 2003). The question is thus *how*, not if, the relation between university education and other societal practices is understood by different conceptual positions on higher education

leadership, policy and teaching. The question of what universities are for is therefore central. In this complex field, we identify two broad positions on how research understands the relation between societal fields and interests, on the one hand, and education and educational leadership, on the other.

In the first position, traditional leadership research has been based on structural functionalism, partly through organisational system theories (see Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017, pp. 48–54). Education and educational leadership are seen functionally, often subordinating them to contemporary economic or political interests. These positions can thus be seen as ideologically naïve. Educational leadership research in these positions typically either focuses on uncritically reaching some predefined present-day need or fails altogether to articulate how higher education and higher education leadership relate to other societal fields. Examples of such positions are distributed leadership (e.g. Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), instructional leadership (e.g. Apkarian & Rasmussen, 2021) and team leadership (e.g. Koeslag-Kreunen et al., 2021). If higher education leadership fails to address the critical question of the role of the university in society by treating it as a closed system, leadership and leadership research can be put at the service of virtually any agenda or ideology. Positions focused on topics such as student employability, labour market expectations (e.g. Varga, 2006) or higher education rankings are examples of positions focused on meeting present-day conservative needs. From these positions, it might be natural to view the task of education rather uncritically as merely educating an employable workforce according to current and fluctuating labour market competence needs or to determine the value and quality of higher education based on international rankings or external accountability criteria. Positions such as these thus risk instrumentalising higher education and higher education leadership to serve interests external to the core tasks of higher education in a liberal democracy, namely independent academic research and the education of students to become self-determined, ethically reflecting and politically aware subjects. These positions thus, often unreflectingly, give education and educational leadership an instrumental societal role, as they are (merely) expected to accommodate the needs and demands of other societal fields and actors.

Second, normatively loaded critical and transformative research, often with a touch of political activism, often superordinates educational leadership and education to contemporary society (e.g. Giroux, 1980; McLaren, 2014; Shields, 2014). The normatively critical positions, in contrast to the ideologically naïve functionalist positions, typically view higher education (in terms of both leadership and research) as a normatively driven force for transforming society. It is typical for traditional critical education research to view education as having the potential to 'shape those who will go on to become future educators, lawmakers, and politicians' (Tolman, 2019). Normatively loaded transformative higher education and higher education leadership, in their radical form, go beyond defending education's emancipatory task as aiming at negative liberty (i.e. liberating students from represented prejudices and conventional practices; Berlin, 1969, pp. 118–172), by positioning leadership as superordinate in relation to existing society by striving for predefined future ideals representing its own interests (Uljens, 2023c). Research positions specifically targeting normatively closed understandings of equality and social justice, gender

perspectives or sustainability, rather than identifying various positions to these issues as objects for elaboration, are examples of this category. Currently, these are topics on the rise in educational leadership research (McArthur, 2010; Wang et al., 2017).

The leadership research positions described above are viewed as end positions on a spectrum since much of contemporary research is positioned somewhere in between (e.g. Mezirow, 1991). What unites both positions is that they intentionally or unintentionally risk subordinating universities and higher education leadership to either existing societal interests or normative ideals of the future. Normatively closed external interests view education as a strategic instrument for reaching something decided upon in advance instead of treating universities, research or university students as representing ends in themselves, expressed in Kantian terminology. Cultural, political, economic and religious interests and ideologies, broadly speaking, represent societal practices regulating university research and teaching that can operate as both transformative and conservative forces. In our view, higher education leadership theory needs to represent a reflective position in this matter, striving to avoid instrumentalism. In other words, higher education leadership research needs to be theoretically sensitive and reflective towards the questions of what universities are, what they are for, and what their relations to other societal practices are. The non-affirmative position that this volume builds upon places itself beyond the positions described above, providing a third position and perspective on the question of the role of the university in a democratic society.

Challenges to Approaching Multilevel Higher Education Leadership

A shift in higher education leadership practices and policies from a collegial and bureaucratic model towards a neoliberally inspired model characterised by managerialism, accountability and leaderism has been evident in many countries (Bolden et al., 2014; Crevani et al., 2015; Croucher & Lacy, 2022; O'Reilly & Reed, 2010; Välimaa et al., 2016). Parallel to, and partly because of, this move from government in old public administration to governance in new public management, multilevel, contextual and situational approaches to educational governance and leadership research have strengthened, rooted in a variety of academic disciplines (Alvesson, 2019; Wang, 2018; Wang et al., 2017). A multilevel perspective is thus necessary for understanding the management, governance and leadership of higher education (e.g. Bolden et al., 2008; Elo & Uljens, 2023; Frost et al., 2016; Uljens & Elo, 2020). In the current research field, there are, however, challenges regarding how the multilevel character of higher education leadership is conceptualised and approached.

Actor network theory (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005), discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008), refraction (Goodson & Rudd, 2012) and other system-oriented

models (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1979) exemplify some of the current multilevel approaches to educational leadership. These approaches use different terminologies but share common ground in that leadership is seen as a mediating activity between different levels and actors. A hermeneutic dimension of translation and interpretation is always present in mediation in the form of negotiations, re-contextualising and discourses. The weakness of many previous multilevel approaches to educational leadership, despite their obvious strengths, is that they offer universal vocabularies that are neutral towards the practice/praxis in question. For higher education, these practices are both education and the creation of new knowledge through research. The challenge with universal approaches to leadership is thus their insensitivity towards what is led and where leadership occurs, as they offer identical conceptualisations to understand the practice and policy of any societal field, such as education, private businesses, national defence or healthcare. The universal validity of these frameworks is thus simultaneously a strength and a weakness, as they lack a specific vocabulary to grasp the studied object. Insights into both research-based teaching and studying (the object) and the societal role of education (the context) are necessary for understanding higher education leadership at various levels. The specific character of educational leadership is not captured if leadership is theorised as separate from its context and object. The rich traditions of organisational or policy implementation research, and other fields of leadership expertise, provide important additional perspectives and are not to be disregarded, but their limitations as foundational points of departure need to be acknowledged.

If the context- and content-neutral universalist approaches to multilevel educational leadership described above are viewed as one end of a continuum, the other end is represented by particularistic positions, characterised by an isolated focus on specific subthemes, aspects or levels of educational leadership. The macro level is generally in focus for research on policy and policy borrowing (e.g. Capano & Pritoni, 2020; Rhoades & Sporn, 2002). The organisational or meso levels are generally in focus for research on academic leadership (e.g. Floyd & Preston, 2018; van Ameijde et al., 2009), while the micro level is typically in focus for research on learning and instruction *(Didaktik),* teaching theory, instructional theory and curriculum, (e.g. Bovill & Woolmer, 2019; Stes et al., 2010). The ability to provide vocabularies that capture nuances and details of the studied objects is an advantage of these particularistic approaches. Research-informed communication and dialogue *between* research on different levels is, however, hindered by the lack of a uniting theoretical framework, resulting in 'siloed' research leaving findings from different levels and fields unconnected (Wang et al., 2017). Thus, there is an obvious risk of losing the 'big picture' of higher education leadership. In this volume, NAT is proposed as a position capable of conceptualising important aspects of the multilevel character of higher education leadership without losing the how, what and where of leadership, namely, the pedagogical dimensions, content and context.

Challenges in Understanding Pedagogical Processes

Current higher education leadership research faces a twofold challenge in the under-theorisation of pedagogical interaction. This means first that the pedagogical qualities or dimensions of leadership interaction within and between different levels are under-theorised. Second, higher education leadership research often lacks a developed idea of the core object of this leadership, namely, research-based teaching and studying.

Pedagogical Qualities of Educational Leadership

A wide variety of assignments and tasks are covered by educational leadership at any level, related to, for example, organisation, jurisprudence/law, facilities, technology, communication and economy. One of these areas of leadership is creating favourable conditions for professional learning, growth and the development of all staff (academic and professional), either directly or indirectly, as well as initiating and participating in processes of organisational and cultural change. To pedagogically and intentionally support the learning of others by direct or indirect measures is thus included in the leadership of any organisation. In this context, it is therefore important to point out the distinction between educational leadership and pedagogical leadership. With *educational* leadership, we refer to the leadership and governance of all the aspects of institutionalised education in a broad sense—legal, organisational, ethical, economic, architectural, relational, psychological, curricular, political, developmental, etc. The understanding and study of educational leadership thus concern and rely on many different fields of knowledge, reflecting the multitude of tasks and perspectives involved in leading institutionalised education.

We use the term *pedagogical* leadership to refer to deliberately influencing the Other's understanding of oneself, the world and one's relation to the world and to others. Pedagogical leadership aims to facilitate learning by transforming the perceptions, values, knowledge, understanding or actions of an Other. In this context, the Other can be understood both as a 'generalised Other' and as an individual, organisation or nation. At all activity levels, from the personal, organisational, institutional and national through the transnational, action, interaction and interpretation are carried out by and between individuals or groups of individuals. Parts of this intentional influencing may be aimed at influencing how others perceive the world or act in the world, that is, aimed at facilitating the learning processes of the others involved. It is this that we refer to as the pedagogical dimension of the interaction on and across all levels of leadership. If leading an educational organisation is divided into management (leadership of things), leadership (of people) and leading development, the pedagogical elements are especially prominent in leading people and leading development. Pedagogical leadership is, however, not irrelevant for management either, as management, for example, through deciding on an organisation's frames and procedures, sets the stage for certain kinds of learning

while possibly hindering other kinds. The leadership literature is insufficient on the topic of supporting professional learning, despite it being a decidedly central dimension of leading any expert organisation. The literature frequently states that leadership is about 'influencing' (Alvesson, 2019) or 'influencing learning', but it remains surprisingly vague what these statements mean conceptually or theoretically. Thus, there is a disturbing gap in the international literature between the key role of pedagogical activities and the core notions of educational leadership theories and models explaining pedagogical influence (Alvesson, 2019; Niesche & Gowlett, 2019; Wang, 2018).

Pedagogical leadership refers to intentional direct or mediated influence on other individuals' self-directed activities, aiming to reach beyond a present state through a learning process. Pedagogical leadership can therefore occur in any societal field or organisation where human resources are crucial for the organisation's activity. The pedagogical aspect is especially dominant in the leadership of development work of various kinds. Development, be it individual professional development or development on an organisational level, involves individuals and groups of individuals learning to think about some aspect of the world, themselves or their relationship to the world in new ways (e.g. the organisation and its mission and their individual role in the organisation). Thus, leading development work includes leading learning processes, that is, pedagogical leadership.

The Object Led—Study Programmes, Teaching, Studying, and Research

Although pedagogical leadership occurs in, and is relevant to, private businesses, healthcare organisations, governmental or municipal organisations, NGOs, etc., this volume does not focus on pedagogical leadership in all conceivable contexts. Rather, it focuses specifically on the pedagogical leadership of higher education or, in other words, the *pedagogical leadership of pedagogical praxis and research*. When the end objects of higher education leadership are understood to be research and research-based university teaching, studying and learning become central. As previously pointed out, higher education leadership theories seldom pay attention to curricular issues (the aims, contents and methods of study programmes), nor do they pay attention to teachers' educational professionalism or research. In the higher education leadership research field, themes such as curriculum leadership (Stark et al., 2002) and instructional leadership (Shaked, 2020) are rare, although they are very common in school leadership research (Hallinger, 2005). Curriculum leadership can be defined as 'a facilitating process in which the leader works with others to find common purpose' (Wiles, 2009, p. 21). In addition, curriculum leadership concerns the university's autonomy to formulate the structure, aims and contents of teaching and research. Freedom to teach, learn and research are inseparable dimensions of academic freedom with long historical roots (Robertson, 1969). Simultaneously, curricular contents are central for discussing higher education institutions' role in contemporary society, and external expectations directed towards higher education often concern curricular contents.

Since designing the structures and curricular contents of study programmes is typically in the hands of the university, the task of leading the collaborative process that develops study programmes is an issue at all leadership levels. These processes and their outcomes are heavily influenced by the underlying understanding of what teaching, studying and learning are and how they are interrelated. A pedagogical theory related to the respective disciplinary field can provide the necessary perspective and concepts for grasping what is being led. To lead and develop a university as a haven for academic learning also includes paying attention to teachers' professional development. The lack of knowledge of teaching and learning that emerges from empirical studies of instructional leaders' practices also appears to indicate a lack of pedagogical interaction theory.

As illustrated above, the higher education leadership research field is associated with several challenges that all revolve around the lack of a theoretically and conceptually developed position on education and pedagogy, from the relational teacher–student level to the macro question of the relation between education and other areas of society. In all cases, the questions, in one form or another, revolve around how we can understand what education and educational interaction are at various levels of leadership, from the macro societal level down to teacher–student interaction. Our point of departure is that pedagogical theory could be well suited to overcoming the challenges described above. In the following sections, we first outline the main characteristics of NAT. Following this, we return to the three challenges and discuss how NAT would allow us to deal with the presented challenges fruitfully.

An Outline of NAT

As argued above, understanding the complexity of educational leadership cannot be achieved from any single disciplinary perspective. Although several perspectives are important, it is not indifferent which perspective is in the foreground and which perspectives are used complementarily. We argue that when attempting to understand the leadership of, and in, *education,* having an educational theory as the point of departure becomes paramount. It becomes even more important when attention is focused on the pedagogical interaction in educational leadership, the *pedagogical leading of pedagogical praxis*. As argued above, the development of, and in, higher education is in itself a partially pedagogical task as it relies on the professional development of higher education staff. Additionally, the development of higher education focuses on the key question of the role of higher education in contemporary and future societies. Pedagogical theory thus becomes important for elaborating on the questions of *what, where* and *how* to develop. We propose NAT and *Bildung* (Benner, 2015, 2023; Uljens, 2023a; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017) as foundational points of departure. NAT includes an interpretation of the modern *Bildung* tradition, as developed by Rousseau, Fichte and Herbart (e.g. Benner, 2015, 2023; English, 2013; Horlacher, 2004; Uljens, 2002), but it must be related to the concept of education to

be pedagogically meaningful (Siljander et al., 2012). In this section, we lay out the fundamentals of NAT, and, in the next section, we discuss how this theoretical point of departure can overcome some of the challenges pointed out above.

We begin our portrayal of NAT by looking at how education is related to society. It is widely accepted that the role of education is to prepare students for participation in, and the future transformation of, different fields of societal practice. The first step in NAT is to identify societal practices and how they are related. While pointing out that the list is not meant to be comprehensive, Benner (2023) identifies six fields of societal practice that are defined as having historical necessity, meaning that humans have been confronted with them in one form or another throughout history. These six fields, pedagogy, politics, ethics, religion, art, and work, are defined as non-hierarchical. It is, however, justified, and even necessary, to take a critical position on the claim of the historical necessity of these fields of practice and on the categorisation of the fields themselves. Different divisions regarding which fields of societal practice are legitimate have been made (e.g. Derbolav, 1987; Fink, 1995; Gruber, 1979), and various differentiations may be legitimate in different parts of the world in different historical periods. Thus, the historical necessity of the described fields is questionable. What is important, however, is not the exact nature of the division of fields but the general point that society consists of different fields of practice and that, in a liberal democracy, these fields are in a non-hierarchical relation to each other. Thus, all fields exert influence on each other without being either totally subordinate or superordinate to each other. We can thus divide society into fields other than those identified by Benner without losing the main point made. The role of public education is to prepare the new generation for participation in, and the transformation of, different societal fields, irrespective of how we choose to divide such fields. Education thus prepares students for participation in, and the transformation of, for example, politics, economy, culture and the labour market at the same time as it is itself influenced by political decision-making, economic conjunctures, cultural movements and labour market needs. It is also worth considering that different levels in the educational system have different focuses or emphases regarding the fields of societal practice for which they principally educate students. Whereas the labour market is the particular focus of vocational education, the field of scientific research has special relevance for universities.

On these basic assumptions regarding the division of society into non-hierarchical fields of practice, Benner constructs a theory describing the pedagogical task of introducing and educating new generations to participate in, and further transform, these societal practice fields. This theory is illustrated in Fig. 1.1.

NAT consists of the regulative and constitutive principles shown in Fig. 1.1. The regulative principles to the right focus on the relations between education and other fields of society, while the constitutive principles to the left focus on pedagogical interaction. The regulative principles thus focus on explaining institutionalised education in its context, whereas the two constitutive principles focus on explaining intersubjective relational pedagogical interaction, irrespective of the context in which it occurs. The constitutive principles are thus principles that come into play

	Constitutive basic concepts of the individual aspect	Regulative basic concepts of the social aspect
A *Theories of education* (*Erziehung*)	(1) Summoning to self-activity	(3) Pedagogical transformation of societal influences and requirements
B *Theories of Bildung*	(2) Bildsamkeit (*Bildsamkeit*) as attunement (Bestimmtsein) of humans to receptive and spontaneous corporeity, freedom, historicity and linguisticality	(4) Non-hierarchical order of cultural and societal practices
	C *Theories of educational institutions and their reform*	

Fig. 1.1 Two constitutive and two regulative principles organising four basic concepts related to the theory of education and the theory of *Bildung* (Benner, 2023)

whenever and wherever pedagogical interactions take place, whereas the regulative principles as such are applicable only to institutionalised education.

The regulative principle in the right-hand bottom corner focuses on how we define the relation between education and other societal practices in a liberal democracy. This principle relates to the first challenge described above and argues that modern democratic societies are characterised by a non-hierarchical relation between societal practices. Under such conditions, different societal practices exert influence on each other while simultaneously being influenced by one another. For example, laws are decided on by politics, but, at the same time, political practice itself is regulated by law. The needs of the healthcare sector place demands on and influence, for example, a state or municipal economy, while the economy simultaneously sets limits on what healthcare can do. Education is continuously influenced by many societal practices while simultaneously preparing students for participation in and the transformation of all such practices. The political system in different national contexts influences how higher education is organised in various ways, but simultaneously this political system is dependent on how education prepares new generations for participation in the system in question. Thus, education has to accept that it is influenced and governed by politics. However, in a democratic society, education cannot renounce its right and obligation to problematise and question this political influence. In other words, the point of departure for NAT is that no societal practice in a democratic society is either completely superordinate or completely

subordinate to another. Instead, such practices coexist in a constantly ongoing deliberational relation in which relations are re-negotiated, challenged and transformed. Education thus has to recognise all the legitimate interests placed on it but cannot uncritically affirm any of them. Affirming, for example, an educational policy would entail not taking a problematising or critical stance towards that policy by making it an object for reflection but simply accepting the policy and setting about implementing it. The basic argument for NAT is that in a liberal democracy, where the task of education is to educate self-determinate subjects capable of engaging in various fields of practice and leading themselves and society towards an unknown future, an affirmative approach to education is deemed inadequate.

Following a modern view of the non-teleological development of society, universities educate for a future that is not known or knowable. As universities strive to prepare their members—whether researchers, teachers or students—to address challenges of which we are as yet unaware, they must promote an education that guides learners from existing answers towards the questions to which this knowledge serves as a response. It is through such a process that *Bildung* at universities includes learning beyond specific content to reach a principled knowledge or theoretical understanding. To reach a capacity for self-determination, students cannot uncritically be educated to affirm the existing societal order, interests or ideologies. However, it is not sufficient to educate them to affirm predefined visions of a *new* order, as in various forms of critical pedagogy. Neither approach develops students' capacity to make judgements by themselves regarding a desirable future direction, that is, to educate them to '. . . participate in discourses on what is to be preserved and what is to be changed' (Benner, 2023). The non-affirmative position thus advocates for neither the preservation of the existing order for its own sake nor the transformation towards a new order. Instead, as a theory, it points out the importance of raising, and learning to deal with, the question of where to go next.

In this respect, NAT is normative, as it stresses the importance of developing this capacity for the continuity of a democratic society. Non-affirmativity, however, should not be interpreted as relativistic or as the absence of influence. It is, rather, a question of the extent to which the Other is allowed and able to use and develop their self-determination and capacity for discerning thought and decision-making, given the surrounding prerequisites. Simply put, the aim of non-affirmative education is not primarily to instil correct answers or positive knowledge into learners. Instead, it aims to treat existing knowledge as a means to develop the capacity for independent thinking and to encourage thinking beyond established norms.

This position originally developed in the first half of the nineteenth century, moving from a pre-modern to a modern world, where the future came to be considered radically open. If the future is open, what the future brings with it depends on how we ourselves choose to act. Modern education comes with a view of the human being as somebody making history. When the position is critical to external interests, it is so for pedagogical reasons. This position accepts the right of democratic societies to establish policies, creating laws and regulations directing subjects. The question is, however, how should we deal with all this in a pedagogical descent way? If we stay true to ideals like the individuals' right to participate in

decision-making and to contribute in innovative ways to new knowledge and renewing culture, then all this requires a pedagogy of its own. For pedagogical reasons, and ultimately for societal reasons, affirmative pedagogy is not defendable. This does not mean that this position is value neutral or nihilistic, not confessing to any values. On the contrary, the position recognises democratic values and the human's right to self-directed action as fundamental. However, precisely because political democracy is acknowledged by the position, teaching about democracy cannot affirm a certain conception of democracy. The learners, younger and older, must be involved in pedagogical discussions of defendable forms of governance and democracy.

In order to be pedagogically involved in a self-transcending sense, learners' subjective experiences cannot be affirmed either. These experiences need to be recognised, though, and must be related to decently. If the learner's lifeworld were affirmed, it would not be summoned or challenged. In pedagogical settings, contrasting individual psychological knowledge structures with the logical structure of epistemic content may naturally be very challenging for the learner. The way the world is explained by established knowledge may be difficult for the learner to understand or perceive. The crucial point, however, is that the utilisation of existing knowledge in pedagogical settings does not entail affirming learners' preconceived ideas of the world but rather pushing them beyond existing ways of explaining the world. In other words, this is one way to understand the non-affirmativity of pedagogical influencing.

From the above, we should not conclude that when having used existing positive knowledge to challenge the learner, learning this content would be the ultimate idea of non-affirmative teaching. The pedagogical idea here is to help learners understand that there are other, and different, ways of perceiving the world, some of which may be deemed better by the learners themselves. This type of pedagogical action includes not only the learning of new content. It also includes developing the learners' critical thinking by comparing different ways of explaining the world. This comparative capability can be developed only in relation to some content. General capabilities are always developed as situated and content-related.

Earlier, we have pointed out that non-affirmativity has to do with not affirming external ideas, expectations and interests by getting the learner to think along these lines, and we have discussed that non-affirmative pedagogy does not affirm the learner's interests and experiences. A third aspect of non-affirmative pedagogy is that, for pedagogical reasons, it does not affirm existing knowledge either. This is especially true in higher education. A non-affirmative approach to curricular content means critically questioning its capacity to explain the world and our experiences of it. What are the premises of this knowledge? What are its implications? In who's interest, is knowledge developed? These are all questions that naturally have high significance in all research. However, in higher education curriculum work, students are led into the disciplinary tradition not only to learn these previous ways of thinking but also to learn that academic knowledge, scientific theories and conceptual models have changed over time. For these reasons, academic teaching in particular cannot pedagogically affirm the contents. In fact, higher education

explicitly nurtures the ability to transcend not only one's personal way of under-standing the world but also to surpass the collective level of established knowledge.

Benner (2023) points out that although the principle of the non-hierarchical relation of societal practices is not a pedagogical principle in itself, it is a necessary point of departure for a general theory of education, as it targets the question of what education 'is' in relation to the rest of society. Thus, it regulates educational activities, as it would not be meaningful to outline human education without an idea of the world and the future. A non-teleological view of the future and history is central to the *Bildung* theoretical position, meaning that the future is radically open and depends on what we and future generations make of it. We do not intend this principle to be read in a normative or dogmatic way, stating that relations *should* be non-hierarchical. Rather, we see the value of the first regulative principle as provid-ing an analytical lens and directing our attention to the ongoing renegotiation of the purpose of higher education and, on the one hand, the degrees of affirmativity embedded in the expectations placed on higher education and, on the other hand, the degrees of affirmativity in higher education's responses to these expectations.

The second regulative principle (right-hand top corner) relates to the second challenge of coherently handling how administration, financing, policy and other forms of leadership and governance, occurring on levels ranging from the suprana-tional down to the individual teacher, contribute to transforming societal interests into pedagogical work. The principle argues that the various aims set for education by various societal actors are transformed into educational practice (the teacher–student relation) through several levels of leadership. At each level, the goals are interpreted, transformed and renegotiated to a greater or lesser extent. This principle points towards the process of reinterpretation and asks to what extent autonomous non-affirmative action exists to determine the meaning and value of the aims and contents of educational influences on and between levels of educational leadership. The value of the second principle lies in directing our attention to the process of the translation of societal interests and the degree to which various levels of leadership maintain a space for autonomous action when influencing each other reciprocally, top down *and* bottom up.

Both constitutive principles on the left of Fig. 1.1 relate to our third critique of the lack of a theory of pedagogical interaction in models of educational leadership. Pedagogical interaction is dependent on what is known in German as the learner's *Bildsamkeit*, the first constitutive principle (bottom left-hand corner). The notions of *Bildsamkeit* (originally developed by J. F. Herbart) and *Bildung* are interpreted differently in the literature (Benner & Brüggen, 2004; Lenzen, 1997). In the current context, *Bildsamkeit* refers not to the human *ability* to learn (i.e. to human plasticity) but to the subject's never-ending dynamic, spontaneous and self-active relation to the world, in which we relate to and can transcend our current way of understanding and being in the world (Benner, 2023). If the first regulative principle (right-hand bottom corner) describes an assumption regarding the interdependent dynamics on the societal level operating in a non-hierarchical way, *Bildsamkeit* describes a similar relational assumption regarding the dynamics on the individual level. This means that the learner's experience of the world is constantly open to transformation. The

content of the individual's experience emanates from the world and is thus not produced by the individual in a solipsistic sense. Simultaneously, the world as experienced is always dependent on the learners and their interpretations. As the learners fundamentally represent an open relation to the world, they are susceptible to influence from the surrounding world but are not determined by these influences. Similarly, the world as experienced is susceptible to influence from the learners but is certainly not determined only by the learners' activity. Metaphorically expressed, the world makes resistance. Phenomenologically, we may talk about a noetico-noematic correlation or how the act and content of consciousness co-exist (Greasley & Ashworth, 2007; Gurwitsch, 2020). It is this open relation between the learner and the world that, on the one hand, makes pedagogical influence *possible* but, on the other, *limits* the extent of possible pedagogical influence.

The second constitutive principle (top left-hand corner) defines a pedagogical intervention as a summons to self-activity. It rests on the assumption that the Other is already a self-active individual, capable of directing their attention and activities autonomously. A pedagogical intervention is an invitation or provocation to this self-active Other to direct their attention in a specific direction in order to engage in a self-transcending activity that carries the potential of resulting in intended changes through a process of learning. This means that a pedagogical intervention can be seen as an interruption in the open and dynamic relationship between the Other and the world. The summoner is unable to directly transfer ideas, knowledge, values and competencies to the Other and does not possess coercive power over the Other's way of perceiving themselves and the world due to constitutive subjective freedom. Pedagogical leadership, conceptualised as a pedagogical summons, thus entails directing an Other's self-activity with the aim of transcending their current state through a process of self-directed transformation. All actors are both potential objects and initiators of pedagogical summoning, meaning that pedagogical leadership is not dependent on any formal leader position.

Learning emanates from the learner's own activities, which, in turn, are influenced by pedagogical leadership summons. Learning is thus not a direct linear consequence of the intentions or actions of the summoner; rather, it is something that *may* occur as a consequence of the learner's own actions. Learning thus results from the interplay between the context, the summons, the learner and the learner's interpretations. Both summoning and *Bildsamkeit as learner's self-activity* thus come across as relational concepts: summoning assumes *Bildsamkeit*, which always points to experiencing influences. How the subject develops is therefore dependent on, but not determined by, pedagogical intervention.

All actors in higher education leadership stand in an open relation to the world, meaning that they are in constant transformation as opposed to being stable entities. A pedagogical intervention, defined as the summoning of self-activity through pedagogical leadership or teaching, is thus an act of directing the Other's attention and thereby self-activity in a certain direction, with the ambition of inducing activities that may result in learning. In the context of teaching, the process can be described as a teaching–studying–learning process (Uljens, 1997). Teaching and studying are concepts referring to human intentional activity, while learning is not

something we do, but something that may happen to us as a result of studying. Teaching therefore only facilitates studying activity, as the teacher and student intersubjectively construct a situational shared experience and understanding within which the teacher may direct the student's attention to new forms of self-activity (Uljens & Kullenberg, 2021). In other words, it is the activity of intentional *studying* that may lead to learning, whereas teaching is limited to aiming at an influence on the study activity. Teaching is by no means necessary for learning; humans learn continuously and unintentionally. We are also highly capable of engaging in studying activities on our own initiative without being summoned by teaching. When transferred to a leadership context, the relations between teaching, studying and learning put the roles of the leader and the co-worker into perspective. When the aim of leadership is to influence co-workers' perceptions, understandings, knowledge or competencies, thereby possibly influencing future actions and development, the leader's possibilities of exerting direct influence on co-workers and achieving some predefined results are non-existent. A leader simply cannot directly influence a co-worker's perceptions, values, etc., or how they may act. The leader's role encompasses summoning, inviting and creating favourable conditions. However, it is the co-worker's engagement in these activities, when summoned, that ultimately brings about a transformation in how the co-worker perceives the world and themselves. This line of reasoning puts pedagogical interaction at the centre of change- and development-oriented leadership, where the focus is on influencing how co-workers and entire organisations understand and think about themselves, the world and their place in the world.

We suggest that the non-affirmative approach makes use of the concept of recognition, originally developed by Fichte and Hegel (Williams, 1992) and later elaborated on by, for example, Charles Taylor (1989) and Axel Honneth (1995). While we see the concept of recognition primarily as an analytical category, we do not use it to denote specific pedagogical acts. Rather, recognition is seen as a prerequisite for pedagogical interaction. Recognition points to the fact that when somebody recognises someone or something, they are always recognised *as* something or *as* someone. Here, we differ between the four aspects of recognition. First, the notion points to the importance of each recognising the other as an *anthropologically indetermined subject*. This is about recognising an *a priori potentiality* featuring humans. Second, in addition to recognising the individual as indetermined, practical pedagogy needs to pay due respect to the experientially established life realities of the other. Through recognition of the Other, the other's orientation and *life reality or lifeworld* becomes a reference point for pedagogical summoning, but recognition is still not equated with the pedagogical act. In most social interactions, paying due respect to each other is crucial. Third, in educational settings, recognition also refers to acknowledging the individual's *a posteriori or experiential possibility* to develop into a subject able to act out of free will. In other words, there lies a difference between recognising human beings as fundamentally indetermined beings, their a priori freedom and their a posteriori possibility. Otherwise, without the first, pedagogical influence would not be possible; without the second, pedagogical influencing would be meaningless. Differently expressed, in this approach, the

individual is recognised, first, as an *already* self-active subject. To already be self-active as a human being does not necessarily mean to act out of reflected will and insight but can mean to act following conventions and tradition. When humans act conventionally, it is reasonable to say that they are self-active, but conventional activity is not what is meant by *free* self-activity. This human being, originally self-active, may be summoned to 'self-transcending self-activity'. This summoning aims at supporting the individual to become a subject capable of acting out of reflected will or acting as 'free self-activity'. This argumentation draws ultimately on Fichte's critique of Kant's theory of how human beings become aware of themselves as free beings. We will return to this later on in this chapter.

The fourth and final meaning of recognition refers to the individual being summoned, the learner, who may or may not recognise the summoner and the summons directed at them. On the learner's part, recognising pedagogical summons is crucial. Recognising the summons means that the individual summoned accepts the summoning act directed at them as legitimate. A summoning act, irrespective of it, is in the form of an invitation of a provocation; it is still an act that takes the liberty to intervene in the Other's relation to themselves, other individuals or the world. Consequently, the moral aspect of this summoning act may not be overlooked. For this reason, summoning needs to be tactful. The concept of recognition helps us direct our attention towards questions such as *what universities are recognised as* or what an individual academic or student is recognised as.

The Potential of NAT for Higher Education Leadership

Having outlined the foundations of NAT, we proceed by spelling out how NAT could be used to productively overcome the three challenges pointed out at the beginning of this chapter.

What Is the Role of Higher Education in a Liberal Democracy?

The fundamental freedom in research, teaching and studying that characterises universities in the Western tradition, often referred to as the Humboldtian model of higher education, requires that the creation of new knowledge through research, and the teaching of this knowledge must not be externally determined by religious, political or economic powers and authority. This view relates education constitutively to the societal role of an institution. Even though this ideal of independent university research and teaching is proclaimed and accepted on a rhetorical level, for example, by the Bologna Declaration of 1988—the 'Magna Carta of European universities'—the 'market state' has become a dominant model since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, resulting in a development bringing together liberal and vocational forms of higher education (Anderson, 2006).

The discourse around the knowledge-based society requires research and teaching to be economically relevant, thus influencing the governance, leadership, and financing of higher education. Currently, a multitude of societal voices want to have a say in defining the goals and mission of universities. Being able to deal with the question of universities' relation to other societal practices—that is, what a university is and what it is for in contemporary society—thus becomes a necessary point of departure for higher education leadership theory.

An analytical–descriptive lens is necessary to clarify how NAT deals with education's relation to other societal practices. The question in focus is to what extent education is subordinate *and* superordinate to other societal practices. Universities can seldom, if ever, stand above the interests of other societal actors and act independently in absolute autonomy. It is, however, equally rare that universities are completely determined by or subordinate to religious, economic or political interests. Different societal practices, of which higher education is one, must therefore *recognise* the interests of each other but are seldom forced to comprehensively *affirm* them. Educational institutions and educational actors thus typically have relative autonomy, as they are not operating totally without either boundaries or outside influence, nor are they in total subordination to these influences (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). NAT provides a non-hierarchical and non-linear view, offering a theoretical construct for empirical analysis of the extent to which societal actors with a superior position in relation to other societal practices recognise the relative autonomy of these action levels. If universities are strictly governed by external interests, or if there is a strict top-down hierarchy within them, leadership forces actors to affirm external or internal interests. The consequence of universities not only recognising but also affirming external interests is that education institutions subordinate themselves in relation to these and become instrumental. In the context of this volume, the non-affirmative concept is interesting as an analytical concept. If applied to the pedagogical interaction that takes place within educational leadership, it directs our attention to the question of the extent to which different acts of leadership, understood as pedagogical summons, expect or require an affirmative response. For example, national educational policies can be more or less affirmative; that is, they allow more or less space for action and decision-making at lower levels of educational leadership. Thus, affirmative policies come with an expectation that they will be implemented immediately, while more non-affirmative policies leave room for action and decision-making on the meso and micro levels. Similarly, leadership initiatives within an organisation can either respect and value the decision-making ability of lower levels (non-affirmative) or adopt a more top-down affirmative approach requiring lower levels to adhere to, for example, centrally defined visions or strategies. As our introduction implies, many of the developments in higher education in recent decades point towards an increase in affirmative management and leadership practices, such as tighter external accountability and policy steering, as well as more managerial internal leadership practices.

The argumentation above applies to empirical studies regarding how and to what extent various interests and actors require affirmative action from others. NAT itself takes a critical position in this question, arguing in favour of recognising the interests

that are external or superior to each operational level but reminding us of the importance of maintaining a capacity and space for autonomous action, recommending actors not to uncritically affirm external interests. Supporting non-affirmative educational leadership and teaching is motivated by the societal tasks of universities described previously. Affirmative leadership and pedagogy may fall short in achieving universities' aim of promoting the development of critical, reflective and self-determining citizens capable of contributing to existing practices and developing new ones. The aim of education in general, and higher education in particular, is to educate generations capable of guiding themselves and society towards an unknown future, with the capacity to solve previously unencountered problems and challenges. The aim for education should thus be set far in the future and have a long 'best-before date'. Educational policy and practice solely focused on affirming *present-day* social orders, societal challenges and external interests are thus obviously not ideal for reaching this aim. The same applies to policies and practices that affirm normatively closed perceptions of social transformation. Both fall short since they are preoccupied with providing the correct answers to predefined questions, thus affirming predefined positions and claims to the validity of knowledge. Given that the future is radically open, a focus on dealing with the *questions* that current knowledge is thought to answer, keeping in mind that future answers might differ from contemporary ones, holds greater potential to develop a capacity for self-determined moral action. This approach would entail making present-day claims for the validity of both knowledge and the questions that knowledge is thought to answer objects for critical scrutiny—that is, recognising them without affirming. Education aimed at the future cannot uncritically affirm present-day expectations.

As described initially, the questions of what higher education is and what it is for are at the forefront of the debate, and many societal actors would like a say in this matter. It is somewhat paradoxical that while higher education is currently called upon to educate innovative, 'out-of-the-box' thinkers, this call is often accompanied by leadership and governance practices that are, metaphorically speaking, forcing higher education *into* a box by requiring it to affirm, for example, expectations of immediate utility or targeted funding based on local or national present-day needs. NAT can provide a language with which to approach this complicated relationship. Striking a balance between providing education and research with relevance for present-day society and challenges and simultaneously having the autonomy to push the boundaries of research into the unknown by engaging in research with no immediate utility or value that, however, *might* prove fruitful in the future is a key question for higher education leadership. An excessive focus on short-term performance or economic or political utility can prove detrimental to higher education's capacity to provide answers to the key questions of the future, which, by definition, are still unknown to us. We have to accept a certain amount of '(re)searching in the dark', during which we *might* end up finding something. A telling present-day example of this is the story of Katalin Karikó's work on mRNA, which, after decades of persistent struggle and having funding applications turned down, ended up 'saving the world' from Covid-19. Luckily for humanity, a focus on the immediate

applicability of research results did not put an early end to Karikó's decades-long research process. This kind of 'inefficient' research accepts that the future is unknown and open and will present us with new and unknown questions, challenges and solutions. However, it does not fit into the paradigm of efficiency and output focus. Simultaneously, an 'ivory tower' approach to research ignoring present-day questions of societal relevance altogether is not beneficial for research, humanity or the future either. It is therefore essential to strike a balance between recognising the current expectations placed on higher education, maintaining an autonomy to not uncritically affirm all such expectations and a capacity to pursue lines of enquiry in spite of the scepticism of peers, politics and funders.

The question of striking a balance between focusing on present-day society and simultaneously heading towards an unknown future is as important for teaching in higher education as it is for research. NAT maintains that many of the previous answers advanced to explain the relationship between society and education have been problematic. On the one hand, socialisation-focused approaches conclude that the role of education is to prepare new generations for life in existing society, that is, to reproduce society in a normative way. We can call this a reproduction-oriented approach. Other approaches have concluded that present-day society is unjust or flawed in different ways and that the role of education is to transform it towards a better future. These transformation-oriented approaches have, however, generally already defined what the problems are and what this ideal future looks like and are thus equally normative. Transformation-oriented approaches are often critical–emancipatory in nature but can equally take forms such as entrepreneurship education or normatively closed conceptions of education for sustainability or social justice. What they all have in common is that future ideals are already defined, and the role of education is merely to achieve them. In this respect, NAT proposes a third alternative, maintaining that the role of education is to lead the new generation to grasp and understand present-day society, but in a constructively critical manner, enabling it to develop new answers to existing questions or identify entirely new questions in the future. This position builds on a non-affirmative approach, recognising present-day society in all its complexity and with its multitude of perspectives while also not uncritically affirming any particular position or perspective. Education is thus not a matter of delivering the right answers to predefined questions; rather, it is a matter of learning to live with the constant 'question' of the open future. The question of the relationship between society and education is especially relevant for higher education, as the role of both higher education teaching and higher education research is to develop a capacity to solve the major, but still unknown, challenges that the future holds. It would be paradoxical to try to achieve this through governance practices that, to an excessive extent, force higher education to focus on and affirm present-day short-sighted needs.

The position offered by NAT thus provides an analytical construct for relating higher education to other societal practices beyond the functionalist and transformation-oriented positions. It offers an analytical perspective that emphasises that higher education institutions are expected to recognise the legitimate aspirations and interests of different stakeholders but points out that these aspirations cannot be affirmed without

serious consideration. At different levels of leadership, recognition without affirmation creates a space for joint, collaborative reflection and the repositioning of activities undertaken by individuals and organisations. Non-affirmative analytics questions to what extent educational leadership recognises and considers the interests of various societal fields and actors, such as politics, the labour market and science, without affirming these. Thus, it aims to strike a balance that avoids instrumentalisation, ensuring the preservation of higher education's relative autonomy in both research and teaching. Safeguarding educational institutions' autonomy in liberal economies and political democracies is crucial, as education has an emancipatory task aiming at developing students' professional, personal and societal self-determination. This educational task entails supporting students in developing their ability for critical and analytical reflection by problematising existing theoretical answers to various dilemmas. Existing knowledge thus offers itself as a necessary medium through which learners can develop their reflective abilities.

How Can We Handle the Many Layers of Pedagogical Leadership Coherently?

The second challenge with research in educational leadership pointed out is related to its capacity to deal with educational leadership as a multilevel phenomenon in a coherent way. Many contemporary approaches appear either to run the risk of providing universal languages capable of covering several levels of any societal practice, thereby making the specific nature of education invisible, or to generate a particular vocabulary limited to certain levels or aspects in isolation, thereby missing the big picture. We have argued for the need for a third position capable of providing a vocabulary that (a) is relevant for the leadership of educational institutions and (b) addresses the pedagogical character of leadership and governance initiatives across various levels of higher education leadership. We illustrate this dialogue in Fig. 1.2.

Figure 1.2 elaborates on the second regulative principle of NAT and attempts to visualise the systemic structure of the multilevel leadership of universities. It is in the dynamics of this structure that the aims and expectations directed at universities are transformed into pedagogical practice and research. The formal organisational hierarchy of higher education leadership, as illustrated in Fig. 1.2, operates in the symbiotic tension between the scientific community to the left and various external stakeholders to the right; at the same time, however, universities contribute to the self-construction of these stakeholders. Higher education leadership can be seen as an organisational hierarchy and a rhizomatic network simultaneously (Välimaa et al., 2016). Individual actors are located at specific organisational levels arranged in a hierarchy while simultaneously interacting with actors at other levels in dynamic and changing networks. It is thus important to differentiate between the hierarchical organisational structure on the one hand and the dynamic and open processes of
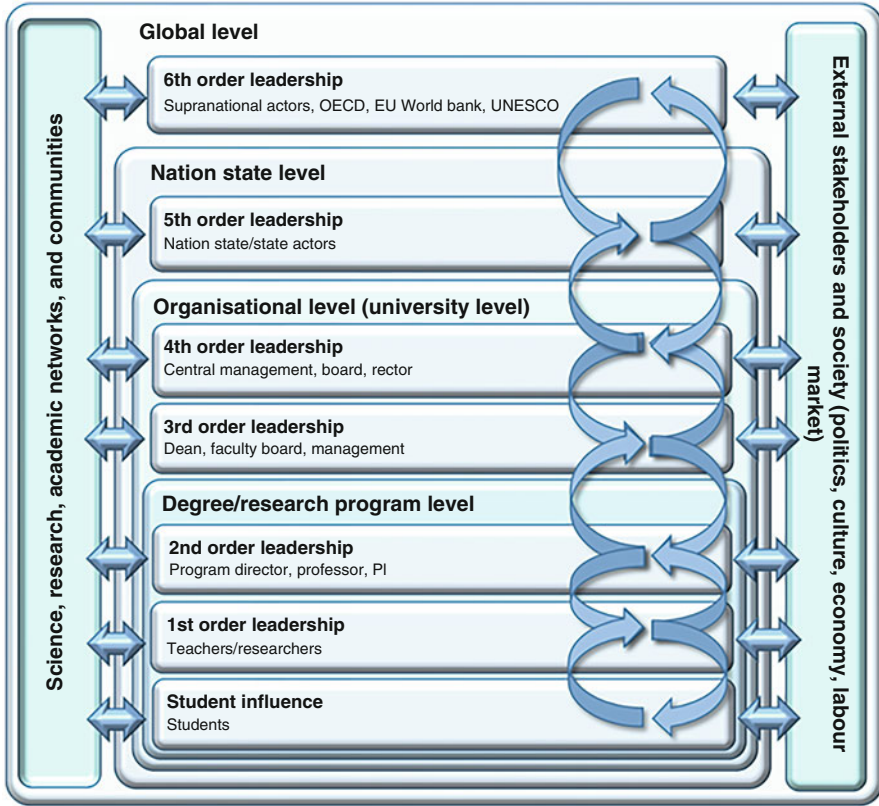
Fig. 1.2 Higher education curriculum leadership as a multilevel and multi-actor phenomenon (Elo & Uljens, 2023)

interaction that occur within the networks within this structure on the other. Any actor can participate in the leadership process that emerges in these networks. The circular arrows represent the reciprocal influences between actors on different organisational levels. NAT argues that understanding the pedagogical dimensions of higher education leadership cannot be limited to focusing on either individuals in isolation or on the activities of any particular group in an entitising sense, thereby bringing a system perspective to the forefront. To grasp higher education leadership, it is necessary to see it as part of a larger dynamic process of creating direction collaboratively, spanning several leadership levels and including a multitude of actors. For example, when a study focuses on pedagogical leadership between two individuals or within a group, this interaction cannot be meaningfully understood in isolation from the pre-existing larger context, while this larger context is simultaneously discursively co-constructed by micro-processes (Crevani et al., 2010).

Within a multilevel system, different kinds of mechanisms influence the practices of universities simultaneously. Economic aspects related to both public and private

funding of universities frame university teaching and research, and the principles for the external and internal allocation of funds and the expectations of productivity that follow are negotiated within and between the different levels of leadership. The ways in which these negotiations can materialise include internal models for allocating funds. Similarly, educational policies on or societal expectations of curricular contents are recognised, interpreted and acted upon within the networks spread out over the organisational levels. Strategic leadership within the university, concerning topics such as staffing policies, campus development, educational offerings and research profiling, occurs in dialogue across levels. Educational leadership thus covers a wide range of tasks, including organisation, law, economy, communication and distribution of work. Leading institutionalised education consequently requires knowledge from many scientific disciplines.

One of the dimensions of leadership is to create conditions for the learning of others. This happens both directly and indirectly, and educational theory provides us with a language capable of conceptualising this pedagogical dimension. From the perspective of pedagogical leadership, a formal leader or actor, or, more broadly, a level of leadership, has to recognise summons from many different levels, actors and directions. These initiatives and influences may point in different directions, be at least partly contradictory, and be driven by different interests. It is not possible to affirm all of them. Instead, the actor has to make a judgement of a feasible and appropriate course of action given the historical and cultural context at hand. Different organisational levels of educational leadership are thus not entirely sub- or superordinate to each other but maintain a certain capacity and space for autonomous action, as they reciprocally influence each other in complex, rhizomatic webs of summons. In the case of the total affirmation of external influences, leadership is reduced to the instrumental implementation of interests external to the pedagogical situation.

Leadership, in general, often includes mediation between levels or actors, as do the pedagogical dimensions of leadership. The recognition of the life realities, values and aims of the other is the starting point for summoning the other to self-activity, challenging the Other to transcend the current state by not affirming these realities, values or aims. Complete affirmation of the Other would entail uncritically accepting all aspects of the latter's understanding of the world and themselves and rendering pedagogical influence impossible. Pedagogical leadership comes across as a process of interpretative mediation involving the recognition of external influences without affirming them, as well as recognising but not affirming the Other. In a pedagogical leadership process, actors control certain degrees of freedom to deliberately engage others when co-constructing a mediational space whereby Others are invited to self-transcending activity. As an analytical concept, affirmation is a continuum of different degrees and forms of affirmation rather than a binary question of yes or no. Non-affirmative summoning provides a tool to analyse the ways in and extent to which pedagogical actors, leaders or institutions affirm either vertical or horizontal interests in their collaboratively mediating leadership activity in a networked multilevel system. Additionally, it provides a tool for analysing the extent to

which pedagogical summons are affirmative in character—that is, the extent to which they require an affirmative response.

We want to stress that identifying different organisational levels of higher education leadership does not mean that such levels are in a strict hierarchical relation to one another or always appear, as in Fig. 1.2. On the contrary, NAT points out that different levels of leadership are neither totally sub- nor superordinate to each other but exist in reciprocally influencing relations. Each level contributes to higher education leadership in particular ways and can only be understood in relation to the other levels. Furthermore, as higher education leadership can be understood as an organisational hierarchy and a rhizomatic network simultaneously (Kandiko & Blackmore, 2012; Välimaa et al., 2016), various actors are situated in a hierarchical organisational structure but act in dynamic networks where horizontal or vertical relations between them are reciprocal, sometimes temporary and not easily predictable. Viewing leadership from an individual actor's perspective would reveal a network of summons and recognition with multiple actors on other levels and elements in the framework, with the actor having the agency to interpret, shape and alter this network. While Fig. 1.2 serves as a valuable tool for rendering various levels and elements visible, it also carries the potential drawback of oversimplifying the complexity inherent in the phenomenon.

Another reservation regarding Fig. 1.2 is that it does not capture the structural complexity of higher education institutions or their leadership. Within the university, the division into organisational layers such as faculty, department, degree programmes, etc., can vary, and the different layers of management within a unit—for example, a faculty—can vary largely. Different variations of university–business partnerships, centres of excellence, cross-disciplinary centres and inter-university centres are common and increase complexity (Maassen, 2017). On a national level, different systems can have layers of leadership or nationally crucial actors not depicted in the model (e.g. Välimaa & Nokkala, 2014). For example, Nordic countries are characterised by a relatively strong nation-state, with matters such as policy formulation and financing mechanisms decided nationally. The federal government/nation-state level has less influence in the United States and Germany, while the state/*Länder* level has more. In certain national contexts, the fifth order of leadership could thus be divided into further levels. Another weakness of Fig. 1.2 is that it can be seen to emphasise the structural similarities between national higher education systems and thereby unintentionally lead us to overlook the differences in the social dynamics between such systems. The fact that national higher education systems are structurally similar does not mean that they function in the same ways (Välimaa & Nokkala, 2014). The language of NAT could be a tool to examine these differences in dynamics between higher education systems.

What Is Pedagogical Interaction?

The focus of the third challenge identified is that pedagogical influence is under-theorised in research on leadership, educational leadership and pedagogical leader-ship, although this research often claims that leadership is about influencing people or influencing learning. Educational leadership research seldom elaborates on how we can conceptualise the pedagogical relation and pedagogical influence, regardless of whether it occurs in or between levels of leadership or as a pedagogical influence in higher education teaching. The two constitutive principles of NAT provide us with a language to address pedagogical leadership influence, regardless of context.

NAT draws on philosophical anthropology as developed within the German and Nordic traditions of *Bildung,* elaborating on assumptions of what a human being is. The complex concept of *Bildung* originally emphasised that the human being is not determined by anything innate or by external conditions, thus leaving a premodern, teleological view of the subject and the world. In this tradition, the core concept of *Bildsamkeit* points out that existing in the world involves a subject–world relationship. This relationship does not solely pertain to the external object or the isolated experiential dimension within the subject. Instead, it refers to the world as actively experienced and shaped through meaning-making activity. The process operates in both directions: while the subject embraces culture in this process, coming to share it with others, the individual simultaneously develops their unique identity or personality. Thus, the processes of personalisation (developing a unique identity) and socialisation (learning to share a culture with others) are interrelated. When individuals make culture their own, they make it *their* own, interpreting and relating to it in unique ways. The *Bildung* tradition analyses human growth and learning in terms of experiential cultural contents rather than through psychological processes, such as cognitivist learning theory, but still accepts that education may develop general capabilities, such as critical thinking or ethical responsibility.

The roots of *Bildung* are found in J. G. Fichte's (1796/1992) critique of Kantian transcendental idealism. A key question in this critique is how humans develop an idea of themselves as acting based on their own, reflected will. In other words, how do we come to develop an awareness of ourselves as free? Fichte was critical about Kant's argument that a human being's awareness of themselves as free and indetermined is made possible by their *a priori* awareness of moral principles in the form of the categorical imperative as well as in terms of innate structuring categories such as time and space. This original awareness of moral principles, in addition to the individual's reflective capacity, allowed them to reflect on the morality of their actions. Fichte's argument asserts that although humans are born indetermined, their awareness of themselves as culturally free arises from being recognised and treated as such by the empirical Other. In other words, our realization of freedom unfolds through being summoned to active engagement with the world. According to Dietrich Benner, the modern paradox of education lies in treating the Other as if they *already would be* somebody or something that they *may become* as a result of their own activity in the relational pedagogical process. This relational

tradition of thought, which emphasises the importance of the empirical other, began with Fichte and was later developed by Hegel, Vygotsky, Mead, Dewey, Habermas, Honneth and Taylor. Currently, it typically manifests itself in non-entitative, processual approaches to leadership research and communication, although this is not always made visible. Following the non-affirmative position, being and becoming human reflects a relational social philosophy that is processual in nature, where being is constantly about becoming. Bildung is a life-long, never-ending process. The individual continuously establishes and reforms their relation to others, the world and themselves, and the direction or end of human activity is not determined by any immanent sources. Rather, we see the activity of 'determining direction', often considered central in leadership theory, as an inherent dimension of the process of *Bildung*, namely, to live while keeping open the question of which direction to choose. The question of direction requires permanent engagement and position-taking, assuming that the future is not predefined, but something that follows from indetermined human action.

Pedagogical activity builds upon the recognition of the Other within a cultural space that is already shared. Within this space, a self-active Other is summoned to redirect their attention by engaging in activities that may lead to their transcending their current way of understanding some aspect of the world, themselves or their relation to the world. In other words, in this shared process, pedagogical leadership initiates conditions for learning. NAT emphasises that pedagogical influence is not linear but mediated through the activities of the summoned. It is not the summons in itself that leads to learning; instead, it is the activities of the summoned that were initiated by the summons that may result in learning and a change of perspective.

NAT accepts that leadership theories are not devoid of values. The normative dimension manifests itself in NAT defending educational ideals to support the development of a mature, critically reflecting, self-determinate citizen and subject in an autonomous nation-state able to actively collaborate and contribute to the non-determined development of society in a globalised world. This educational ideal is clarified by the distinction between negative and positive liberty (Berlin, 1969, pp. 118–172). Negative liberty refers to freedom from external restraints or limitations, whereas positive liberty refers to the capacity for or possibilities of self-determination and practising one's intentions in relation to others' interests. For example, formally recognising civil rights (negative liberty) does not guarantee that an individual has the genuine capacity to execute these rights productively. For this to be possible, positive liberty is necessary: the citizen must be recognised as having the right to be offered the cultural tools to act in one's own interests as related to others' interests. Education is a central part of reaching this capacity for self-determination in practice.

The processual character of pedagogical leadership is visible in three ways. First, from a *Bildung* theoretical perspective, each subject is in a lifelong, open processual relation to the world. As the individual is constantly 'in the making', pedagogical leadership intervenes in this continuous process, providing input for change and

development without determining the outcomes. Second, the relation in pedagogical leadership itself is an open, processual relation, being both symmetrical and asymmetrical with respect to roles and experiences. The result of a pedagogical summons evolves in the interplay between the summoner, the summoned and the context and is therefore not knowable beforehand. The third perspective on the processual character of pedagogical leadership lies in the processual nature of the development of organisational culture. Directing others' self-activity in a way that results in learning is an act of 'shaping movement and courses of action', which is at the core of leadership work (Crevani, 2018, p. 89), regardless of whether this occurs on an interpersonal or organisational level. Multilevel non-affirmative pedagogical leadership, seen as a socially shared phenomenon, is therefore in line with a process ontology of leadership. This approach to pedagogical leadership in higher education portrays it as a processually evolving multilevel and multi-actor phenomenon that is not strictly tied to the traditional positions of leader and follower or academic and professional staff. Pedagogical leadership rooted in the *Bildung* tradition reminds us of what Crevani (2018) describes as a processual production of direction in various forms of relations and interactions evolving over time, as well as over organisational space. The direction of the development is not predetermined but shaped in the interplay of summons between actors.

Our argument is that being able to conceptualise pedagogical influence has three advantages. First, it enables us to conceptualise one of the core activities in higher education, namely teaching, and thus conceptualise one of the core objects of higher education leadership. We argue that academics and professional staff engaged in higher education leadership are more capable and successful if they can theoretically conceptualise the work carried out within the organisation—in this case, teaching. To lead pedagogical praxis pedagogically is a very specific type of leadership. If a university wants to educate self-determinate subjects capable of not only understanding the questions that present-day knowledge answers but also to have the capacity to develop new answers or altogether new questions in an open future, certain requirements are made of university teaching. Reaching such a capacity requires the acquisition of a deep and nuanced understanding of various phenomena. Superficial or normatively closed understandings of democracy, sustainability, economy, gender, etc., are simply not sufficient to reach a critical awareness of such multifaceted topics. Having a critical capacity is not a matter of having opinions or ideologies but a question of reflective awareness and deep knowledge. Reaching such awareness includes having one's own preconceptions questioned and put up for discussion. Education thus includes not only not affirming external ideologies or expectations but also not affirming students' preconceptions. Non-affirmative teaching is thus based on recognising that students have preconceptions but taking the liberty of questioning these in a constructive manner.

Second, the ability to conceptualise pedagogical leadership influence provides us with a language for understanding the leadership influence that occurs within and between actors at all levels in higher education. NAT thus provides us with a language to talk about pedagogical leadership influence regardless of level or context. Adopting NAT as an approach to pedagogical leadership in higher

education provides a language and framework for studying pedagogical leadership interaction as a continuous process of creating direction. NAT consequently provides a theoretical foundation to talk about pedagogical leadership influence, which has rarely been theorised in research to date. The non-affirmative concept focuses our attention on what degrees of freedom are created in pedagogical summons, irrespective of the organisational level: local, national or global.

Third, the development of organisations' operative culture is increasingly related to and in focus of leadership and management. Leadership of such developmental processes is pedagogical in nature, as it aims at influencing and developing organisational culture through the learning processes of groups of individuals. Developmental leadership thus has a pedagogical element at its core and is consequently an object for educational theory to study. We believe the above argumentation provides strong reasons to approach educational leadership, especially its pedagogical dimensions, by utilising a theory of education. We argue that a non-affirmative approach can overcome some of the challenges identified and avoid the typical dilemmas of both functional–reproductive and ideological–transformative approaches to education.

An Empirical Research Perspective on NAT

The Primacy of the Ontological Perspective

Often, educational research or research on education is divided into three main directions, representing different ideas about what kind of knowledge this research is looking for. The directions are positivism, hermeneutics and critical theory. Related to the type of knowledge, appropriate methods for reaching such knowledge are then argued for. Each is represented by a larger number of sub-categories. From the perspective of non-affirmative education theory, it is a fundamental mistake to ground the categorisation of education research in such epistemological positions. Taking the point of departure from epistemology, the nature of the object of research itself remains invisible or is somehow deduced from these positions. In contrast, the non-affirmative position maintains the primacy of *ontological* reasoning as the point of departure for empirical research. Empirical education research must start from some idea of the object studied, instead of general ideas about the nature of scientific knowledge.

Is then all reasoning about epistemology obsolete in empirical non-affirmative education research? By no means. NAT broadly positions itself between the hermeneutical human science tradition going back to Schleiermacher and Dilthey and the critical tradition ultimately drawing on the Hegelian tradition. Following the hermeneutical line of thought, NAT argues that human cultural growth is constitutively related to language. It is by language that we may transcend our unique subjective experiences of the world. Conceptual knowledge having a central role in all education is unthinkable without language. Language operates not only as a mediating tool

but also contributes to constituting the meaning of our experiences themselves (Mielityinen & Uljens, 2023). Here, hermeneutics represents a position in philosophical anthropology and a point of departure for social theory in general. In this light, hermeneutics says something essential about what it means to *be* a human being (Kögler, 2006). This position defends the idea that reaching linguistically constituted intersubjectivity—that we share a common language—is crucial for the constitution of oneself as a unique individual. The idea of education as summoning the Other to free self-activity is then largely an undertaking in the medium of language. However, as in the case of epistemology, non-affirmative education theory argues that teaching and education cannot be reduced to or explained by communication theory or language (Uljens & Kullenberg, 2021).

In addition to viewing language as a constitutive dimension of human existence without reducing education to language, hermeneutics is crucial in the non-affirmative approach because of the simple fact that pedagogical work includes interpreting learners, their actions and communication, their hopes and fears, and their life-world and identity in order to find out the best ways to support her growth. The pedagogue acts in the same manner in relation to the context. How should various kinds of external interests, recommendations, expectations and regulations be interpreted? Which are defendable ways to act pedagogically, given the situation and context? In discursive practices, educational leaders often act as mediators between followers and the context. Leadership often means having a privileged position regarding access to information, insights or the like. Interpretation here refers to decision-making as balancing interpretative acts aiming at optimising pedagogical action. When we have emphasised the multi-level character of educational leadership, this means that hermeneutic interpretation is constitutive for activities on all educational leadership levels and across these levels. To conclude, while interpretation is a crucial feature of educational leadership as summoning to free self-activity, the unique character of pedagogical acting, whether in the form of educational leadership or teaching, cannot be derived from interpretation theory or hermeneutics.

A core idea in non-affirmative education theory is to view the attainment of self-determination and autonomy as a core task of any institutional education system, from schools up to universities. Self-determination and autonomy mean different things at different levels, but from a general perspective, Western political democracies, liberal economies and plural societies require citizens able to act out of reflected knowledge and will, in relation to others' will. This is what the notion of non-affirmative education refers to. It is about recognising individuals' and societies' interests but maintaining the right not to affirm these interests. Only by being allowed such a mediating pedagogical problematisation of external interests, including problematisation of the other's experiences and interests, pedagogical activity is capable of offering the summoned possibilities for self-transcendence with the help of critical treatment of cultural practices and knowledge. In this respect, NAT is a critical theory. It acknowledges the political, ethical and normative tasks of education, thereby holding emancipation as a foundation value.

These features gesture towards how NAT connects to critical theory. However, this type of critical education theory may also be described as functional given that an open society cannot sustain itself without such a pedagogy. The position is functional, given political democracy, liberal economy and a culturally plural society. Here, 'functional' is not used in an instrumental sense. Rather, functional refers to coherence. NAT is consistent with the societal characteristics mentioned. In this sense, non-affirmative education theory gives priority to the ontological question.

Exemplifying Four Empirical Research Topics

From the above, we have seen that in approaching empirical research, NAT defends a certain idea of human growth, and how to promote such growth, as its point of departure. This means giving priority to the ontological question over the epistemological one. However, this is not to suggest that the ontological perspective substitutes the epistemological perspective. While both are necessary, the contributions from empirical research must be based solely on a theory of the object in question, not its epistemology.

Our point is that empirically studying an object requires some kind of theory about the object studied. If we intend to study education but lack a theory of education, we are, in fact, conceptually blind. We very well understand the double-edged sword in play when talking about initial concepts and theory in empirical research: without concepts, we risk seeing nothing; with concepts, we risk seeing nothing but what our concepts allow us to see. The non-affirmative approach denies simple empiricism as reflected, for example, in grounded theory-like approaches. Such an inductive approach reflects naïve realism, according to which the world exists out there, just waiting to be uncovered. Similarly, in our interpretation, NAT takes a distance from pure deductive methodology. According to pure deductive methodology, we construct measurement instruments allowing us to see nothing but what was measured. NAT operates not in between these traditional positions but beyond them. NAT is most comfortable with an abductive approach. This means that the researcher may start either from a more open-ended position or from a more limited perspective in gathering data. Starting from an open-ended data-gathering position, which is reasonable in contexts that are not very familiar, does not mean that data are analysed irrespective of the theory of previous research. Rather, analysing empirical data in a second step with the help of theory reflects what Kvale (1994) identified as theoretical validation. On the other hand, in data collection and analysis, we may start out from a more theory-guided approach. This does not hinder us from being sensitive to anomalies that do not fit in. Rather, these anomalies may be used for developing or refining theory.

In defending the primacy of the ontological perspective, from an NAT perspective, the key empirical research problem is how and to what extent educational activities, at different levels of the education system, operate along and promote the ideals of non-affirmative education theory. This theory is value-bound in that it

recognises the subject's right to be pedagogically introduced in a culture in ways that aim at developing the subject's autonomy, conceptual understanding and ability to think critically. In other words, it recognises emancipation in terms of negative freedom. Negative freedom means that education liberates the individual from the tradition by making the tradition into an object of critical reflection. This type of education aims to develop the subject's productive freedom. This means aiming at the subject's real possibilities to act in the world out of one's own will and in relation to others' interests (Rucker, 2023). Following this main question, we identify four distinct research ideas (Uljens, 2023c) to be explored.

First, *empirical educational leadership research must recognise the societal role of institutionalised education.* This is the why and where question of higher education leadership. As educational leadership also operates in historically developed organisations, we need to ask: how do actors at different levels interpret what the societal task of an educational institution is? What is the role and task of higher education institutions? How do educational leaders and leadership practices carry out activities given their relative freedom to make decisions (e.g. Tigerstedt, 2022)? What kinds of prerequisites do individuals, operational sub-systems or networks possess in promoting the realisation of the ideals and realities mentioned? Is it possible to identify hindrances of various kinds that may influence the realisation of a non-affirmative pedagogy?

How universities and other HE institutions perceive their societal role is visible in how they construct their curriculum and study programmes. How do various actors within higher education work with curriculum making? Traditionally, comprehensive schools are directed by nationally agreed curricula, while a main pedagogical feature of universities is to base teaching on research and thereby construct their own curricula. Universities' classical freedom of research and teaching is thus visible in how independently they are allowed to construct, approve and develop their curricula. Self-directed curriculum making is essentially what we mean by the freedom of research and teaching. However, the universities' self-directed curriculum work is no longer self-evident. For example, the policy programme called *European Higher Education Area* reflects a strong movement towards externalising curriculum making (Curaj et al., 2018). As Rucker (2023) argued, we think that the notion of 'educative teaching' that is fundamental in NAT may operate as a normative principle or criterion against which actors' initiatives, policies, organisations and evaluation systems may be analysed. To what extent are the principles of non-affirmative pedagogy accepted, defended and practised at different levels?

Second, empirical educational leadership research in the NAT tradition *helps us identify in what ways and to what extent educational leadership practices, as a broad category, demonstrate pedagogical qualities?* This is the how-question of higher education leadership. Which features do these pedagogical qualities demonstrate at different levels? Leadership-wise, it is of special interest to study the vertical dynamics in an education system, as exemplified by Uljens and Ylimaki (2017). Studying such vertical bottom-up and top-down dynamics is certainly not a new proposal. However, directing the empirical focus precisely on these pedagogical qualities in operation within and between levels is considered a novel approach. For

example, how are visions and missions expected to operate within an organisation? What initiatives or new practices are launched to support and put new directions into practice? Are these organisational policies just implemented instrumentally to get the staff to dream the same dream as the top level, or does such policies operate as non-affirmative actions that reserve space for colleagues to interpret, critique and contribute?

Third, this position argues that educational leadership, as any form of leadership, is not only contextually framed and operates through pedagogical measures but is also about leading *something*. It has an object. This is the what-question of leadership. While much research sees leadership as a generic competence, valid across organisations, institutions and contexts, the position advocated in this volume does not share such a universalist and context- and content-neutral view. Rather, this volume argues that it is essential for a leader to have an understanding of *what* they are leading. Therefore, it is surprising that such a large portion of contemporary empirical research about educational leadership stays silent about the object led— teaching, studying and learning. Consequently, following NAT, it is of interest to focus on the relation between various leadership levels and the actual teaching– studying–learning process in a given institution. To be able to empirically understand the practice of teaching as the object of educational leadership, a theory of this object is required. In most educational institutions, schools and universities, the division between leadership activities and teaching is not always very strict. Very often, teachers are involved in a collaborative fashion to develop pedagogical practices. This volume argues that NAT, which was originally developed as a theory for understanding the nature of pedagogical practice, is applicable for these purposes.

Fourth, *NAT values research-supported practice development carried out as a collaborative multi-level effort with practitioners.* Given the ontological point of departure, NAT differs in its approach to established interventionist and collaborative approaches, as most practice developmental initiatives typically approach the empirical educational reality not from an educational but from an epistemological and methodological perspective. These research-supported developmental methodologies and designs are thought of as applicable in any societal context. This is true for cultural-historical activity theory, theory of practice architectures, the communities of practice approach, and other action-theory-based approaches.

As a phenomenon, applying practitioner research in higher education is by no means anything new. Various forms of action research and practitioner research have been applied for decades in higher education (Kember & Gow, 1992). There are a number of complementary approaches (Bruheim Jensen & Dikilitas, 2023). Today, action research as an umbrella concept covers a broad family of approaches, such as the Community of Practice approach (Denscombe, 2008; Omidvar & Kislov, 2013), Theory of Practice Architectures (Mahon et al., 2017) and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 2011, 2016; Sannino, 2011). These three methodologies have been applied in empirical collaborative research in very different contexts. This context-neutrality is their strength but, at the same time, their weak point.

However, it is not as if these approaches are totally silent regarding human learning. Typically, grounded in various positions in social philosophy, all three significantly developed during the 1990s. As anticipated, they all criticize subject-centred, cognitivist approaches to human learning, opting instead to emphasise the distributed, material and contextual nature of problem-solving and learning. However, in line with the perspective in the socio-cultural and linguistic turn in learning research, they have mostly focused on non-formal learning outside schools and universities. When educational institutions have been the empirical object, this research has typically not focused on teachers' teaching and students' learning but on teachers' collaborative professional learning and development. As this professional development was treated as adult workplace learning in general, it was not very closely connected to research on teaching.

Non-affirmative education theory is closer to cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) than the others. The main reason for this is that CHAT has its background in educational learning research, as established by Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky, in turn, draws on the Fichtean critique of the Kantian approach as developed by Hegel. In this light, NAT and CHAT emanate from the same history of ideas—the empirical Other is considered constitutive for higher-order learning. Also, what appears attractive in CHAT is an elaborate idea of the pedagogical nature of the interventions when practice is developed as a joint effort among practitioners and researchers (Mäkiharju et al., 2023). The methodological implication of NAT to this kind of developmental work research is a more reflected position of what it means to intentionally engage in various practices as a researcher. The point made is that in such developmental research, *the researchers' intervention in collaborating with practitioners is considered non-affirmative in nature.*

In other words, while NAT prioritises the ontological perspective, claiming the necessity to approach educational research on the basis of education theory, this very theory also points out that the researchers' input in the shared cultural-historical process is pedagogical in nature. It is pedagogical in a non-affirmative sense. Non-affirmative action research allows itself to intervene in practitioners' work, but with the motive of emancipating practitioners to reach levels that perhaps would be the case without external support. Thereby, the ontologically defined theory about the object, pedagogical work in modern education institutions, also has methodological implications in collaborative action research (Su & Bellmann, 2023).

Coming Back to History

This chapter started with a short historical overview of the development of universities, pointing out that the idea of what a university is has been evolving throughout its history. Universities have always, to some degree, been instruments for reaching goals external to themselves. Broadly speaking, the main affiliations of a university in the different stages of its development can be described as being the church, the state and, currently, the market. Our point of departure is that research on higher

education leadership has to take a reflective position on the question of what a university is. Doing so entails having an idea of how to conceptualise the relationship between a university and other fields of society, as well as being able to conceptualise the core activities within a university, namely, teaching, studying and learning. Our argument is that the NAT of education can overcome some of the blind spots in current leadership research: a theory of education may not be sufficient for understanding all aspects of educational leadership, but it has the potential to function as a foundational point of departure. We thus still need psychological, organisational, economic and other types of policy approaches to studying leadership in and of universities, but we recall that which perspectives are in the foreground and which are in the background is not a matter of indifference.

In current society, where the university, or the *multiversity*, is more differentiated and interpenetrated with the surrounding society than ever before, and the future is characterised by its openness, Barnett (2004) argues that defining the core mission and idea of universities is more difficult than ever. Barnett concludes that in this 'new' situation, where we cannot know what the future brings, the core mission of universities could be to teach students to live with the question of the uncertain future as an open one. NAT argues for a very similar position, the main difference being that this is by no means regarded as a *new* state of affairs. On the contrary, according to the *Bildung*-centred tradition of education, learning to live with the future as an open question has been at the core of education since the beginning of modernity. Although the operational environment of the university has transformed rather radically, the foundational theoretical perspectives of educational theory still appear highly viable and relevant as foundational points of departure.

The Rationale and Structure of This Volume

Our ambition in this volume is not to encompass all aspects of higher education leadership or provide an exhaustive overview of current approaches or positions. Nor do we aim to present a theory that comprehensively explains every facet of higher education leadership, and our focus is not to produce a volume of 'best practice' tips and tricks for higher education leadership. Our specific focus is to work out how and to what extent the pedagogical dimensions in higher education leadership can be illuminated using *pedagogical theory*. Our point of departure is that approaching pedagogical leadership of pedagogical praxis through a pedagogical theory can enable us to tackle some of the challenges with which the current educational leadership field is struggling. However, this is an open question, and the answer remains to be seen. Our approach to NAT itself is thus non-affirmative; we raise the question without having a pre-decided idea of the answer. Thus, the ambition is not to cover all aspects of what it means to lead higher education in one volume. We maintain that a multitude of perspectives on leadership is valuable and necessary for grasping the complexity of higher education leadership. Simultaneously, however, this multitude runs the risk of creating a field that is so fragmented

that the foundations and the overarching perspective are lost. The pedagogical elements of leadership, present at all levels and *common* to the phenomenon as a whole, risk becoming invisible. Pedagogical leadership in the context of pedagogical praxis is a distinct form and context of leadership. Leading pedagogical praxis pedagogically is different from leading pedagogical praxis with, for example, an economic or efficiency focus. Moreover, pedagogically leading education in a pedagogical manner differs from pedagogically leading development in a private business or governmental institution, for instance. As we have posited, leadership in education requires an understanding and a theory of the object of that leadership, along with its relationship to other areas of society.

Naturally, pedagogical leadership manifests in diverse ways across different levels. In this volume, each chapter focuses on examples of pedagogical leadership at different levels. Our examination of these examples using NAT explores both the theory's possibilities and limitations in the context of higher education leadership. However, the chapters are not strictly bound to individual levels, as many of the phenomena discussed span several levels. After the introduction chapter, Elo and Uljens, in Chap. 2, link the theoretically focused introduction to the subsequent chapters by providing a general overview of the pedagogical dimensions of higher education leadership as a multilevel phenomenon, drawing on contemporary higher education literature to exemplify what kind of pedagogical leadership activities we might find at various levels of leadership. In Chap. 3, Lili-Ann Wolff, together with Janne Elo and Michael Uljens, focus on sustainability in the Anthropocene era as an example of a global curricular topic transcending national boundaries. In Chap. 4, Jussi Kivistö, Janne Elo and Michael Uljens discuss the pedagogical dimensions of national higher education funding models. In Chap. 5, Jussi Välimaa, Michael Uljens and Janne Elo discuss how different logics of higher education governance produce different prerequisites for academic staff to maintain a non-affirmative position. We continue in Chap. 6 with Ingunn Hybertsen and Bjørn Stensaker's discussion of the pedagogical dimensions of quality assurance in higher education. Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons discuss the nature of higher education studies in Chap. 7. In Chap. 8, Romuald Normand, Michael Uljens and Janne Elo approach the pedagogical influence on individual teacher/researcher roles and professional identities in current higher education. The volume is summed up in a concluding chapter by Elo and Uljens.

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Chapter 2
Levels of Pedagogical Leadership in Higher Education: An Overview

Janne Elo and Michael Uljens

Abstract Leadership in higher education is widely recognised as existing within a network of actors situated at different organisational levels and encompassing a broad variety of tasks and assignments. Leadership interactions are partly pedagogical in character, meaning that their goal is to support, both directly and indirectly, the development of the insights, understandings, and competencies of others. This chapter draws on examples of contemporary research in higher education to provide an overview of how pedagogical leadership can emerge at different leadership levels. We apply the non-affirmative theory of education to enable a conceptual understanding of the pedagogical nature of interactions among higher education leadership at and between all levels of leadership. Drawing from contemporary research concerning higher education leadership, this chapter elucidates the pedagogical dimensions of leadership at various levels in higher education.

Keywords Higher education leadership · Educational leadership · Pedagogical leadership · Systemic curriculum leadership · Educational theory

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, we outlined three challenges in contemporary higher education leadership research and presented reasons for why non-affirmative theory of education (NAT) can provide a foundational point of departure for educational leadership. First, it helps to conceptualise the ultimate aim of such leadership, namely teaching, studying, and learning. Second, the position offers a theoretical foundation for understanding the pedagogical dimensions of leadership at various levels of education. Third, it provides a perspective regarding how institutional education relate to other fields of societal practice as economy, politics and culture in general.

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In this chapter, we explore beyond the theoretical elaborations of Chap. 1 by adopting a more pragmatic perspective regarding the various ways in which the pedagogical dimensions of leading in education can emerge at various organisational levels of higher education leadership. This chapter thus functions as a segue between Chap. 1 and the following chapters, which focus on more specific topics in a higher education context. The aim of this chapter is to exemplify pedagogical influences in higher education leadership at different organisational levels by drawing on contemporary research regarding higher education leadership.

We contend that understanding leadership and management within institutional education in contemporary societies requires a multi-level perspective, ranging from the macro supranational level down to the micro level of the individual teacher and student (e.g. Elo & Uljens, 2022). Thus, this article focuses on how pedagogical leadership operates in such a multi-layered system.

Educational Leadership and Pedagogical Leadership

In this context, we consider it meaningful to distinguish between educational leadership and pedagogical leadership. Educational leadership refers to a multi-level networked phenomenon concerning the governance and leadership of institutionalised education, including legal, organisational, economic, architectural, relational, and other aspects of what it means to lead an educational institution. Pedagogical leadership refers to deliberately influencing and promoting the Other's engagement in learning activities directed towards understanding oneself and one's relation to the world and to others. Pedagogical leadership aims to influence the perceptions, values, knowledge, understanding, or actions of an Other by inviting the other to engage in activities that will most likely result in learning. In this case, an individual, organisation, or nation can all influence and be influenced. At all activity levels, including personal, organisational, institutional, national, and transnational levels, interactions, interpretations, and actions are executed by and between individuals and groups of individuals. Some of this interactional intentional influencing typically aims towards facilitating the learning processes of others involved. This is referred to as a pedagogical dimension of interactions across all levels of leadership. In an educational context, pedagogical leadership is thus only one feature of educational leadership alongside economic, administrative, political, and other dimensions. Pedagogical leadership refers to deliberate and direct or indirect influences on other individuals' self-directed activities to transcend a present state through a process of learning; however, such leadership is not constrained to any specific context and can therefore occur in any societal field or organisation where human resources are crucial for the organisation's activity.

The focus of this chapter is to exemplify and elaborate upon pedagogical leadership in higher education institutions as a multi-level phenomenon. Examples of other approaches to studying leadership in education as a multi-level phenomenon include actor–network theory (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005), discursive institutionalism

(Schmidt, 2008), ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrener, 1981), and refraction (Goodson & Rudd, 2012). Within all of these approaches, leadership manifests as a mediating activity between different levels and actors. While the multi-faceted character of educational leadership and governance is indeed widely recognised, most multi-level approaches applied in educational contexts stay silent regarding the activities led. In educational organisations these include not only learning related to teaching and studying but also learning related to leadership and administration. Typically, also the pedagogical qualities of these translational leadership activities remain unclear. The approaches mentioned above all offer the same conceptualisations of the dynamics of any context. While being critical regarding contextual insensitivity, we concur that there are features that different contexts share. For example, mediating activities within and between levels always include an element of interpretation, thus demonstrating a hermeneutic dimension of translation (Mielityinen-Pachmann & Uljens, 2023). However, while all mediations are hermeneutic, not all mediating interpretative translations are intended as pedagogical activities. In addition, we must understand what the influence of pedagogical leadership means within an educational context, wherein pedagogical processes are influenced. To this end, this chapter contributes to further developing the non-affirmative approach to educational leadership introduced by Uljens (2015) and Uljens and Ylimaki (2017), as this school of thought provides detailed language to conceptualise the specific nature of the influence of pedagogical leadership and how it differs from the influence of any other type of leadership.

Non-affirmative Theory of Education

The following section briefly outlines the basic characteristics of the non-affirmative theory of education as a framework for analysing the pedagogical interactions between and within levels of educational leadership (Benner, 2023; Uljens, 2015; Uljens, 2023; Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017).

In NAT, a pedagogical intervention is understood as a *summons of self-activity.* This denotes that the leader or pedagogue is unable to directly transfer ideas, knowledge, values, etc. to the other due to not possessing coercive power over the other's way of perceiving themselves and the world. A pedagogical intervention is an invitation or provocation of an already self-active other to engage in self-transcending activity that potentially could result in change through a process of learning. A pedagogical intervention is an interruption in the relation between the other and the world. Pedagogical leadership, understood as a pedagogical summons, entails inviting or provoking the other to reflect upon, question, or problematise their current state, self-understanding, and relationship with the world to transcend the current state of affairs through a process of self-directed transformation. The outcomes of the summons are fundamentally open and dependent upon the other's self-activity.

NAT has utilised the concept of *recognition* (see e.g. Williams, 1992), which does not in itself refer to pedagogical activity. Recognition refers to each recognising the other as an actor with free will and space for autonomous action. As an ethical concept, recognition thus describes actors' moral responsibilities to each other. Recognition further refers to the fact that the other is considered a subject that is oriented toward engaging with the world. Adopting such a view of the other means that they should not be used instrumentally for one's own aims. Recognition entails acknowledging and respecting limitations, possibilities, realities, and potentials of the other. The other's life reality and orientation are viewed as the starting point of summoning. As recognition also entails the other recognising the summons directed at them, the relation is dual. Recognition is thus a prerequisite both for the leader summoning the other, as well as for the summons to be recognised by the other.

Pedagogical intervention is dependent upon what is called *bildsamkeit* in the German language. Bildsamkeit refers to human plasticity extending beyond the human capacity to learn. Rather, the concept refers to the individual's self-active, never-ending open and dynamic relation to the world, through which the human being can transcend their current means of understanding the world through a process of learning (Benner, 2023). Therefore, learning or human growth does not presuppose a pedagogical intervention, as we frequently learn from experience, without an educator or anybody else being present. A pedagogical intervention as the summoning of an individual to self-activity through pedagogical leadership or teaching, can be described as an act directing the other's self-activity in a specific direction with the aim of inducing activities possibly resulting in learning. In a teaching context, this is described as the teaching–studying–learning process (Uljens, 1997), denoting that learning is not something we do; rather, learning is something that may occur as a result of the activity that we call studying. Teaching (or pedagogical influence in general), in turn, does not lead to learning directly but may influence the activity (studying) that may induce learning. In a pedagogical leadership context, this means that pedagogical influence cannot directly result in the desired learning outcomes; instead, it is limited to supporting, inviting, or provoking activity on behalf of the other that *might* result in learning.

The concept of non-affirmative action is related to both the question of pedagogical interaction and the question of the relationship between levels of educational leadership and other societal domains. While a leader, or more broadly a level of leadership, both exerts influence and is subjected to influences, it is necessary to recognise summons from many actors and directions. These influences and initiatives may point in different directions, be driven by different interests and may be at least partly contradictory. Since affirming them all is not an option, the actors must determine an appropriate course of action given the cultural and historical context. As leadership generally includes mediation, this certainly applies to the pedagogical dimensions of leadership. In constructing a mediational space whereby others are invited to engage in self-transcending activity, actors possess certain degrees of freedom to deliberately engage others. Non-affirmative pedagogical leadership is thus an act involving others and recognising the influencing factors without affirming or uncritically accepting any of them. It is an act of interpretative

mediation between different influences. Educational institutions and educational leaders have relative independence and autonomy, since they are not operating in total subordination to external influences or boundaries, nor completely without these (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). In the case of total affirmation, leadership is reduced to the instrumental implementation of interests external to the pedagogical context.

Similarly, when summoning an other to self-activity, the leader must maintain the capacity to challenge the other to transcend the current state of affairs by recognising the life-realities, values, and interests of the other, without affirming them. Fully affirming the other would render pedagogical influence impossible.

Non-affirmative theory maintains that the relationship between education and other fields of society is non-hierarchical. This means that education is not completely subordinated to influences such as politics or the economy, although it is influenced by them. Nor is education fully superordinate to politics or the economy, although it does exert an impact on them. Different fields of societal practice are thus not entirely sub- nor superordinate to each other. In a similar way, different levels of leadership maintain a certain space and capacity for autonomous action, as they influence each other reciprocally in complex, rhizomatic webs of summons. A component of this reciprocal interaction is pedagogical.

As an analytical concept, affirmation should not be understood as a binary "yes or no" question but rather as different degrees and forms of affirmation on a continuum. In different contexts actors, institutions, or nations have different prerequisites and capabilities for and interests in recognising and responding to summons in more or less non-affirmative ways. In our view, the non-affirmative theory can provide a tool to analyse in *what ways* and *to what extent* pedagogical leaders or institutions affirm or do not affirm horizontal or vertical initiatives and influences within their mediating role in a multilevel networked system or to what extent a pedagogical summons requires an affirmative response. Non-affirmative theory is not proposed as a normative ideal or prescriptive instruction stating that leadership *should* be non-affirmative but as an analytical tool for pedagogical interactions between actors in educational leadership at different levels (from the supranational arena down to the teaching–studying–learning level) in a coherent manner based on a theory of the studied object, namely education.

The above-outlined perspective regarding pedagogical leadership in a higher education context serves as an example of a relational and processual approach to leadership. From an NAT perspective, an entitative and dualistic perspective on leadership, viewing leadership activity as an isolated phenomenon performed by leaders and directed at followers, is excessively limited.

Pedagogical summons can be made by any actor and directed at any individual or group. The ultimate result of a pedagogical summons, as previously explained, is fundamentally open. No single actor exerts control over the outcome, as the outcome is a result of the process that the summons aims to provoke. Pedagogical leadership is thus relational and processual as opposed to entitative and linear and is consistent with a processual ontology of leadership and an understanding of the core of leadership work as "shaping movement and courses of action" (Crevani, 2018, p.89).

Leadership Within Higher Education as a Multi-Level Phenomenon

The following section exemplifies the use of NAT as an analytic approach to higher education pedagogical leadership by drawing on examples of contemporary higher education research. The discussion is structured around the visual framework for higher education leadership as a multi-layered and multi-actor phenomenon, as presented by Elo and Uljens (2022) and introduced by Uljens (2015).

Higher education leadership operates at and between several organisational levels, ranging from the supranational level down to the individual student level. Higher education exists in a tension field between the scientific community and various external stakeholders. Figure 2.1 aims to identify the different organisational levels and layers of higher education leadership without claiming that they exist in a
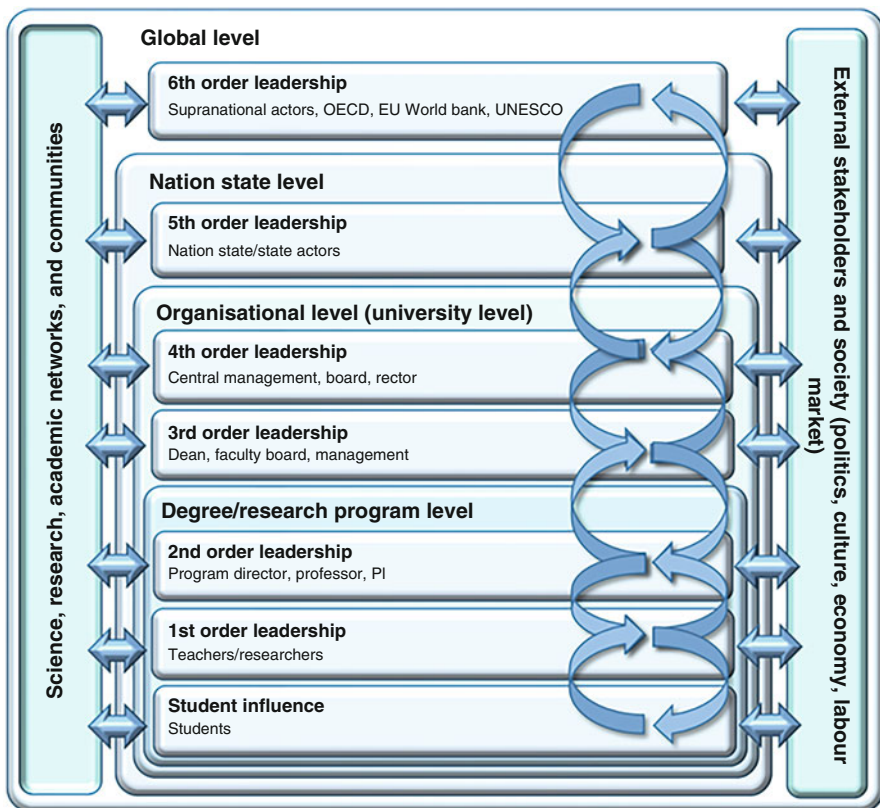
Fig. 2.1 The organisational structure of higher education curriculum leadership as a multi-level and multi-actor phenomenon (Elo & Uljens, 2022)

strict hierarchical relation to one another or that they always appear as in Fig. 2.1. Conversely, NAT stresses that different levels of leadership and different fields in society are neither fully sub- nor superordinate to each other but that they exist in a reciprocally influencing relationship. Furthermore, higher education in general and higher education leadership in particular can simultaneously be understood as a hierarchy and as a rhizomatic network (Kandiko & Blackmore, 2012a; Välimaa et al., 2016). Various actors are situated within a hierarchical organisational structure but act in rhizomatic networks where horizontal or vertical relations between actors are reciprocal, dynamic, frequently temporary, and not easily predictable. Influence in the vertical dimension is not limited to occurring only between actors on adjacent levels. Examining leadership from an individual actor's perspective at any particular level would reveal a network of one-way or reciprocal acts of summons and recognition with multiple other actors on different levels in the framework. Each actor would possess substantial agency to interpret, shape, and alter this network. It is thus important to differentiate between the hierarchical organisational structure on the one hand, and the reciprocal and dynamic relational influence that occurs within the structure on the other. The framework is thereby a useful tool for rendering different organisational levels and elements visible while simultaneously running the risk of oversimplifying the complexity of the phenomenon and giving an impression of absolute hierarchy. The model exemplifies the framework in which the second regulative principle in non-affirmative theory (Benner, 2023) operates. It describes the structure through which societal interests transform into pedagogical activities. The model also applies the first and second constitutive principles (summoning to self-activity, Bildsamkeit) as well as the notion of recognition to elucidate the dynamics between levels and actors indicated in the model.

Additionally, Fig. 2.1 does not capture the structural variation and complexity of higher education institutions, as the division into university, faculty, department, degree programmes, etc. can vary. Different forms of cross-disciplinary centres, centres of excellence, or inter-university centres are increasingly common, and they increase the level of complexity (Maassen, 2017). Different national systems can have layers of leadership that are not depicted in the figure (e.g. Välimaa & Nokkala, 2014), and many nationally crucial actors are not visible. Another limitation of the figure is that it can be interpreted as emphasising the structural similarities between national higher education systems, and it can thereby cause one to overlook the differences in the social dynamics between higher education systems. The fact that national higher education systems are structurally similar does not mean that they function in the same ways (Välimaa & Nokkala, 2014). Figure 2.1 is thus primarily intended as a tool for discussing the organisational structures in which NAT can be utilised as an analytical language to discuss the pedagogical dynamics within higher education leadership. The following section draws on some examples from contemporary research to exemplify how NAT could be utilised to approach the interactions between actors in and between the levels visualised above.

Sixth-Order Leadership

Sixth-order leadership involves supranational actors influencing subsequent levels as well as being influenced by these and each other. Examples of such actors are the EU, OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank, which influence education on a large scale and summon nation states, for example, by promoting competency-based or entrepreneurial educational policies (Kandiko & Blackmore, 2012a). In this context, educational policies can be understood as summons to autonomous nation states, who recognise and respond to policy initiatives in different ways and affirm them to different degrees, mediating between the supranational and subsequent levels. The pedagogical dimension lies in the fact that these summons are focused on influencing the national perceptions and understandings of the aims and roles of higher education in a contemporary global society.

The European Bologna process is an apt example of a supranational process that transcends national boundaries and profoundly affects higher education at all levels (Brøgger, 2019; Kandiko & Blackmore, 2012a, 2012b; Karseth, 2006). In the global knowledge economy, higher education occupies a center-stage position in relation to striving for economic competitiveness, with an emphasis on innovations and working life competencies (Alvesson & Benner, 2016). Higher education is as much an issue for economic policies as it is for educational policies, and higher education is frequently regarded as a driving force of a global knowledge economy, with the Bologna process being a part of Europe's quest to become the world's most competitive knowledge economy (Alvesson & Benner, 2016). The Bologna process has affected higher education in terms of macro structures and in relation to how competency-based learning goals are formulated or how individual scholars perceive their professional roles (Brøgger, 2019). The influence of the Bologna process is thus partly pedagogical to the extent that it focuses on altering the understandings, perceptions, values, and identities of a multitude of actors at many levels of higher education as well as curricular contents and learning goals. Despite lacking legislative power over national higher education policies, the Bologna process has managed to summon nation states to transform their higher education in relation to European homogenisation through open methods of coordination (Brøgger, 2019; Karseth, 2006). Determining how and to what degree national policies (a) recognise and (b) affirm Bologna policies would reveal similarities and differences in how nations have interpreted and acted upon the summons. Global trends involving the privatisation of universities, the rise of academic capitalism and the entrepreneurial university, new neoliberal forms of governance supported by global rankings, and an increased commodification of higher education have summoned nation states and higher education institutions to transform their understanding of what higher education is and what it is for. Nations respond by recognising and affirming the various trends to different degrees and with different emphasis.

As policies at the supranational level emphasise higher education as a vital ingredient in the knowledge economy, an increased external orientation emphasising higher education institutions' impact on the private and public sector is visible across

the globe (Alvesson & Benner, 2016; Kandiko & Blackmore, 2012a). In these cases, the policies tend to skew towards recognising and affirming the interests, values, and norms of the economy and the labour market rather than the traditional values and norms of the scientific community. This exemplifies a horisontal tension in Fig. 2.1. A focus on recognising the economic utility of higher education also has consequences related to the perceived value of different fields of science, as STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), for instance, are generally perceived to have more economic utility than humanities (Välimaa et al., 2016). This has not always been the case in universities.

Another supranational phenomenon that summons higher education institutions to engage in self-reflection is the global ranking of higher education institutions and research, which prompts higher education institutions to recognise and affirm the performance indicators measured (Bögner et al., 2016; Elken et al., 2016). If affirmed, these summons can contribute to a transformation of higher education institutions' values and their actors´ values, norms, ideals, identities, or management practices. Journal rankings, high impact factors, and other outcome measures have increased in significance, and journals are inclined to favour manuscripts in established fields that are likely to attract citations, altering the understanding of what constitutes "good research" while simultaneously risking a reduction in the innovative potential of research and impairing interdisciplinary research (Bögner et al., 2016; Reihlen & Wenzlaff, 2016). A commodification of research driven by supranational trends has thus summoned the scientific community to recognise and affirm a performance- and market-oriented logic and to question the fundamental values and norms of science. Presumably, different researchers, research communities, or fields of science recognise and affirm the summons in different ways. However, this recognition does not necessarily entail affirmation, as demonstrated by Elken et al.'s (2016) study concerning the effects of global rankings on the identities of Nordic research-intensive universities, exemplifying a non-affirmative response from the higher education institutions, as the rankings did not affect the higher education institutions' self-perceptions to a strong degree.

Fifth-Order Leadership

Influenced by the supranational level, the national higher education institutions are led at the nation-state level. Being in between the supranational level and the higher education institutions, the national level functions as a mediating level that recognises the various summons both vertically in both directions and horizontally. The situation in nation states varies. For instance, Nordic countries are characterised by a relatively strong nation state with policy formulation, financing mechanisms, etc. on the national level. The United States and Germany are characterised by relatively less influence on the federal government and nation-state level and a greater influence on the state and *Länder* level. In certain national contexts, the fifth order of leadership could thus be divided into further levels.

Dobbins et al. (2011) present a categorisation of three ideal types of higher education governance, namely the state-centred model, the Humboltian model, and the market-oriented model. These ideal types have distinct features regarding the state's role in leading higher education. In the state-centred model, higher education is regarded as an instrument for implementing state policies, and the state summons higher education to action, expecting that the summons is recognised and affirmed. The relationship between education and politics becomes rather hierarchical, and education is primarily a means to achieve political ends. In the Humboltian model, systematic external influence is kept to a minimum, and higher education is largely a self-governing community of scholars. In this model, summons from professional communities within different disciplines, with their values, norms, and codes of professional conduct, become particularly dominant. In the market-oriented ideal type, education is viewed as a commodity, investment, and strategic resource. Summons to higher education from industry, the labour market, financing bodies, and students expecting high returns from their education are recognised and affirmed.

These ideal types emphasise three different relations in Fig. 2.1: the relation to the state (state-centred model), the relation to the scientific community (Humboldtian model), and the relation to external stakeholders (market-oriented model). In each relation, the pedagogical dimension is evident in how the summons influences the understanding of what higher education is, along with the values, visions, goals, and professional identities of actors within higher education. In many cases, national higher education is a combination of all of these, producing a complex and potentially contradictory web of summons, rendering it difficult to define what higher education is or what it means to be a scholar. Leadership is increasingly multifaceted, having to recognise summons from a multitude of actors in various fields of societal practice and mediate between all of them in a manner that leads forward.

In accountability-driven state governance, universities are summoned to view themselves as producers of degrees, competence, and research rather than as traditional universities in a Humboltian sense, resulting in a narrower space to position themselves. These summons carry an implicit demand to affirm the accountability mechanisms; for instance, a failure to affirm the requirements of output-oriented state funding models has dire financial consequences for higher education institutions (Dobbins et al., 2011; Foss Hansen et al., 2019). Performance-based national funding models also summon academics to alter their publication patterns and thus their understanding of what it means to conduct science in order to accommodate the mechanisms and rewards of the models (Mathies et al., 2020).

As Capano and Pritoni (2020) have demonstrated, the development of state policies for higher education during past decades has taken various paths both between and within nation states, without a clear or common pattern. Nation states have continued to govern and have even increased the steering of higher education in various ways, such as through balancing autonomy with control and steering. This suggests that although supranational trends have been recognised by nation states, the interpretations of them and the actions taken have varied immensely. The concepts of NAT could prove to be fruitful in comparing the development of nation

states, revealing qualitative differences in how nations recognise and affirm supranational summons as well as in how nation states summon the higher education institutions or what they recognise higher education institutions as and in how the higher education institutions recognise national summons and the degree of affirmation by higher education institutions.

Fourth-Order Leadership

Fourth-order leadership entails a university's central management leading the organisation. Central management mediates between the state and supranational level and the faculties, departments, schools, and degree or research programs to resolve the tension between the scientific community and the external stakeholders. Global development in recent decades appears to have summoned higher education institutions to strengthen and professionalise higher education management at the expense of the influence of the academic community (Christensen, 2011; Dobbins et al., 2011; Maassen & Stensaker, 2019). A transformation from loosely coupled organisations towards more complete organisations has entailed strengthened organisational identities, hierarchies, and rationality (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000; Maassen & Stensaker, 2019). A formerly self-governed community of scholars (with the scientific community as the main frame of reference) has now been summoned to recognise and affirm the influence of the central management, strategies, and policies in new ways. These shifts constitute a summons to the professionals within higher education to transform their understandings of both the organisation that employs them as well as themselves as professionals and their professional roles within the organisation. It also entails learning new procedures and work cultures.

Examples of summons demanding recognition from subsequent levels are centrally developed higher education profiles, university-wide strategies, the centrally driven implementation of outcomes-focused curricula, productivity and output targets, standards for assessing staff performance, centrally defined economic frameworks and results-oriented steering mechanisms (Blackmore & Kandiko, 2012; Hussey & Smith, 2002, 2003; Kandiko & Blackmore, 2012b; Maassen, 2017; Maassen & Stensaker, 2019). As Maassen and Stensaker (2019, p. 5) have stated: *"The central university leadership and administrative level increasingly decides on the framework conditions, that is, rules, regulations, and procedures with respect to the universities' primary processes of teaching and research."* A shift from a relatively self-governed community of scholars to a managed community of scholars entails a shift from the recognition of the frames of the scientific community and various local academic cultures towards a recognition of the frames established by management and entails learning new ways of working and being. Such a shift involves summoning faculties, departments, degree and research programs, and individual scholars to redefine their understanding of the context for their professional actions and identities and to redefine their roles within the organisation.

In contemporary higher education, the recognition of the interests of a growing number of external stakeholders outside the formal hierarchy (e.g., within industries and the economy) is increasingly stressed (Karseth, 2006; Maassen, 2017; Parker, 2003). Accountability to external stakeholders and funding bodies has become increasingly influential (Christensen, 2011). Various types of networks, including other higher education institutions, higher education/industry partnerships, technology centres, and NGO partnerships are increasingly common, especially in market-oriented governance models (Dobbins et al., 2011; Ferlie et al., 2008). Higher education institutions thus must recognise a multitude of potentially contradictory and incompatible summons and are faced with the challenge of relating to all of them in a critical and reflective manner and affirming them to varying degrees. Leadership is thus an act of recognition, reflection, and self-directed action based on a renewed understanding of desirable future directions.

Third-Order Leadership

Third-order leadership focuses on the faculty and department level. The organisation of higher education into levels of administration varies between national and local settings and can consist of various sub-levels (faculty, school, or department). The transition from a collegial and democratic form of governance towards a more centralised managerial form of governance has significantly altered the leadership dynamics at this level. The role of faculty councils or procedures of decision-making has transformed, and power has shifted from academic employees to management (Frost et al., 2016). This means that the entire faculty and organisation must develop and learn new operational cultures, prompting transformations of individuals´ professional roles and identities. In some contexts, the implementation of a distributed form of leadership has also diversified the levels of leadership; for instance, a growing number of vice-dean positions serve a mediating function between senior leaders and academic staff (Floyd & Preston, 2018). Where collegially and democratically oriented forms of leadership have been challenged or replaced by managerial forms, academics and administrators have been summoned to redefine their professional identities and roles, sometimes in a fundamental manner (Boitier & Rivière, 2016; Frost et al., 2016). Within universities, central management has increased its influence through university profiles, strengthened organisational identities, productivity targets, and managerial values, academics have increasingly found themselves summoned to self-activity by managerial hierarchies, possibly at the expense of, or in conflict with, academic and professional values, norms, or codes of conduct (Maassen, 2017).

Second-Order Leadership

Second-order leadership focuses on curriculum leadership within a degree program and entails both leading the program overall and leading individual academics, sometimes by serving as a foreman or supervisor for a team. This level also refers to principal investigators leading research projects, as these are frequently located at the same organisational level. Although the subject department or faculty in many contexts has been the dominant organisational unit in higher education, the program or project level has strengthened its position, partly in response to demands for more flexibility, efficiency, and labour market relevance (Floyd & Preston, 2018).

Although higher education is research-based, a disciplinary logic is not necessarily the primary influence on curriculum, as the vocational and professional logic of the labour market might be equally or more influential in practice (Kandiko & Blackmore, 2012a; Karseth, 2006; Lindén et al., 2017). This tension is evident in debates regarding whether the curriculum should aim to thoroughly introduce the student to the discipline or maximise student employability by recognising and affirming current labour market expectations (Parker, 2003). Lindén et al. (2017) argue that a shift from a discipline-based curriculum to a dynamic and responsive competency and outcomes-focused curriculum with a higher education strategic focus is evident. This means that the process of creating curricula is recognising and affirming the rapidly evolving interests of the external stakeholders, the labour market, and politics to an increasing degree, rather than recognising and affirming any particular disciplinary tradition or *bildung*-centered Humboltian tradition of higher education. A shift of this form entails developing new understandings both of what universities are and what they are for, as well as transforming professional cultures and individual professional identities. The tension between a discipline-based and vocationally based logic of curricula can be visualised in Fig. 2.1 as a tension between the influence of the scientific community on the left and of external stakeholders on the right, with the influence of European homogenisation running vertically. Curricular leaders are thereby summoned from all directions and face the task of recognising and balancing all summons by not fully affirming any of them.

The increased demand-driven vocationalism in higher education curricula is also a result of a vastly increased number of students enrolling, specifically over 50% of cohorts on average in OECD countries (Hattke et al., 2016; OECD, 2013). Only a fraction of these students will ever pursue a career in academia, resulting in a stronger pressure for higher education curricula to recognise and affirm the realities and demands of the labour market (Hattke et al., 2016). Student expectations regarding labour market relevance have thereby "summoned" the curriculum development process, and an increased focus on employability and competency-based learning outcomes is often experienced by academics as instrumentalist and incongruent with professional values (Kandiko & Blackmore, 2012b). This entails challenging a classical understanding of what a university is with an understanding that is reminiscent of universities of applied science or even vocational education. Alvesson and Benner (2016) note that the large percentage of cohorts attending

university, in combination with output-based state funding, has prompted higher education institutions to lower the quality standards of education to meet funding quotas. This shift has summoned higher education institutions and academic staff to re-evaluate the role of higher education in society, as well as their professional identities and standards, in a fundamental manner.

First-Order Leadership

Finally, first-order leadership encompasses the individual academics conducting research and leading the students' study, possibly including both administrative tasks and responsibility for course syllabi. This layer of leadership is organised differently in different higher education institutions and national contexts. Higher education teachers can have substantial autonomy in designing courses and course syllabi. In practice, this means that many of the tensions between a vocationally or disciplinary-oriented curriculum or outcome-related performance measures for mass teaching boil down to this level. The individual academic is frequently faced with contradictory and incompatible summons, having to recognise them all and determine an appropriate course of action that is consistent with individual professional identities and values within a specific sociocultural and historical context.

At this level, the tension between the outcome- and performance-oriented managerial values and logics and the values and logics of the scientific community also become concrete. Crevani et al. (2015) provide a concrete example of this when describing a leadership intervention where a group of assistant professors are summoned to recognise and affirm the performance-focused views of research excellence held by the senior management of the university. In the example, the assistant professors clearly recognise the summons but refuse to affirm it, as it conflicts with their own professional values. This serves as an example of how researchers are faced with recognising various and often contradictory summons and having to navigate them in a manner that is consistent with individual norms, values, and professional identities while also not jeopardising their academic careers. Neglecting matters such as performance measurement mechanisms could exert undesired negative effects on career development. Hattke et al. (2016) posit that the cross-organisational professional communities and networks in different disciplinary fields are often a stronger point of reference for individual academics than their employing organisations. Scholars tend to feel a stronger commitment and loyalty to their academic networks than to their employing universities (Weiherl & Frost, 2016).

The organising logic of research is the professional logic of the discipline, and the academic peers and networks are the primary frame of reference for professional values, norms, and identities. Complexity, tensions, and contradictions emerge when scholars, who recognise and to varying degrees affirm professional logics and values, are simultaneously summoned to pledge adherence to the organisational logic and values of the university through managerially defined research profiles

or quantitative output targets (Hattke et al., 2016; Spender, 2016). A contradiction of logics can even result in productive and successful scholars leaving the organisation due to incompatible profiles (Maassen, 2017). A commodification of education and research has also summoned scholars to focus on teaching and research that has immediate utility for external stakeholders, leading to the exploitation of existing results rather than the exploration of new fields that might prove fruitful in the future (Hattke et al., 2016). Scholars can thereby find themselves in a crossfire of summons, left with the challenge of recognising and reconciling them with individual values, professional norms, and identities.

Hussey and Smith (2003) contend that the global trend of defining specific, transparent, and measurable intended learning outcomes for higher education teaching overlooks the fundamentally open nature of a teaching–studying–learning process and encourages teachers to embrace a rather instrumental and technological view of teaching. The pre-defined learning outcomes may become the only point of reference, overlooking students' principal autonomy, their individual frames of understanding, the principally open nature of education, and the variety of learning outcomes emerging from individual teaching–studying–learning processes. A focus on predefined learning outcomes might prompt teachers to view students as objects for teaching rather than active agents in studying. From an NAT perspective, narrowly affirming learning outcomes can hinder the teacher from actually recognising the students and the fundamentally open character of education, thereby impairing the fundamental pedagogical relationship.

Student Influence

In addition to levels 1 through 6, the student level also influences higher education leadership, as students are co-creators of course syllabi and curricula through different forms of feedback, critical discussions within courses, or the co-planning of course syllabi (Weller, 2012). Especially in democratically oriented forms of higher education governance, students are represented in different leading bodies, such as faculty boards. In the higher education teaching–studying–learning process, the teacher summons a principally autonomous student to engage in self-transcending activity, ideally recognising each student and their lifeworld. The results of this process depend as much on the students' self-activity as they do on the summons by the teacher. The massification of higher education often arguably renders recognition on an individual level impossible. In addition, the entrepreneurial university must present itself in an appealing manner to potential students, as fee-paying students are vital for the survival of higher education institutions. In an educational market, the higher education institution is pressed to recognise and affirm the values, future visions, and ideals of potential students to attract them to apply. As the importance of affirming student expectations increases, the space for critically reflexive and non-affirmative pedagogical summons that challenge student preconceptions can decrease.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we continued from the theoretical foundations delineated in Chap. 1 by adopting a more pragmatic approach to exemplifying how the pedagogical dimensions of higher education leadership can emerge at different levels. Although the examples we draw on are quite different, they can all be regarded as examples of summons to individuals or groups to develop new operational cultures and to transform their understandings of the roles, aims, and values of higher education or the roles and identities of individuals or entire professional groups. From one perspective or another, the summons relates to the fundamental question regarding what higher education is in contemporary society and what it is for. Our argument is that NAT provides a theoretical framework to elaborate on these questions form several perspectives. On the one hand, NAT provides a perspective concerning the relations between education and other fields of societal practice, thus providing a point of departure for elaborating on the role of education in a liberal democracy by asking what degree of freedom education has to autonomously formulate its task and role while recognising the legitimate interests of other societal fields. On the other hand, NAT provides a language to discuss pedagogical influence. This is important in two respects. Firstly, it provides a language to discuss one of the ultimate objectives of higher education leadership, namely higher education teaching, studying, and related learning. Secondly, it provides a language to discuss the many different forms of pedagogical influence that reside at and between all levels of leadership in education in a conceptually and theoretically consistent manner. Being able to conceptualise pedagogical leadership itself in a nuanced manner is a significant step forward in the field. Definitions of leadership generally tend to conclude that leadership is about *influencing* people in various ways and contexts (Alvesson, 2019) without necessarily providing language to elaborate upon what constitutes this influence, thereby raising the question of how to understand what influence is. From our perspective, the concepts of NAT offer us a more elaborate conceptual framework to approach questions concerning the influence of pedagogical leadership.

NAT thus offers the tools to approach multi-level and multi-professional leadership within education in a theoretically consistent manner that can capture the nuances of the pedagogical dimensions of the phenomena from a holistic perspective. As higher education leadership features a pedagogical dimension, in addition to having education as its object, we can discuss the pedagogical leadership of pedagogical activity. Such leadership differs from pedagogical leadership in other settings, such as industrial organisations. The object is not education. Given that higher education institutions typically value leaders with knowledge and experience in relation to the organisation in question, leaders need to have a principled understanding of the organisation they lead. Education as a science provides leaders with such knowledge.

Leadership in higher education exists within a complex, dynamic, rhizomatic, and often contradictory web of summons that appear to be challenging higher education institutions to redefine their self-understanding and their relationship to society, to

stakeholders, and to other higher education institutions. Individual academics are summoned to redefine their professional identities and relations to society, stakeholders, the higher education institution, and the scientific community. In the same manner, the scientific community is summoned to transform even the fundamental values, logics, and frames of reference of science. The summons are therefore indeed of a *pedagogical character*, as they are initiatives that focus on intervening in the relation between the other and the world to influence the self-understanding of the other.

The examples in this chapter illustrate the importance of having a theoretical framework that enables us to approach and elaborate upon pedagogical influence and the extent of its coercive character (i.e., the degrees of non-affirmative action it renders possible) in a theoretically coherent manner based on a theory of the studied object, pedagogy, and education. This includes always viewing the studied phenomena within its context, which entails understanding that individual acts of pedagogical leadership influence are always part of a larger dynamic of influence and interpretation. Viewing the relationship between education and other societal domains as non-hierarchical is an important point of departure. Ontologically, such a position entails discursive spaces forming a fundamental point of departure for an essential understanding of education. This prompts the following question: To what extent does leadership, understood as pedagogical summons, allow for non-affirmative activity?

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Chapter 3
Higher Education Curriculum Leadership in the Anthropocene

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Abstract In a time that many researchers have started to refer to the Anthropocene, the role of higher education (HE), as predominant educational institutions, is most relevant. Humanity faces big challenges with climate change that have become too obvious to be denied, a faster biodiversity loss than ever, growing inequality and poverty problems, and a zoonotic pandemic that has revealed that humans are parts of viral ecosystems. In such a world, the idea of the university and higher education in general is crucial in preparing for the future. This chapter discusses more precisely HE curriculum leadership (HECL) in the Anthropocene. The argumentation explores the topic from a view of *Bildung* and *non-affirmative education*. Based on the literature, the study specifically explores if the non-affirmative education theory could be an option to develop HECL in the Anthropocene. The paradoxical situation with an education that promotes freedom for humans, who live on a planet that noticeably limits their activities, is all but easy. Therefore, the HECL challenge includes the promotion of responsible discussions about values and urgent activities now, but also about how to enable the students to live in an unknown future.

Keywords Curriculum leadership · The Anthropocene · Non-affirmative theory · Sustainability · Higher education leadership

Introduction

The current world situation calls for an increased global focus on the future to secure the living conditions on the earth. In addition, it calls for responsible actions from all social sectors. Thus, higher education (HE), and higher education leadership (HEL)

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have inescapable steps to take, both on the management and curriculum levels. This chapter will especially discuss the role of higher education curriculum leadership (HECL) in relation to the world situation. According to contemporary Didaktik and curriculum theory, it is widely accepted that curriculum development is about choosing *what* to teach, but also about questioning who should have access to the knowledge, why particular content should be taught, based on what rules the content should be selected, and how the curriculum parts should be interrelated (Kliebard, 1992; Ylimaki, 2011; Klafki, 1997a, 1997b; Hopmann, 2007). If curriculum leadership is employed critically, it is more than leading work based on these questions.

After the transition from pre-modernity to modernity, educational theory operates with an idea of the future as open. Therefore, education faces the paradoxical dilemma of preparing *for* the future even though the future, in principle, cannot be known. The future itself is shaped by actions to be taken in the future. Humankind has abandoned a teleological cosmology according to which the development of human culture follows a predetermined plan. Yet, the near future is not totally behind a veil of ignorance. In fact, there is enough convincing knowledge about the direction and magnitude of where the world is heading. In addition to what is obvious, humans are forced to envision the future and what role future generations will have in its continuous shaping. While education for a long time has operated with a dyadic idea of generational change, humans need to reconcile and truly incorporate the idea of a multi-generational future perspective. Such a perspective centres intensely around an idea of responsibility for generations to come, or differently expressed, a responsibility for humanity in large. The idea of modernity was connected to the rise and development of nations, states, and nation-states, decentring the Kantian idea of education as related to a cosmopolitan view of humanity. Today humanity needs to rethink education and view it from a global perspective including education of the individuals for humanity's sake, and even the planets sake.

In such times, universities, including leaders and teachers, cannot be the ones who transform the students in a specific direction. Rather their task is to provide conceptual, experiential, historical and research-based perspectives that help students to construct a shared and individual platform for future engagement in professional, cultural, and societal participation. This includes collaboration in their visioning of a better future, which helps in attaining a critical consciousness (cf. Freire, 2021). A critical curriculum leader in any educational institution works in partnership with various other groups inside and outside the HE institution, and actively influences policies when needed.

Curriculum leadership, as education in general, is often reflected in relation to a broader or narrower context. In a longer historical perspective various contexts have significantly influenced how people think about education. In premodern cosmology, religion was important. Later, education was to a large extent connected to the idea of a nation-state. More recently, with the evolving global knowledge economy, the market has received an increased role. We argue that increased awareness of global interdependencies of various kinds, requires a rethinking and broadening of

the contextual issue. Uljens and Ylimaki (2017, p. 107–117) ask: "(H)ow should we conceptualize education, leadership and curriculum in order to make sense of these phenomena in a contemporary cosmopolitan perspective?" In arguing for 'globopolitanism' as a new leitmotif they make a distinction between cosmopolitanism as an education ideal and cosmopolitanism as empirical interconnected transnationalism. Identifying the validity of Uljens and Ylimaki's (2017) argument this chapter intends to continue the debate by presenting what is meant when calling the current time for the Anthropocene. The chapter starts with a background on why the quest for sustainability has arisen. We hope that this opening strategy will make it easier to understand the argumentation related to education that will continue in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

The Anthropocene

Numerous researchers, especially in the field of geoscience, argue that planet earth has entered a new geologic epoch and left the Holocene, which started about 12,000 years ago (see, Crutzen, 2006). They call the new epoch the Anthropocene, and in this word the first part comes from the Greek word *anthrōpos*, which means 'human being'. Thus, the Anthropocene is the name of the time when humans started to influence the atmospheric, geologic, hydrologic, biospheric and other earth systems, and make an impact on the globe far beyond the physical spheres. Many are those who mean that the so called 'Great Acceleration' started in the middle of the twentieth century or after the Second World War (e.g., Autin, 2016; Waters et al., 2016). At that time a growing world population began to consume resources and create new materials at an exponential rate (e.g., Sörlin, 2017), and to treat almost everything on earth as a resource (Paulsen, 2021b).

The Anthropocene is described in various ways by researchers from various fields. Sverker Sörlin, whose research field is environmental history, compares the idea of the Anthropocene with an intense light, and they also use the metaphor 'Janus faced'. Both the light and the metaphor reflect that this idea reveals how vulnerable the earth is and how it has reacted to the politics and science of the last centuries. It also reveals that humanity is in a dangerous situation, which people living now need to solve. Thus, the light points simultaneously backwards and forwards, from destruction to responsibility (Sörlin, 2017). With this Sörlin means that humans need to look backwards to understand what has brought them to this point and why their current lifestyle might be destructive, and to look into the future to solve the problems. In the book *Risk Society,* the sociologist Ulrich Beck (1992) describes how humans are entering a new era of social transformation in which the time of excuses is gone, and the time of self-criticism is the only option. In this new era, other means than politics may be required to decide about the future. Similarly, the educational researcher Michael Paulsen (2021b), calls the Anthropocene 'a time of transition', while Ole Kvamme (2021, p. 1) from the same research field talks about a time of 'global corporate capitalism', a time when "central imaginaries associated

with identity – human being, personhood, person, and the self – are, in fundamental ways, being shaken". Subsequently, to be a human today entails both to have insight into the state of the world, and to be willing to jointly change it, when needed.

Various positions exist regarding the consequences human activities have on the planet, and solutions are offered. Among them are solutions that are scientific, technical, philosophical, or political. In social sciences, the Anthropocene is viewed as a break that can denote both an environmental awakening and the end of the society of today (Autin, 2016; Wolff et al., 2020), pointing towards the unpredictability of the outcome. Climate change and biodiversity decline are the most obvious signs of the human impact on the earth, and neither of them can be denied. Still one sign of the problematic relation humans have with other parts of nature is the pandemic. In an oft-downloaded article in *Science*, Holmes states:

> Major changes in land use, increasing urbanization, and global connectedness are well documented as driving disease emergence through increasing human–animal contacts and accelerating transmission rates, and climate change will similarly accelerate the rate of zoonotic events. (Holmes, 2022, p. 1114)

Huge social problems like war, poverty and hunger are often interrelated with each other as well as with issues like climate change (see, e.g., Davies & Riddell, 2017; O'Riordan & Sandford, 2022). What happens to the earth has an immediate effect on humans.

A Quest for Change Through Politics and Education

It has become increasingly obvious that the state of the world is all but durable, and that a change is necessary. Many people have been aware of this for decades, among them the members of the Club of Rome.

> . . .change is perhaps already in the air, however faintly. But our tradition, education, current activities, and interests will make the transformation embattled and slow. (Meadows et al., 1972)

The Club of Rome was created in 1968 to address the environmental crises. In the 2020s, it has about 100 members, including notable scientists, economists, business leaders and former politicians (Club of Rome, 2022). Since its first book, *The limits of growth* (Meadows et al., 1972), the club has regularly published alarming reports on the state of the world.

Since the 1990s, attention on 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' issues has rapidly increased. According to UNESCO, 'sustainability' is a long-term goal, whereas 'sustainable development' acknowledges the process towards this goal (UNESCO, 2018). Thus, sustainability had already emerged as a visionary notion in the 1960s, while sustainable development became a political agenda in the 1980s (WCED, 1987). These concepts are all but clear, and have multiple meanings in various contexts, and are even used as synonyms. Salas-Zapata and Ortiz-Muñoz

(2019) distinguish four ways that sustainability is employed in research. They are as: (1) a set of social-ecological criteria guiding human action, (2) a vision of humankind realised when uniting social and ecological objectives of a particular reference system, (3) an object or phenomenon taking place in certain social-ecological systems, and (4) an approach involving the incorporation of social and ecological variables into a study, process, or product. In educational research all these approaches occur, and a problem is that the interpretations as well as the implementations most often are normative.

A political plan for moving towards sustainability that has received much attention is *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (in brief, called Agenda 2030) with its 17 goals (SDGs) and 169 targets (UN, 2015). This political agenda strives for action on climate change stressing that humans must live in harmony with nature, but they must also develop a more equal world with a target to end poverty and hunger. Thus, the agenda is a political 'plan of action for people, planet and prosperity' (p. 3). However, an increasing number of voices do not find the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs radical enough (see, Briant Carant, 2017; Scott, 2015; Swain, 2018). On the contrary, they call for a global redistribution of economic resources. They see a so called 'green economy' as a way to uphold prevailing societal capitalist models trying to simultaneously promote economic development and sustainability (see also Loiseau et al., 2016).

Irrespective of if the SDGs and similar policy agreements striving for a sustainable transformation of society are regarded as convincing or not, they are still guidelines pointing out that the state of the world is all but defensible, and that the course needs to be changed. A positive future depends on human capability and willingness to change and learn to act differently. At this stage, humanity needs more than technical innovation and economic growth, humanity needs tools to solve huge planetary problems and handle unpredictability. Both groups and individuals need basic knowledge about the planetary limits, and what is needed to change the situation in various sites and situations. In addition, the state of the world requires inhabitants with an understanding built on ethics to be willing to live without causing damage to the earth, so it will remain inhabitable (see, Wolff et al., 2020). Accordingly, there is a quest for an education that prepares people to handle an unpredictable future.

Since the 1980s, politicians have repeatedly given education an important role in the transition to sustainability (e.g., UNESCO, 2020; WCED, 1987). An increasing number of educational researchers, NGOs, teachers, and others have also actively informed and educated others about the planetary challenges. Not least, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) have mutually and separately acted on the forefront both to initiate actions, but also to discuss the consequences for education (Wolff et al., 2022). Many educational researchers also call for more thoughtful actions, and do not think transformation is any easy task. Transforming society is neither the same as transforming education

nor transformative learning. Hitherto the effect of education has been slow, as Meadows et al. stated already in 1972 (see the first quotation above, see also Wolff, 2011). A problem is that many voices seem to mix the role of politics and education, subordinating education as a tool to reach political aims. Instrumentalising education jeopardises the potential of education to develop students´ capability to critically reflect and to act based on their own judgements. Thus, both in schools and universities, students must learn to make responsible and cogitative actions. A learned individual demonstrates a discerning intellect and morality. In this light, educational institutions cannot be places in which the students learn to uncritically fulfil political aims. This concerns especially higher education institutions. However, let us be clear, since the establishment of modern universities in the seventeenth century, also Nordic universities have fulfilled parallel motives. Generally taken, for universities to act in the interest of economic productivity is not necessarily problematic. In fact, most of them have increasingly started to be cast in the same neoliberal mould, thereby losing their critical potential.

This chapter will discuss the role of education, especially higher education (HE), and of HE curriculum leadership (HECL) in the transformation that is required to tackle climate crises and other challenges in the Anthropocene. The text will especially focus on which vistas Bildung and non-affirmative pedagogy could offer in the context of HE and HECL. We begin by clarifying what international policies have to say about HE in relation to sustainability, and the role of HE in the transition to sustainability. Second, we discuss three educational positions offered as the means. Third, the focus is turned towards affirmative and non-affirmative education. The chapter ends with a reflection on if a non-affirmative approach could be an answer to what education needs in the Anthropocene.

Higher Education and Sustainability

Among the many international policy documents stressing the role of education in promoting sustainability, is the Global Partnership for Education (2020), which explicitly emphasises education to promote peace, tolerance, and sustainable development. On the contrary, the World Economic Forum 2015 report emphasises that students must adapt to the labour market, even if the UNESCO Secretary-General Irina Bokova, in her foreword, emphasises education as a path to sustainability (UNESCO, 2015). This report is no exception, since sustainability is not at the forefront in common international education policy. In general, policy pays main attention to socio-economic aspects, like the twenty-first century skills aiming at the promotion of knowledge and skills to succeed in a future labour market, in which high competition and rapid change are the target (Griffin & Care, 2014; Wolff et al., 2020). In many parts of the world the biggest unsustainable problem when it comes to education is a lack of education, especially if attending HE is impossible for most of the world's inhabitants.

Sustainability as a HE Goal, Among Others

Kaplan (2021) agrees that higher education is the topmost educational institution leading research and innovation. From the viewpoint of being a dean, he also argues that the survival of these institutions is not self-evident without radical changes of the rules of the game. To stay on the top is to be part of an already existing game. What he sees as the main transforming directions the current time calls in by HE are digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI); both will need a stronger focus on developing students with skills like adaptability and autonomous learning. Other necessary changes he asks for include adapting to cross- and interdisciplinarity, as well as educating responsible and sustainability-minded leaders. In addition, he stresses the need to collaborate with stakeholders outside the HE institutions and that the HE members need to match their actions with their words. However, one can ask if all these goals are mutually within reach. Like many other voices, Kaplan's ideas about how a university can survive and compete in the global educational field have many ingredients that are difficult, even impossible, to combine with sustainability. To be a part of an existing top game, one must play hard since the rules are hard ─ games have both winners and losers.

> Not only have competition and competitive schemes dramatically developed in the last decades, from competition for students to competition for budgets and competition for professors, but the nature of competition has also evolved, leading to new forms of competition, especially on the segment where this evolution has been the strongest, i.e., research universities. It is argued that competition in higher education is no longer only occurring between individuals and countries, but has become institutional, leading to a multi-level form of competition and transforming universities into competitors (Musselin, 2018, p. 657).

When HE strives to be competitive on a global educational market and to contribute to economic growth, these goals easily contest with sustainability goals in HE policies (Wolff et al., 2017). The practice of HE institutions is similarly the target of many incompatible wishes from a large number of staff and student groups and various stakeholders, like funding agencies, politicians and managers (Wolff & Ehrström, 2020). Thus, the HE institutions and HE leadership are interwoven with myriad political, economic, cultural, and religious interests and ideologies (Elo & Uljens, 2023). They might be entangled in various power constellations and must operate and balance between contrasting interests. Therefore, they may be forced to raise external funding, even if this involves meddling with businesses that are unethical from a global equality view. Expectations upon HE to deal with sustainability and sustainable development are thus merely one among many expectations of HE. Balancing expectations of sustainability, while simultaneously recognising expectations to contribute to economic growth or technological innovations can sometimes be at odds with each other. Balancing between different and sometimes contradictory expectations is one of the challenges for HE curriculum leadership.

Another difficulty is the epistemological dissimilarities between various disciplines. However, even if separate disciplines and faculties have dissimilar interests

and ideologies, complicated sustainability problems call for interdisciplinary approaches both in education and research (e.g., Dillon, 2006; Wolff et al., 2017). The problems cannot be solved without innovative methods (Christie et al., 2013) through which students learn to criticise normative assumptions and to search for alternative views (Zilliacus & Wolff, 2021; Wolff, 2011), and acknowledge both collective and individual interests in various timeframes (Roos, 2015) from an ethical view (Wolff, 2011; Wolff et al., 2017).

Universities are the leading producers of knowledge, and besides education, they have two more central tasks: research and societal engagement. Nonetheless, they have a strong subject orientation with a lack of interdisciplinary understanding, and administration that often hinders collaboration between subjects and institutions. The researchers include an increasing number of specialists even though sustainability issues are widely connected and complex (Wijkman & Rockström, 2012), and call for cross-disciplinary, even transdisciplinary approaches. However, cross-disciplinarity action is not possible without leadership and management support.

Collective HE Actions and Prospects

Since the end of previous century, many international associations aiming at sustainability in HE have seen the light of day, and many of them are especially involved in campus greening, but they also have other wider targets (Niedlich et al., 2020). An interesting new agent in the last decade is the *Planetary Health Alliance* (PHA) that is a growing confederation of more than 300 universities, non-governmental organisations, research institutes, and government bodies from more than 60 countries. The PHA is a result of the *Rockefeller Foundation-Lancet Commission on Planetary Health*'s report *Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch* in the renowned medical science journal *The Lancet* in 2015 (Whitmee et al., 2015, 22 authors, cited nearly 2000 times). This report highlights many issues that need to be studied and developed for humans to be able to live on a healthier planet. Nevertheless, like many policy documents, this report also strongly trusts in increased knowledge and behaviour change interventions. The idea that knowledge can trigger action, and that attitudes of others can be purposefully changed is a recurring issue in the sustainability debate. Unfortunately, there is no linear route from knowledge to action, and the hindrances on the way are numerous (see, Wolff, 2011). Therefore, the mode of the pedagogical enactments is crucial.

"Planetary Wellbeing might be defined as the highest attainable standard of wellbeing for human and non-human beings and their social and natural systems", according to Antó et al. (2021, p. 1). With 'planetary wellbeing', the authors extend the 'planetary health' concept, and call it a normative ideal for both the entire planet and for humans. According to Antó et al. as the leading educational bodies, HE institutions have a key role in encouraging awareness and promoting actions to improve planetary wellbeing. Nevertheless, this is easier said than done, and with a normative goal as the guideline, there might be a risk of *affirmatively* promoting a

fixed ideal. However urgent a goal might appear, when education is guided by preset goals, it is similar to if education strives towards conserving a society of status quo or to aim at an ideal or utopian future state (see, Uljens, 2020). Nevertheless, to change other peoples' attitudes and values is not the same as to ask for changes to the procedures and the principles that guide education. In contrast, to raise awareness of the state of the planet and encourage actions for change based on the students' own critical considerations, needs a non-affirmative approach by HE and HECL. We will penetrate deeper into this issue when discussing non-affirmative education later in the chapter.

Higher Education Leadership

According to Balsiger et al. (2017), sustainability is not only competing with contradicting goals in HE policies, but there is also a lack of capacity and knowledge about how to transform higher education practice. It is crucial for HE leaders to reflect on what goes on in the world and change course in relation to what takes place, but the sight of what is most essential for the earth's survival and its inhabitants cannot still be lost. Undoubtedly, the organisational change processes are vastly complex and include many aligned development parts with various actors and simultaneously occurring internal and external impacts (Azizi, 2023). Global events, crises, and trends have a strong influence, or rather *influences*.

HEL in All its Complexity as a Part of Change

Despite the significance of leadership for a successful transformation of HE's promotion of more sustainable societies and to face the challenges of the Anthropocene, the literature on the role and practices of sustainability leadership in higher education is poorly developed (Aung & Hallinger, 2022; Azizi, 2023), and the studies have also been fragmented (Azizi, 2023). Leadership in and of HE differs from leadership in private businesses due to its object: education. This means that HEL has a pedagogic dimension (cf. Elo & Uljens, 2023; Tigerstedt & Uljens, 2016; Uljens, 2020) in two respects. On the one hand, the end object of HE leadership is pedagogic (HE teaching and studying) and on the other hand, parts of HE leadership aims at development (staff or organisational) and thus includes supporting and influencing the learning processes of others. Curriculum development in HE combines both, as it consists of the learning and development processes of staff, aiming at transforming HE teaching and studying, i.e. pedagogical leadership of pedagogical praxis. In Leal Filho et al.'s (2020) study, one of the main sustainability leadership tasks mentioned by HE leaders was curriculum development, pointing towards the key role of the pedagogical dimensions of leadership when dealing with sustainability issues. Yet, curricular development is not without challenges.

Because of the many challenges, HEL is intricate in many ways. As already stated, to understand the pedagogical role of HEL, one needs to see it as a part of a dynamic process in a large context involving multiple agents and players that influence each other in many ways (Elo & Uljens, 2023). This does not only make HEL into a dynamic commission altering between what takes place on internal and external arenas, but also in relation to the past and the present time (Uljens, 2020). Like HE in general, HEL involves a great number of both internal and external stakeholders. Therefore, both HE and HEL form parts of complex dialogues or discourses, as they are context-dependent and interrelated with many other sectors of society (Elo & Uljens, 2023; Tigerstedt, 2022). This is challenging, since people are multifaceted, they have a variety of backgrounds and conditions (Wolff & Zilliacus, 2021). The influences are also many, both international and national, when it comes to visions, management, work processes, as well as evaluation of outcomes. This means that the situation may quickly request adjustments. Not at least concerns like an enlarged privatisation (Uljens, 2020), the increased student volumes and institution numbers, growing costs, as well as the political visibility and the economic significance attributed to education and research have all affected HE (Schofer et al., 2021). In Europe, there has been a clear shift from an input-centred to an outcome-oriented curriculum policy (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2015).

To increase the potentials to change HE, it is crucial to initiate both internal and external discussions about where HE is heading, what the ultimate aims of HE are, and what kind of life in what kind of a world the students enrolled today might have to live in (Wolff, 2007). Similarly, it is crucial to discuss what kind of educational and didactic approaches might lead to a change. Such discussion could be initiated top-down by the leaders or bottom-up, by students for example, but even a bottom-up approach needs a response from the leadership. Following Leal Filho et al.'s (2020) description of leadership, its role is to align people with visions, motivating and empowering them. Yet, they also emphasise that anyone in an organisation can become a leader and initiate change.

The Political Goal Diversity of HEL

In many countries, HE has been influenced by ideas of new public management (NPM) (e.g., Elo & Uljens, 2023) that is a management model based on a neoliberal ideology. NPM is built on the ideas that the quality and efficiency of the civil service should be developed by management techniques and practices mainly employed in the private sector (Bleiklie, 2018). However, NPM built on elements like accountability and measurement might not suit very well an aim of transformation towards what the Anthropocene dilemmas demand. The combination of HEL based on NPM and the quest for a transformation because of the challenges of the Anthropocene is all but easy.

HE institutions have strong cultural and historical traditions (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2015). They are old-fashioned when it comes to procedures (Wolff et al., 2017), and

leadership is hierarchical and divided on a succeeding scale as well as on a parallel level, which makes all changes demanding. The notion of Bildung and the non-affirmative theory that will be in focus in the next section offers an alternative to market and economic imperatives in HE (see, Taylor, 2017), since leadership is not merely about management and pragmatically leading people, but also about creating conditions for other people's growth. Tigerstedt and Uljens (2016) call leadership *pedagogic* when it supports human growth and learning in interaction.

Three Diverse Options for HE

There are impediments of many kinds slowing down the transformation of more ecologically sound and equal societies, many of them ideological. Since education is given a major role in the transformation process, the following discussion will concentrate on what educational options are commonly offered and what a transformation to fit the challenges of the Anthropocene could denote from the view of education and curriculum development. This section discusses three positions often offered to handle future challenges in educational contexts, in relation to higher education, leadership as well as to sustainability. These positions are competencies, transformative learning, and Bildung. Even if these positions sometimes are mixed, we will here present them separately as three examples on the many ways sustainability is approached in HE curriculum and HEL today.

Competencies

Following the twenty-first century skill discussion and other contemporary education policy approaches, the focus on *competencies* has risen to the top. This is obvious when it comes to HE as well as sustainability education, but also HEL and sustainability HEL (e.g., Purcell et al., 2019; Segalàs et al., 2009). There are efforts towards the development of education competencies, higher education competencies, sustainability competencies, and leadership competencies. The origin of this interest is the OECD that started to aim at competency development in education more generally in the 1990s (OECD, 2014). Hundreds of sustainability programs have emerged in the global HE context the last two decades (Brundiers et al., 2021), and many sustainability attempts in HE are striving towards developing the students' competencies (Pacis & Van Wynsberghe, 2020; Evans, 2019; Levesque & Wake, 2021). However, competency is a vague concept that might relate to psychology or sociology, a performative ability to operate in practical situations, or entail something interpersonal, organisational, or theoretical (Schaffar, 2019). There are many lists with sustainability competencies, seldom explaining which theories these lists are built on (Brundiers et al., 2021). Among them is a much-cited list created by Wiek et al. (2011), according to whom a student needs to develop systems thinking,

anticipatory thinking, strategic thinking, values thinking, interpersonal collaboration, and integrated problem-solving. To this list, UNESCO (2017) has added self-awareness competency, which is controversial as a competency, according to Jaakkola et al., 2022). A more basic division is knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities, and attitudes (Segalàs et al., 2009).

Since the sustainability competencies are listed in various ways by various authors (Jaakkola et al., 2022), the whole competency concept is as such very hard to interpret (see, Schaffar, 2019). Competency is also used as a synonym of competence, even if the meaning shifts (see more about this in Jaakkola et al., 2022). An attempt with this concept has been to measure the learning results. However, measuring competencies is hard, since features like someone's agency, responsibility, motivation, and morale are often situational and varies with the content of knowledge area. In addition, competencies are often viewed as intra-individual capacities and not socially distributed or relative contexts and contents. Thus, the competency approach instrumentally focused on changing people, be they leaders, students, or others, but not communities. Therefore, one can ask if a competency approach is suitable for HE, which aims to prepare the students for an unknown future.

Transformative Learning

Another approach that is often emphasised in relation to sustainability education and leadership is *transformative learning*. Opposite to the competency approach, transformative learning is a learning theory with a theoretical background based on many thinkers, like the philosophers Karl Popper, Jürgen Harbermas, John Dewey, and Thomas Kuhn, the educator Paulo Freire, the psychiatrist Roger Gould, and many others (see Kitchenham, 2008; Mezirow, 1990, 1991). Based on these and other theories Jack Mezirow developed the so called 'transformative learning theory' aiming at adult learners and valid for adult learning contexts. A transformative learning approach strives to promote the students' critical reflection on postulated meaning and values, and to identify and judge their earlier assumptions (Mezirow, 1990, 1991). A key element in transformative learning is critical reflection, implying that the learners become aware of their frames of reference and are willing to expand them. According to Mezirow (1990), the educator is an 'emphatic provocateur' and a model for critical reflection.

Transformative learning is built on trust. Therefore, shaping trustful relationships in authentic practices is a foundation for transformative learning (Taylor, 2009). Trust is a prerequisite, both between the students, and the students and teacher, if the educator wants to promote the afore-mentioned critical reflection. While transformative learning can awaken strong emotions and feelings of vulnerability, the educator needs to be responsive and aware of the students' comfort levels (King & Heuer, 2009; Tisdell & Tolliver, 2009), so the learners develop confidence, and readiness to deal with learning even if affective (Taylor, 2009). Lange (2009) states

that transformative learning is about 'creating a learning sanctuary', which first means that the educator leaves the door open for unseen transformation to occur. Second, it is about shaping new relationships between the social and natural world, and third, offering a safe space to enable the participants to ask deep questions that can lead to broader societal relationships. The notion of trust in the transformative learning theory relates to recognition and vulnerability. All these three elements occur in Habermas' communicative action theory (Petherbridge, 2021), which was crucial for Mezirow.

Like competencies, transformative learning is often used in sustainability education discussions. The transformative learning theory is strongly based on theories, but still it is often implemented in a shallow way in sustainability education contexts without relating the concept to any theories (Giangrande et al., 2019; Aboytes & Barth, 2020). However, Sterling (2011, p.27) states that even if transformative learning is difficult, a "mainstream emphasis on cognitive learning with a little 'values education' thrown in", will be insufficient to meet the contemporary unsustainability challenges.

The ideas of competencies and transformative learning are also often combined, even if shallowly (e.g., Peterson & Lundquist, 2021; Sahakian & Seyfang, 2018). OECD (2019) combines these approaches by outlining three transformative competences [sic] for 2030. They are: 'creating new values', 'reconciling tensions and dilemmas', and 'taking responsibility'. With these competencies, OECD (2019, p. 4) implies "the types of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values students need to transform society and shape the future for better lives". However, a transformation process is complicated and far from any easily adoptable competency, and it is a theory that must be developed further to suit new contexts, like sustainability and HEL. When implementing sustainability in HE through a transformative learning approach including a focus on competencies may easily end up in normativity (Sahakian & Seyfang, 2018).

Bildung

The idea of Bildung has many aspects in common with transformative learning (see, Buttigieg & Calleja, 2021). They have partly the same root in the thoughts of the Enlightenment with philosophers like Rousseau and Kant, and the German philosophical tradition built on classical thinkers like Schleiermacher, Hegel, Herbart, and later also Habermas. Especially elements related to Habermas are similar (Sørensen, 2015).

In the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment philosophers started to refer to the 'Bildung' concept. They saw Bildung as a holistic educational approach aimed at the development of humankind. The concept of Bildung, became a part of the vocabulary of the culture and education minister of Prussia, Wilhelm von Humbodt. He used Bildung when he talked about the university reformation and civil servant education at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In contrast to the word

education, Bildung has no preset aim, but describes a progression, like a journey, in which someone leaves the homeland or hometown and enters an adventurous journey open for new experiences and understandings (Gadamer, 2013). The experiences during the journey may change the traveller's way of thinking and acting and when returning home, this person may have changed, and initiates change in the surrounding society, as well. When viewing HE through this metaphor, HEL is about leading in a way that is *non-affirmative* towards the community with staff, students, and stakeholders, being willing to influence and act in the society and even globally, to see what is possible in others, and thus promote transformation (cf., *Bildsamkeit* below). In this context, non-affirmative means that the process does not recognise and affirm a predefined end goal, instead, the question of the future direction is regarded as being open for deliberation. The critical power of non-affirmative curriculum leadership then lies in that it avoids conservative reproduction of existing practices but also avoids acting instrumentally with respect to any external interest. Such an idea of education and curriculum leadership also implies that the pedagogical interventions operate indirectly by reminding that, in the end, it is in the hands of the learner what comes out of the process.

The idea of Bildung assumes that humans can act in a way that exceeds the immediate present. Bildung is a kind of a creative dialogue in which a newcomer (novice) discusses with the world. However, the Bildung process has no preset aim, the outcome remains open. Therefore, Bildung does not suggest a specific way of life, but is "a guiding concept that reflexively ties together a diversity of different life experiences and lifestyles" (Riese & Hilt, 2021, p. 99). Bildung includes critical reflection on the past to be able to transform the present into a better future. Uljens (2020) also emphasises that Bildung is about realising the shortcomings of one's hitherto knowing, and an ability to envision the future.

A problem with the Bildung approach in relation to sustainability and the challenges of the Anthropocene, is that the idea of Bildung is often perceived as strongly human centred. From the beginning it has dealt with humans both as individuals and groups, but not with humans as a part of nature. According to Paulsen (2021b, p. 212), the idea of Bildung "marginalises nature as a scene to be tamed and mastered". However, this is a misconception. Given that the idea of Bildung refers to an unending interchange (Wechselwirkung) between the subject and the world, the subject is made dependent on something it is not by itself. Instead, the subject is constantly questioned by the resistance put up by the world. Paulsen (2021b) mistakenly reads the concept of Bildung too normatively. In addition, the classic representatives of Bildung typically saw education of a moral character as the highest aim of education. The highest aim was not to learn to reason following any predetermined morality, as perhaps implied by Paulsen, but to live with the question of good life as an open one, or as a constant companion in life. As morality is renegotiable, the individual must learn discerning thinking in moral issues.

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, German educators started to ask for an ecological Bildung (ökologische Bildung) (e.g., Müller, 1994; Möhring, 1996; Waldmann, 1992). Müller (1994) wanted to see an ecological Bildung as a part of the general Bildung, and not as any add on. The dilemma

with the absence of natural world from the Bildung discussion, has also been raised by Peltonen (1997), who sees Bildung as a process in which humans acts alone and jointly in cultural, social, and natural environments, and thus recreate, define, and transform both themselves and their environment. Similarly, Wolff (2007) calls for a Bildung approach in HE that creates a more realistic view of the future, and that is built on interdisciplinary approaches, acknowledging diverse forms of knowledge including scientific perspectives other than Western ones. Such an education incorporates ethical discussions about how current and future dilemmas relate to human history, and how humans have exploited the non-human part of nature and each other in the past. Suhr (2021) combines transformative approaches and ecological Bildung, when they search for a 'transformative social ecologic education' through the philosophy of Herbert Marcuse.

Even if there are many voices that are critical of the notion of Bildung, it has also found its way to the posthumanism through for example Carol Taylor (2017), who situates it in an English HE context:

> I make the case for a posthuman Bildung which recognises the inseparability of knowing and being, the materiality of educative relations, and the need to install an ecology of ethical relations at the centre of educational practice in higher education. Such a conceptualisation situates Bildung not purely as an individual goal but as a process of ecologies and relationships. (Taylor, 2017, p. 422).

Still Taylor (2017, p. 423) argues that Bildung with its origin in the Enlightenment is firmly tied to "Western-centric, individualistic and colonialist modes of understanding". Nonetheless, Taylor sees Bildung as a flexible concept, and states that regardless of this burden, the idea of Bildung can be modified like any other concept, since "concepts find their value in being put to use". By this argument, Taylor means that Bildung is not any static notion, but can be developed and must be developed constantly, since the circumstances today are different from what they were in the eighteenth century.

Another representative of the Bildung tradition that has put the concept to use their (take 'their' away) when writing about didactics from a Bildung perspective in the late 1900s is the German educational researcher Wolfgang Klafki, who correctly claims that teachers today cannot have knowledge about what cognitions and attitudes students will need in the future (Klafki, 1997b). Klafki also warns against making school education into a simplification of scientific knowledge, and wants to include so called 'epochal key problems' in the Bildung concept. By this, Klafki addresses global issues related to the environmental crisis, social inequity, and war, as ways of presenting educational content more universally (Klafki, 1997a, 1998). All the complicated challenges of Anthropocene are epochal key problems, and Klafki (1997a, 1998) and Scott (2009) call for an education that creates students' capacities to live in an unpredictable future world and makes them prepared to adjust to changing physical and material circumstances. In addition, Klafki (1998) calls for an education that promotes critique, argumentation, and empathy. Klafki's view of epochal key issues is in line with what Jean-Jacques Rousseau had already sketched out in 1765 in the supplement part of the book *Émile*, *Émile et Sophie.* The most

important aim of education, in this often-neglected part of Émile, is not that Émile should achieve a particular kind of knowledge or competencies, nor specific values or attitudes, but to become capable of living whatever life would bring in his way (Rousseau, 2009).

Paulsen (2021a) is critical to the ideas of Klafki, since Paulsen means that the Anthropocene cannot be regarded as an epochal key problem among others, but must be viewed as a new world-horizon that demands a reinterpretation of the previous epochal key issues, and a rethinking of the notion of Bildung. Therefore, Paulsen suggests three aspects of education relevant in the Anthropocene. These aspects are: (1) *A new awareness*. This aspect entails that humans need to reflect on who they are and how they relate to the rest of the world, (2) *A double entanglement*. This aspect emphasises the bonds between *humans and humans* as well as between *humans and non-humans*. It also includes reflections on how these two bonds interact. (3) *A new epoch*. Since there is nothing like a nature-free human or a human-free nature, this aspect implies opening a new understanding of both old and new relations and problems.

Like Paulsen, Kvamme (2021) is critical of Klafki's epochal key issues and asks where the non-humans are in this anthropocentric theory. Undoubtedly, humans are the core of the traditional Bildung theory. However, like Paulsen, Kvamme sees potential in Klafki's Bildung theory, because of its global viewpoint and since it has a transformative outlook including both ethical and political dimensions. In contrast to the instrumental competency concept, the German *Bildung* concept is an alternative that partly overlaps transformative learning and has an aim more in line with an education that the Anthropocene dilemma quests for.

Säfström (2021, p. 236) raises the question "how we are to mobilise pedagogy to respond to the forgetfulness of earth and its spiritual life without repeating the fallacies that brought us to this point?". Therefore, as a didactical approach that might have something to offer the HEL and Anthropocene discussion of today the following section will discuss non-affirmative education, which has its root in the Bildung theory.

Affirmative Vis-a-Vis Non-affirmative Education

The German and the Nordic educational traditions distinguish between a Bildung and a pedagogic action theory. We will first present the ideas of affirmative and non-affirmative education, and thereafter discuss the role of a non-affirmative Bildung approach in HEL, which could be called a pedagogic action theory. Finally, the section ends by answering the question of whether a non-affirmative educational approach could be utilised in a HE context to suit the challenges of the Anthropocene.

Affirmative Education and Action

As already stated, in the policies on how to implement sustainability through education, the aim has often been to try to change the students' attitudes and behaviour to suit predefined values. The question is how such a process is carried out. If it is only a question about learning values that are presented as self-evident, then this kind of change attempt is called *affirmative education*. Of many reasons, politics have aimed at changing the younger generation in a specific direction. The concern has been religion, economy, or to uphold some specific social order. When the 15 authors from various research fields in Antó et al. (2021. p. 9, see Higher Education Leadership above) talk about the flourishing of humanity, it might first sound similar to Bildung and a non-affirmative approach:

> that humanity can aspire to flourish only alongside non-human beings and in ways attentive to environmental boundaries and the political, legal, economic, cultural, and social systems shaping Earth's natural systems.

However, these authors see education as leading learners to a given, and in a sense closed, normative system, when they propose a new concept, 'planetary wellbeing', as a defined conceptual framework:

> Planetary wellbeing has a global reach that concerns us all, and we should endeavour to define a conceptual educational framework that can be taught not only at universities but also at primary and secondary schools, as well as in life-long learning programs open to everyone, regardless of their educational background. Finding a pedagogical template that can be refined by teachers working at all educational levels should be one of the goals of a project such as this.

Not only education, but also culture can be affirmative. This is obvious in the *affirmative action* concept that relates to how people treat each other and stipulate unequal laws (Van Alstyne, 2000). The affirmative action concept is much used in relation to supportive processes aiming at upholding racist and sexist cultures by law and actions (Hanson, 2020), and thus the concept is associated with social sustainability. Research related to the notion of affirmative action shows that the HE culture is far from offering equal opportunities for all (Ibarra, 2001). Repeatedly, empirical research shows how applicants from under-privileged social groups are underrepresented among university students, even in countries in which students can study free of charge, and, therefore, not dependent on familial economic resources. Similarly, in public education in countries like Finland, boys are systematically performing less well than girls. However, in many parts of the world girls faces huge barriers to education because of poverty, norms, lacking infrastructure, violence, and various forms of fragility (World Bank, n.d.). Educational policy and school systems thus affirm certain kinds of unequalising cultures, which affects the students' subsequent school careers and thereby the rest of their life.

A changing world needs leaders that are willing to initiate and trigger change processes in many arenas, from the global to the institutional, and from laws, regulations, and strategies to actual activities in daily campus life. This is not only about the so called 'campus greening' of the buildings, gardens, and consumption,

but also about shaping institutional educational cultures in which people can safely mature and flourish together. An HE culture includes patterns of assumptions shared by the members of the institution, and it develops and is transmitted in the daily interactions (Niedlich et al., 2020). Thus, a culture includes directly visible structures, language, and practices, as well as invisible principles, and it is apparent in many other ways than through language.

When considering the way non-human animals, plants, water, and land are treated in law and discourses, an affirmative action related to other than humans is also obvious, even if the concept affirmative action is not typically used to indicate this kind of unfairness. However, even if this is not the case, it is HE's task to address wrongness against other parts of nature as well as against humans by studying the reasons, processes, and possible consequences of such societal discourses. In a political initiative, Taylor (2017, p. 432) wants to see 'ecological universities' caring for the world, not only humans, and she sees the university education as entangled in "a posthuman partnership in worlds-making", since education cannot anymore be only a 'human affair'. Likewise, it is not only an 'inner process', but an educative practice that makes a difference in the world.

Affirmative education has probably existed for as long as there have been humans bringing up their children. Benner (1995) also clearly stresses the importance of affirmative education before an individual can learn to criticise and aim for change. This means that the process of socialisation comes before transformation. All animals perform affirmative education when they instruct their offspring on necessary issues, for example, when they teach them how to search for food, but they do not perform non-affirmative education. To transfer knowledge could also be called affirmative education, even if this task is often crucial. Thus, to have knowledge about the state of the world is a precondition before somebody develops capacities that make them ready to change it. Therefore, both affirmative and non-affirmative education are needed, even if their aims differ. However, for humans to grow, education is about teaching and learning how the world operates, and about one's own and others' options, and even obligations, to influence and change these processes. A critical frame of mind that sees change as an essential option becomes a lifelong endeavour, a Bildung process. Humans need to act in accordance with what they know today but be ready to accommodate and critical search for new routes.

In addition, the opposite of an affirmative education, a *non-affirmative* educational theory has existed for a long time, at least the seeds to it. Friedrich Schleiermacher was already writing about non-affirmative education at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The following section will introduce this concept, and how it could be implemented in a sustainability HE pedagogy, institutions, and leadership.

The Non-affirmative Education Theory (NAT)

For the most part, Bildung is taken to refer to an open, unending and dynamic process between the subject and the world. This is how Humboldt saw it. For such processes to occur, no education is needed. Bildung in this sense, is an anthropological way of being in the world. Yet this understanding of Bildung presupposes the existence of something external to the individual. In addition to that way of understanding Bildung, we can identify a class of human activities that are initiated by pedagogical interventions. Such Bildung activity does not happen by itself but depends on pedagogical activities in which the students are promoted to question what they experience. Based on the philosophy of Schleiermacher, Herbart and Fichte, Dietrich Benner, has developed a Bildung based education theory approach focusing especially on a *non-affirmative* view (Benner, 1995; Elo & Uljens, 2023). Non-affirmative education includes a critical treatment of topics like democracy, equality, and sustainability (Uljens, 2023). In the following sections, we will focus on a few elements that are central in the non-affirmative educational theory. They are 'Bildsamkeit', 'summoning to self-activity' (Aufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit), recognition (Anerkennung), and the idea about non-hierarchical social areas.

The German concept *Bildsamkeit* is based on the idea that individuals are free and self-reflecting subjects, who can be "provoked" to continue reflecting and thus, further develop. Individuals are already subjects actively experiencing the world and influenced by the world, although not determined by it (Elo & Uljens, 2023; Brinkmann, 2021). In a similar fashion, individuals are also active agents influencing the world, without determining it either. The relationship between individual and world is thus characterised by reciprocal influence without determination. Only if students are treated as free subjects (not empty bottles to be filled), they can develop their ability to think independently and act in accordance with their own reflective decisions. They are provoked to make sense of the world.

The non-affirmative education theory (NAT) conceptualises a pedagogic intervention as a summons of self-activity, an invitation or provocation to an already self-active Other to direct their attention in a certain direction and engage in self-transcending activity that likely will result in a process of learning. In this process, the other exceeds their current way of understanding and being in the world. A pedagogical intervention is thus an interruption in the open and reciprocal relation between the Other and the world as described by *Bildsamkeit*. Due to constitutive subjective freedom, the summoner does not possess coercive power over the Other's way of perceiving themselves and the world. The Other is not determined by the summoner, who is unable to transfer ideas, knowledge, values, and competencies to the Other directly. Pedagogical influence is thus always mediated by the Other's self-activity. Even if Humboldt emphasised the role of language in the Bildung process (see Brinkmann, 2021), the summoning is also bodily and emotional. It is the whole individual who changes, not only the cognitive faculties (see also, Merleau-Ponty, 2012).

Pedagogical leadership, understood as a pedagogic summons, entails directing an Other's self-activity to transcend their current state through a process of self-directed transformation and is not tied to any formal leadership positions, as all actors are potential objects as well as initiators of pedagogical summoning. In a leadership context, this means that formal leaders as well as co-workers provoke others to reflect, and question preconceived notions and norms. This includes their relations with themselves, with others and with the entire world (see, Wolff, 2011). In the Anthropocene, the reflection on a human's relations to the biotic as well as the non-biotic parts of the earth and its atmosphere is extremely crucial. In a HE context, this means that students, co-workers, and others are provoked to jointly transcend the given. They are invited to dialogues (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2015), but also to act. In a HE context there are various players summoning each other "in complex, rhizomatic webs of summons" (Elo & Uljens, 2023, p. 1291) through various forms of relations and interactions that change over time.

NAT calls for recognising others and confirming them as anthropologically indeterminant subjects with a right to their own freedom (Benner, 1995). This offers educated individuals with opportunities to choose and influence how human culture develops in the future (Benner, 2001). To become a citizen is considered to be a privilege, but it cannot be taken for granted. However, it comes at a price, and that price consists of commitment, responsibility, and participation. The non-affirmative view on Bildung emphasises that individuals reflect on how their own interests are promoted in relation to others' interests.

Educational situations, in which someone promotes another's self-reflection and self-creative activities, offers opportunities for the learners to exceed themselves, and understand more than they otherwise would (Uljens, 2002, 2005). However, a paradox is how both to influence individuals' actions, and simultaneously encourage the development of their freedom. Benner (2005) regards this paradox as an educational starting point. The educator must prevent harmful deeds but can also promote learning processes that the students never might accomplish without the educator. Thus, the students become capable of achieving what they could not have done without supervision. To some extent, this compares with the 'zone of proximal development' that Vygotsky (e.g., 1978) developed. Awareness of the paradox can operate as a warning signal that prevents education from becoming too utopic or being derailed into indoctrination. Also, Rousseau expressed the idea that people must be encouraged, invited, and provoked to freedom (Affeldt, 2006). What Benner (2005) points out is that non-affirmative education is about recognising and treating another individual as something they are not yet, and to adapt the demands so they most likely engage the other individual in relevant self-activity.

Based on Axel Honneth, who was Habermas' student, Fleming (2022) has developed the notion of recognition into the transformative learning theory. "Learning involves an intersubjective process of mutual recognition that is a precondition for self-realisation, critical reflection, and engagement in democratic discourse and transformative learning (p. 574). Undoubtedly, Fleming's version of transformative learning has much in common with NAT, and Fleming sees adult learning as an

"intersubjective process of mutual respect and recognition" (p. 574). Therefore, Fleming emphases learning as something social.

However, freedom always has its limitations. Since humans are social beings, they are parts of social communities, such as HE institutions. This means that NAT criticises education theory positions that merely promote freedom and neglect the role of social responsibility. Such a pedagogy would compromise most visions of mutual covenants and actions, like responsible actions on behalf of the entire planet. Thus, contemporary HE is in a constant struggle between the goals of individual autonomy, social responsibility, and the survival of the earth (see, Wolff & Zilliacus, 2021). The leaders' responsibility is to recognise and care about individuals as well as the community. However, this is not enough; they need to include the entire planet. Without a vital planet, all human activities are in vain. Therefore, the human future and survival need attention. Humans are dependent on both the biotic (living) and the abiotic (not living) environment. An orthodox human-centred approach is impossible because humankind is completely dependent on other parts of nature for survival. Therefore, recognition in the Anthropocene epoch means that both the individuals' right to well-being and survival and the whole humanity's well-being and survival are acknowledged. In addition, the entire planet must be recognised. A non-affirmative leadership creates opportunities for individuals to develop their judgment and make their own choices based on recognition. From an anthropocentric view this means that other people are recognised as individuals, as members of society as well as natural beings dependent on a viable planet (see, Wolff, 2011). Therefore, humans need other parts of nature to survive. From an eco-centric view, all parts of nature have an intrinsic value, and need protection.

Education in a liberal democracy cannot have as its goal to merely train people for specific work tasks or leadership roles in a definite field and according to a teleological or hierarchical system. Instead, the education of today needs to prepare people holistically and include them in the understanding of various human activities (Benner, 2005). According to Benner, various human practices are equal and build a unity in which all parts are important for human coexistence in the future. Therefore, Benner (2005) divides human practices into six non-hierarchical practice fields or co-existentials, which are economy, ethics, politics, art, religion, and education. These generation transcending practice fields are neither predetermined nor hierarchical. In addition, Benner (2005) follows Herbart, and regards *education*, *ethics*, and *politics* as three branches of the same human intercourse. Thus, none of these three branches is hierarchically above the other, but they are equally important. Every individual must be introduced in these branches to be able to participate in common human practices, and in joint development of the entire world community, in a cosmopolitan way. The non-hierarchy between education, ethics, and politics in HE creates a discursive culture and an openness (Tigerstedt & Uljens, 2016). Thus, summoning in a HE context means to support the others towards professional, political, and cultural autonomy and to problematise norms, practices, and knowledge (cf., Tigerstedt & Uljens, 2016). A non-hierarchic order of practices makes it possible to criticise and critically study the policies and values education is built on from an inside HE position, but also vice versa, it gives opportunities for politics to

study education (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). This enables dialogues as well as mutual development actions between the practice fields.

Benner does not directly discuss sustainability issues, but he is aware of the conflict that may arise between values that recognise the world as a home for all humans, and those who want to protect the interests of distinct states. Similarly, he distinguishes between a conflict between seeing work as a general human activity, and exploiting nature and eliminating workers in a competition between labour and capital. When reflecting on the idea of non-hierarchic practice fields, we cannot help wondering why some fields are absent. We don't view Benners's description of the practice fields as a definitive description, but rather as communicating the point that a liberal democracy can be seen to consist of various fields of practice influencing each other in a non-hierarchical manner. However, the division into these fields itself can vary, and depending on how they are divided, the fields themselves can be more or less intertwined with each other. Other divisions of society into fields of practice have been presented over the years by Flitner (1961), Fink (1995) or Derbolav (1987). From a HE point of view, as well as from the point of view of the Anthropocene, one relevant co-existential that is included in Derbolav's (1987) framework but missing in Benner's description is the field of research. From the perspective of the Anthropocene, the recognitions of the scientific field could open for a better understanding of the role of other living organisms than humans and of their environments, as well as of life-supporting processes on earth. From a HE perspective, research is the foundation for all activities within HE and maintaining a non-hierarchical relation between research and other fields such as economy, politics or religion is a fundamental prerequisite for HE. From the perspective of HE in the Anthropocene, highlighting research as a field of practice could be justified from the perspective of the Anthropocene.

However, although emphasising the recognition of the voice of scientific research when deliberating on the relation between the human species and nature, it still does not communicate a position on the matter itself. It is one thing to point towards recognising the input from research, and another to take a position on the human/non-human nature relationship. The discussion on the Anthropocene has pointed towards the importance of recognising that the biological preconditions for humanity's existence on earth are *beyond* the levels of societal practice fields. The biotic and abiotic preconditions for human existence can be seen as fundamental prerequisites and points of departure, without which engaging in societal fields of practice is both meaningless and impossible. The environment is the fundament that makes all other things possible. From the perspective of the Anthropocene, it is a weakness that NAT is silent on the question of the relation between education and the existential prerequisites formed by the biotic and abiotic environment.

So, how is education to deal with this relation? NAT states that the relation between education and other societal fields is non-hierarchical. This entails that in a liberal democracy, no field of society is either totally subordinated or totally superordinated to another. In other words, education does not exist in total autonomy and splendid isolation from economics or politics, nor is it totally subordinated to economic or political interests. NAT's point of departure is that education must recognise the interests of economics and politics, but instead of affirming them,

education has the autonomy to make these the objects of reflection and elaboration by maintaining a non-affirmative position. However, the question is if the same principle of recognition without affirmation is viable in the relation between education and the environment? On the one hand, the relation between humankind and the environment is non-hierarchical and reciprocal, since human is nature. The human species is indeed influencing the environment, this is the root cause of the Anthropocene era. On the other hand, the environment is also clearly influencing humankind. To this extent, the relation can be seen as non-hierarchical and reciprocal because mankind and the environment are influencing each other. However, there is a substantial difference between the relation between the societal fields of practice themselves, and the relation between the practice fields and the environment. The practice fields are areas of human activity created and upheld by humans. The environment is neither created nor upheld by humans. The biotic and abiotic environment preceded humankind and will continue to exist after humankind in one form or another. As the Anthropocene condition has shown, there are limits to the extent and character of human influence on the environment, otherwise this influence becomes a fundamental threat to the existence of humankind. In contrast to the societal practice fields, the environment is not an actor or field, intentionally influencing another actor or field. Rather, the environment is the fundament for the existence of humankind that cannot be ignored. The mechanisms of the biotic and abiotic environment are not the choice of an active actor, or negotiable, they are there whether one likes it or not. Without a vital nature, there are no humans. Adopting a non-affirmative approach to "the laws of nature" themselves is thus not a viable option. The environment thus emerges as a *fundamental* point of departure that all fields of societal practice, education included, must relate to and cannot ignore.

One conclusion could thus be that to educate for a sustainable future, education would have to both recognise *and affirm* the prerequisites for human existence that the environment sets. Accepting the biotic and abiotic frames for human existence as a fact does however not dictate how education is supposed to approach the question of what present and future generations of humans are supposed to do about it. The answer provided by NAT would be to recognise human dependence on the environment as a fact but raise the question of how to handle this is an open question. Accepting and affirming human subordination to the environment does not itself solve the problem of how to arrange human activities in a way that does not jeopardise this relation of dependency. NAT emphasises the importance of treating this question of human dependence on the environment as an open one. The role of education is to bring the question to the table and to summon the growing generations to understand the *question,* without providing normatively closed understandings of the solutions. Treating the question of the dependence of humankind on the environment as an open one instead of as a normatively closed one leaves the possibility open for growing generations to develop new answers to this question that goes beyond the ones imaginable today. It also acknowledges that the solutions to the problem are different in different contexts and for different aspects of the problem. Similarly, the challenge of sustainability emerges very differently in different scientific disciplines.

Higher Education Curriculum Leadership in the Anthropocene as a Non-affirmative Approach

For HE curriculum leadership, the consequence of the argumentation above would be that the biotic and abiotic fundaments for human existence cannot be ignored in HE curriculum and curriculum leadership. The question would have to be recognised and its importance affirmed. As the role for HE is to educate growing generations to understand the key questions and challenges of present time, with the ability to develop new solutions to them as well as to identify altogether new challenges in the future, the challenges of the Anthropocene cannot be overlooked. Recognising the challenge of the Anthropocene at various levels of HE leadership does not, however, entail advocating any normatively closed *solutions* to the challenge. Quite the contrary, to live up to the task of HE to develop the capacity to develop new solutions to existing as well as future problems, a precondition is that the topic of humanity's subordination to the environment is treated in a non-affirmative way: raising the question without advocating for any singular predefined solution. As the environment can be regarded as a fundamental for all fields of practice, the question of how to deal with the challenges related to the Anthropocene is relevant for most disciplines, even though the challenge emerges in quite different ways within different fields. This also calls for cross-disciplinary approaches as the challenge is common to all, but the solutions are similarly diverse as the problem.

Non-affirmativeness in leadership means that leadership is based on an awareness of the diversity of perspectives and interests both inside the organisation and among external partners and stakeholders. The task of leadership is thus not so much to guide others in a specific predefined direction, but rather to expose to various alternatives and encourage others to critical thinking and questioning by shaping an inquiring culture. This will not happen if the approach is merely affirmative.

Based on the view of the environment as a fundamental that goes beyond the societal fields of practice, we could argue that HE institutions need to broadly implement an open-ended sustainability approach, if they want to encourage students to become active thinkers and to act in the Anthropocene epoch. In most countries, sustainability in HE has mainly been implemented at the course level. In response to how to bring about a more profound change through education, Niedlich et al. (2020) and many others present a so-called 'whole institution approach'. This idea implies that an entire institution works as an active community aiming at change that acknowledges the situation of the planet at all levels of its operations. This is in line with a non-affirmative approach, viewing the environment as a fundamental. Thus, HEL creates a professional pedagogical culture, "in which individual learners learn about what it means to find a voice of their own and what it means to develop towards democratic citizenship" (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2015, p. 37).

Conclusion

> The Earth has now crossed a point of no return; its great cycles have changed, the chemical
> compositions of air and ocean have been altered in ways that cannot be undone. By the end
> of the century it will very likely be hotter than it has been for 15 million years. (Hamilton,
> 2015, p. 237)

The 'good old days' will not come back, since the earth systems have already
changed their basic processes. In the Anthropocene, a non-affirmative theory must
go beyond its humanistic focus and also recognise the non-human nature. When it
comes to recognising the wellbeing of the entire planet, recognition includes the idea
that both the society and individuals must limit their freedom to promote the survival
of human individuals and groups as well as other species and to protect vital habitats
(Wolff & Zilliacus, 2021). This view of recognition challenges the idea of humans as
master species, superior to the non-human nature. Wolff and Zilliacus (2021) state:
"Without the group, humans are nothing, and without a functioning planet, they are
dead". This means that humans are social creatures, which is obvious in many of
their activities. Humans cannot live a good life alone (see Wolff, 2011), since there
are also other species on the earth that have a right to a good life. Most importantly, a
vital earth must be of a higher priority than all other human practices, since without a
home planet neither the human species nor others can survive. This means that all
human activity forms cannot have equal roles in all decisions that involve the future
of the earth. The humanistic approach must step back by decentring the human and
recognising humanity as a part of the wider environment.

Educational leadership for a sustainable future has a paradoxical obligation. On
the one hand, it must develop an institutional culture that recognises everyone's
freedom, on the other hand, it must courageously protect everyone's mutual future
by learning to limit this freedom. This entails recognising all individuals as both
parts of the community, but also as parts of the entire planet (Wolff & Zilliacus,
2020). In institutions like HE, leadership must recognise policy aims and assure the
continuity of existing structures and systems. However, leadership also mobilises
change for a future that is fundamentally open.

The Anthropocene is a story about how to move toward a better future (Sörlin,
2017). For this to happen Hamilton (2017) calls for a 'cognitive leap' to make people
understand the severity of the situation, and which responsibility and willingness this
craves from them. To be able to handle the contemporary global challenges mutu-
ally, the HE institutions need to become places in which leadership entails 'live as
you learn', since the culture not only affects one's own community, but also has a
larger impact. Therefore, the culture must be reliable, even if it is not constant and
the aims predestined. A non-affirmative way of relating to democracy means that the
youngest generation is not nurtured into a given form of democracy, but that they are
given the opportunity to reflect critically on historical and prevailing forms of
democracy and participate in the design of future forms of society (see Uljens,
2020). A non-affirmative way for leadership to relate to a whole institution with
people of various ages, is like the way a teacher relates to young students. Thus, the

HECL becomes a reflexive way of viewing the institution as a part of a larger Bildung project.

Paulsen (2021b) suggests a 'co-creation' as an educational aim and to 'reshuffle' the Bildung concept, and a re-description of the contemporary age (Paulsen, 2021a). Consequently, the institutional community needs to learn, create, and rebuild the common space, its internal and external relations, its education, research, and all other activities. The institution could be seen as an organisation of individuals building flexible and changing groups, like a pulse in which new people come in and others leave, as is the case in all educational institutions. In such an organisation, the power is steadily divided and changing from the top to the bottom, which means that all individuals and groups, despite their hierarchy positions, are encouraged to make suggestions that will change the structures and procedures at the entire institution. Learning is also seen as flexible undertakings, in which knowledge is a complexity built on various subjects and scientific fields, and in which learning is more than a cognitive process. It is also embodied and emotional.

An HECL that is willing to work for change also needs to focus on puzzling issues like ethics and worldviews and dares to question both planet-devastating policies and practices, and to create new discourses in a constant joint learning process (see, Zilliacus & Wolff, 2021). Paulsen (2021b) calls for an approach that deals with the relations between humans and the relations between humans and non-humans as open-ended questions. This includes a 're-interpretation', 're-evaluation' and 're-identification' of humanity's crucial concerns acknowledging the human species' necessary development of responsibility for the earth, but also for interesting interspecies opportunities. The non-affirmative education theory has much to offer HECL in the Anthropocene, but first it must take off its non-human protective glasses to avoid human centred reluctance to seeing.

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Chapter 4
National Funding of Higher Education from a Non-affirmative Perspective

Jussi Kivistö, Janne Elo, and Michael Uljens (ID)

Abstract This chapter aims to demonstrate that the non-affirmative theory of education offers conceptual tools to analyse the tension between universities´ autonomy and accountability. The autonomy of universities becomes affirmative in character when it is geared towards finding the most functional and efficient ways of reaching externally defined performance targets and thereby to implicitly affirm the norms, values and standards that the performance targets rest upon. At the same time societal accountability measures make visible what is hidden or concealed: governmental objectives in higher education and the instrumental emphasis of universities in attaining those objectives. This exemplifies that the second regulative principle of the non-affirmative theory of education always is tied to the first: the governance of education is always linked with the current idea of the role of education in society at large. The non-affirmative theory of education provides us with a view that makes this relative autonomy visible. The chapter argues that the key aspect for universities and their stakeholders today is to find an appropriate balance between instrumental and institutional approaches, accountability and autonomy as well as affirmative and non-affirmative orientations.

Keywords Governance · Autonomy · Accountability · University funding · Non-affirmative theory

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Introduction

The nature, mission and meaning of a university represent the most important dilemmas on which all reforms aiming to revise or develop the "idea" of a university are grounded. However, the implications of these dilemmas for how universities are governed are often less clear. For this reason, American higher education management scholar Robert Birnbaum (2004, p. 8) wisely pointed out that "the essential debate [on university governance] may not reflect differences about how a university should be *governed*, but rather conflicting ideologies and differences in belief about what a university should *be*".

From a historical vantage point, there have been two competing views on the nature and mission of the university. First, a university can be seen as *an institution* that possesses a "relatively enduring collection of rules and organised practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances" (Olsen, 2007, p. 27). From this perspective, the existence of universities as organically developed, self-directed organisations that have intrinsic value cannot be measured by their immediate and measurable effects or value to society. Consequently, in this view, universities are not sub-ordinate in regard to external interests but rather autonomous or even super-ordinate in that they have autonomy to contribute to society according to their own interests and agenda.

Second, the university can be seen as *an instrument* for achieving predetermined objectives and interests of external stakeholders, whether these are the state or other public authorities, markets or communities. Then, the question is whether the university can be organised and governed to achieve the objectives and interests of stakeholders. From this perspective, universities are measured against the instrumental value they are able to create for their stakeholders as an exchange of resources they receive (Olsen, 2007).

While both options are mutually exclusive, we argue that the non-affirmative position can provide a third option that is able to bridge both previous positions by providing a language for elaborating the degree and nature of higher education institutions' (HEI) space for autonomous non-affirmative action.

Universities and Higher Education: Non-affirmative Institutions or Affirmative Instruments?

As discussed in more detail in Chap. 1, the first regulative principle of the NAT focuses on the dynamics between higher education and other societal fields of practice (politics, economy, culture, religion). NAT reminds us that in a democratic society, this dynamic relationship is non-hierarchical, denoting that different fields of society are always reciprocally influencing each other without one being totally

sub- or superordinated to the other. To accept that education is partially subordinate to external interests means that education has always had a societal task and a functional reason for its existence. This task and reason have varied over the years, from serving the church to an emphasis on nation-state-building, with expectations for economic utility currently emphasised. In other words, to a certain extent, education has always been an instrument for something external to itself. At the same time, however, reminding us of the modern university's critical task, education simultaneously has been reserved as a space for autonomous and self-determined action. This space for autonomous initiatives relates both to the freedom of research and to the educative tasks of universities. Universities require large degrees of freedom to educate critically reflecting subjects and citizens who are able to contribute to reforming existing practices.

Education is thus always *simultaneously* sub- and superordinate to other fields of society. The principle of the non-hierarchical relationship between societal fields captures this dynamic by asking, not *if*, but *how,* other societal fields exert their expectations on universities. What degrees of freedom are reserved for the university? It is this continuous negotiation between education, politics, religion, economy, culture, etc. that shapes the prevailing idea of what the university sector should *be*. From the vantage point of the concept of *recognition,* the question is therefore not *whether* universities are recognised but rather *as what* they are recognised, in what way and by whom. To recognise someone is always to recognise them *as something*.

When connecting the question of how universities are governed to the more fundamental question of what universities should be and what they are recognised as, Birnbaum (2004), in our reading, points towards the connection between the first and second regulative principles of NAT. While the first principle claims that the role of education in society is constantly negotiated in the dynamic relations between different fields of society in a non-hierarchical dialogue, the second principle points out that various forms of governance and leadership initiatives, on several levels, transform or mediate the task and societal goals for universities into educational practice. In other words, as the question of *how* universities are governed is always related to the question of *what* universities are perceived to be, the second regulative principle of NAT (how societal interests are transformed into educational aims) is always dependent on the first (how the dynamic between societal practices operates in society). Depending on the vantage point and the ideologies and interests embedded, the question of what universities or education should be more broadly will be answered differently. Our point of departure is that the role of (higher) education in a democratic society and in a dynamic culture and economy is one of the key questions that educational theory is capable of providing tools to elaborate on.

The concepts of affirmative and non-affirmative summons or influences are of key importance. The feature of affirmative influences is that they come with expectations to be accepted and implemented. Affirmative influences have an impact on how expectations are enacted. It is typical for affirmative influences to define higher education as an instrument for reaching goals external to education or research. Affirmative influences circumscribe the autonomy of higher education, viewing education as clearly subordinate to external interests. *Non-affirmative* influences,

on the other hand, rest on a view of humans as fundamentally dependent on, yet still indetermined by, external influences. Non-affirmative influences therefore do not present a predefined goal or ideal to be reached or policy to be implemented in a linear fashion, but instead reserve space for elaborating on and interpreting the influence. As an education theory, the non-affirmative position is emancipatory by liberating the subject from pre-existing practices but with the aim of supporting the development of the individual's own analytical and decision-making capacity or capacity for self-determination. This is crucial for teachers, researchers and students at the university. Then, understanding the governance or leadership of the university cannot overlook what kind of institution a university is. Studying universities historically, it is undisputable that they have had different roles, from serving the church, state or market. As universities educate both for a contemporary society we know, but at the same time for a future that we do not know, the university, as an educative institution, indeed recognises various societal interests but cannot affirm them uncritically. Instead, external influences become an object of reflection for both teaching at and the leadership of universities. The role of higher education (HE) leadership, then, is to take external as well as internal influences and positions into account and make a judgement regarding an appropriate line of action, given the cultural, historical and organisational circumstances, instead of merely implementing specific external expectations. Leadership is thus seen as having a mediating role between external and internal influences, recognising them all but maintaining relative autonomy to affirm them.

From the perspective of non-affirmative education theory, the depicted institutional (non-affirmative) and instrumental (affirmative) approaches should not be understood as a binary question of either–or, but rather as a continuum of different degrees and forms of how institutional and instrumental aspects of university are manifested in time and place. Universities always have a societal task and are thus always "instruments" for reaching some form of societal goals, but simultaneously modern universities in democratic societies, in viewing the future as something dependent on contemporary activity, always operate as autonomous actors influencing society in a broad variety of ways. Therefore, analysing in what ways and to what extent contemporary universities affirm or do not affirm influences (summons or expectations) at different levels in a multilevel networked system is a question that addresses the institutional and instrumental characteristics of universities. The NAT argues that the relationship between education and other societal practices is open, constantly forming in the interrelations of summons between societal fields and actors. Asking to what degree these summons create space for autonomous non-affirmative action for universities and how they utilise or enact this space thus provides answers to the question of the degree of instrumental expectations placed on universities, simultaneously acknowledging that different HE institutions may recognise, affirm and respond to these summons in different ways. The societal role of universities in general and the role of individual HE institutions are thus constantly in the making through a relational dialogue.

Accountability, Autonomy and Funding

Institutional (non-affirmative) and instrumental (affirmative) approaches translate to and correspond with the distinction between the accountability and autonomy of universities. As previously argued, the question of accountability has always been important in the Western higher education tradition. Throughout history, universities have had collaborative, regulative or other relationships with external stakeholders such as the Church, the nation-state and local and regional administrations that have been grounded on some form of accountability. In other words, universities have always been subjected to demands or summons from various societal actors, with expectations of some degree of affirmation. In contemporary Western societies, this accountability is very much connected to universities' need to be responsible for the money they spend, outputs they produce and outcomes they achieve (Huisman, 2018). As a concept, accountability, however, is multifaceted and ambiguous, allowing for a wide range of differing interpretations. In any case, the most essential questions for accountability are: Who is to be held accountable, for what, to whom and through what means? (Huisman & Currie, 2004; Kivistö et al., 2019; Trow, 1996). High degrees of accountability correspond with high expectations of affirmative enactment of external interests.

When operating with policy-based evidence, *accountability* indicates a relational principle that attaches certain expectations of one party to the actions and performance of another, thereby making the performing party responsible for providing evidence of its actions. Fundamentally, the logic behind accountability policy builds upon the idea of *mistrust* between parties—the employer requires evidence to discourage fraud and manipulation on the performer's side. The performer, in turn, mistrusts employers trying to maximise output to the lowest possible cost. Thus, besides strengthening the legitimacy of institutions, much of the discussion on accountability gears towards economic or financial aspects in the form of "return of investment". In addition, in the context of higher education, discussion on accountability is often paired with discussion on efficiency, effectiveness and performance. In this sense, the process of verifying accountability calls for proving, by effective means, that higher education has attained predetermined results and performance (Kivistö et al., 2019). Accountability-based governance thus reflects affirmative summons on the stakeholder's side, as HE is expected to live up to predefined expectations and criteria. A policy of accountability, for example, towards the state, relies on the premise that state policies are in a superordinate position to the HE institutions, and the HEIs are expected to affirm the expectations directed at them.

But what are the reasons for strengthening accountability demands, and from where does the interest in using different types of accountability mechanisms emanate? A widely supported interpretation is that accountability mechanisms reflect politico-administrative distrust in universities. This distrust is based on the belief that universities need external interventions and incentives to push them to operate in a way that best satisfies the societal expectations directed at them.

Universities are thus recognised as irresponsible and unable to identify and define their own goals and roles in society, thus requiring external affirmative guidance. At the same time, accountability-driven reforms may also reflect attempts to transform university cultures and values, thereby changing their actions. In these cases, reforms function as affirmative, transformative summons intended to push universities in pre- and externally defined directions. As Western European countries increasingly develop into knowledge-based economies, research and development work in HE institutions also plays a renewed, pragmatic and instrumental role in the economy. As discussed by Normand et al. in Chap. 8 of this volume, managerialism also produces new identities among academics.

In many European countries, strengthened demands for accountability have paradoxically gone hand in hand with reforms aiming to increase the level of institutional autonomy of universities. However, the paradox evaporates when recognising the shift from decision-making autonomy regarding aims to decision-making autonomy regarding methods. In other words, a traditional notion of autonomy refers to academic self-governance (control of academics in all university matters concerning students, staff, standards and degrees, curricula and research management) and academic freedom (freedom of academics to conduct teaching and research in order to pursue truth wherever it seems to lead without fear of punishment or termination of employment) (Ashby & Anderson, 1966; Berdahl, 1990; Maassen et al., 2017). However, more recent studies have more explicitly addressed the tensions between enhanced formal autonomy and the actual possibilities of universities to use autonomy vis à vis the state's control focus and demands for accountability (Maassen et al., 2017).

This is paradoxical in the sense that increases in autonomy are often directed to increase the regulative capacity of institutions and individuals (academic freedom), thereby making interferences and regulative control by external actors more difficult. Institutions universally desire to uphold their rights and capacities for self-governance and exempt themselves from excessive interference from the government and other external entities. However, accountability in all its forms implies outside interference, and the intensification of accountability is often at odds, at least to some extent, with different aspects of institutional autonomy (Huisman, 2018; Kai, 2009; Kivistö et al., 2019).

One explanation for this paradox is that political interest in increased institutional autonomy is often legitimised by the argument that increased autonomy will stimulate intra-organisational engagement, creativity and adaptability to local characteristics, which again will boost organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Aghion et al., 2010; Verhoest et al., 2004). This is further explained by the belief that enhanced institutional autonomy, especially the authority of institutions to manage themselves (professionalisation of managers), will have positive effects on issues such as institutional strategic behaviour and profiling, system diversity, the socio-economic responsiveness and relevance of universities and the quality of the university's primary processes of teaching and research (Goedegebuure et al., 1994; Maassen et al., 2017). Indeed, the idea of formal institutional autonomy in higher education research has moved from mainly denoting community self-

governance and an emphasis on academic freedom to denoting the organisational autonomy of the university as a more unitary and strategic actor (Krücken & Meier, 2006). Thus, the locus of autonomy has shifted from individual academics to university managers and leaders. This emphasises the importance of recognising that autonomy should be viewed as a multi-level concept. Increased autonomy at one level in an organisation may well result in restricted autonomy at another. In the current situation, the increase in the institutional autonomy of HEIs is therefore instrumental in the sense that it is given for the purpose of increasing the institutional capacity to fulfil accountability demands. HEIs are thus "autonomous" to recognise and affirmatively enact the demands communicated through accountability mechanisms. This instrumental institutional autonomy may very well result in, for example, tighter strategic leadership and managerial control leading to a restriction of "academic freedom" and autonomy at the faculty, programme or teacher or researcher levels. At all levels, autonomy is thus restricted mainly to deciding how to live up to demands defined elsewhere; autonomy has become affirmative.

When accountability and autonomy are understood in this way, the question of how public funding is allocated to HEIs becomes important, as it has implications for both autonomy and accountability. In principle, the overall architecture of funding HEIs in most countries is based on three typical pillars: basic funding (pillar 1), performance-based funding (pillar 2) and innovation- or profile-oriented funding (pillar 3) (Ziegele, 2013). The main characteristics of basic funding can be described as follows: it is often the most substantial pillar in terms of funding volume; it takes into account the size of HEIs by adjusting the allocation aspects like student numbers, staff numbers or the size of the previous year's budget. The main objective of basic funding is to offer stable, predictable and reliable financing that covers the main part of HEIs' operational costs resulting from their core tasks of teaching and research.

In contrast, performance-based funding (pillar 2) can be defined as an allocation mechanism in which the amount of funding is tied to the achievements of HEIs as reflected by performance indicators (e.g. Jongbloed & Vossensteyn, 2001). Most of the performance indicators applied to teaching and research are output- or outcome-based indicators measuring either progress to or completion of final outputs (e.g. study credits, number of degrees awarded, publications, competitive research funding awarded, citations, patents, amount of competitive or external research funding and student satisfaction). The substance of the indicators may also be ratios, percentages or other quantitative values mixing input and output elements (e.g. staff-student ratio, employment ratio of graduates, retention rates, number or percentage of students completing a fixed amount of credits per academic semester or year, graduation rates and graduation time) (e.g. Kivistö & Kohtamäki, 2016).

The third typical pillar of funding models, innovation- or profile-oriented funding, underscores the intentions expected to be carried out in the future. In concrete terms, this type of funding is utilised under the label of "targeted or earmarked funding", "competitive funding", "strategic funding", "excellence initiatives", to name but a few. Regardless of the name, all these funding instruments aim to finance and incentivise innovations, research (or sometimes teaching) excellence

Table 4.1 Three funding pillars

	Main objectives	Justification for funding	Nature and mission
Pillar 1: Basic funding	Stability and predictability.	For what HEIs are.	HEIs as institutions.
Pillar 2: Performance-based funding	Productivity and efficiency.	For what HEIs have done.	HEIs as instruments.
Pillar 3: Innovation- or profile-oriented funding	Change and development.	For what HEIs promise to do.	HEIs as instruments.

or the development of institutional profiles in advance (Arnhold et al., 2017; Ziegele, 2013). Innovation-or profile-oriented funding can take many forms, such as funding that is allocated on a competitive basis (i.e. via funding calls) or a non-competitive basis directly allocated to HEIs (e.g. as funds to support strategic profiles of HEIs).

It is important to note that the crucial distinction between these three pillars lies in their main objectives, main justification for funding and how the nature and mission of HEIs is primarily recognised (see Table 4.1).

A strong emphasis in pillar 1's "basic funding" recognises HEIs as responsible autonomous actors capable of independently setting goals, defining their societal task and fulfilling this. Thus, the allocation of funds is not associated with affirming any externally defined interests. A stronger emphasis in pillar 2's "performance-based funding" recognises HEIs as instruments for reaching externally defined targets in need of incentives in order to be productive and efficient. From a pillar 2 perspective, HEIs are thus recognised as less responsible and less capable of autonomous action (as defined by the public funding body), and universities are forced to affirm the expectations and values that lie behind the performance criteria that are applied. Similarly, the use of pillar 3's "innovation- or profile-oriented funding" stresses the need to offer incentives for future change and development and as such suggests that HEIs are less capable of doing so unless funds are provided.

Performance-based funding is used to increase institutional awareness of targeted policy objectives and to ensure accountability and affirmative action in accomplishing those objectives. When discussing institutional (non-affirmative) and instrumental (affirmative) approaches in the context of autonomy and accountability, the most interesting pillar is performance-based funding. The principal rationale for introducing performance-driven practices is to improve institutional productivity. This is grounded in an implicit belief that performance-based funding will incentivise institutions by using their institutional autonomy to improve or maintain their level of performance in exchange for higher revenue (Dougherty & Reddy, 2011). In other words, autonomy is limited to the question of deciding *in what way* (the method, how) to affirm predefined performance targets and the interests and values that they are founded on. It is not a matter of autonomously deciding on which and what kinds of targets (the aims, what) are worth pursuing in the first place. Institutional autonomy coupled with accountability to performance indicators are thus central elements in how societal interests are transformed into

educational practice in a contemporary HE context—in other words, a contemporary example of how the second regulative principle of NAT can emerge and operate. By reformulating incentives so that institutions are rewarded or punished primarily according to actual performance, performance orientation looks to stimulate a shift in institutional management towards greater efficiency (cf. Kivistö & Kohtamäki, 2016; Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014).

Performance-based funding is expected to reduce potential or actual goal conflicts by aligning the strategic priorities of universities with the policy goals of the state or government and therefore offer more straightforward incentives for productive behaviour. In other words, performance-based funding is a mechanism for affirmative policy summons. By reformulating the incentives in such a way that universities are rewarded or punished primarily based on actual performance in relation to predefined criteria, performance-based funding seeks to stimulate shifts in institutional behaviour that are expected to result in a greater level of efficiency (Kivistö & Kohtamäki, 2016; Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014). It is worth pointing out that efficiency in performance is not a goal-, value- or policy-neutral concept. Efficiency is always evaluated against a predefined standard. The seemingly neutral contemporary strive for efficiency is simultaneously a call to affirm the explicit or implicit standards against which this efficiency is measured and reflects that universities are recognised primarily as producers of services, research and exams. Efficiency and performance are mainly quantitative concepts. This mode of recognition is at odds with a traditional notion of universities being primarily responsible for striving for "the truth" and the good of humanity, mainly qualitative concepts. Thus, the question of what universities are is always embedded in how they are governed.

Finnish University System: Changes in Balancing Autonomy and Accountability—The Universities Act 2009–10

The university system in Finland comprises 13 universities (with 155,000 students), of which 11 are public entities (corporations under public law) and two are private entities (foundations). The overall configuration of the university system in Finland can be described as having the following characteristics: a flat prestige hierarchy, a wide geographical or regional dispersion and a limited emphasis on specific institutional profiles (10 out of 13 are comprehensive, multidisciplinary universities) (cf. Melin et al., 2015). The university sector in Finland is governed (or "steered") by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), principally through three policy instruments: (1) legislation (regulation), (2) allocation of funding (economic means) and by offering policy recommendations, evaluations and guidelines (information).

National legislation, the Universities Act, which was completely reformed in 2009–2010, has a strong regulatory impact on the Finnish university sector. This legislation determines many of the sector's essential features, including the number of universities, universities' missions and tasks, governance and administrative

structures and bodies and regulations related to studies, studying and academic staff. Most importantly, the legislation determines the degree-granting rights of universities and the names and structure of the degrees. Viewed as summons, legislation is naturally affirmative in character; non-compliance is not an option. The ministry also uses steering by information, where MoEC "soft law" mechanisms, which are not legally binding but rather persuasive tools such as policy recommendations, guidelines, statements and university-specific feedback and development suggestions. These play an important role because university non-compliance may in some cases have direct or indirect implications, resulting in more binding and coercive policy instruments. Therefore, summoning by soft law is, on the one hand, less affirmative in character than legislation, and universities have a larger scope of action in recognising and relating to these summons. On the other hand, not recognising and affirming these summons altogether is not an option, as this would result in more affirmative interventions.

The MoEC and universities agree on 4-year performance agreements, which are a kind of hybrid of economic and information policy tools. Performance agreements set common objectives for the higher education system, key measures for each higher education institution, the tasks, profile, core areas and newly emerging scientific fields in each higher education institution, degree objectives as well as the appropriations allocated on the basis of these. The agreements also specify how the outcomes of the objectives will be reported (MoEC, 2022).

The Finnish MoEC currently applies one of the most performance-driven university funding models in Europe. The current model is the fruit of a long historical trajectory of continuous development towards stronger performance orientation (Fig. 4.1).
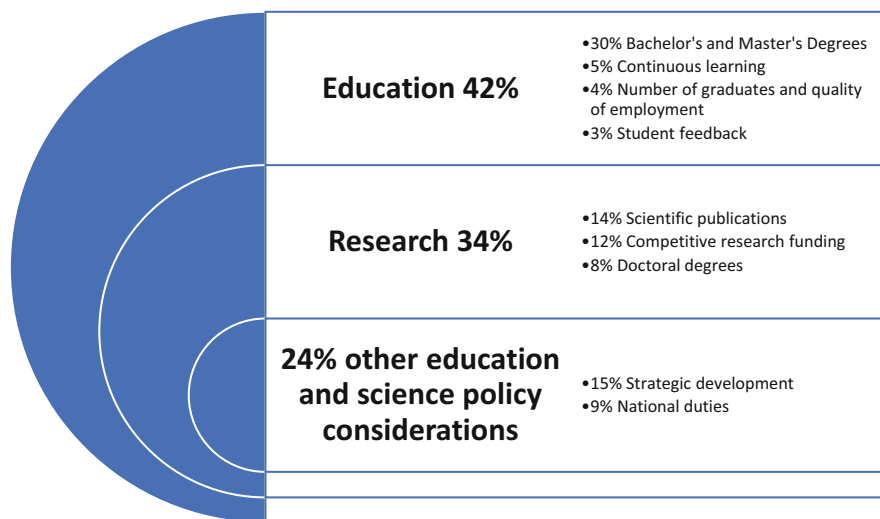

Fig. 4.1 University funding model 2021–2024 (MoEC, 2022)

The model rests on a funding formula split mainly between education (42%) and research (34%). Both parts are performance-based because they are composed nearly exclusively of output-related criteria. Master's degrees make up 19% of the overall model, with funding capped to an agreed target; bachelor's degrees account for 11% of the funding. For degree numbers, coefficients are applied that take into account the cost differences in the educational fields and reward faster graduation times. Other indicators for education include graduate employment and tracking, student feedback and continuous learning (MoEC, 2022).

The research component is made up of doctoral degrees (8% of the entire model), scientific publications (14%) and competitive research funding, distinguishing between international and national or corporate funding (12%). The remaining portion of the financing for universities (24%) is allocated on the basis of university strategies, which are formulated together between the ministry and each institution. Additionally, the national tasks and duties of the universities are taken into consideration in central government funding for universities. The "strategic development" component of the funding (equal to 15% of the block grant) has two parts; the first one relates to institutional strategy implementation, while the second one is linked to "national education and science policy aims", giving the government additional steering power. In 2021–22, the government's goals with this part of the funding were to subsidise the costs of an increasing number of students and strengthen international networks (MoEC, 2022).

The level of appropriate government involvement in the management and governance of universities and the balance between public accountability and institutional autonomy have been topical issues in Finnish higher education policy since the early reforms of a stronger performance orientation in the 1990s. Finland has a strong tradition of being a Nordic welfare state, which also influences the relationship between the state and universities. Currently, Finnish universities enjoy relatively high levels of organisational, academic and staffing autonomy compared to other European countries (Bennetot-Pruvot & Estermann, 2017). This is highlighted by the fact that the autonomous status of universities is guaranteed at the level of the Constitution, which is uncommon in many other European countries (see Hallberg et al., 2021).

However, as described above, much of this institutional autonomy is de facto constrained by a heavy resource dependency on MoEC funding and the incentives this funding sets for universities. The Finnish higher education system is one of the most publicly funded systems among EU and OECD countries; in 2017, 92% of all expenditures on higher education institutions came from public sources (EU23 average 73%; OECD average 67%) (OECD, 2020). Of this, the share of the MoEC's core funding, allocated via a performance-based funding formula, is approximately 60%, making it the dominant source of universities' revenue.

From an international perspective, the Finnish funding model is quite exceptional due to its heavy reliance on pillar 2 type performance-based funding. Unlike many other European countries, where pillar 1 funds represent the largest component in allocating public funds (often 60–80%), the Finnish model allocates 76% of the core funding with performance-related criteria. Given a recent comparative study, only

Sweden, Denmark, Belgian Flanders, Slovakia and Bulgaria allocate a higher share than 60% by using a performance-based formula, and with 85%, only Denmark allocates more than Finland (ICF-CHEPS, 2021).

However, it is important to note that Finnish universities have responded very differently in terms of how they forward the performance incentives of the MoEC funding model in their internal funding models (budgeting). At one extreme, some Finnish universities (e.g. LUT-university, Åbo Akademi, University of Lapland and University of Eastern Finland) have chosen a model in which the performance criteria and weighting of the MoEC model are followed very closely. On the other hand, at other extremes, the University of Helsinki and Hanken School of Economics apply internal funding models that do not have much resemblance to the MoEC model. Universities like the University of Tampere, University of Turku and Aalto University have selected internal funding models that try to balance the MoEC model incentivisation by selecting mostly the same indicators as in the MoEC model but offering less weighting in allocations. The models of the University of Oulu and the University of Jyväskylä fall somewhere between the previously described models.

As seen in Fig. 4.2, these differences show that universities naturally recognise the MoEC's funding model but that some universities are more affirmative than
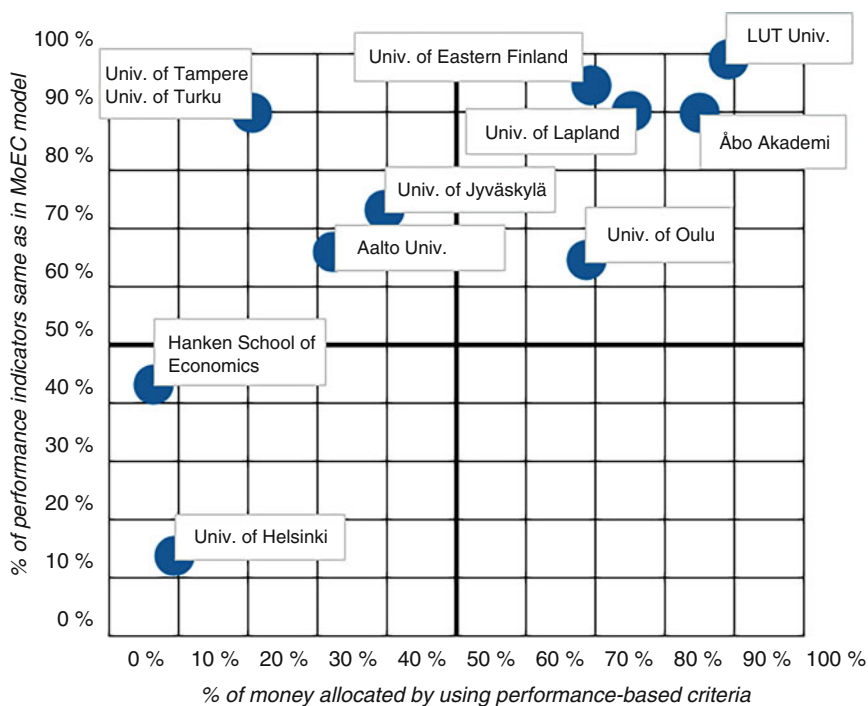

Fig. 4.2 Internal funding models of Finnish universities in the context of the MoEC funding model. (Source: Kivistö et al., 2021)

others, at least when it comes to internally incorporating the MoEC's performance-based funding incentives. However, it also shows that universities can use their autonomy to design different types of internal funding models that can insulate or disconnect system-level incentives from internal ones.

In conclusion, Finnish universities operate under the tensions between their financial autonomy (they can, among other things, spend and accumulate their wealth quite freely and design their own internal funding models), financial dependence from the state and political–administrative governance, which is to a large extent channelled through the performance-based funding model (Christensen, 2011; Kohtamäki, 2020). Even though the central aim of Finnish higher education policy (as promoted by the MoEC) has been to encourage greater institutional strategic capacity and capability and to improve institutional distinctiveness and profiling, it is still to be determined how to balance pressure for efficiency and system-level governance by increasing the capacity of individual institutions (Kivistö & Kohtamäki, 2022; Melin et al., 2015).

As the description above shows, the financial steering models of Finnish universities have continuously developed towards relying on more and more affirmative summons through a focus on the performance standards set by the MoEC. As previously pointed out, standards of performance always rely on the policies, values and ideals they are founded on, thus reflecting an underlying assumption of what a university is or should be. Accountability and autonomy are relational concepts, as a university is always accountable or autonomous in relation to someone or something else, for instance, the state or a funding body. The concepts of recognition, summoning and non-affirmative action can thus aid us in conceptualising and elaborating on the relations in which accountability and autonomy are formed and acted out on and between the different levels of HE leadership and governance.

Impact of State Accountability on University Autonomy

Empirical studies focusing on the impact of accountability measures on the sphere of institutional autonomy remain inconclusive, both in Europe and in Finland. This is to a large extent due to the precise meaning of and definitions that are given for "accountability" and "autonomy". In general, as a point of reference, the European University Association's regularly updated ranking list of university autonomy known as the "Autonomy Scorecard" provides an analysis of the different dimensions of university autonomy in European countries. According to Estermann (2017), while earlier assessments showed developments towards more autonomy in Europe, there is currently no distinguishable uniform trend of university autonomy in Europe. In addition to challenges related to academic freedom (e.g. in Hungary), constraints of autonomy continue to be affected by stronger accountability measures and governmental micromanagement. According to Estermann (ibid.), the challenging economic context in particular has had an impact on financial management, staffing matters and organisational aspects in several countries, but

also on the use of funding mechanisms (competitive and performance-based funding).

Kallio et al. (2020) recently described the tension between accountability and autonomy in the Finnish university system. According to them, the fact that the state expects universities to develop their strategies while strictly tied to public steering mechanisms (especially funding) makes setting institutions' own priorities and strategic management very difficult. In other words, steering mechanisms tend to force HEIs to affirm the targets and agendas that lie behind the steering mechanisms. The mechanisms thus become instruments for affirmative summons and the HEIs are not in practice recognised as autonomous. This interpretation is backed up by further evidence from several national-level studies and evaluations. In particular, in the national "Impact Evaluation of the Universities Act Reform", it was concluded that the funding scheme, its indicators and its weight in determining the levels of universities' funding were considered too detailed and constraining the universities' ability to set their goals. This assumption is further reinforced by the findings from the 2015 evaluation of the Finnish higher education system and the OECD's review of Finnish innovation policy in 2017 (Kallio et al., 2020; Melin et al., 2015; OECD, 2017). It thus appears as if the Finnish state, through these mechanisms, is currently primarily recognising HEIs as strategic instruments for reaching policy targets.

Studies and empirical evidence on the impacts of performance-based funding on the productive behaviour and performance of universities are relatively scarce in Europe and almost non-existent in Finland. Causally linking the increases in performance to funding has not been studied in detail, but it is fair to assume that the two are closely associated, given the available indirect research evidence. Dysfunctional impacts caused by performance-based funding have not been comprehensively studied, but there is a volume of anecdotal evidence supporting the idea that it has also triggered unethical behaviour when pursuing higher levels of individual and organisational performance.

Regarding empirical studies, there are, however, a few exceptions. Seuri and Vartiainen (2018) showed that universities indeed have increased outputs measured by performance indicators incorporated in the national funding model. However, their study did not discuss the extent to which this increase is an improvement of productivity (produced outputs per academic or administrative staff), nor did they provide any evidence on the causality between the incentivisation and performance increase. However, it is reasonable to suggest that universities have directed their activities along the performance indicators and that this productivity increase, at least partly, can be related to this redirection. Similarly, an empirical study of Mathies et al. (2020) suggested that performance-based funding incentives have likely affected publication patterns among Finnish academics. While not claiming that a causal relationship exists between the funding formula and the publication patterns, convergence was observed between the changes in the publication patterns and the priorities set by the publication-related performance indicator. The results at least suggest an indication of some influence of performance-based funding on publication patterns, especially in the fields of social sciences and humanities, by shifting the publication efforts from domestic to international research outlets, in line

with the incentives set. Empirical evidence thus suggests that universities appear to have affirmed the MoEC's summons for higher efficiency in quantitative outputs as well as affirming the summons for "desired academic behaviour" regarding publication patterns.

Conclusions

As the discussion above reveals, strong resource dependencies accompanied by performance-based funding measures can jeopardise the autonomy of universities. Stricter financial controls encourage universities to construct hierarchies for more effective internal coordination of their actions. This takes place through the centralisation of duties and responsibilities and the strengthening of managerial roles, which direct action along the organisational strategy and profile (Bonaccorsi & Daraio, 2007; Seeber et al., 2015). Performance-driven rationality and means-end orientations will then be filtered down to the internal processes of universities, such as internal funding models (Kivistö et al., 2021). This development reduces universities' freedom to set their internal structures and processes along the means-end rationality. At the same time, it restricts their freedom in deciding on the goals they want to pursue (Berdahl, 1990). The autonomy of universities thus becomes affirmative in character, as it is geared towards finding the most functional and efficient ways of reaching externally defined performance targets and thereby to implicitly affirm the norms, values and standards that the performance targets rest upon. It also risks shifting the locus of autonomy away from the academic freedom of academic staff towards the strategic and economic leadership of management. Paradoxically, increased university autonomy coupled with accountability results in constrained academic autonomy.

Accountability measures in general, and performance management in particular, are valuable in the sense that they make visible that which is often hidden or concealed: namely, specific governmental objectives in higher education and the instrumental emphasis of universities in attaining those objectives. This exemplifies that the second regulative principle of the NAT is always tied to the first: the governance of education is always tied to the current idea of the role of education in society at large. At the same time, it should be remembered that the context of operation has also changed significantly over the years. Current universities cannot operate according to the principles and ideals of nineteenth century German idealism and Humboldtian principles. Massification of higher education challenges old principles of "elite" higher education, which were characterised by limited and selective access (< 15% of the relevant age group) based on a privilege of birth or talent, highly structured curricula, uninterrupted fulltime studies directly after secondary education and a small number of homogenous universities. The main function of elite higher education was to shape the mind and character of the ruling class and prepare them for elite societal roles, not to serve the nation and society as a whole (cf. Trow, 2006).

In contrast, mass higher education is characterised by larger access with meritocratic criteria (16–50% of the relevant age group), flexible curricula, direct or delayed entry after secondary education, comprehensive universities with diverse standards, democratic institutional governance with a broad representation of various stakeholders, connectedness between society and labour markets as well as interest groups and party programmes. In mass higher education, the function of universities is to prepare a much broader range of elites that includes the leading strata of all the technical and economic organisations of society (cf. Trow, 2006; Kivistö & Tirronen, 2012).

The key aspect for universities and their stakeholders today is to find an appropriate balance between instrumental and institutional approaches, accountability and autonomy as well as affirmative and non-affirmative orientations. In today's universities, this balancing is visible in tensions emanating from the shift from a collegial and democratic tradition to an accountability-oriented functionalist line organisation that separates performative responsibility from decision-making power. Seeking this balance needs, first, to take into account the evolution of Western universities, including their millennial history of organic development and their specific role and authority in shaping modern societies. At the same time, distinctiveness and traditionality need to be balanced with growing expectations and expenditures directed towards higher education and universities. This chapter demonstrated that the non-affirmative theory of education offers us conceptual tools to analyse the tension between universities´ autonomy and accountability. Following a modern view of the non-teleological development of society, universities continue to educate for a future that is not known or knowable. As they aim at preparing their members, researchers, teachers and students to deal with problems that we are not yet aware of, universities must promote an education that leads learners through existing answers to the questions to which this knowledge provides an answer. It is through such a process that Bildung at universities includes learning beyond specific contents and reaching principled knowledge or theoretical understanding. In addition, such an approach develops the personalities of students and professionals. The non-affirmative theory of education provides us with a view that makes this relative autonomy visible. Universities cannot be reduced to instruments.

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Chapter 5
Understanding Higher Education Decision-Making and Educational Practice as Interrelated and Historically Framed Phenomena—A Non-affirmative Take

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Abstract This chapter discusses three historically rooted ideals of decision-making practices in universities (collegiality, democracy and managerialism) from the perspective of non-affirmative theory of education (NAT). Following a discussion on the historical layers of Finnish universities, we analyse how different practices of higher education decision-making are connected to ideas of what a university is and does. Utilising NAT, we reflect on higher education leadership both in terms of its internal character and its object and historical context. The chapter has three starting points. First, we note that contributions to conceptualisations of educational leadership, governance and management need to provide an idea of the object of this leadership—what is being led. Second, we argue that higher education leadership and governance theory needs to say something meaningful about the relation between society and university. Third, we discuss how decision-making is managing the gap between external expectations and conditions and institutional operational culture. We discuss the ways in which both collegiality and democracy recognise each other as free, capable of and responsible for participating in decision-making, either directly or indirectly. From the perspective of NAT, recognition without affirmation creates a space for collaborative reflection and the repositioning of the activities of individuals and organisations. However, the shift from the democratic mode of decision-making to managerialism implies a break with this tradition. Decision-making in Finnish universities in the period after the university law (2009) is characterised by a shift of power from democratically elected bodies into the hands of deans and the rector. Utilising NAT, we discuss how this change influences academics.

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Introduction

Historically, three ideals have dominated decision-making practices in universities. In temporal order, these ideals are collegiality, democracy and managerialism. Even though these three ideals developed during different historical periods, their influence can still be felt in contemporary universities. In what follows, we discuss when these decision-making ideals developed, some of their main features and how they continue to influence contemporary universities.

We argue that these *decision-making* ideals correspond with different *educational* ideals. Although this connection is sometimes loose, we want to demonstrate that the educational and societal task of a university to educate new generations according to visions of citizenship, culture and the needs of working life and the aim to support the growth of personal identity are also reflected in the governance of the university as an institution. Thus, we investigate how educational leadership and the educational task of universities appear as interrelated phenomena. While they do not determine each other, they are not independent of each other. Given their contextual character—educational governance and the leading educational idea of the university go hand in hand—they need to be conceptualised as such in their respective historically developed societal context.

Therefore, our points of departure are, first, that contributions to conceptualisations of educational leadership, governance and management need to provide an idea of the *object* of this leadership—*what* is being led, that is, (1) the practice of educating students and (2) research, which relates to the professional growth of academic staff. Second, we argue that higher education leadership and governance theory needs to say something meaningful about the relation between society and university, that is, the *where* of leadership. Even though it is obvious that this relation has changed both over centuries and more recently, surprisingly often, conceptualisations of higher education leadership fail to make sense of how educational leadership relates contextually. Third, higher education leadership and governance often occur as a mediating activity between societal expectations external to the university and the procedures and practices internal to it. Thus, decision-making is about managing the gap between external expectations and conditions and internal operational culture. The processes around and power of decision-making contribute to creating and preserving organisational discourses that also affect future decision-making processes. In addition, as curriculum construction, mentoring and teaching in universities are so strongly based on research, the development of faculty as both researchers and teachers comes to the fore. Educational leadership is therefore aimed at supporting not only staff members' growth but also students' learning. Thus, higher education leadership includes both direct and indirect instances of pedagogical leadership. All related qualifications in higher education leadership, such as managing finances, equipment, locations/buildings, agreements, laws and

regulations, etc. are, in the end, designed to support the main task: universities as havens for human development and autonomy in the service of culture, society and economy, with their development instantiated through research and teaching.

Given that higher education leadership needs to be reflected not only in terms of its internal character and qualities but also in relation to its object and context, we intend to utilise non-affirmative theory of education (NAT) to analyse how more recent practices of higher education decision-making connect to certain ideas of what a university is and does.

On Collegiality, Democracy and Managerialism as Ideals

Historically speaking, *collegiality* was the first decision-making practice and process (or model) in European universities. This ideal was developed in and through student housing in colleges where both students and academics or only students or only academics lived and studied from the Middle Ages onwards (on different practices, see Välimaa, 2019; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2010). Collegiality also became the mode of making decisions in medieval academic communities called *universitas* or 'studium generale'. This was the case both in Bologna (established around 1088) and later Paris (established around 1210), where either students (in Bologna) or academic teachers (in Paris) made decisions and constituted a body—or 'universita'—for the education of lawyers, priests, medical doctors and later officials. Despite significant changes in Western universities, the collegial tradition as a principle for decision-making never completely disappeared. The collegial tradition has been most visible in higher education in Britain (e.g. Oxford and Cambridge) and the United States, where all members of academic colleagues are faculty.[1] Broadly speaking, the most important organising principle of the collegial tradition is the logic of argumentation. Ideally, the best argument wins, and importantly, the best argument can be suggested by any member of the academic community irrespective of status. According to the collegial ideal, there is no voting because the decision is made when the academic community concerned reaches a consensus. The collegial ideal also assumes and is based on a low-level hierarchy in academic communities because it supports critical discussion as essential for collegial debates and discussions. Thus, critical discussion is both a consequence of and precondition for collegial decision-making. In addition, academic freedom and institutional autonomy are necessary preconditions for collegiality to flourish. One of the consequences of the collegial decision-making process is a strong commitment to decisions made together (Välimaa, 2012).

Democratic decision-making may also result in a consensus based on negotiations between different actors of the academic community or group responsible for

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[1] In the Continental European tradition, the term 'faculty' means an organisational unit in a university.

decision-making. However, the rule of the majority is at the core of the democratic decision-making ideal. For this reason, *voting* is a normal procedure in democratic decision-making, including in universities. Democracy emphasises values of equality and equity, especially in the Nordic countries. As for universities, the origins of democratic decision processes date back to medieval universities, especially Paris, where faculties made decisions based on voting (Välimaa, 2019). However, democratic ideals had their heyday during the 1960s when students across Europe were demanding rights to participate in university decision-making. These battles against the university establishment were especially notorious in France (see Bourdieu, 1988), but they were also highly visible in Finland. Consequently, Finnish universities implemented a tri-partite model consisting of the participation of representatives from the professorial staff, other academic staff and students in all university decision-making bodies. Each group would normally make up one-third of the representatives of a decision-making body.

Managerialism is the most recent decision-making ideal in higher education, which operates under the influence of the OECD (see Kallo, 2009). According to this ideal, decision-making should be concentrated in as few hands as possible in order to increase efficiency and the ability to make strategic decisions. In this context, strategic decision-making has to do with the increased ability to make cuts and set specific, often narrow, goals for universities. In practice, managerialism favours institutional leadership at the cost of democratic and collegial bodies, which are perceived as slow and inefficient in decision-making processes. Managerial practices also favour streamlined organisational models and efficiency, which can be measured with the help of numerical indicators.

The Three Decision-Making Ideals—A Historical Glance at the Case of Finland

Collegial Roots and Geopolitical Tensions

The origins of the Western and Scandinavian university traditions, together with the shared civil law jurisdiction when Finland was one of the core areas of the Kingdom of Sweden (for about 700 years), constitute the cultural heritage of Finland. The expansion of universities began during the Swedish reign, in the seventeenth century. The first university after Uppsala, established in 1477, was the University of Tartu (Swe. Dorpat) in today's Estonia, established 1632, which was also a part of Swedish kingdom. The university in Åbo (Fi. Turku) was established 1640 and the university in Lund in 1666. The establishment of these universities (Dorpat, Åbo, Lund) was supported by the geopolitical motive of securing the state's expansion and survival as an administrative unit.

Higher education—especially the university context—is and has been interconnected with the changes in Finland from the establishment of the Royal Academy in Åbo in 1640. This northernmost university in Europe was established

in the middle of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) in Europe. The rationale for establishing it was to educate priests to defend the Lutheran Church and train officials for society, especially in the service of Swedish kings (Klinge et al., 1987; Välimaa, 2019).

A similar purpose was continued, even strengthening after the fire in Åbo in 1827 when the university was moved closer to St Petersburg to the new capital Helsinki. The old Royal Academy of Åbo was renamed The Imperial Alexander University, and in 1917, it became the University of Helsinki. As part of the Russian Empire (1808–1917), the university was granted a monopoly to train (1) civil servants in order to expand public administration in the Autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland and (2) priests for the Finnish Lutheran Church. Without going into historical detail (see Välimaa, 2019), it is important to recognise that the university played central cultural, social and political roles in building the Finnish society and nation during the nineteenth century. Imperial Alexander University offered a very important social space for the development of both Finnish nationalism and the Finnish nation state (Välimaa, 2019).

As a university institution, Imperial Alexander University followed the Humboldtian principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom regarding research and studying. This was important in separating it from Russian universities, which developed in a more vocationally oriented direction. These differences in the orientation of universities also resulted in differences in how the educated middle class developed.

In the Royal Academy of Åbo (1640–1827), professors were defined as *colleagues* from the very beginning. This tradition continued despite the Russian occupation of Finland in 1809, disconnecting the country from Sweden and turning it into a grand duchy under the czar. Therefore, professors continued to make up the decision-making body in the renamed Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki (1827–1919). The collegial tradition continued when Finland gained independence in 1917, and the university was once again reconstituted, now as the University of Helsinki (1918–present). The great and small 'consistories' were the central bodies.

As part of the grand duchy and the Russian Empire, the university was reformed by integrating university governance with imperial bureaucracy and incorporating university professors into civil servant categories of the grand duchy during the nineteenth century. However, the leadership of the university remained in the hands of university professors, who elected the deans and rectors and exercised power in and through consistories. At the same time, the university as an organisation was closely related with Finnish society and the ruling imperial family because the crown prince would normally be nominated as the university chancellor (Klinge et al., 1989; Välimaa, 2019).

These practices continued in the Republic of Finland as professors and other university staff were defined as civil servants and the university enjoyed institutional autonomy. The University of Helsinki and two new universities established in Turku (Åbo Akademi and the University of Turku) enjoyed a high social status in Finland between the two world wars. These universities educated the elite of Finnish society, together with a technical university and two business schools (Klinge et al., 1990; Välimaa, 2019).

In addition to the collegial nature of academic decision-making, the university administration adopted models of state bureaucracy, especially during the 19th and 20th centuries. The ideal of modern state administration was to follow rules, regulations and laws. This traditional ideal of administration has persisted, especially in human resource management, in financial and student matters because these activities are regulated by national legislation (Välimaa, 2012, 2019).

The Democratic Turn of the 1960s and Its Roots in the Independence

Finnish society began changing rapidly, both politically and economically, after WWII due to rapid industrialisation altering the country's economic structure. This development contributed to radical changes in higher education policies and the introduction of the first national higher education policy plan in the late 1950s. The aim was to expand higher education so that it could better respond to the needs of a changing, industrialising and urbanising society. The expansion was supported by macro-economic aims to mobilise talent reserves in Finland. Politically, however, the most important goal was to create a fair society with the aim of providing equal educational opportunities for all citizens regardless of their gender, socio-economic background or geographical location. These policy aims were strongly related to the social policies and values of the emerging Nordic welfare states. They were also supported by provincial regions and cities with the aim of regional development (Välimaa, 2019).

As a result, the number of university students increased rapidly, and universities were established across the country. Finland was the first among the Nordic countries to reach mass higher education in the 1970s. The policy of expansion continued with the establishment of the sector of universities of applied sciences (UAS) during the 1990s when Finland was faced with severe economic austerity related to and partly caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the political discourse, the claim was that the establishment of a new vocationally oriented higher education sector would raise the skill level of the Finnish labour force. This also illustrates the continuation of macro-economic argumentation because research and universities are seen as important supporters of the Finnish knowledge society of the twenty-first century (Nokkala, 2016; Välimaa, 2019).

The expansion of higher education also led to internal changes at universities. By the 1960s, it became quite apparent that traditional university decision-making processes and professorial rule were not sufficiently efficient for Finland's rapidly expanding universities. It was partly because of internal changes and rapid social changes that university administration and governance were in need of reform. During the late 1960s, the government of Finland demanded that universities reform their internal governance structures. Universities and especially professors resisted these reforms (Välimaa, 2019). However, following political confrontations, a

compromise was reached according to which all decision-making bodies in universities were to consist of representatives from three groups: professors, other academic staff members and students. This model was a radical democratic change because it introduced democratic decision-making processes and structures in universities formerly ruled exclusively by professors (Välimaa, 2019).

The introduction of democratic decision-making bodies was seen as a modern initiative in terms of reforming universities and making them more democratic. In principle, democratic decision-making is based on the rule of the majority, which often leads to decision-making by voting. In practice, however, democratic decision-making tends to lead to compromises where everybody wins in order to avoid confrontations between different groups represented in the university's decision-making bodies (Välimaa, 2019).

Market State, Managerialism and the Collapse of the Soviet Union

Following international neoliberal trends and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the role of the state started to change in Finland. Following more or less the ideas first explicated by Milton Friedman, the state was defined as the body collecting taxes, but its role in upholding institutions diminished.

The market state model, which was strongly defended by, for example, Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom, led to the privatisation of significant societal services at the turn of the millennium. The policy applied was a version of ordoliberalism as it retained the necessity of regulating institutions in creating stability; however, there was some distance from ordoliberalism through a subscription to the ideal of the welfare state. In Finland, the populist rhetoric of the time was that only economic liberalism could guarantee the continued existence of the welfare state, thus representing a version of the social market economy. One of the most influential neo-liberal models was new public management (NPM), which challenged traditional administrative and governance practices aimed at making public organisations more efficient, transparent and better managed business-like entities.

The substantial economic difficulties resulting from the collapse of Finnish exports to the Soviet Union, which resulted in unemployment rates of up to 17%, led to a sudden end to the growth of higher education budgets, which had continued from the mid-1980s. Consequently, there were severe budget cuts, resulting in a 21% cut in public funding to higher education between 1991 and 2000 (Välimaa, 2019). The economic hardships were so severe that every Finnish academic was forced to meet the need to do things differently. This recession can be described as a psychological 'globalisation shock' to Finnish society and higher education, leading to increased uncertainty under social conditions of competition between universities, their faculties, and individuals. All this contributed to a radical change of mentality in universities. Under the new reality, it became socially acceptable to increase

cooperation with companies, industry and other sectors of the society in all academic disciplines.

The policy discussion also drew on the early liberal representatives of the minimalist market state. In Finland, this view was originally advocated by Anders Chydenius from Gamlakarleby, who in his essay '*The Source of Our Country's Weakness* in 1765', translated into German the same year, argued for a liberal economy and the idea of the *invisible hand* made famous by Adam Smith (1776) (see, e.g. Jonasson & Hyttinen, 2012).

In the university environment of the 1990s, the *social market state* ideal resulted in the increase in the status and power of academic leaders (departmental heads, deans and rectors). The main initiative was, however, accepting the Universities Act 558/2009, whose objectives were related to the aim of ensuring that world-class universities in Finland would be supported by new public management ideals that aim to transform universities into more productive and efficient organisations. Consequently, the Universities Act 558/2009 essentially wiped away the democratic bodies and introduced line-organisation models with strong academic leadership. Collegiality was ignored as a basic decision-making principle.

However, collegial decision-making is as old an ideal as European universities. It has been and continues to be an integral part of decision-making regarding research processes, teaching arrangements and pedagogical matters among academics. However, collegial decision-making is rather invisible in universities because it is not organised around or by a university office. This potentially explains why collegiality is easily overlooked or even forgotten as a rationale for academic decision-making. This is especially true with the contemporary Universities Act (558/2009), which emphasises the power and responsibility of academic leaders (especially deans and rectors) and the efficient implementation of decisions made with the help of a streamlined organisation. Managerialism also overlooks democratic structures and processes in universities to the benefit of academic leaders.

Today, Finland as a nation state steers its higher education system with the help of information, economic incentives (in and through performance agreements and funding models) and normative regulations by issuing acts and orders. Where reforms are concerned, however, the most efficient steering instrument is national legislation. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the most recent legislative reform in Finland in the last 100 years, the Universities Act 558/2009.

According to the official explanation, the main aim of Finnish legislators was to increase the 'institutional autonomy' of universities (background memos, 2009). This was achieved by, first, separating universities from the state budget and changing their legal status and defining them as independent legal subjects (i.e. public corporations) or universities run by foundations. This change increased the economic autonomy of universities because they could now enter contracts to run their own economic activities, receive donations, make capital investments and use the profits from investments to support university teaching or research (Välimaa, 2019). However, the total operational costs for all universities are covered by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC). The MEC also gives universities permission to establish new study fields and decide on the number of starting places for

students. This means that universities have *procedural autonomy* to decide how they can reach the national targets defined by the MEC.

The second aim was to make the university board the strategic decision-making body responsible for deciding on strategic goals for the university. In addition, at least 40% of the board members had to be external to universities. The university collegium (or consistory in foundation universities) was a new decision-making body consisting of elected student and staff representatives. This democratically elected body only accepted annual budget plans and annual economic reports suggested by the board.

However, perhaps the most important change was to make rectors the most powerful executive actor in the university. This change was well in line with the aims of new public management in terms of strengthening the power of executive managers. Furthermore, it is important that the rector is now nominated by the university board, contrary to the tradition of being elected by university staff and students. This means that rectors are loyal to and responsible for university management and the university board rather than academic communities. As a result, all democratic bodies have lost much of their power at the faculty and department levels (Välimaa, 2019).

Concerning academic staff, the most visible change was the discontinuation of the civil servant status of staff, changing it to a work contract relationship with the employer, that is, the university. However, the Universities Act continues to secure academic freedom. In addition, the Finnish Constitution protects academic freedom and institutional autonomy. These two principles are both important and interconnected because real academic freedom can only take place in the context of institutional autonomy. Critical thinking, which is the core value of academic freedom, needs both supportive academic communities and organisational structures that defend academic freedom in thinking and research. Collegiality, in turn, is at the core of academic communities because they function well when they respect the logic of argumentation (Välimaa, 2012, 2019).

A Non-affirmative Approach to Interpreting the Three Decision-Making Ideals

The aim of this historical overview was to show that Finnish higher education has changed in relation, and often in response, to social, ideological and geopolitical developments. The three decision-making ideals were born in different historical periods, but they continue to influence practices and processes in contemporary universities because they have sedimented and formed historical layers above each other. Historical layering is based on the empirical notion that it is much easier to implement new practices than discontinue existing ones (Christensen, 2012). Collegiality has passed the test of time and continues to be a way of behaviour in academic processes. It also relates to the democratic ideals of equality and shared decision-

making; however, it is challenged by managerialist ideals of measurable efficiency and strong leadership. The interplay between these ideals does help in maintaining universities as dynamic social spaces. In what follows, we apply a non-affirmative point of departure in analysing the different decision-making ideals: collegial, democratic and managerialist.

While the collegial model was previously treated in a decontextualised manner, the latter two were related to societal developments reflecting different citizenship ideals. This discussion, therefore, exemplifies the relation between the first and second regulative principles of NAT (see Chap. 1), that is, that higher education leadership and governance (second principle) are always related to the role of higher education in relation to other societal fields (first principle). It also reflects different positions regarding the two constitutive principles, that is, how we define the relation between the subject and the world and the manner in which the subject is summoned by leadership interventions. Educationally, the collegial decision procedure builds on a rational learning process and assumes that everyone has a right to challenge or question the experiences or explanations of others. As the dialogue builds on everyone's right to summon others, both parties recognise each other as free. The summoning rational dialogue also assumes the self-reflection of others regarding content or arguments presented as a necessary aspect of the collegial dialogue—the other must decide to accept an explanation that has been the subject of argumentation. Despite representing a different approach to understanding communication, the collegial tradition reminds us of some of the arguments in Habermas' theory of communicative action, believed to serve the understanding of the transmission and renewal of cultural knowledge. The process, which results in mutual understanding, contributes to forming researchers' identities. The collegial discourse features an emancipatory dimension, a belief in the power of communicative reason where language has a foundational role. In the collegial culture, leadership and decision-making come across as collaborative processual phenomena, where a shared understanding and future direction are created—'learned'—in dialogue. Sociality rather than individuality marks the point of departure. This understanding of collegial decision-making is reminiscent of a pedagogical process: Teaching is not about transmitting knowledge and values but, rather, about negotiating the reasons for and validation of given explanations. Such a pedagogy summons students according to the same communicative structure as that operating between faculty.

The shift to the democratic mode of leadership and decision-making in the 1960s relates to the shift in relations between societal fields, which resulted in a transformed view of the role of higher education in society. Previously, higher education mainly involved education for the ruling elite, thereby conserving societal power structures. In the societal dialogue of the 1960s, the view on higher education transformed towards seeing it more as a transformational force for a more equal and democratic society and economic development. This exemplifies the first regulative principle of NAT, which states that the role of education is constantly negotiated in a non-hierarchical relation between different fields of society (economy, politics, culture, religion). When this dialogue resulted in a shift in the view of higher education, it also affected the second regulative principle in terms of how this

societal task was transformed into pedagogical practice through leadership and governance. Defining the task of higher education as promoting equality and democracy appears to have led to equality and democracy becoming key principles in higher education leadership and decision-making. As previously noted, this shift was not affirmed uncritically by the professors who had led the universities until then. The result of the discussion that followed was the establishment of the democratically elected tri-partite decision-making bodies in higher education, where decision-making was based on the principles of democracy. In this mode of decision-making, the principle of argumentation remains prominent. In other words, every elected member of a decision-making body is recognised as having equal rights to summon the others, and every member is recognised as principally free to make their own judgement. However, if a consensus is not reached through argumentation, voting guarantees that decisions can still be made. From a NAT perspective, voting is based on the precondition that everyone recognises *and affirms* the results of the vote.

The introduction of the tri-partite system also meant that all members of the academic community—professors, teachers, researchers, administrators and students—were formally recognised as having influence in higher education decision-making. Adopting a democratic principle for decision-making by democratically elected bodies entails a recognition of university employees as capable of and responsible for leading their own university. This maintains a space for non-affirmative deliberative dialogue where external influences are recognised, discussed and decided on by those affected by the decisions. Even though everybody is expected to affirm decisions reached through democratic means, a democratic mode of decision-making means that the outcome of the decision-making process is open and that organisational direction is created in processual dialogue.

Both collegiality (where all faculty are included) and democracy are characterised by all members of the academic community being in one way or another recognised as free and capable of and responsible for participating in decision-making, either directly or indirectly. This has not always been the case in practice as professors were the sole participants in decision-making in Finnish higher education pre-1960s. The shift from the democratic to the managerial mode of decision-making implies a noticeable break in this tradition. Decision-making following the university law of 2009 meant that the power of the democratically elected bodies was significantly reduced and shifted mainly to deans and rector. From the perspective of recognition—pointing out that we are always recognised *as something*—this shift is noticeable as it implies that academic staff are no longer recognised as capable of making decisions and having influence on higher education leadership to the same extent as previously. Rather than being recognised as decision-makers capable of deciding on the direction of their institution, academics are now increasingly recognised as decision-implementers in need of strong leadership. The expectation is no longer that academics would recognise and non-affirmatively deliberate on external influences and collaboratively create a direction for the institution; instead, to a larger extent, they recognise, affirm and implement decisions and strategies made by academic leaders. As the shift from democracy to managerialism is also

coupled with strengthened accountability mechanisms and an increase in performance-based funding (see Chap. 4), the space for non-affirmative autonomous decision-making becomes restricted, and the summons directed at academics are increasingly affirmative in character. Perhaps most importantly, this means that academics are no longer recognised as free but are largely instruments for reaching external goals.

The above-described shift in the second regulative principle of NAT is related to a shift in the relations between societal fields—the first regulative principle. Where the democratic mode of decision-making was coupled with the view of higher education as a means for a more equal and democratic society, the managerial mode of decision-making was founded on the view of higher education as a key strategic instrument for maintaining economic competitiveness in a global market. Thus, the role of higher education was redefined in the production of competencies (education) and innovations (research) in a global market economy. This means that the right to define higher education goals no longer necessarily resides with higher education institutions and the scientific communities but increasingly among external stakeholders in business and the economy. A tighter managerial control (regulative principle 2) is logical if the goals are increasingly defined elsewhere, meaning that higher education is increasingly seen as subordinate to the economy and politics (regulative principle 1).

A shift towards more managerial modes of decision-making and leadership, which reduces the role of academics to implementers of strategies and decisions made elsewhere, creates tensions as it is at odds with the two fundamental tasks of higher education: teaching and research. As noted earlier, a key principle of scientific progress is that of collegial argumentation. Ideally, the strongest argument wins, regardless of who presented it, and it is the dialogue between different viewpoints that makes up the core of scientific progress, leading the field forward in a direction that is fundamentally open and created by the process itself. In a similar vein, teaching is fundamentally based on recognising the other as principally free and self-active, free to recognise and respond to summons more or less affirmatively. As the other is fundamentally free, a teacher cannot directly transfer ideas or knowledge to the other. Instead, by directing the self-activity of the other towards activities that have a pedagogical potential, the teacher may influence the study activities of the other in ways that support learning. More important than attempting to teach today's correct answers to students is leading students to understand the very questions that the answers address. This approach carries the potential that, in the future, students will develop entirely new answers to questions or pose different questions altogether. Relative autonomy is crucial in educational institutions as education in liberal economies and political democracies has an emancipatory task aimed at developing students' professional, personal and societal self-determination. This requires support for students to develop their abilities to analyse and reflect critically as individuals, problematising existing theoretical answers to various dilemmas. In this respect, existing knowledge offers itself as a necessary medium through which learners' reflexive ability is developed. Such an approach is coherent with a liberal and democratic polity.

As this short discussion portrays, both teaching and research are foundationally based on an open and non-affirmative relation between actors and between higher education and the surrounding society. This open and non-hierarchical relation is at the core of the potential of higher education to reach beyond the present state in both research and teaching. A tight strategic and managerial steering of these activities is therefore fundamentally at odds with the very nature of the activities, reducing the space for autonomous action and requiring affirmative responses to leadership and management initiatives. Recent managerial leadership policy reforms (Gunter et al., 2016) have favoured affirmative leadership, thus jeopardising the principles of non-affirmative education that have historically been principal aims of and of central concern to universities. Managerialist leadership therefore risks being counterproductive as it reduces the innovative potential of both teaching and research by subordinating them to external influences and goals.

Conclusions

Recognition without affirmation creates a space for collaborative reflection and a repositioning of the activities of individuals and organisations, characterised by both collegiality and democracy. Non-affirmative analytics ask about the extent to which educational leadership EL considers interests such as those of the labour market, science and politics while avoiding instrumentalisation, which would violate the relative autonomy the higher education in education and research. From a multi-level systems perspective, a shift towards managerialism entails moving power upwards in the hierarchy. If higher education leadership and governance are seen as a mediating activity—managing the gap between expectations external to the university and internal procedures and practices—then gap management has moved upwards in the hierarchy, distancing itself from the core activities of higher education: teaching and research.

The three ideals of decision-making presented in this chapter exist simultaneously in contemporary Finnish higher education. The collegial logic of argumentation is still the prevailing logic of scientific discourse. The democratic tradition still prevails in the democratically elected decision-making bodies that remain, and the managerial ideal is the most recently added layer. As the discussion above shows, these layers of decision-making have distinct differences regarding *what* they recognise the individual academic to be and in what way academics are summoned. Whereas the first two recognise the academic as a principally autonomous actor, capable of taking responsibility and participating in decision-making and creating a direction for higher education, the managerial layer directs affirmative summons at the academic, mainly recognising them as implementers of strategies and pursuers of goals decided on by someone else, unable to take responsibility for the direction of higher education.

NAT contributes to the research field with is its non-linear and non-hierarchical view. It offers a theoretical construct for an empirical analysis of the extent to which

instances of role superiority in relation to other practices recognise the relative autonomy of these action levels. If external interests govern higher education, or if there is a top-down hierarchy among them, leadership forces actors to *affirm* various external or internal interests. If universities not only *recognise* but also *affirm* such interests, education and research institutions sub-ordinate themselves in relation to these interests. Affirmative pedagogy and leadership run the risk of not achieving the aim of universities to promote the development of self-determining, reflective and critical citizens able to contribute to existing practices and develop new ones in a democratic society.

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Chapter 6
Affirmative and Non-affirmative Dimensions in Quality Assurance: Balancing the Accountability–Improvement Dilemma as a Matter of Trust and Learning

Ingunn Dahler Hybertsen and Bjørn Stensaker

Abstract Today, given the build-up of national quality assurance systems, 'quality management' within higher education institutions requires critical attention. This management operates as a balance between accountability, which is outward oriented, and improvement, which covers internal pedagogical and research activities. This accountability–improvement dilemma has been intensively researched over the years, not least by focusing on how the relationship between national quality assurance agencies and individual higher education institutions can be developed with respect to mutual trust. Applying insights from non-affirmative theory, this chapter investigates external judgements of quality management at the institutional level in the Nordic context. The investigation addresses how external evaluation reports may function as a mediating tool for balancing the accountability–improvement dilemma in quality assurance. Using conceptualisations of educational and pedagogical leadership derived from non-affirmative theory, we analyse how expectations of leadership are expressed in external evaluation reports. The framework comprises dimensions of pedagogical leadership that are (1) to organise learning processes in professional learning communities, (2) to negotiate practices of quality work in the academic community, both within and across institutions, and (3) to protect professional, academic and institutional autonomy. We analyse the alignment between this conceptualisation of and the expectations of leadership expressed in external reports and add (4) trust in quality management as a fourth dimension. Balancing the accountability and improvement dilemma is not only a matter of trust between the institution and the national agencies but also within the academic community. Discussing the importance of mutual trust in quality work can add

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value to our understanding of pedagogical leadership in non-affirmative education theory.

Keywords Quality management · Higher education leadership · Pedagogical leadership · Learning processes · Quality work · Trust

Introduction

A classical debate in the field of quality assurance is whether this activity is to be understood as a controlling or reporting task demonstrating accountability to the society at large, or whether it is a process stimulating internal renewal and improvement in methods and practices resulting in the enhancement of educational delivery (Thune, 1996). From a more theoretical perspective, the relationship between accountability and improvement has been interpreted in various ways: as a dilemma, as a continuum or as a design challenge that needs to be considered and weighed against national policy ambitions and institutional autonomy (Barandiaran-Galdós et al., 2012; Brennan & Shah, 2000; Elken & Stensaker, 2018; Frederiks et al., 1994; Harvey & Green, 1993; Kis, 2005; Stensaker, 2008; Westerheijden et al., 2007). However, under the shadow of the accountability–improvement debate, a series of studies have also been undertaken with a more practice-oriented perspective aiming to identify problems and practical ways of solving this dilemma (Bollaert, 2014; Hulpiau & Waeytens, 2003; Massy, 1999; Massaro, 2010; Newton, 2000, 2002; Nair, 2013; Shah & Nair, 2013).

Nordic countries have traditionally stood out as a region in which the tensions between accountability and improvement have been conceived as being less dominant and important and where pragmatism and governance traditions characterised by dialogue and trust have created ways of accomplishing both purposes within national quality assurance systems (Danø & Stensaker, 2007; Thune, 1996). When comparing the education system and leadership in Nordic countries with those in the United Kingdom or United States, Moos (2017) determined that confidence in national institutions, state funding and trust among people are higher in Nordic countries, whereas power distance is lower. Moos also used the GINI index to illustrate that the equality level is higher in the Nordic region. When observing how new approaches to quality assurance—particularly institutional accreditation— were introduced in the Nordic context, Danø and Stensaker (2007) argued that it cannot be taken for granted that accountability and improvement can also be seamlessly balanced in the future.

In this chapter, we re-examine the approaches to accountability and improvement through an in-depth exploration of how non-affirmative education theory can provide new insights into the relationship between national quality assurance agencies and individual higher education institutions in the Nordic context. Thus, we pose the following two research questions: (1) How are issues related to accountability and improvement balanced in external evaluations of institutional quality assurance systems in the Nordic region? (2) What is the added value of non-affirmative

education theory to the understanding of how accountability and improvement play out in the Nordic context? In our investigation of these questions, we analyse how expectations of leadership are expressed in the external evaluation of quality assurance, and how they align with the conceptualisations of pedagogical leadership derived from non-affirmative education theory. This chapter ends with an attempt to unpack the concept of trust in quality work and a discussion on what non-affirmative education theory of leadership may add to the understanding of building trust in a setting characterised by governmental steering and control.

Accountability and Improvement in External Quality Assurance: Perspectives and Positions

Perspectives on how to Govern Quality

External quality assurance has had a significant impact on higher education institutions during the later decades (Westerheijden et al., 2007), although the jury is still out on whether this activity has affected teaching practices and student learning at the institutional level (Stensaker et al., 2011).

From a governmental perspective, one may identify two main positions on how quality in teaching and learning can be governed in the context of the accountability–improvement discussion. The accountability position emphasises the need to build and strengthen managerial control over quality issues at all levels. From a governmental perspective, it is then important that institutions build quality management systems dominated by formal organisational rules and routines related to the governance of educational provision (Brennan & Shah, 2000). Quality management systems could be designed in different ways but share the assumption that management is essential for ensuring coordination and control and that it should be easy to identify the people responsible for taking actions and for implementing changes (Pratasavitskaya & Stensaker, 2010). A recent review of quality management approaches has also suggested that quality management routines are increasingly being integrated into the global management structures of higher education institutions (Manatos et al., 2017). From this perspective, national quality assurance agencies can be seen as drivers of a more managerial and governed university (Frølich et al., 2013; Williams, 2012). An increased emphasis on quality management systems within the accountability position might gradually shift the core activities and tasks in managing at all levels in universities. However, whether this shift can improve core educational activities is still an open question. Within academic disciplines and professions, one can identify many competing stakeholders, beyond not only the management level but also the actual educational institution. In general, an increased number of transnational developments have been influencing the quality assurance practices of agencies and borrowing governance ideas from industries and systems outside the education sector (Moos, 2017).

The improvement in external quality assurance is rooted in the belief that governmental steering has limited impact on institutional behaviour, and that universities and colleges have certain unique features that need to be considered to create effective external quality assurance (Clark, 1998; Dill & Beerkens, 2010). This position is based on the idea that broader cultural changes are not something that can be imposed on an institution but must be fostered and enhanced through and embedded within existing internal quality cultures over time (Yorke, 2000). Management is in this position of lesser importance, and what is emphasised are approaches that could mobilise the staff and students to engage in quality assurance activities that drive systematic changes over time. This cultural approach to quality improvement has gained considerable popularity over time, not least as a response to perceptions of more bureaucratic and managerial universities appearing because of external quality assurance (Bollaert, 2014; Burnes et al., 2014). At the European level, some distinct supra-national evaluation schemes have also been developed with the intention of creating institutional quality cultures (Rosa et al., 2011).

More recently, Elken and Stensaker (2018) suggested that a third position is possible: focusing more on the mundane routines and local practices involved in institutional quality assurance, arguing for a more dynamic relationship between accountability and improvement. The emphasis on practices and routines suggests that the actual work that is related to quality is important for understanding the mechanisms of accountability and improvement and how this plays out in the day-to-day running of higher education institutions. What unites all three positions is the emphasis on how quality assurance could be a way of integrating and coordinating fragmented organisations, such as universities and colleges, which have often been described as loosely coupled systems (Weick, 1976). In a more recent review of the use and misuse of the 'loose coupling' concept, Elken and Vukasovic (2019) pointed out that multiple couplings transpire in a complex co-existence of academic and administrative steering. However, an interesting question is whether the routines and practices of quality assurance can facilitate better integration and coordination of educational organisations—or, in other terms, create tighter coupling.

Following the accountability position, quality assurance can be argued to shape institutions towards a traditional machine-bureaucratic line organisation with certain expectations of management. However, the characteristics of higher education institutions are more in line with loosely coupled systems and knowledge-intensive organisations, although it can be disputed if universities are *highly* knowledge-intensive in their nature (Greenwood, 2009). This is based on the argument that knowledge-intensive organisations are a product of structures, relationships and dynamics in the organisation, more than the quantity of knowledge they contain, the educational level of their staff or the sectorial location. Based on the insights from Argyris and Schön (1996), Greenwood (2009) further argued that to become knowledge-intensive organisations, universities must have at least some characteristics of organisational learning, such as being capable of creatively modifying their structures, changing behaviour and aligning with the environment. In this sense, improvement through quality assurance can be seen as a cybernetic process of

learning, either intentional or unintentional, or as conscious or unconscious learning by the organisation members (Huber, 1991).

To further discuss issues related to how accountability and improvement are balanced in the external evaluations of institutional quality assurance systems in the Nordic region, we find support in Pulkkinen et al.'s (2019), p. 8) description that 'the Nordic region ranks rather high internationally across a multiplicity of comparative dimensions, ranging from innovation to trust in government to educational quality to quality of life'. Following the Bologna process, there is an observable convergence in education policy across Nordic countries, and the overall governance and management structures and quality assurance systems linked to education are interesting examples. However, similar policy ideas and rhetoric have been introduced at different points in time and appear with variations, and there seems to be less convergence in actual policy implementation. For instance, performance is measured using different indicators and potentials of redistribution with somewhat different effects and can therefore be difficult to compare across Nordic countries (Kivistö et al., 2019).

Moos (2017) compared the indicators of core contemporary societal and educational values in Nordic education with core values in Anglo-American systems through the following indicators of prevailing values to illustrate Nordic similarities and US/UK differences: GINI index of inequality, confidence in national institutions, trust, power distance and state funding of schools. In addition, it is reasonable to assume that there are some similarities (as well as differences) in educational leadership across Nordic countries when it comes to low power distance and high levels of trust in others, high levels of equality and confidence in national institutions, such as quality assurance agencies. In what follows, we elaborate on the third position of quality that emphasises the *practices* of the institutions and further explore how non-affirmative educational theory (NAT) can add value to the accountability–improvement debate in the Nordic context.

Adding Insights from NAT

Elken and Stensaker (2018) argued that 'quality work' constitutes an important missing link between accountability and improvement, as these activities should not be understood as predefined and codified entities but more as iterative and dialectical processes characterised by evolution rather than stability (see also Harvey & Stensaker, 2008). Thus, quality work offers a more dialectical and dynamic perspective to understanding accountability and improvement and how these activities are shaped and evolve. Elken and Stensaker (2018) suggested that 'quality work' is about how multiple expectations regarding higher education are balanced; that a desired outcome of quality assurance is a transformation of existing ways of providing educational offerings and that changes inside higher education institutions are dependent on individual problem solvers and innovators working in a pragmatic and autonomous fashion.

While the quality work perspective is quite explicit in many aspects, it could be criticised for being more silent on the processual and contextual mechanisms required to facilitate these outcomes. The link between pedagogical initiatives and the actual improvement of educational delivery, including pedagogical leadership and the *learning processes* within the institution, needs to be investigated (Elo & Uljens, 2022). NAT can provide the necessary framework for developing the understanding of how quality work operates as a mediating mechanism between external accountability and internal pedagogical work.

NAT takes an analytic view of higher education (Benner, 2021) as a point-of-departure and assumes a non-hierarchical relation between education and other societal practices. This means that education as a societal practice is neither totally subordinate nor superordinate to external influences like politics or economy. If education were to become subordinated to external interests, this would implicate prescriptive management behaviours, focussing on efficiency alone. Again, if education were superordinated to external interests, the universities would be totally autonomous in any decisions concerning their operations. The non-hierarchical understanding implies that universities prepare students for active participation in society, not only by socialising them into existing practices but also by preparing them to contribute in innovative ways in developing various practices. In addition, a fundamental feature of higher education is its autonomy in curriculum construction based on, for example, research and labour market expectations. Such an understanding argues for the relative autonomy of educational institutions, as argued by non-affirmative education theory.

Given the relative autonomy of higher education institutions, non-affirmative education theory assumes that education leaders need to *recognise* legitimate external expectations, but the question is to what extent actants are required to *affirm* these expectations. Expectations external to the university may be interpreted as ways to summon university leaders to engage in certain forms of self-activity, which includes an assumption of the relative autonomy of the summoned actors. A similar dynamic occurs within the university. While individuals are considered as already active and self-directed subjects in their relationship with the world, others and themselves, leadership activities summon them to engage in certain self-transcending activities. However, this occurs only to the extent that the staff recognise leaders' summons and affirm them as legitimate. Such a relational understanding of educative initiatives, where summoning to self-activity directs the others' attention and invites them to self-directed action (Bildsamkeit), represents a processual and dynamic view of the subject-world relationship. This view of pedagogical leadership includes the idea that external influences are meaningful, as they provide the staff with influences that cannot be avoided, thereby operating as a type of material to handle while not determining their actions. Therefore, educational governance initiatives are both possible and necessary. In this way, policy initiatives may be considered as pedagogical interventions that are co-creating processual learning spaces. From this perspective, organisational change is conceptualised as emanating from self-transcending activity that is a result of interactions with other interested parties, existing knowledge and specific opportunities (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2015). These

arenas for interactions emanate from the interventional summonsing of the others to self-activity. When these interventions recognise, but do not affirm, external expectations, they avoid instrumental managerial pedagogical leadership. When expectations are mediated in a non-affirmative fashion, different actors exchange views and perspectives based on mutual respect and recognition of all perspectives brought to the fore. While non-affirmative pedagogical leadership recognises existing practices within universities, such leadership does not affirm these practices. Instead, these practices are challenged by summoning the actors involved. These aspects of NAT have many similarities to the improvement-oriented position for governing quality and suggest certain mechanisms conditioning the creation of quality cultures.

However, NAT does acknowledge the importance of leadership, not least pedagogical leadership, highlighting the complexity of this position as one which is not about affirmation—to make decisions—but rather to establish summons for joint exploration of opportunities (Uljens, 2018). Leadership is about acknowledging the many complexities surrounding higher education institutions while preserving the institutional and academic autonomy characterising higher education. However, neither expectations of accountability nor improvement from external assessors can meet this autonomy. This becomes even more complex in large organisations, as the number of external national and transnational stakeholders of educational programs varies across academic disciplines and professions *within* an individual higher education institution. External quality assurance at the institution level needs to consider this complex landscape of rather loosely coupled actors. The big question to be asked is regarding the role external quality assurance procedures and practices play in facilitating institutional summons, creating processes characterised by 'bildsamkeit' and allowing non-affirmative educational leadership.

In non-affirmative education theory, pedagogical leadership is argued to be crucial to fostering change and learning (Elo & Uljens, 2022). Change is perceived to occur from summons of self-activity; therefore, it is crucial to discuss how to organise learning processes in the institution. Emphasising quality work as practices, we consider that organisational learning processes occur in professional communities of reflective practitioners, and the learning space is a process of co-reflective practice (Hybertsen, 2014).

Conceptualising educational and pedagogical leadership from non-affirmative theory in relation to quality as practice, co-creating processual learning spaces is emphasised. The first two dimensions that will be applied to analyse the expectations of leadership in external auditing are as follows:

- *to organise learning processes to articulate and reflect on practice in professional learning communities*
- *to negotiate practices of quality work in the academic community—both within and across institutions*

Following the studies of quality work (Elken & Stensaker, 2018) that have emphasised practice, we argue for more in-depth investigations into what managers carrying out academic and educational leadership actually do. Alvesson et al. (2017) indicated that research in the context of higher education also follows the rather

common distinction between management and leadership. Studies of management and managerial work often focus on the complexity of the context, such as descriptions of the organisational structure and culture, in processes of reorganisation and change. Despite the extensive research on management and leadership in general, there are few studies on leadership in higher education. In a recent study of middle managers in academic institutions, Gjerde and Alvesson (2020) determined that in addition to aligning with hierarchical expectations, they also engage in countermanagement, aiming to weaken the hierarchical pressure rather than to enforce or uphold it. To describe models of educational leadership, Moos (2017) distinguished between outcome-and participatory-oriented perspectives. In this sense, pedagogical leadership is about learning-centred leadership (Moos, 2017). To articulate and reflect on, sometimes, tacit practice is an important part of learning processes, which require a certain level of trust.

With respect to the importance of mutual trust in quality management, as well as trust as a core societal and educational value in Nordic countries (Moos, 2017), we therefore elaborate further on non-affirmative theory. This theory addresses issues of power and trust in a particular way (Elo & Uljens, 2022). First, by viewing education as a major societal undertaking to promote the development of self-directed or autonomous citizens, driven by the reflected will and ability to cooperate with others, power is seen as distributed. Hence, although accepting emancipation as liberation from unreflected practices, Western higher education and non-affirmative education accept the idea of negative liberty but do not defend the idea of positive liberty, which refers to unreflectively socialising learners to predefined ways of thinking and acting. Instead, Western higher education typically defends the idea of productive liberty, which means that the students reach, for example, professional autonomy. Western higher education governance policies adhere differently to these educational aims. However, most systems accept 'freedom of research' as a foundational principle. From this perspective, the question of power in non-affirmative theory is first how it is distributed across different levels, and second, to recall that the governance of higher education institutions should not jeopardise the relative autonomy of the university, given its critical and constructive societal task.

In this light, the question of *trust* is essential. The more freedom universities are endowed with, the more they need to be trusted. In addition, from the perspective of organisational culture, trust is crucial, especially in innovative and critical education institutions. Innovation requires a climate of openness and support. Tactful leadership is necessary: co-workers are challenged but not shamed. The same holds true for all pedagogical and research processes—a climate of demanding but tactful trust is beneficial. Non-affirmative theory reminds us that an important question is how governance recognises individuals' and institutions' relative autonomy. Without protecting such autonomy, counterproductive consequences, such as affirmative leadership and teaching, will most likely occur. Affirmative leadership reduces the participants' self-active (Bildsamkeit) contribution in the process, making learning and professional development a process of normative and prescriptive socialisation. Building on pedagogical leadership as creating a learning space of co-reflective practice in professional communities of reflective practitioners, trust is crucial for change and learning.

Against this backdrop, we further develop the dimensions of pedagogical leadership as activities aimed

- *to protect professional, academic and institutional autonomy*
- *to balance power and trust in the leadership of quality work*

We discuss the alignment between this conceptualisation of pedagogical leadership and the expectations of leadership found in external reports.

The following key dimensions will be applied to analyse the external expectations of educational and pedagogical leadership in quality assurance. The aim is to further explore how accountability and improvement are played out in the Nordic context.

Research Design and Method

To investigate how expectations of educational and pedagogical leadership are expressed in the external evaluation of quality assurance, we use a descriptive and normative research design (Bryman, 2016). The design's descriptive character is based on the use of non-affirmative theory to conceptualise the pedagogical leadership of quality work in key dimensions, which is applied to analyse four institutions' external evaluation reports. In addition, the design has a normative character since the theory is applied to discuss the alignment with our theoretical dimensions of leadership, as indicated above. The research design also includes an element of comparative case studies based on the identification of descriptive categories to further develop theory (Eisenhardt, 2021) following a deviant case strategy. The unit that is defined as a case is the external quality assurance of a higher education institution, where we use the key dimensions to explore common features across Nordic countries.

Empirical Context and Cases

External quality assurance is currently a well-established activity in the Nordic region, although some countries, such as Denmark and Sweden, started out earlier than the remaining Nordic countries (Danø & Stensaker, 2007). Currently, all Nordic countries have external quality assurance systems that align with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) in quality assurance. Although the history and practices associated with external quality assurance have varied over time, the dominant procedure in the Nordic region today is based on the following requirements (Bollaert, 2014): i) all higher education institutions should have an internal quality management system, ii) there is a national evaluation system/agency regularly controlling the functioning of the systems within individual institutions and iii) institutions receive an external report from the national agency conducting the external evaluation. iv) Following this report, institutions are formally accredited

by national agencies to develop and deliver educational offerings, providing them with institutional autonomy regarding the ways in which this is done for a defined period.

In the selection of specific institutional cases to analyse, we concentrated on external reports from four large Nordic countries: Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. All these countries have a national agency for the evaluation of higher education:

- The Danish Accreditation Institution
- FINEEC—The Finnish Evaluation Centre
- NOKUT—The Norwegian Agency of Quality Assurance in Education
- UKÄ—The Swedish Higher Education Authority

Four institutional evaluation reports from the last 5 years were selected from these agencies. We deliberately chose a deviant case strategy to identify common features across cases. Hence, the four cases chosen were as follows:

- Audit of the University of Helsinki (2022), the oldest and largest university in Finland with a complex internal organisational structure. The evaluation resulted in a positive accreditation of the university.
- Institutional accreditation of Aalborg University (2018), a university established in 1974 as a regional university. This university was re-accredited in 2018 after a conditioned accreditation in 2016 concluded that the internal quality management system of the university had some shortcomings. The follow-up evaluation resulted in positive accreditation.
- Audit report of University of Stavanger (2021), a former college that became a university in 2005 and received conditional accreditation concluding that the internal quality management system had some shortcomings. The follow-up evaluation resulted in positive accreditation.
- Audit of Chalmers University of Technology (2018), a specialised technical university whose history goes back to 1829. The chosen report concluded with a partial recognition of the quality management system at the university, with areas to be improved before final accreditation is given.

As the short descriptions imply, the cases cover various higher education institutions—large, small, comprehensive, specialised, old, young and some whose status has changed from college to university over the years. The reports also display different outcomes, ranging from fully positive reports to reports that have been written because of earlier negative outcomes and a report concluding with a partial negative outcome.

Data and Analysis

A thematic document analysis was conducted, where the four reports were read using the key dimensions identified in Table 6.1 as a starting point. Text excerpts

Table 6.1 Key dimensions related to accountability and improvement in quality assurance

	To organise learning processes	To negotiate practices of quality work	To protect autonomy	To balance power and trust
Country 1, evaluation report				
Country 2, evaluation report				
Country 3, evaluation report				
Country 4, evaluation report				

associated with the four dimensions in Table 6.1 were initially marked, opening for a second in-depth reading where the broader context related to the excerpts was considered. In this process, the formal lingua related to the ESGs were considered where, for example, ideas related to 'quality culture' were seen as a possible indicator for ways to 'organise learning processes' and where 'collegiality' was seen as a possible indicator for ways to 'negotiate practices of quality work'. In the data presentation, some excerpts from the reports were used as illustrations of the tone and form of the external evaluation reports. As most of the reports were written in a Scandinavian language (except the one from the University of Helsinki), the excerpts were translated into English by the authors.

Results

Organising Learning Processes

A key concept evolving along ESG development in Europe is the emphasis on quality culture (Bollaert, 2014; Harvey & Stensaker, 2008)—the idea that higher education institutions should be engaged in collective practices centred on quality improvement. This emphasis is visible in all external evaluation reports analysed, as the quote below exemplifies:

> *The review committee notices that processes for broad participation, engagement and responsibility were well described in the self-assessment—something that was confirmed during the site visit.* (UKÄ, 2018, p. 6).

However, it is not the more organic development of such quality cultures that is emphasised in the report but how quality cultures could be nurtured and almost manipulated from the institutional management. Such approaches are also acknowledged by the review committees:

> *On the other hand, the audit evidenced a reflective quality culture based on active collection of different types of data in the form of statistics, surveys, annual reviews, audits periodic evaluations etc. The university has good, perhaps too many digital tools in place to facilitate different processes...* (FINEEC, 2022, p. 93)

The quote also hints at the need to balance more structural approaches (digital tools) with the interactions occurring between the staff and educational leadership. A similar logic is also displayed in the following quote:

> *The review committee recommends a continued focus on the self-assessment process in the three-year cycle, and that this process functions according to its purpose, including the follow up of action plans.* (Danmarks Akkrediteringsinstitution, 2018, p. 39)

As illustrated in the quote, the emphasis on self-assessment processes, which are an integrated part of the institutional quality management system at the Danish University, is acknowledged, but again such practices should be complemented by plans and follow-up actions.

In 2015, the ESG was revised, and new dimensions were included in the external quality assurance. One of the most noticeable changes was an increased focus on student-centred teaching and the need to engage students in learning activities. In all four evaluation reports, this student-oriented perspective is brought to the fore, and various ways to engage and stimulate student participation are acknowledged and praised. One example can be found below:

> *As part of the process of strengthening student engagement and participation, the student representative body (StOr) has developed a manual aimed at helping new student representatives into their new assignments, and their new role. The review committee want to commend this work.* (NOKUT, 2021, p. 24)

In general, the external evaluation reports clearly underline the need for the institutions and the leadership within these institutions to stimulate learning processes—engage students and staff. In this sense, pedagogical leadership not only involves creating learning spaces in a professional learning community but also extending this community by including the students.

Negotiating Practices of Quality Work

The attempt to find a balance between accountability and improvement, between control and creativity and between structure and culture represents 'negotiations' among different logics within institutional quality management. There are several examples of such 'negotiations' in the external evaluation reports. A typical example is from the audit report of a Finnish university:

> *As such, the university is as creative as it can be. The audit team commends the university for also being a real learning organization.... However, the multiplication of ideas and initiatives can at times give the impression of a lack of priorities. The audit team therefore encourages the university to better exploit its potential by affirming a stronger leadership in support of an innovative culture...* (FINEEC, 2022, p. 61)

The quote displays an ambiguity expressed by the review committee between acknowledging creativity, on the one hand, and finding the need to add direction, a responsibility which the committee clearly put on the leadership, on the other hand.

As long as the leaders take responsibility and follow up on problems identified, the external review committees accept that such processes may be somewhat bureaucratic and take considerable time, as illustrated below:

> *The review committee notices that new de-centralized processes for improving the learning environment may result in a lengthy follow up of potential problems identified. . . . However, the review committee find that the university – at local level – acts when problems arise. . .* (Danmarks Akkrediteringsinstitution, 2018, p. 37)

External reviews of institutional quality management systems are, first, a procedure based on written documentation, not least stemming from the self-assessment conducted by the scrutinised university. This self-assessment may include several thousand pages of documentation, resulting in a quality assurance process that runs the danger of becoming bureaucratic and formalised. One could imagine that the site visit, as a result, plays a less important role. However, based on the external reports, one gets the impression that it is the site visit to the actual institution that is the most important process:

> *It is, based on the documentation provided, not easy for the review committee to judge whether the university has a satisfactory internal quality management system. . .Based on the design of system, the broad engagement of staff and students in the organization of it, how faculties has adapted to the system, digitalization processes and the conversations with staff and students during the site visit – our conclusion is still that the review committee trust that the system is and will be a good instrument for securing and improving the quality of the education provided.* (NOKUT, 2021, p. 14)

As the quote illustrates, the review committee in this case argues for the difficulty of arriving at a clear conclusion based on the written documentation alone. The conclusion that the institutional management system is satisfactory is only reached after talking with the staff and students at the focal university.

The reports analysed also illustrate how difficult it is to arrive at solid conclusions based on written documentation alone. Hence, the interactions between the review committee and the staff and students at the universities audited seem crucial for the conclusions:

> *This process-oriented and cyclic way of working is described in detail in the self-assessment, but was somewhat difficult to understand completely, not least with respect to division of labor, and access to, governance and control over resources. During the site visit, the review committee got a more comprehensive picture of the system and greater understanding of how the different parts were connected.* (UKÄ, 2018, p. 4)

Protecting Autonomy

In general, all external evaluation reports in this study acknowledge the importance of institutional autonomy, and most of the reports refer to institutional strategic plans and how the institutional management system is linked to these plans. However, the concept of autonomy can be interpreted in various ways, focusing on the institutions and academic staff. High institutional autonomy may not imply high individual autonomy as a default, as institutions may use their autonomy to restrict the

discretion given to academic staff. The external evaluation reports seem to be sensitive to this issue, where certain balance is sought, as illustrated in the following two quotes:

> *The University of Helsinki's educational provision is linked to and developed based on the university's strategic priority areas. . . .the bottom up processes and initiatives, such as the process for the creation of the international master's degree programmes, are generally appreciated and considered a very good way of working by staff.* (FINEEC, 2022, p. 20)

> *The university has various systems which contribute to highlight, assure, and develop pedagogical competence. . . .the responsibility for pedagogical development of teachers is linked to the line managers, and the responsibility for the design of the content belongs to the department of education.* (UKÄ, 2018, p. 10)

Both excerpts show how roles and responsibilities are distributed throughout the universities, and that the review committees acknowledge combinations of top-down and bottom-up approaches. In general, the arguments provided by academic staff are respected by the review committees, even though their purpose is basically to look for 'quality management'.

In fact, in all analysed reports, the review committees tend to be somewhat concerned that institutional quality management systems may result in 'too much management', arguing for 'slimming down' systems that are too comprehensive and too time-consuming:

> *The university has through the self-assessment process and. . . .established well functioning systems. In sum, they add value but also overlap with respect to problem identification and information. The review committee recommends that the university in its future adjustment of the reporting systems consider simplifying these processes, e.g., through digitalization.* (Danmarks Akkrediteringsinstitution, 2018, p. 39)

> *The review committee is concerned that the quality management system is too comprehensive, with too many different meetings, and arenas at various levels. This may result in too many reports, and a very complex systems for those using the system in their daily work.* (NOKUT, 2021, p. 13)

As the quotes illustrate, one could argue that the review committees are concerned that institutional autonomy can be endangered if mandatory institutional quality management systems develop into too big and complex systems, taking time and resources away from the primary activities of teaching and research.

Balancing Power and Trust

While the results so far suggest review committees aiming at finding balances between different purposes related to quality assurance, note that the external evaluation is basically a control procedure required by national authorities in each of the Nordic countries. As a negative outcome of an external evaluation that may have severe consequences for an individual institution, these processes are always embedded in a power hierarchy. That being said, and although all reports are explicit about the formal purpose of the evaluation conducted, the reports also highlight

many examples of how such power is downplayed. A relevant example is how the strengths and possible weaknesses of the quality management systems are labelled in the reports. While headings that include the word 'strengths' are visible, it is rare to find headings using the word 'weaknesses' in the reports. The norm is to use the phrase 'development areas', or similar expressions. While such details may seem unimportant, it is interesting that the reports are quite sober in their written statements and assessments. When critical comments are made, they are usually detailed and specific—often acknowledging that while some activities and procedures work well, others may have shortcomings:

> *The operations planning process ensures a university-level systematic approach to societal engagement (public engagement), which would otherwise be lacking....In general, the PDCA model seems to be used well throughout the various levels of operations, but collecting and using feedback information (Check) in recognition of the developments needs of the operations (Act) could still be enhanced.* (FINEEC, 2022, p. 93)

> *In the initial accreditation of the university in 2016, the review committee evaluating the institution concluded that the quality management system was insufficient in that it was not able to identify shortcomings in the links between students and academic staff, and that the implementation of key indicators was not sufficiently solid, and that threshold values within each indicator had not been defined.* (Danmarks Akkrediteringsinstitution, 2018, p. 7)

> *In conclusion, our assessment is a conditionally recognition of the institutional quality management system. In the area of equality our assessment is that the work and systems are not satisfactory ....The review committee acknowledges that the university in general has a well-developed system for governance of quality management which ensures the quality of the studies offered.* (UKÄ, 2018, p. 29)

A feature in the reports that is also interesting with respect to the issue of power is how the review committees also acknowledge their own formal limitations—what they may and may not conclude or suggest in their reports. The quote below illustrates such limitations:

> *It is obvious for the review committee that the institutional quality management system at the university is delivering on all formal requirements. However, the review committee would still argue that the system has potential for improvement. The committee will provide some advice as to how the quality management system could be further developed, but these go far beyond the minimum requirements found in the act.* (NOKUT, 2021, p. 35)

As such, there is a clear tendency in all the cases analysed that the power authorised to the review committees is not something they 'show off' during the evaluation process. The reports are rather sober in their ways of arguing for both strengths and shortcomings, and critical remarks are related to specific issues that avoid sweeping generalisations.

Discussion and Reflections

This chapter posed two research questions: how accountability and improvement are balanced in the external quality assurance procedures implemented in the Nordic countries and what potential added value NAT may have for understanding how

accountability and improvement are played out in the Nordic region. We investigated the research questions through a focused analysis of four key dimensions (how learning processes are organised, how practices of quality work are negotiated, how autonomy is protected and how power and trust are balanced), which we assumed would illustrate potential challenges with respect to balancing accountability and improvement.

Although it should be underlined that the empirical study undertaken is far too limited to arrive at general conclusions, the four reports analysed from Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden share many similarities, even though they are linked to higher education institutions, which are very different. Based on the findings, one could argue that our small study is in line with previous studies demonstrating how accountability and improvement are quite balanced in the Nordic region (Danø & Stensaker, 2007; Mårtensson et al., 2014; Thune, 1996). We find that external evaluation reports emphasise internal learning processes, and that quality culture embedded in strong collegial ways of organising is appreciated and commenced by the external review committees. This shared perspective may also partly be related to the fact that all external committees consist mainly of Nordic academics, some of which have considerable expertise in external auditing. This composition of the external committees may have contributed to a specific Nordic practice in quality assurance and to building trust and processes of learning across institutions and countries.

It can be argued that there is still a 'governance bias' in the reports though; while quality cultures and collegiality are praised, at the end of the day, it is the organisational structures, leadership, documents and data collected, as well as how problems are followed up by the institutions, that is underlined as crucial in the reports. In this respect, the 'bias' is perhaps linked to the fact that the purpose of external evaluations is to inspect, audit and evaluate institutional management systems, where a taken-for-granted assumption is that such systems should rely on clear structures, plans and leadership (By, 2005; Williams, 2012).

The fact that we also find many examples of review committees expressing concerns that institutional management systems are becoming too comprehensive, complex and resource-demanding is perhaps the best example of how the balance between accountability and improvement is considered to be achieved in the Nordic region. There should be systems and procedures, but they need to be relevant and add value to the work universities are engaging in to improve quality. The fact that the review committees praise and criticise a particular practice in their reports is perhaps also an example of the complexity of the quality work undertaken at the institutional level (Elken & Stensaker, 2018), where the devil indeed is found in the details of designing and organising routines and actions that make sense to the staff and students. Hence, there is a tacit expectation in the report that the (educational) leadership at the institution level is responsible for making the quality management system work, as well as for making it relevant to all stakeholders, both internal and external to the institution.

Returning to the theoretical interest of the chapter—NAT—our cases do demonstrate that the elements described in this theory are visible in the descriptions of some

of the existing practices in external quality assurance. While hierarchy is perhaps not totally absent, it is downplayed in the analysed reports. Furthermore, the limitations of the power the review committees formally have are emphasised by the committees themselves in their reports, indicating that while recommendations are indeed given, it is up to the institutions to decide what to do with them. In this way, the reports invite a summoning of self-activity for the joint exploration of opportunities by the institutions, and thus, the importance of pedagogical leadership (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2015; Uljens, 2018). Acknowledging the many complexities surrounding higher education institutions while preserving the institutional and academic autonomy characterising higher education lies at the core of educational leadership. Studies of management and managerial work that focus on the complexity of the context would be interesting to address if expectations of leadership expressed in the reports are in line with what managers actually do. The finding of managers engaging in countermanagement to weaken the hierarchical pressure rather than to enforce or uphold it (Gjerde & Alvesson, 2020) could be relevant to be explored further in relation to quality assurance.

Of course, one could argue that the seeming relevance of NAT for our cases is that we have investigated a region in the world where the society has some features (Moos, 2017) that match many of the assumptions specified in this theory. Hence, the question could be asked if this theoretical frame would add new insights and alternatively have less explanatory power in settings that score differently on dimensions such as equality, hierarchy and mutual trust. Given that the international reputation of external quality assurance is intertwined with accusations of bureaucracy, hierarchy and more intrusive management (Kis, 2005; Liu, 2013; Massaro, 2010; Newton, 2000, 2002; Stensaker, 2008), one might argue that the challenge with external quality assurance is not the process and practices of this initiative itself. The challenge is that we do not pay attention to the societal characteristics impacting the ways these initiatives are implemented (see also Massy, 1999). One example is the development of digital infrastructure and tools to support quality management systems that might impact the development of indicators and the quality work itself.

However, it would be problematic to assume that the Nordic region has some built-in special societal features that are only found here, making it impossible for others to find a balance between accountability and improvement in external quality assurance. The key dimensions developed from non-affirmative theory and some of the data from our small study may provide some pointers for investigating this issue further. As illustrated in our findings, the review committees paid considerable attention to the site visits, which played a critical role in the conclusions in terms of recognition and accreditation. In fact, while written documentation seemed to have been inconclusive with respect to whether some quality management systems were satisfactory, talks, interactions and discussions with the staff and students were important for the review committee in reaching their conclusions. This might have implications for how trust can be stimulated, especially within a non-affirmative theoretical perspective. First, ideas derived in the non-affirmative educational theory—including non-hierarchy and self-activity—may be dependent on specific practices and physical meetings between the actors involved. This implies that the

specific ways in which external quality assurance processes are designed and organised are extremely important for the possible outcomes of these processes (see also Bollaert, 2014). Second, being able to facilitate such a non-hierarchical dialogue is also dependent on the selection of those sitting in the review committees. Hence, while such committees are reliant on expertise and craftsmanship, one might also assume that non-hierarchical dialogues are easier to foster if such committees consist of peers with similar experiences and background as those that are evaluated. If taken further, this suggests that, from a long-term perspective, external evaluations in higher education could be conducted as benchmarking exercises between higher education institutions solely. In principle, such an approach might resemble more 'market-like' practices which could be more acceptable in other settings than the Nordic region.

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Chapter 7
Rejuvenating 'on Campus' Education to Reinforce the Particular Response-Ability of the University

Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons

Abstract In recent years, the effects of climate change, accelerating disparities between the rich and poor, popular discontent, intractable political conflicts, and major population movements in the world have meant that universities have increasingly mobilised to address societal challenges. In this contribution, we assert that to take up their responsibility, universities should sustain their delivery of education as a particular (pedagogical) form requiring a campus since it embodies forces that sustain students' and academics' power to study and think. We first sketch how two trends threaten to make the university (as an institution and campus) increasingly irrelevant by calling into being two figures: the independent personalised (vulnerable) learner and the innovative autonomous researcher. These figures require the university merely as a protecting and facilitating infrastructure for their increasingly personalised learning and research trajectories, which have to lead to excellence and employability. In the second step, we explore how to reclaim the university as a particular arrangement of study practices that contributes to the future in a particular way by complicating learning and exposing the 'learner' and the 'researcher' to practices of public and collective study and common pedagogical infrastructures (embodied in the campus). We propose that these pedagogical infrastructures help students and scholars become ever more sensitive to different worlds and what those worlds have to say, and in this way, increasingly response-able.

Keywords University · Pedagogical form · Public study · Campus forces · Personalised learning · Response-ability

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Introduction

In recent years, the financial crisis, effects of climate change, accelerating disparities between the rich and poor, popular discontent, intractable political conflicts, and major population movements in the world have meant that universities have increasingly mobilised to address societal challenges. Many policy documents (at the international, national, regional, local, and university levels) make clear that some of the responsibility for finding inventive responses to these challenges rests on the shoulders of universities. We will assert that in order to take up their responsibility, universities must maintain themselves *as universities*, that is, as (pedagogical) forms of public and collective study that do not protect and facilitate but that complicate and expose learning and research. We see that, by doing so, they constitute a very particular way of dealing with challenges, one that is worthwhile maintaining and that requires the campus as embodying forces that sustain students' and academics' power to study and think.

In what follows, we first sketch how two trends threaten to make the university (as an institution and campus) increasingly irrelevant by calling into being two figures: the independent personalised (vulnerable) learner and the innovative autonomous researcher. They merely require the university as a protecting and facilitating infrastructure for their increasingly personalised learning and research trajectories, which lead to excellence and employability. In the second step, we explore how to reclaim the university as a particular arrangement of study practices that contributes to the future in a particular way by complicating learning and exposing the 'learner' and the 'researcher' to practices of public and collective study and common pedagogical infrastructures (embodied in the campus). We propose that these pedagogical infrastructures help students and scholars become ever more sensitive to different worlds and what those worlds have to say, and in this way, increasingly response-able.

Becoming Independent Learners and Autonomous Researchers

In the current European discourses on the university and its inhabitants and the various policy instruments organising the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA) (European Credit Transfer System, European Qualification Framework, Dublin Indicators, Key Performance Indicators, etc.), the orientations of excellence and employability clearly frame the role of universities in a particular way. They define research as the *production* of knowledge, education as the *production* of learning outcomes, and service as the *production* of impact on social and economic development (innovation). Furthermore, they outline the figures of the 'independent learner' and the 'innovative researcher'.

Today, in English but also in other languages, we see increasing use of the notion of a 'learner', which implies leaving behind the old notion of being a student. While 'student' still seems to refer to the *place* of learning (a student is at a university or higher education institution) or a kind of social position ('I am just a student'), the self-conscious 'learner' has emancipated (disconnected) herself from all institutional attachments: her only concern is learning. Everything else is secondary—'where', 'when', 'how long', and 'through what' refer only to modalities. This learner is a figure that is constantly addressed in policy discourses and for whom all kinds of policy instruments and procedures are being developed (Simons, 2021).

We can refer to the ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) and its guidebook to help us to describe the existential condition of the learner (European Union, 2015: ECTS Users Guide). The ECTS is used by many educational institutions to organise, reform, and monitor their programs and curricula in terms of the accumulation of credits, which may be obtained in different institutions and can be the result of both formal and non-formal learning. However, accrued, the ECTS credit is 'a quantified means of expressing the volume of learning based on the workload students need in order to achieve the expected outcomes of a learning process at a specified level' (ECTS Users Guide 2015 p. 35). Credits can be accumulated and transferred, and those credits can lead to a qualification. The basic principle is the quantification of study based on the time needed to produce particular learning outcomes. The guidebook strongly emphasises that it is a 'learner-centred approach'. It is from here that we get a good impression of the kind of learner that the ECTS is imagining:

> An independent learner may accumulate the credits required for the achievement of a qualification through a variety of learning modes. She/he may acquire the required knowledge, skills and competence in formal, nonformal and informal contexts: this can be the result of an intentional decision or the outcome of different learning activities over time. (Ibid., p. 18)

The learner imagined or projected here engages in a learning process that is *independent of* concrete *educational contexts*, but at the same time, someone whose learning experiences and outcomes can always be counted, accumulated, verified, and recognised (validated). In that sense, the independent learner appears as a kind of de-institutionalised (detached) student.

The notion of a 'learning outcome'—one of the key building blocks in the European space of higher education—helps to understand what is needed when looking through the eyes of the learner. Learning outcomes transform sites of study into environments with more or less *productive learning activities* and allow to clarify to stakeholders what learners have achieved, while at the same time clarifying to learners what they can 'get' or gain. The basic logic is to decide in advance and in detail what the outcome of each learning activity should be (European Commission, 2012).

For the independent learner, university education becomes organised as a network or platform of *personalised* learning trajectories they can navigate to guarantee optimal learning gains. One could say that as a personalised learner the student is

someone who invests in her human capital and produces competences that increase her employability. For this learner, learning is a very stressful business that requires her to look for study trajectories with market value (added value), niches, opportunities to invest, choices with high returns, creative accumulation of competences, and ultimately, credits, which she needs to become accredited. One has to manage and accumulate these credits, and to count the learning time. Learners do not simply attend courses or go to university but make calculated choices. They look for competency-based education (so that they know or have a good idea of what they will learn), which offers flexible and efficient learning trajectories and clearcut modules, in order to allow for fast adaptations in terms of investment (of time and money) and in order to lead to employability. These learners require education that is orientated towards their needs, learner-centred, and personalised. The university is useful for their productive and calculated learning practices since—and to the extent that—it offers them protection and facilitation. The university is there for them—to protect them, to reduce investment risks, and increasingly today, to offer therapeutic support that helps them live their stressful lives—and it makes little sense to reverse the question and ask whether they are there for the university.

Many of the European frameworks have the following objective: transforming the student into a learner and making the learner *independent of institutionalised forms of education* since institutional rhythms and places are often considered as hindering personal learning trajectories. Clearly, there is only independency to a certain extent. The ECTS makes clear that the independent learner at least depends on recognition, validation, qualifications, and standards (that allow the learner to profile herself and manage her profile), and hence also on the agencies and procedures that support those to operate (Simons, 2021).

The situation is similar when it comes to research, which is seen as a production process, with knowledge as the produced output, increasingly regarded as a commodity (to be protected, sold, etc.). This offers not only a way of viewing or speaking about research but also a way of organising research. Accordingly, project-based research seems to have almost become the norm, with its detailed formulation of work packages as production units and with expected outputs defined in advance. Implicitly or explicitly, *the logic of productivity* functions as the guideline for research to be carried out. Research becomes something to be managed, with the proletarisation and professionalisation of the scholar into a knowledge worker or a 'researcher' as a logical result. This researcher becomes an inhabitant of the European Research Area, which serves to exploit the potential of research activities and guarantee a return on investment. Furthermore, the European Research Area wants to create a labour market for professional researchers (with a 'European Charter' and a 'Conduct Code for Recruiting', which are the central elements of the website EURAXESS—Researchers in Motion https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/ jobs/charter-code-researchers). These researchers are considered or projected as being mobile, without attachments, and so 'independent'. The idea is to call into existence the doing of research as a profession and the researcher as a professional. That is how researchers are defined, referring to the Frascati definition of research as carried out by 'professionals that are occupied by conceiving and creating new

knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems, and with the management of related projects' (Frascati Manual of the OECD, OECD, 2015, 164).

The European space of research today is a space that permanently and relentlessly *mobilises* researchers, including PhD students and post-docs, to orientate themselves towards accumulation (e.g. of citations, projects, publications) and—though it is often ignored in critical commentaries—to look constantly for (accredited) *recognition* for their learning outcomes or research results. Academic conduct in search of excellence[1] and employability indeed implies a particular mode of visibility. In order to 'exist' as an academic, what is required is to make oneself (in terms of performance) visible by permanently staging oneself, for instance, by constructing (academic) profiles and managing those profiles. This branding is not considered a passtime but instead characteristic of academic conduct and being innovative as it is promoted today. Branding or profiling is essential to run one's business as an academic. As for the independent learner, the freedom or autonomy of the researcher is countered by her increasing dependence on recognition of her productivity and 'impact' (H-index, Citation-Index, research profile, etc.).[2]

As such, the orientation towards excellence and employability changes the academic world at all levels—including the mode of existence and ethos of the inhabitants of the university and the study practices. Indeed, the university is a habitat (increasingly platformised) where the figures of the independent, personalised learner and the innovative, autonomous researcher understand themselves as entrepreneurs and are involved in production (of competencies or knowledge), speculation (on profitable investment), calculation (of credits), accumulation

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[1] The principle of **excellence**, which entails that the best researchers with the best ideas can obtain funding, remains the cornerstone of all investments under the European Research Area. See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1749

[2] One could probably say that the researcher and the learner get the clearest and most pronounced picture of the way the new learning factory—which has been expanding since the end of the last century—operates. The images of this factory are no longer, as Alain Supiot indicated (Supiot, 2012, 2018), the machine and the clock, but are now the cybernetic model of the computer and the robot. The 'employer/worker' is no longer a passive cog in a machine, who has to disconnect her brain (at least to some extent); now, she has to connect her brain all the time and, like a computer, react in real-time, day and night, to messages in order to ensure the smooth running of the system (see also Crary, 2014). Rather than obeying the orders and rhythms of machines, instead, the researcher or learner runs and is run by and through programs, using indicators that are quantified and enable real-time evaluations and monitoring of performance. They are governed by numbers, or maybe even better, by objectives or outcomes. They are now independent, but increasingly locked into a system of indicators requiring them to consistently perform better (Supiot, 2018; Han, 2015). In this sense, the ERA and EHEA are toxic environments both for the university, which is neglected, and for individuals, who are exploited to the point of exhaustion. Perhaps scholars and students, in becoming independent learners and researchers who are employed and employable in the new learning factories, can be considered to be freelancers. The word clearly suggests they can offer their 'service' or 'ability', or sell their 'competence', to separate 'employers' or 'buyers'. The tools of the freelancer today are laptops, software, internet access, and smartphones (filled with data and profiles). Freelancers are 'unbound' and may be attached to nothing but also can be attached to anything.

(of competencies and publications), and capitalisation (of innovations and learning outcomes). They require fast science and fast education involving dashboards and learning analytics that help to automate and accelerate learning and speed up science. Platforms are increasingly involved and allow them to 'operate' and be 'visible' independent of time and space. Some may question why and whether the innovative researcher and the independent learner actually need the university. Their modes of existence no longer seem to be intrinsically linked to or interwoven with the university. However, these figures will likely stay within or make use of the university as long as it remains functional. So, as long as the university is oriented towards excellence and employability (and is (therapeutically) concerned for their vulnerability and work–life balance), it will remain relevant. That may be difficult to maintain since the independent learner and innovative researcher always look for other, more productive or enabling environments and platforms. That places the university in the position of needing to outline its added value for the learner and researcher. However,, in what follows, we seek to reverse the perspective, to start from the university and to reclaim it and its campus as a particular arrangement of study practices that (when given form) contributes to the future in a particular way by complicating learning and exposing the (independent) 'learner' and the (autonomous) 'researcher' to practices of public and collective study. By doing so, the university campus transforms them into *dependent students* and *scholars* who are sustained to become ever more sensitive to different worlds and what those worlds have to say, and in this way, they are becoming increasingly response-able.

The University as *Universitas Studii*

One could argue with good reasons that, historically, the university emerged as a way to address societal challenges. The oldest university (Bologna, founded in 1088) owes its emergence to the promulgation by the town of new laws aimed at collectively recuperating money from 'foreigners' (to cover debts run up by their fellow 'countrymen') and the need to turn these laws into objects of collective discussion and study. The university thus emerged as a public movement of thought and an association of students engaging in a form of 'regarding' and concern for a societal challenge.

When we consider the origin of the university, it indeed deals with societal challenges by turning them into objects/subjects of collective and public study (which is to be distinguished from mobilising and exploiting resources). It deals with them s by gathering, through certain pedagogical practices and material space–time arrangements, around these challenges *as students*. The Latin name for this European invention of the Middle Ages was *universitas studii* (an association for study), students being those who devote themselves to studying (*studium*) something (a phenomenon, an issue, a problem) and the 'scholar' being one of these students (one could call her the 'eternal student'). The translation of *studium* is to 'regard attentively', 'to devote to something', and 'to consider', and also to be respectful,

concerned, and thoughtful. Hence, studying is not first about producing something but instead about taking care of and engaging in something. The notion of a 'scholar' also clearly indicates that the work of academics and students is essentially (and not accidentally) related to the working or practices of a 'school', that is, the university, which is bound to *studium*. Here, study is not to be equated with learning. The university marks the difference between learning, for instance, Spanish and studying Spanish. Where learning is aimed at the end of learning, that is, at the acquisition of knowledge or competence by someone (I can speak, understand, and read Spanish), studying is instead about always further deepening the investigation, attention, and questioning. It is a way to not only be concerned about oneself (as a learner or learners) but also to take care of some public matter (that matters). Reclaiming *studium* is not orientating the university to a personalised aim (as the notion *Bildung* often seems to imply), or an empty signifier (such as excellence), but it points to the importance of its pedagogical forms in working through problems in a way that takes care of a shared future. Accordingly, to define *Didaktik*/didactics as dealing with the teaching–learning process also disregards the idea of *studium*, in contrast to a view of didactics as dealing with the teaching–studying–learning process (Uljens, 1997). This own or proper space, time and force of *Studium* is also taken seriously in the relational view of content-centred educative teaching in non-affirmative education theory (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017; Elo & Uljens, 2022). The distinction between the scholar (academic) and researcher, just like the one between the learner and student, is no word-game but is important for the ways in which research and learning happen. At the university as *universitas studii*, research always directly relates to practices of making public and gathering the public *around, with, for, and through* research as study. This is not about scientific research as such since scientific research can also be carried out very well outside the university (as is increasingly the case). Research as 'study' (and as scholarly activity) concerns a particular kind of scientific research, which we could call academic and which has nothing to do with retreating into an ivory tower.

When reclaiming the idea and practice of public and collective study, it becomes crucial to emphasise that the university is not about facilitating and protecting individual learning trajectories or research careers. Furthermore, public and collective study are no scientific meetings of 'peers' or 'experts' and there is no 'collaborative work' of 'learners'. Instead, it is about gatherings that are not defined by predefined outcomes but are moved or driven from behind by issues and questions. As Wilhelm von Humboldt (1810) suggested, academic research is, therefore, not so much moved by the contact with 'colleagues' but rather through it being part of what could be called 'pedagogical forms' as articulations of *studium*, engaging a public of students in a collective movement of thought. This *studium*, in the words of von Humboldt, is operating in and for itself in these forms. Hence, academic inquiry and thinking not only require public exposition afterwards (as a written publication or 'report') but also *in actu*. This is what *happens*, for instance, in the lectures and seminars, which, in return, makes something happen to (and with) the public. This public of students does not precede the event of gathering but emerges through the event. The gathering articulates, therefore, a movement of de-identification—*we are*

no disciples (servants of a discipline), no innovators and businessmen, no learners and researchers, no human capital, but students and scholars. This movement occurs and implies that students and scholars are moving in a time of suspension (i.e. not simply a time of accumulation or re-production), which is the particular time of *studium* i.e. of *scholé.*

It is important that the university is dealing with issues and questions, along with challenges to which we do not yet have a response, which implies that it is not just about finding solutions or formulating answers but also about the *formation* of people and worlds for a future that we cannot yet imagine. Moreover, we do not know how and to what extent our necessary abstractions (concepts, theories), and the new facts (and data), new nature, new things, and new ways of doing that our sciences produce or conceive, will have consequences for our common life and common world. For that reason, we have to be vigilant, attentive, and thoughtful. Furthermore, we must be careful and exercise caution: *il faut faire attention* (Stengers, 2013; Harraway, 2016). This implies considering that we might be wrong or mistaken. That consideration is not an individual competence or capacity and is not just a matter of attitude or choice. The exercise of caution is related to the way in which the university organises and arranges the possibility that one's work will be met with objection, or that one will be confronted with something one has not yet considered or thought. In this sense, the university refers not to a kind of institution (or projected 'idea') but foremost to a practice consisting of material arrangements and technologies that make something possible. What it arranges, in creating possibilities for objection, is the chance to make public what one knows and thinks, confronting the public with that, and hence also to make it possible to think *in* public, *with* the public, and *before* the public. This was likely the unique force of the original invention in the Middle Ages called a 'university', which allowed thought to become public, and hence, turned it into collective study. It is precisely the 'pedagogy' of the university, that is, its forms and practices of study (including material infrastructures, obligations, and time–space organisations), that arrange and embody such collective and public forms of thoughtfulness, cautiousness, vigilance, and attentiveness. Furthermore, it is those forms and practices that are changed when today's research and learning environments open up to personalisation (increasingly supported by digital tools) and a format starting from what they offer for the learner or the researcher in an outcome-defined and -driven business.

Becoming Attached and Dependent Students: The Campus and its Collective and Public Study Practices

From the perspective of the university, recognising the independent learner and the autonomous researcher as the owners of their own learning, their own research, their own publications, their own opinions, their own credits, their own profile, and their own learning and research trajectory, and pursuant of their own interests in view of

the ideal of self-profiling, *implies putting the learner and the researcher at the centre of everything*. In this sense, the campus and the institution increasingly become targets for destruction and abandonment. The independent learner and autonomous researcher are not born through a process of emancipation from oppression but through the destruction of or separation from (inter)dependencies and attachments (to a place, a time, practice, and even a 'matter') that reduce flexibility, mobility and efficiency. The price for excellence and employability that these independent learners and researchers strive to achieve is 'the triumph of sad passions', as Spinoza calls it (Deleuze, 1990, 242), while Stengers (2020) reminds us that isolating them and entering them into a state of uneasy and anxious competition places learners and researchers in a vulnerable condition (under stress) and gives them an insatiable hunger for feedback and recognition.

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting move online by universities (with the digital space largely, but not necessarily, person-centred—the personal computer, the personal profile, the personal search, the personalised phone—and in a way the most 'modern' invention since it is said to be limitless and borderless) has reinforced and intensified the trend towards personalisation and putting the learner and the researcher at the centre, which implied the accelerated destruction or neutralisation of the campus (Masschelein & Simons, 2021). If that is the case, the university is increasingly being robbed of its unique capacity for study, that is, its unique power to create a 'gathering for collective and public study' (*universitas studii*), which constitutes its specific response-ability.

We perceive that the university matters as it stands as one of the 'tools' to address damaged and chaotic worlds, and to become capable not of solving problems but of responding to worlds, that is, sensing, imagining, thinking, and taking care of them (and perhaps we have to add the planet: see Chakrabarty, 2019). The university matters but it is, in fact, crying out for our concern. We should, especially as educationalists, be concerned with regenerating the campus as a common pedagogical infrastructure (including practices, architecture, time, and space arrangements) where the learner (and the researcher) are de-centered and public and collective study are enabled and sustained. Recall here what Humboldt stated, that professors do not exist for the students or the students for professors, but that both exist for 'science' (Humboldt, 1810). This is a formulation that we might modify a little in further qualifying 'science' as slow while confronted with the mess of the world through its students, but which states clearly that it is not about the learner or the researcher. The regenerating of a common pedagogical infrastructure that is getting the learner out of the center, and that instead of separating us from dependencies and attachments, reinforces the acknowledgment, as Isabelle Stengers states, that we are situated (always somewhere, sometime with some things) and that we are made able to respond (which is not the same as to solve problems) with others, thanks to others and also at the risk of others, hence, the acknowledgement that we are depending on and obliged by the relationships we create with others, both human and non-human (Stengers, 2021). This also depends on what we want to call pedagogic forms. So, if we have to become able to act and imagine the future, to become sensible to what the world has to say, and to 'respond', we see the need to regenerate (and not further

sterilise or neutralise) the relationships between students and professors and 'science' or 'matter', that is, regenerate or rejuvenate the pedagogic forms that provide 'questioning situations' (Ibid.). These pedagogic forms are not in need of learners but of students, that is, people that accept and recognise to be dependent. Furthermore, these pedagogic forms embody forces that sustain the emergence of collective public study and the becoming of (a) studying body(ies), that is, a body(ies) that acknowledge(s) the need to be situated and dependent in order to sense, think, and imagine. Putting it otherwise, in order to become university students (and scholars), one needs the campus, which one depends on to embody affective intensities and forces that make us move or do something or prevent us from doing something (i.e. affecting us; Latour, 2004).

Becoming a student of chemistry, geology, architecture, geography, law, sociology, politics, or educational sciences entails becoming more and more sensitive to what these worlds have to say. University education is about acquiring organs (ears, eyes, tongue, nose, hands, minds) capable of making distinctions that matter in chemical, geological, juridical, social, and educational worlds. By acquiring organs suited to inhabiting richly differentiated worlds, we *give voices to these worlds*, expressed in how they affect the body or set it in motion. The worlds thus become more talkative and interesting. This acquisition and voice-giving are *made* to happen through artificial layers or setups, usually lectures, seminars, workshops, lab exercises, excursions, library visits, etc., which play a crucial role in enabling the world to become talkative and in sensitising us to what it says. Such setups enable us to *taste* the world, so to speak, and in doing so, to work on our ability to notice distinctions that matter—or in a word, to *study*. These artificial setups support learners to develop the effort, concentration, focus, and discipline required, on the one hand, to resist what we could call the automation of looking, reading, listening, and feeling and, on the other hand, to realise a certain attention and presence of mind. Let us very briefly refer to some concrete practices and operations that contribute to becoming a student.

First, we must point to all the *mediatic displacements* from one medium to another that contribute to transforming something into a *matter of study*. The notion of 'mediatic displacement', coined by Lavinia Marin (2021), refers to the event of transcoding, in "which more than one medium is used, successively, such that the effect of a medium is cancelled through another medium . . . It achieves a suspension and placing at a distance of something already embedded and structured by codes. . . . The lecturer's voice displaces the text, the student's gaze displaces the voice, the writing hand displaces the text and the voice, and then the text again is read and commented while displacing voice and writing, and so on, in endless circular movements of displacement. This educational suspension enables thinking to suddenly irrupt" (Marin, 2021, p. 52). Media that are subject to displacement can include slides, experimental setups, formulae and diagrams on blackboards, models, and also very importantly, the various forms of the spoken word. Thoughts and texts are literally turned to speech when they are spoken, but so too are formulae, numbers, rocks, and chemical elements. All are mediatically displaced into speech

or talk, albeit in varying styles and tones according to the educational atmospheres of the different made setups.

Indeed, a teacher or student speaks differently, and is, therefore, differently affected by thoughts, texts, formulae, stones, and so on, depending on whether she is present in an auditorium or involved in a seminar, excursion, exercise, or webinar. These differences matter. We could refer here to the work of Françoise Waquet (2003), who has described how orality is a crucial element of courses, which we tend to forget because of our reliance on written sources. She points to the impact of the spoken word in lectures, exercises, excursions, and conferences, as well as in the endless conversations before and after courses in hallways and corridors. The university, for her, is 'the milieu of spoken science'. Moreover, different kinds of sessions, with their particular setups, literality, and orality, lead the world to talk back, or 'object', in different ways, for instance, through the comments, clarifications, and questions of other students, confrontation with examples, and so on. One learns new words, new names, and so on that do not just represent immaterial thought. Different sessions also change how a world is loaded into words (and names) and how words can affect us. We need to be aware of the unpredictable and uncontrollable ways in which these sessions affect words (and gazes, etc.), and in which words, in turn, affect us.

In addition, what we could call a rediscovery of on-campus education (see also Masschelein & Simons, 2021) leads one to realise the presence and particular importance of bodily displacement. There are good reasons to claim that one *goes* to the university and to the campus and to recall that 'course' actually refers to a movement. Course programmes not only indicate what a course is about and who the teacher is but also tell students where to go. Going to the campus and moving across the campus, from one session to another, is also an undergoing and a form of exposure. It is the very opposite of being 'installed' at home or in your student room, and it is different, too, from surfing online. Walking on campus, attending and passing the various buildings, rooms, libraries, and so on, is not like navigating throughg the Blackboard platform, or clicking from one Zoom 'session' to another Teams 'meeting'. In the words of Timothy Morton (2016), there are different times flowing out of different 'things' (shaping different spaces). Moreover, going to class, to the course, creates a particular in-between time, a time of transition, which makes one aware and expectant of the eventual adventure of an encounter, not only with others but also with something of the world.

Attending a course on campus is site-specific. You go to the university, to a particular room, at a scheduled time. This room is more or less dedicated to, and defined by, a certain practice. It has no bed or bath, but ordered seats, blackboards, tables, lab equipment, or collective screens, all of which place limits on what can be done there, forcing a certain discipline, a certain posture. In a lecture hall, you cannot normally move the chairs or the blackboard; your gaze is to some extent directed. This is quite different from looking at a laptop screen, which can display all manner of formats, allowing you to switch from one to the other without any change of posture at all, and always leaving you the option to click out of them altogether. Course rooms do not allow this option. Course rooms cannot be appropriated at will.

You cannot simply make yourself at home in them; on the contrary, they resist your efforts to do so, reminding you that you are somewhere else, in a place of exposure, of study, with fellow students rather than family and friends, a place where you are not just a spectator but also a participant. Going to the course room thus offers a location that is neither 'in the cloud' nor at home. Whereas at home or in her student room, the student might indeed be considered to be the centre of attention and decision-making, the made setups of courses instead aim to get the student *out of* the centre, both liberating the student from having to decide everything for herself and also helping to make the world talkative and demanding or obliging.

The campus as a physical environment *becomes* a place of study through the enactment of multiple, emplaced collections and collectives, which engender encounters with worlds. A campus in this sense is an active educational force, both producing and being produced. Enactments have to be performed, and the collections and collectives that emerge from them are fragile and always temporary, even if material infrastructures and institutional contexts lend the campus a certain durability. In today's conditions, where the figures of the independent learner and autonomous researcher promoted by EHEA and ERA increasingly demand personalised trajectories and environments (enabled by digitisation and platformisation) to optimise their production and accumulation processes (of outcomes and impact), university campuses (including their pedagogic forms) are increasingly threatened with abandonment, and hence, the particular study power of the university (its response-ability) seems to be at risk. In seeking to drive the regeneration or rejuvenating of the campus, we do not want to speak in the register of optimisation (of the learning process) and progress (of science), but we want to hint at making particular 'gatherings' (once again) capable of generating collective and public study and capacities to sense (to be affected). When we propose regenerating these gatherings/tools for collective and public study, it is not simply about restoring or reproducing the old tools but instead about re-beginning them and recultivating the art of staging the *pedagogical life*. According to Durkheim, that was the meaning of the notion of *studium* in the *universitas studii*, but it became threatened by personalisation and platformisation long before the COVID-19 pandemic, which has only strengthened and intensified the developments.

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Chapter 8
On Maintaining Social and Moral Agency beyond Instrumental Managerialism in a Knowledge-Based Economy—A Sociological and Educational Perspective

Romuald Normand, Michael Uljens ⓘ, and Janne Elo

Abstract This chapter examines transformations in the epistemic governance of higher education and research on education in Europe, and in how the production of scientific knowledge increasingly is constrained by utilitarian expectations and standards based on policymaking decisions. The chapter explains how new political technologies produce certain modes of representation, cognitive categories, and value judgments that support development of new forms of interaction between researchers, experts, and policymakers. By characterizing transformations of academic capitalism, the chapter examines how academics today are engaged in heterogeneous networks that legitimize new relationships and work conventions. The chapter draws on sociological and education theory in explaining these transformations' consequences, not only on the generation of academic knowledge, but also on selves and identities within scientific communities. This epistemic governance undermines some moral components and leadership attitudes in an increasingly competitive and instrumental environment.

Keywords Academic capitalism · Academic professionalism · Bildung · Non-affirmative theory · Sociology of tests

Introduction

Without glancing nostalgically at any golden age, this chapter highlights new local, national, and transnational conditions affecting academic work and fostering new forms of academic mobility and networking. New social practices shape new

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relationships between academics and their institutions. The two pillars of academic work, teaching and research, based on disciplines and membership in national and international scientific communities, are being challenged by new configurations that promote interdisciplinary knowledge and connect new resources and mechanisms to structure a new research policy agenda. At a European level, standardizing quality policy reduces the importance of State regulation of higher education systems through public-private transnational networks and organizations. Also, the European Higher Education Area institutionalizes new types of evidence-based knowledge, thereby transferring this to policymaking.

To deal with these transformations conceptually, i.e., to find a language for talking about what is happening to and occurring within our universities, and how these changes affect the academic profession, this chapter draws on complementary sociology and education theories. First, we employ social theory by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, who have approached ongoing developments in terms of a "new spirit of academic capitalism." Second, we employ non-affirmative education theory, as developed by Dietrich Benner, to understand governance of and leadership within universities. These sociological and educational approaches offer complementary analytical lenses. Social theory, as developed by Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), demonstrates how capitalism, through managerial technologies, can legitimize international mobility that focuses on projects and on connections that differentiate between mobile and immobile agents along networks. By applying social theory to understand European higher education, we argue that a *new managerial regime* can be characterized that institutionalizes new *tests against* or *challenges to* the academic tradition by undermining its values and modes of attachment, and by reshaping academic work. Social theory provides us with a better understanding of how policy initiatives' mechanisms form operational spaces that frame subjective identity construction.

The relationally oriented non-affirmative theory of education (NAT) asks to what extent and how these tests and challenges recognize the autonomy of academic staff and students, and to what extent these framings are strategically manipulative or instrumental, thereby representing affirmative pedagogical governance. NAT offers us a language for understanding the university as a societal institution, as well as the nature of its educative functions. Furthermore, NAT also opens up the pedagogical dimensions of governance, management, and leadership of and within these institutions (Elo & Uljens, 2022). These leadership and managerial practices influence students indirectly, but influence staff directly by inviting them to be part of certain kinds of self-formation processes (*Bildung*). Both the sociological and educational approaches share a certain inconvenience with the consequences for citizenship emanating from the new university culture. The citizenship ideal promoted is counterproductive given the broad societal expectations on citizens whom the university educates.

Education theory operates on three levels in this chapter. First, the theory of higher education helps explain the university's societal task and ideas, including how we understand the university's societal role, which entails how we define the relation between the university and other societal practices, e.g., politics, economics,

religion, and culture. This concerns the university's autonomy. Second, education theory emphasizes that universities' governance and leadership partly concern creating conditions for research and staff professional development. These higher education leadership dimensions, which directly or indirectly aim to support growth-oriented self-formation, exemplify pedagogical leadership. Third, education theory not only explains universities' societal role or the pedagogical dimensions of governance, but also offers a language for one of the university's core tasks: academic teaching that supports students' intellectual, personal, and professional growth. *Non-affirmative* education theory covers all three aspects and offers a distinct perspective on these issues (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017; Uljens, 2023).

The distinction between *affirmative* and *non-affirmative* influences is central (Benner, 2023). We argue that the prevailing policy architecture described in the first part of this chapter reflects staging the scene/framing universities in an *affirmative* or instrumental way, i.e., external actors use universities to serve their own interests. Academic capitalism views the relation between education and politics/ economy as mainly hierarchical, rather that nonhierarchical, thereby diminishing universities' autonomy. In NAT, a pedagogical act or pedagogical intervention is viewed as the *summoning* of an already-self-active Other to direct their self-activity toward activities, content, contexts, etc., that have pedagogical potential. The result of the Other engaging self-actively with the suggested activity/content/context may be that the Other transcends their current way of understanding, relating to, and being in the world, i.e., the consequence of the activity for which the Other is summoned can be learning. The act of summoning can be either a direct intersubjective act or a mediated act, e.g., the creation of new policies, networks, or arenas for cooperation can be viewed as mediated acts of pedagogical summoning, as they at least partially aim to transform the (self)conceptions and actions of higher education (HE) and academics. We see connections between the educational concept of summoning and the sociological concept of tests.

In addition to the concept of summoning, the concept of "recognition" is also valuable: What/who are university researchers and teachers acknowledged to be? To what are they summoned? How are they invited to contribute or act? We view ongoing policy processes as examples of affirmative pedagogical influencing (Uljens, 2023). Affirmative management creates conditions for instrumental Bildung processes in which subjects reconstruct themselves to fit into a system determined by interests outside of universities. Just as the theory of academic capitalism asserts that ongoing transformations pose consequences on selves and identities, this transformation of selves and identities also might be viewed as a Bildung process. While the theory of academic capitalism primarily addresses staff self-formation, non-affirmative theory is a reminder that academic capitalism's effects extend to include university students.

This chapter's structure is as follows: First, we outline *academic capitalism* and *new academic professionalism*'s principal characteristics. Even though competition between higher education institutions has increased, academic capitalism, as a notion, is not limited to marketization and also legitimizes new managerialism. In turn, this new managerialism and the values that it represents delegitimize academic

work by pushing it toward a "new professionalism." The chapter emphasizes how instrumental visions that promote entrepreneurship and expertise have become embedded in new work conventions that silence not only academic leadership, but also moral issues in higher education by emphasizing managerialism. Second, we argue that the non-affirmative theory of education and Bildung provide a fruitful and productive way to understand higher education since the introduction of the Humboldtian idea of the university and versions thereof. Third, throughout this chapter, we point out how the sociological theory of academic capitalism and NAT complete each other. In the conclusion section, we reflect on a non-affirmative interpretation of academic capitalism that bridges social and education theory.

From Market to New Public Management: The 'New Academic Professionalism'

Reforms in higher education undertaken several years ago in Europe have weakened academics considerably by infusing them with a new spirit of capitalism. Under managerialism's influence, the collective identity of academics that had been shaped during the 1960s and 1970s has been shaken by internal changes in higher education institutions, impacting the status of academics (Enders & Musselin, 2008). A systematic deconstruction of academic work has taken place through a set of transformations most often justified by discourses on internationalization, attractiveness, innovation, and economic competitiveness. These reforms and the restructuring of the academic profession already have been analyzed thoroughly in the literature. Next, we present some research findings that are relevant to our analysis, then conduct a *sociological analysis* of institutionalized tests that managerialism has imposed, as well as their impact on the academic profession.

The New Spirit of Academic Capitalism

Sheila Slaughter and Larry L. Leslie have done groundbreaking work by characterizing the academic working environment's transformations (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), i.e., how researchers are forced to find resources outside the university by developing applied research that makes them dependent on the business sector. As a result, competition for access to resources is increasing, whether it concerns funds or students, while research is becoming entrepreneurial. The private sector's profit values are invading the academic realm, while globalization-related tensions undermine the relationship between academics and their universities. The new spirit of academic capitalism, in developing marketization, deregulates the profession while rankings penetrate the university (Gonzalez, 2014). Global companies invest in R&D, and academics adopt opportunistic behaviors while facing an increasingly

competitive environment, e.g., seeking private funds or product licenses or patents to finance their research endeavors.

However, academic capitalism cannot be reduced to marketization (Kauppinen, 2012). It entails a complex process involving international and transnational activities in terms of content taught, academic and student mobility, offshore campuses, technical assistance, and expert collaboration structures. These exist in combination with practices organized at local, national, and transnational levels, within networks and intermediary organizations, involving knowledge flows, funding mechanisms, and public policies that blur traditional boundaries between higher education, the State, and the private sector. At the European level, academic capitalism has been extended through activities developed by the *Higher Education-Business Forum*, *Association of European Science and Technology Transfer*, and the *European Commission's* calls and programs (Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012). *The European Research Area* encourages companies to help develop innovations, while the *European Round Table of Industrialists* advocates synergies and complementarities between academia and business (Bruno, 2008).

Academic capitalism also refers to many other features that structure relationships between universities and knowledge production. In the context of global competition, universities' external revenues depend on knowledge and intellectual property rights that research, development, and innovation provide. These components correspond to new knowledge regimes and networks that create intermediation spaces between the public and private spheres by integrating different forms of investment and interest groups (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Globalization is intensifying competition between universities and academics in the production of scientific and technological knowledge.

Among discourses defending this new spirit of academic capitalism, Burton Clark's assumptions, in analyzing transformations of academic work, have accredited and spread the idea of an entrepreneurial university (Clark, 1998, 2004). Several conferences organized by the *European Higher Education Society* and the *Consortium for Higher Education Researchers* widely have supported and promoted these ideas further, while the Mellon and Spencer Foundations have provided specific funds for discussing this issue at several symposia (Shattock, 2010). According to Clark's entrepreneurial vision, these transformations in higher education have pressured European universities, forcing them to develop more flexibility, autonomy, and managerial capacity through, e.g., implementation of contracts, increased self-financing activities, and adoption of managerial practices, which are viewed as strategic and necessary.

These discourses, reflected in various articles and books, have made a significant impact on policymakers (Davies, 2001). First, in the United Kingdom, after a long period of austerity in higher education, the idea that universities should rely on themselves and not State intervention has proliferated widely (Deem et al., 2007). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) higher education program adopted Clark's entrepreneurial approach, and the European Commission has taken up many of these ideas in various communications, e.g., *The Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge* (CEC, 2003), *Mobilizing*

Brainpower of Europe (CEC, 2005), and *Delivering the Modernization Agenda for Universities: Education, Research, and Innovation* (CEC, 2006).

The notion of an entrepreneurial university, or a networking university, is promoted in international organizations' recommendations and reports, as well as in handbooks written by researchers and experts promoting knowledge management (Wasser, 1990; Clark, 1998; Barsony, 2003; Lundqvist & Hellsmark, 2003; Etzkowitz, 1997, 2004, 2008; Gibb & Hannon, 2006; Lazzeroni & Piccaluga, 2003; Poh-Kam Wong et al., 2007; Mohrman et al., 2008). It is not easy to estimate this new knowledge regime's concrete impact on current academic work in higher education institutions, but globally, a new paradigm clearly is emerging, reflecting a new stage in the implementation of academic capitalism. It has been establishing a new representation of university and academic work, which, although far from being achieved, produces a managerial vision that influences structural changes and policymaking. How this paradigm functions as a criticism against current academic organizational structures varies across countries depending on their historical heritage in higher education and public governance. This normative literature, beyond its technocratic dimension, has set a strong moral tone to define what academia should become, conveying a doctrine that, while denouncing the academic tradition, legitimizes rules of conduct that reflect implementation of New Public Management principles.

New Public Management Trajectories in European Higher Education

Ferlie et al. (2008) identified five major features of New Public Management in higher education. The first relates to marketization and increased competition between institutions, professionals, students, and territories. In many cases, this competition comes from an economic evaluation and exchanges of goods or services valued in the development of markets or quasi-markets (Paradeise et al., 2009). Second, budgetary constraints tighten funding conditions while new instruments, e.g., indicators, are designed to measure outcomes. Third, budgetary reforms emphasize performance assessments in the management of training and research. Fourth, a concentration of funding is used to differentiate between institutions that are viewed as more or less efficient. Fifth, university officials must assume managerial roles at the expense of collegial power shared by representative bodies, while the academic community is subjected to more human resource management.

Other researchers have found that the pace, methods, and extent of reforms, as well as policy changes, vary across countries (Bleiklie & Lange, 2010; Bleiklie et al., 2011; Paradeise et al., 2009). National higher education traditions largely determine these reforms and their instruments, and new drivers for action are absorbed by the local environment that they are expected to impact. Agenda-setting is incremental, rather than responding to radical transformations. However, more systemic reforms

have been observed in recent decades, with substantial financing, evaluation, and governing instruments introduced in countries such as France, Norway, Finland, Germany, and Switzerland. Other ideas have influenced higher education reforms, and vertical steering has been complemented by networked governance (Bleiklie et al., 2013). First, some policies have encouraged stakeholders' integration into academic affairs, boards of directors, and research funding programs, thereby broadening networks of actors involved in decision-making as more and more criteria and principles outside the academic world have been embraced. Subsequently, international and supranational actors have tested these centralized management methods through research projects that have mobilized a combination of human and financial resources at different scales. Finally, the autonomy that academics have enjoyed has been transferred to institutional officials, who make strategic choices for their institutions, including the possibility of allocating funding based on performance criteria.

These common trends also occur in relationships between academics and their institutions. Universities increasingly can control academic activities and careers despite persistent variations in national contexts (Musselin, 2013). First, skills and decisions that national or regional public authorities previously managed have been transferred completely or partially to universities themselves. Also, management and supervision of recruitment and careers increasingly are delegated to universities, while contractual arrangements have increased. New professors are no longer recruited as civil servants or for tenure track positions, but rather are hired under performance contracts and merit-pay schemes based on their academic resumes. Regular assessments of academic tasks have been introduced, as well as managerial control. The abandonment of automatic salary scales has been accompanied by international recruitment based on academic performance, reputation, and quality, with new possibilities for bonuses and new promotions. A form of managerialism gradually has been established to restructure academic professionalism.

Academics Between Managerialism and Professionalism

The concept of *managerialism* is used to characterize changes in the management of public institutions following the widespread restructuring of public services in Western societies (Deem, 1998, 2001; Deem & Brehony, 2005). It refers to both the ideologies related to the application of New Public Management techniques, values, and practices in the private and public sectors, as well as to civil servants and public agents using these techniques and practices (Ferlie et al., 2009; Clarke & Newman, 1997; Dunleavay & Hood, 1994). In higher education, as in other public sector realms, new organizational and managerial practices have been imposed on universities, while new forms of accountability and auditing have been introduced. This managerialism deconstructs two modes of coordinating (structuring) relationships between academics and the State: bureaucracy and professional autonomy.

The first coordination mode, bureaucracy, provides routines and predictable actions. The structuring principles (based on rules and controls that well-trained professionals have developed) aim to transform complex tasks into stable and predictable forms. For example, in higher education, a promise is made that each student will be treated fairly in accordance with administrative rules and current procedures. The second coordination mode, professional autonomy, is based on peer regulation and expertise that the State and academia recognize.

Managerialism, in turn, has been used to dissolve this compromise between administration and professional autonomy by restructuring higher education institutions. To this end, initiatives include controlling costs and implementing neo-Taylorian devices, resulting in competition, decentralization and autonomy, systematic quality standardization, and greater attention to service provision. Further steps associated with this managerialist restructuring include reworking budgets in accounting terms, measuring costs and performance through indicators, considering relationships between actors based on the principal-agent model, shaping the node of contracts associated with performance, opening up competition and public-private partnerships, and devolving services to minimal and optimal units.

As explained by Julia Evetts (2003, 2009, 2011), traditional managerial professionalism discourse has been adopted, reconstructed, and used as a tool for *managerial* control within organizations. Within universities, two different forms of professionalism gradually have been juxtaposed: *occupational professionalism* and *organizational professionalism*. The latter gradually is replacing the former, as explained below.

Occupational professionalism historically is built through relationships among academics, including a kind of collegial authority. It involves trusting each other and students alike, and is based on autonomy and peer judgment. It depends on a common system of training and recruitment, long-term socialization, and development of a common professional identity and culture. Controls are operationalized by academics themselves, who are guided by ethical codes that professional networks and associations define and regulate.

However, *organizational professionalism* refers to quality control and managerialism, and it includes a legal-rational authority and hierarchical structures, but emphasizes individual responsibility and bottom-up initiatives. It is based paradoxically on increasing standardization of working practices and managerial controls, and is directed by external regulations: rankings; targets; audits; and indicators. And yet, all this is only an instrumental way of taking control of academics. Managerialism carries normative values and self-motivation, adoption of a discourse about service and students' satisfaction, speeches on commitment, and teamwork. It also includes rhetoric on individualization and competition legitimizing individual performance, i.e., success against failure. These powerful mechanisms control the academic work in disseminating new professionalism values that are decisive in accepting managerialist principles.

Despite these developments, academic autonomy remains important as professional associations and trade unions try to maintain their relative advantage through peer control and regulation. Indeed, academics, as a professional bureaucracy,

historically have developed their autonomy in their working practices, and they have enjoyed strong legitimacy and power. Furthermore, knowledge production is not easily standardized and measured, so many academics evade performance management and accountability standards. Nevertheless, it seems that organizational techniques/professionalism are replacing occupational professionalism, e.g., the imposition of targets and benchmarks in academic work, sometimes developed by academics themselves (e.g., on websites such as Academia or ResearchGate), ultimately is ordering and ranking research activities.

The increase in the number of forms to be filled out, development of quality indicators, and standardization of work procedures, particularly through digital technologies, are means of controlling academic productivity and creativity. Increased competition over access to resources leads to changes in professional relationships and work. Building trust and collegial solidarity is transformed into supervision, accountability, and external audits. This, in turn, impacts relationships between academics and their institutions.

At this stage, these transformations of academic work over the past decades can be formalized in the following framework (Fig. 8.1).

As a comment on Fig. 8.1, we observe that historically, the academic profession was created as a corporation that engendered recognition and privilege in training elites and giving advice on community or state affairs. Imitating religious orders, it gradually was specialized into disciplines while research gradually took more precedence over teaching. While maintaining remote control, the State gradually institutionalized the profession while recognizing a certain monopoly in the production of knowledge (*Bureaucratic control* in Fig. 8.1).

With the expansion of higher education, state control has strengthened, particularly in academic recruitment and career management, but also in the organization of

	Knowledge		
Bureaucratic control	Academia	Mode 2 of knowledge production	**New Public Management**
	Profession-based bureaucracy/ Occupational professionalism	Organizational professionalism	
	Profession		

Fig. 8.1 Transformations of academic work

training content. The profession was organized and structured stepwise as trade unions and professional associations. While gaining recognition for its disciplinary expertise, it continued to enjoy strong autonomy and peer regulation (Fig. 8.1 depicts the shift from *Academia* to *Profession-based Bureaucracy*).

The implementation of *New Public Management* (see Fig. 8.1) challenges this corporatist compromise and undermines traditional hierarchies to institutionalize a flexible academic organization that individualizes careers and salaries. As collegiality loses its power, some academics are assuming new roles and responsibilities under New Public Management, which develops new instruments (e.g., evaluations, contracts, and partnerships) and provides a new professional ethos (*Organizational professionalism* in Fig. 8.1).

However, this managerialism goes beyond the academic profession to tackle knowledge production and management (Mode 2 of knowledge production) (Gibbons et al., 1994). The new forms of relationships with business, digital technologies' role in promoting a networked university, and the recognition of entrepreneurship or leadership skills among academics structure a new organization emphasizing interdisciplinary knowledge, its mediation, and dissemination to policymakers and stakeholders.

Sociological and Educational Tools for Analyzing Emerging Conventions for Academic Work

Earlier, we demonstrated empirically how the academic profession has been subjected to new policies establishing a new spirit of capitalism and new managerialism. We also described these empirical changes using organization theoretical terminology. We now would like to focus on conditions under which, and mechanisms or processes through which, academics have become involved in this managerialism.

The new spirit of academic capitalism, as promoted through New Public Management policy, operates not only through the shift in organizational and regulatory mechanisms. It also introduces new challenges or conditions that most likely will result fundamentally in new work conventions and a new type of academic professionalism.

Thus, the evolution of new identities obviously relates to initiatives that aim to elicit certain forms of professional learning. New individual profiles emerge—those of Entrepreneur and Expert—while a new epistemic regime is shaping the production of knowledge. These transformations were made possible because they were legitimized, i.e., recognized as acceptable, by part of the scientific community and because the old model and its legacy previously had been subjected to considerable criticism (Normand, 2016). We may view this policy transformation as comprising intentional and strategic intervention initiatives that aim to reach toward and implement a new professional identity ideal. However, Bechky (2011) critiques

organization theory literature's efforts to examine social interaction while remaining silent about social processes at different levels through which strategy actually is implemented.

In the next step in our analysis, we argue that social theory and education theory help provide a more-detailed examination of social processes. Thus, we take a closer look into how (a) the language of academic capitalism as developed within sociology and (b) the language of non-affirmative theory as developed within education can be utilized to conceptualize initiatives and workplace action that create new work conventions that function as new reference points for academics' self-formation, resulting in a different academic professional identity. The approach connects to the interactionist tradition as developed in the sociology of work and occupations, viewing occupations as negotiated orders and observing how occupational action is integrated with organizational change (Bechky, 2011).

(a) *Social theory approach—the new trials of academic work*

By applying the social theory approach developed by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005), the extension or promotion of managerialism and new professionalism among academics operates through the creation of new trials or tribulations (Fr.: *épreuves*; Swe.: *prövning*). How can we establish such a set of tests for academics to face in their tasks and responsibilities under management's influence? For this, we need to consider *principles of justice* upon which academics build their experience and work, and from which they direct their action toward common goods. By highlighting the type of tests or tribulations that managerialism initiates, we can concretize how academics acclimate to new working environments and how this process results in the *creation of new identities*.

First, there are what we could call *tests of strength*. This expression refers to the observation that academic staff and individuals are *forced to conform their actions* to imposed standards, devices, and instruments because of new institutional rules and managerial control over their activities, tasks, and responsibilities. At the local level, academics have little control over the introduction of quality mechanisms or the definition of quality criteria that an external agency will use to evaluate their research outcomes. Similarly, it is difficult for them to oppose top-down managerial decisions that control their budgets or make them accountable.

Second, academics are exposed to *tests of justification* in the sense that their actions occur in and partly constitute a legitimization space related to some ideas of what is viewed as common goods. These *justification processes*, which involve various judgment categories, arise through interactions between people when the current order is challenged and injustices are alleged. For example, a debate may arise within a faculty council about the criteria for allocating the budget fixed by the university, or about student participation in the definition of teaching content or about learning assessment methods. The emergence of this test is conditioned by the degree of academics' reflexivity and their degree of awareness about changes. For example, they can ignore that debates within the faculty council have something to do with implementation of quality assurance mechanisms. The test of justification also is determined by the degree of certainty that local academics face, depending on

what levels of change are institutionalized and how they produce lasting effects within the institution. For example, a change in managerial rules for assigning tasks and activities between academics will be disputed more often because of its consequences on peer regulation than a change in national regulations on qualifications whose effects are more uncertain and diluted in daily managerial activities.

Tests of justification, or people's capacity to justify their actions against others, are based on different categorizations of the social world and the possibility of establishing equivalences between heterogeneous elements gathered under the same convention. *Tests of strength* are changes that impact the academic community, but over which academics have little control.

These tests partly are inherent to managerialism and are characterized by:

– Transformations in the *recognition* of academic work and effectiveness that delegitimize traditional values and ideals within professional bureaucracy—based on collegiality, loyalty, and solidarity—to foster modes of commitment that focus on individual motivation and success, projects, and entrepreneurial identity.
– A new system of *responsibility* and decision-making based on delegation of tasks and activities, as well as accountability mechanisms that focus on efficiency and performance, to the detriment of peer regulation and a certain attachment to the community.
– Adoption of *managerial techniques* and tools presented as objective, adaptable, and flexible, justifying a dynamic of improvement, the search for excellence and quality, and the extension of partnerships against arbitrary interests, partisan strategies, and self-interest that academics are accused to maintain.
– The transition *from a hierarchical organization* to a *networking organization* that overcomes the divide between the public and the private, and involves sharing decision making between policymakers and stakeholders, new modalities of knowledge production and dissemination, and supporting creativity and innovation against the (considered) lack of productivity by academics locked in their "ivory tower."

(b) *Education theory approach—from non-affirmative to affirmative summoning*

As noted in previous argumentation, the management of policy implementation obviously is reminiscent of change leadership with particular goals. As this process includes influencing people's perceptions and understanding themselves or some aspect of the world around them, it has educational dimensions and consequently can be approached through education theory. Adopting such an approach entails viewing education theory as being useful not only to describe interactional and interpersonal processes, either in formal or informal settings, but also to explain educational processes mediated through several levels, actors, or artifacts. Following the classical Bildung-based tradition since von Humboldt, self-formation receives a cardinal position in education.

Bildung as human self-formation refers to a lifelong process, yet it is not just a "process," i.e., something that occurs or happens to us, but rather something humans

do. Thus, Bildung is an activity that entails experientially grounded professional growth. Given Bildung's relational character, i.e., not being limited to describing a human capacity or the raw process of learning itself, it focuses on the world as experienced. Therefore, the notion of Bildung denies the meaningfulness of describing the world as such, or human thinking as such. In this respect, the concept of Bildung is a concept describing what it means to be a human being: To be in the world is to stand in an ongoing open relation to Others, to the world, and to oneself. Thus, being is becoming (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). The Bildung tradition describes this process of becoming in terms of experiential content, unlike, e.g., cognitivist learning theory, which tries to capture the psychological *process* of experiencing as such, isolated from its content. Thus, human thinking is dependent on something different from itself. Bildung deals with human growth relationally.

When we approach the reflexivity of academics, i.e., reflexivity resulting in a renewed academic professional identity, such reflexivity is always *content-* and *context-dependent*, yet not determined by context, i.e., by existing or new work conventions. Thus, the Bildung tradition accepts humans as transcendentally indeterminate, i.e., radically free. However, to reach *productive* or cultural freedom, the subject must be presented with the culture in a way that simultaneously results in an experience of oneself as contributing to or establishing the experienced object's meaning. In this respect, the subject comes to understand themselves by reflecting on how Others perceive themselves as a subject. The Other's perceptions do not determine the subject's self-image, nor is the subject's self-image independent of how the subject was recognized and perceived.

Thus, a *Bildung* theoretical point of departure can investigate self-formation, professional development, and identity transformation from the individual's perspective, while a theory of *education* is not required for studying individual change as such. However, when we focus on identity formation in relation to explicit external initiatives, as we do in the present context, not only is a theory of Bildung needed, but also a theory of education to describe pedagogical deliberations. Here, education theory refers to the study of intentional initiatives, i.e., summonses, to either influence academics directly or indirectly by creating new working conditions to which academics are forced to relate. Thus, we argue for a broader concept of education that is not confined to interpersonal interactions between leaders and staff, but instead refers to the wider creation of working spaces and conditions designed to invite staff to enter certain modes of self-formation processes, or aim for given academic identity ideals. Creating conditions and working spaces is a form of mediated summoning of the Other.

We argue that the introduction and promotion of new policies and managerial practices may be viewed as including an educational dimension, i.e., being thought of as operating as a function between these influences as related to processes of Bildung. These managerial practices, described earlier in this chapter, are perhaps not only, or even mainly, introduced to create a change in prevailing academic culture, but they nevertheless operate as having these effects. However, we could ask whether the introduction of new practices or policies really would make sense if they

lacked the intention and capacity to encourage self-creation of new academic identities and practices.

Obviously, we think that policy implementation initiatives, indeed, include educational qualities., i.e., viewing them as pedagogical summonses is meaningful. We then must ask: Which kind are they? NAT makes a major point about the difference between affirmative and non-affirmative educational initiatives/summonses. Affirmative educational summoning seeks to promote given aims. Affirmative education is not very interested in co-creating direction for change together with staff or academics (i.e., the "learners"). The main aim is to reach what already is decided upon in advance. Regardless of whether these aims are future ideals to be strived toward, or if the aim is to prepare for a given state of the art, affirmative educational leadership takes an instrumental approach to participating subjects, not treating them as ends in themselves. In this sense, affirmative education leadership, indeed, accepts emancipation as a first step, as the subject must be "liberated" from established practices and working habits of academic identity. In a second step, affirmative education leadership strives to lead toward externally derived aims.

However, non-affirmative education policy and leadership assume that the subject is fundamentally indeterminate and views the future as radically open. Non-affirmative education leadership also does not subordinate itself to new policies, but rather promotes them instrumentally. Thus, these interests, typically external to universities, are recognized, but problematized. Regardless of the level of policy, leadership, or management, non-affirmative leaders problematize interests and ambitions in a collaborative dialogue with staff. Thus, non-affirmative leadership treats staff as ends in themselves, deliberatively contributing to creating direction and discursively positioning themselves. By summoning leadership that is not affirmative, space is created for co-workers to determine, through balancing acts, how expectations should be interpreted and dealt with. Thus, non-affirmative policymaking and implementation are dialogical and processual, operating with direction, but open to critique.

As with affirmative leadership, non-affirmative leadership also accepts emancipation as a first step; thus, it not only avoids affirming external aims, but also avoids affirming existing interests among staff. In this respect, non-affirmative leadership allows itself to question, challenge, or test staff. However, a non-affirmative way of presenting tests, in the sense discussed through social theory above, is not managerialist in an instrumental sense. Due to its dialogical nature, non-affirmative leadership also puts the tests to a test, as externally introduced tests are questioned by not affirming them in the first place. It may be that the tests are of such a character that they are unavoidable, i.e., they simply *must* be applied. However, non-affirmative leadership and policy implementation, in such a process, respects academics' autonomy, asking whether they are prepared to pay the prices required. Non-affirmative leadership views the acceptance of these externally promoted tests as truly open for debate. Non-affirmative education leadership is open for "revolution," i.e., externally implemented tests are, indeed, not accepted. Notably, non-affirmative education leadership is *not* revolutionary, i.e., it does not programmatically aim at turning things around. Instead, non-affirmative education leadership is critical, perhaps more critical than many normatively critical theories.

A Comparison

So, how is the sociology of tests formulated by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005) related to non-affirmative education theory? The theory's strength is that it both pays attention to the character of the institution that we are talking about, namely the university, as well as provides a vocabulary with which to address the character of the relational processes that influence the self-formation of academics. Despite the strong normativity of the sociology of tests, this theory is applicable to any societal sector, from health care, social services, and education, to media and communication. Although the sociology of tests does not explicitly distinguish between a theory of self-formation (Bildung) and education, it still includes such educational thinking under the surface, so to speak. This is not a critique of the sociology of tests, but rather demonstrates that it is reasonably meaningful to interrelate sociological and educational theories. A connection exists between the two, as reflected in the interest in self-formation. As the sociology of tests does not explicitly explain the difference between the theory of Bildung and the theory of education, one might conclude that this precludes identifying the difference between affirmative and non-affirmative influence.

However, this analysis demonstrates that the sociology of tests (tests of strength and tests of justification) provides us with a more distinct and accurate terminology for identifying educationally *summoning practices*. If tests of strength and tests of justification are interpreted as pedagogical summonses, they come across as having distinct qualities. Tests of strength are defined as tests that academics cannot refuse or avoid, but are forced to accept and implement. Thus, viewed as summonses, these tests are distinctly affirmative in character, as academics have no option but to recognize, accept, and affirm them. Tests of strength are not open to debate or deliberation, and due to their normative and instrumental nature, they do not leave room for discussing the ends to which they are the means. However, tests of justification are defined as being more open to debate and deliberation, requiring academics' autonomous action and interpretation in the justification process. The direction that is the result of a test of justification is co-created in the justification process and, therefore, is fundamentally open. Thus, tests of justification appear as non-affirmative summonses, as they point in certain directions, but recognize the autonomy of the Other, leaving the outcome of each summons an open question to be answered by the process itself.

The sociology of tests and NAT employ the concept of recognition, emphasizing that the individual always is recognized *as something,* affecting the nature of the pedagogic summons and the input into the process of self-formation that these summonses provide. In the tests of strength, generally speaking, the individual is recognized as an implementer of the test and as a means to ends external to themselves and to higher education. However, tests of justification leave room for interpretation and recognize the individual as a co-creator of direction that has individual autonomy and the opportunity to influence the test's outcome.

Thus, as the sociology of tests and the concepts of affirmative and non-affirmative summonses appear to target similar phenomena, but from different theoretical perspectives, we think they can complement each other in a fruitful way. The sociological perspective helps us recognize differences between various managerial interventions and in recognizing, describing, and analyzing societal changes that affect academia. Education theory provides us with a more elaborate language with which to talk about the nature of the pedagogical influence embedded in these managerial interventions, as well as provides a more distinct perspective on these changes in the education context. As the discussion above has pointed out, the tests or summonses directed at the academic community affect the constant self-formation of academics, as well as work conventions in the university and scientific community. Thus, individual academics are summoned to redefine their professional identities, as well as their professional conventions of work, in a more or less affirmative way, depending on the character of the tests to which they are subjected. Next, we briefly outline shifts in work conventions and professional roles that have been observable in the past few decades.

The New Homo Academicus and Work Conventions

We now identify four different academic work conventions that each represent an ideal type that helps characterize the shift from a tradition of collegial, occupational professionalism to performative, organizational managerialism (see Fig. 8.2).

The work conventions in Fig. 8.2 are divided based on their reputational effects (related to recognition within a community or a network) and their competitive effects (related to differentiated access to academic positions and resources).[1]

The first working convention or profile of academic work is the Mandarin, conceptualized by Pierre Bourdieu. The Mandarin has been part of the university tradition since the Middle Ages and manifests its greatness through distinction and eloquence. The Mandarin reigns over a court for which, like aristocrats and the society described by Norbert Elias (1983), distributing ranks, titles, and positions, and animating the scientific community. According to this convention, academics are placed under the authority of peers to whom they are subordinated. A logic of gift and counter-gift/debt and recognition is woven throughout relationships so that the academic must comply with customs and traditions. Respect is a principle of conduct while it is permissible to be recommended by consecrated people. The Mandarinate is rooted in the reproduction of the elite and marked by a set of *tests* that emerge in social gatherings during which intimate and peer-to-peer conversations allow for making decisions about candidates' talent and merit as a form of competition before appointments.

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[1] These ideal types also describe the shaping of academic identities and abilities to claim different principles of justice (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006).
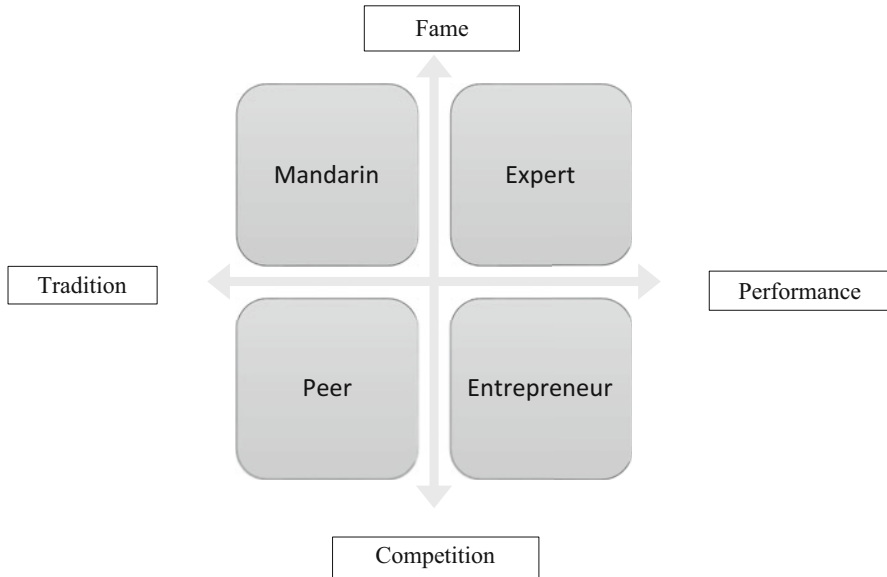
Fig. 8.2 Profiles of academic work

The second profile corresponds to *primus inter pares*. The Peer identifies with the group and defines its greatness through participation and representation of interests within the scientific community. The Peer's mandate is assigned by others peers and elections, but also is institutionalized through laws and regulations. The Peer is a member of academic and selection committees, trade unions, and professional associations. Peer regulation is confirmed by the status of elected representatives and delegates who maintain solidarity between members and defend community interests. Relations between academics are circumscribed by membership campaigns, the election of representatives, and the delegation of power to a spokesperson. The physical environment of interactions comprises membership cards, lists, and procedures for selection and recruitment, as well as lists and criteria for election and representation. This convention of academic work is particularly open to discussions and debates in general assemblies or smaller groups, which themselves generate procedures for membership and mobilization, rejection, or exclusion. The peer community is subjected to tests to determine the legitimacy of representation, as well as access to academic (and institutional) positions and resources through assemblies, conferences, meetings, or sessions in which proposals or motions are adopted, strategic choices are made, and representatives and spokespeople are elected and appointed.

In addition to these traditional profiles, two other conventions are emerging in relation to transformations observed in higher education institutions, particularly the setting of a new managerial and professional order in a context of globalization and openness beyond the academic community. Simultaneously, these conventions displace tests institutionalized by traditions, whereas a new modernity is proclaimed.

The profile of the Entrepreneur legitimizes an increasingly competitive world that places the project at the core of new relationships between academics. The Entrepreneur is creative and opportunistic, but also flexible and autonomous. Creators and innovators value entrepreneurship, as they want to meet the challenges of competition, particularly by seeking funds and responding to national and international calls.

To conduct projects, the Entrepreneur forges alliances and collaborates with a variety of agents, including those outside the academic field. Success is judged in terms of performance measured by the number of publications, the scope of projects, the size of networks, and mobility at the global level. The main test is to forge links, connect with others, accumulate resources, and make technological and scientific investments. Networking becomes a daily activity, as well as lobbying, which brings the Entrepreneur closer to policymaking and business.

The profile of the Expert is the fourth work convention. Like the Entrepreneur, the Expert aims to expand networks and adopts opportunistic behavior in selecting projects and contracts. By making connections, the Expert functions as a mediator in the accumulation of knowledge by which the Expert attempts to reach fame among policymakers. However, the state of greatness is defined in terms of reliability, precision, and relevance to the knowledge produced. The Expert is proud of having versatility and the ability to work in an interdisciplinary context, surrounded by other experts who have mastered a set of tools and methods that make them recognized as specialists. The Expert claims the ability to control uncertainty and risk. Experts believe that it is good to invest in technological and scientific progress to improve the economy and society. To this end, they address recommendations, set up criteria or standards, build indicators and other tools, and are keen to identify some causal factors and their impact. The Expert believes in measurement, which constitutes an indispensable resource for producing evidence and truth. By measuring and formalizing social reality, the Expert helps policymakers and stakeholders monitor and anticipate changes. The Expert also can systemize heterogeneous elements and create procedures and standards for implementing effective policies and programs.

These four profiles characterizing academic work remain ideal types. They can give rise to hybrid forms and compromises between several principles of justice. The experience of academics in Europe is subjected to various policy rationale within specific institutional and academic environments, entailing a diversity of arrangements of people and things in the shaping of the self.

Let us now consider some overlaps and equivalences that give rise to these kinds of compromises. The Mandarin-Expert can find a place within expert organizations or international epistemic communities to maintain a hierarchical position of authority, enjoying strong fame and having the ability to connect with long networks. The Entrepreneur may adopt an activist attitude and devote most projects to societal innovation or protest/resist managerialism. The collegial dimension and representativeness are issues at stake in Expert groups, as well as among policymakers.

However, the four profiles describing academic work as presented above must be situated in diachronic, as well as synchronic, dimensions to characterize a long-term transformation of the academic institution. The shift from Mandarinate to Peer

regulation is a consequence of changes in the professional relationship to the State, as well as the replacement of the Magisterium by collegial professionalism. The shift from the Peer/representative profile to the Entrepreneur profile is a direct consequence of the implementation of New Public Management, global rankings, international mobility, and the weakening of trade unions' power and professional associations' influence. The rise of expertise is mainly due to the emergence of new modes of knowledge production and evidence-based research that have become highly internationalized and disseminated to policymakers.

By shifting institutionalized tests, these new profiles related to academic work have conquered a space of legitimacy based on new principles of justification, while they have denounced the old conventions through corrective or radical criticism. They also have benefited from different forms of standardization and academics' instrumental equipment, which have made possible shifts and asymmetries conducive to the new spirit of academic capitalism. Using a non-affirmative language, we could say that the shifting institutionalized tests have summoned academics in a fundamental manner to redefine their understanding of what it means to be an academic. Thus, academics are summoned to transform their professional identities.

Keeping in mind the distinction between tests of justification and tests of strength also helps us reflect on the introduction of managerialism into the university. In relying on how Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) analyzed the emergence of a project-based world, in which people's activities are built through a succession of projects and connections in large networks, we observed how flexibility, adaptability, and autonomy are qualities recognized as professional skills. The *Entrepreneur* and the *Expert* become authentic figures of this interconnected world.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we attempted to demonstrate how sociological and education theory can complement each other when trying to grasp changes in professional roles and work conventions that academics have been subjected to in recent decades. The sociological perspective can capture shifts and developments in academics' societal roles, as well as shifts in their relations to other societal stakeholders, and point out changing work conventions. Thus, social theory provides us with an understanding of how policy initiatives' mechanisms come to form the operational spaces that frame subjective identity construction. Education theory turns our attention from a process perspective, i.e., when various societal developments affect us, to the intentionality of actors and intentions behind activities driving change. Education theory raises the question of intentionality and responsibility, e.g., the non-affirmative position addresses the question of how different actors and stakeholders recognize academics' autonomy as self-active subjects. Also, education theory asks whether, how, and to what extent policy initiatives require affirmative action from academics. Affirmative policy initiatives represent a sort of educational governance and leadership that leave less room for interpretation and independent

positioning on the academics' part. Affirmative policies only seemingly reserve a space for choice. Such policy initiatives and re-framings also tend to limit academics' professionalism to operating along a predetermined social logic. Non-affirmative theory is a reminder that whether summonses are affirmative or non-affirmative, the Bildsamkeit/Bildung side of education theory focuses on the subject's construction of their identity. Thus, subjective identity construction is not limited to being something that happens to or with us, but rather something that subjects do. Individuals are neither totally autonomous to form their identity, nor determined by mechanisms in policy initiatives, though they are summoned by them to various degrees. Thus, the operations featuring the above four positions also may be viewed as affirmative leadership initiatives that aim to define in advance how academics are expected to construct their professional identities.

These transformations of academic work over the past few decades have resulted in academics acclimating to new work environments and creating new professional identities in this process. The shifts in these professional roles and relations are outlined in the chapter in the form of Mandarin, Peer, Expert, and Entrepreneur, exemplifying how academics navigate and respond to changing policy contexts. The sociology of tests is a useful way of illuminating how these changes operate by subjecting academics to new tests, either of strength or of justification. These tests influence self-formation of academic professional identities, as well as the networks and relations that comprise academia.

To sum up, in this chapter, we argued that the concept of tests from sociological theory and the concept of summoning from education theory provide complementary answers to the question posed in this chapter's title: how to maintain social and moral agency beyond managerial instrumentalism. The sociological and education positions, as developed in this chapter, share some common ground because they both aim to explain interventions that, at least partly, aim to influence the individual's self-formation. Both concepts also acknowledge that these interventions can be more or less "open" in character. In sociological theory, tests are divided into tests of strength (closed) and tests of justification (open for debate), and in education theory, summonses can be affirmative (closed), non-affirmative (open for deliberation), or something in between. Sociology and education complement each other in this regard, as sociology can point toward societal processes that the tests emanate from, as well as the outcomes, to some extent, whereas education theory provides a more elaborate language for the intentional dimensions of these tests/summonses. Thus, education theory operates on several levels. First, non-affirmative education theory provides a distinct position on the role of education in relation to other areas of society, maintaining that the relation between societal fields is non-hierarchical. In this way, putting education theory at the forefront offers a more elaborate perspective on the context studied, namely education, providing a frame for the sociological approach. Furthermore, NAT complements the sociology of tests by providing a vocabulary through which tests' character can be discussed from a relational perspective. We then ask to what extent and how these tests and challenges recognize

the autonomy of academic staff and students, and to what extent these framings are strategically manipulative or instrumental. In other words, how affirmative are the tests in character and how well do they provide a vocabulary with which to talk about the premises for this relational interaction? Maintaining the difference between education and Bildung provides a more detailed way of approaching the intentional processes through which academics' self-formation and work conventions transform.

By identifying new work conventions related to the emergence of a new spirit of academic capitalism, we demonstrated that management is institutionalizing new tests while relativizing those tests, which the academic tradition earlier built on. The gradual imposition of quality standards and a managerialism in the production of knowledge through transnational networks also weaken the relationship between the State and the academic profession. The denunciation of these transformations is difficult because they anchor their legitimacy in several criticisms addressed to academia and subsequently taken up by policymakers and international organizations.

The relocation of the institutionalized tests generates asymmetries between managers and those experiencing it through their daily tasks and responsibilities. The latter are relatively helpless in establishing equivalence between, on one hand, international agencies and networks that design managerialist standards, and on the other hand, controlling tools and frameworks implemented in higher education institutions. According to Albert O. Hirschman's terminology (1991), strikes or protests (voices) are very weak when facing global reform movements, particularly because it is difficult for protesters to mobilize in response to changes that are complex and difficult to categorize. This explains why many academics hesitate between exiting or remaining loyal to the organization, which is why academic leadership is at stake.

Managerialism also underestimates the power of moral capacities that direct people toward common goods and allow them to take initiatives and responsibilities within the academic organization. Different moral grammars coexist within higher education institutions and shape the foundations for interactions between academics and students. Limiting these social relationships to an instrumental vision ignores attitudes and behaviors related to solicitude and compassion, or to gift and counter-gift, and other disinterested commitments that characterize the academic condition and its modes of existence.

This invites some reflexivity about the tacit and assumed knowledge that makes the notion of academic leadership relevant based on varying moral and cultural interpretations and contexts. It is a means of characterizing embeddedness of leadership practices within transformed higher education institutions in relation to ethics and a sense of social justice, as well as highlighting some areas of tension between historical and civic traditions, while being open to a more liberal and reflexive modernity.

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Chapter 9
Conclusions

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Abstract In this concluding chapter we aim at tying together the volume. First, we return to and remind of the points of departure from chapter one. Thereafter, we return to each chapter briefly to recapitulate, and point out some of the key points in each one. At the end, we summarise the insights from the volume, pointing out both possibilities and limitations for NAT as a point of departure for approaching multilevel pedagogical leadership in higher education.

Keywords Higher education leadership · Non-affirmative theory · Multi-level leadership

The point of departure in this volume was the observation that the current state of the art in research on leadership in and of higher education is associated with challenges. A major part of HE leadership research often depart from either organisation theory or policy research. Other strands point to generic leadership models. A dilemma with these approaches is that they conceptually oversee the ultimate object of HE leadership (teaching, studying and research). While some of this research does consider the context and societal task of higher education, it is seldom guided by anything resembling a theory of education. We argue, therefore, that the leadership of learning in educational institutions is of a very different nature than the leadership of learning in, for example, the private sector or in public service institutions. In addition, as has been demonstrated in this volume, the idea of what constitutes a 'university' has changed dramatically throughout history. Any attempt to theoretically ground pedagogical leadership in and of higher education must not overlook this fact. Yet, research often does so. Irrespective of how elaborate the model, object and context neutrality characterise most of the previous approaches. This volume recognised a need to raise questions regarding the *content-related what-aspect* and *context-related why-aspect* of higher education leadership.

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A third bothering aspect is that much of the existing HE leadership research deals with influencing the development of capacities and competencies at the individual and organizational levels but fails to thematise the pedagogical character of such leadership activities. Humans naturally learn everywhere, from all kinds of interactions, but what about the qualities of leader initiatives that intentionally aim to support others' learning, either directly or indirectly? There is obviously a pedagogical dimension or aspect to such leadership activity. In addition to the 'what' and 'where' questions, we saw a need to raise questions about the *pedagogical how* of higher education leadership.

Influencing learning refers only to one part of the interactive learning process—namely, the 'influencing' as such—while other approaches focus on the opposite—the learner's activities. When research on leadership for learning is grounded in learning theory or learning research alone, this results only in practical recommendations of how leadership for learning should be carried out in different contexts. Reaching for practical advice is valuable, but this strategy omits how we conceptually may describe features of the pedagogical, interactive dimensions of leadership and studying. In this volume, we argued that a theory that opens pedagogically driven learning activities cannot be limited to either the leadership activities or the learning process, but rather must approach these processes relationally.

The argument of this volume was that, ultimately, the content of higher education leadership is always related to teaching, studying and research, but in a mediated fashion. Even though leadership may be primarily focused on, for example, economical aspects or facilities, these are always understood in relation to the end object of HE leadership: HE teaching, studying, learning and research. Thus, leadership of HE institutions is to be understood as a multi-level and rhizomatic undertaking. For example, the board of the university only indirectly leads teaching and learning. The same holds true for the rector or provost of the university, who primarily leads other leaders of the university, who in turn more closely lead teachers, who lead their students.

The volume introduced the challenges of current strands of theoretical grounding of higher education leadership research. As we see it, these challenges relate to the capacity to deal with a) the object of HE leadership, namely teaching, studying, research and leadership; b) the societal task of education and research that point to the aims or the why-aspect of higher education; and c) the pedagogical dimensions of higher education leadership, namely those characterised by an ambition to influence the ways in which an Other learns, matures, qualifies and constructs an academically based professional identity, all of which support the individual's ability to successfully act in the world. In the introduction, we formulated these observations via three critiques of contemporary HE leadership research.

In the first critique, we pointed out that many contemporary positions face challenges relating education to other societal fields of practice and thereby risk either subordinating education to serve contemporary conservative needs (i.e. reproductive education) or subordinating education to predefined and normatively closed ideals of a future (i.e. transformative education). In our second critique, we pointed out that many contemporary approaches have challenges dealing with

HE leadership as a multi-level phenomenon in a coherent manner. Many approaches focus on isolated phenomena on isolated levels of leadership, and in doing so miss the big picture. Others grasp the big picture but do it using a general theory or conceptual language, thus missing the *object* of leadership: education. Our third critique pointed out that most contemporary approaches lack a language for pedagogic influence and interaction. This is a twofold challenge. First, it means that these positions lack a nuanced understanding of the end object of HE leadership, namely the relational teaching–studying–learning process. Second, it means that these positions lack the language to talk about the pedagogic influence that occurs within the leadership process itself at different levels of leadership, wherever this leadership entails intentionally trying to influence an Other directly or indirectly to transcend their current way of understanding or being in the world. This form of influence is inherent in all forms of developmental work.

This volume was based on an aim to explore the extent to which the non-affirmative theory of education can overcome these challenges and provide a theoretical point of departure for approaching the pedagogical dimensions of HE leadership in a coherent manner. This point of departure comes with two important limitations. First, our approach to exploring the capacities and limits of the non-affirmative theory is guided by a non-affirmative approach to the theory itself. Our mission is thus not to advocate for NAT in an affirmative manner; instead, our approach is guided by an ambition to test the usefulness of the theory while simultaneously trying to avoid the kind of normative stubbornness that would hinder us from seeing the limitations of the theory. Our search for the limits and capacities of NAT is in no way finished, and future responses to this volume will undoubtedly sharpen our view on the limits and capabilities of NAT. Second, it is important to acknowledge that our point of departure is that NAT may indeed contain a potentiality and capacity to deal precisely with the *pedagogical* dimensions of HE leadership. NAT is thus not proposed as a *general theory* capable of covering all aspects and dimensions of HE leadership.

Educational leadership thus remains a broad phenomenon that covers far more dimensions than a theory of education can handle. For example, organisation theory casts light on important dimensions of higher education leadership beyond its pedagogical qualities. Our argument is, however, that a theory of education can on the one hand work as a *fundamental point of departure* that sheds light on the role of education in a liberal democracy, while on the other hand be able to provide a language for the pedagogical influence that occurs *within* education and the leading thereof.

In this concluding chapter, we aim to sum up the main results and implications of our exploration of the capabilities and limitations of NAT described in the previous individual chapters. The chapters of this volume should be seen as attempts to deal with *examples* of pedagogical phenomena on various levels of HE leadership. Naturally, one volume is not capable of covering all the pedagogical dimensions of all levels of leadership, and the examples provided here are a limited few. In the introduction, we formulated three critiques and sketched how NAT could be capable of overcoming them. We focused on the theoretical points of departure in relation to

previous positions. To provide a transition between the theoretical elaborations in the introduction and the specific but limited examples in the following chapters, we designed chapter two with a more pragmatic approach that drew on contemporary HE research to offer an overview of the various ways in which pedagogic interactions can emerge in multi-level HE leadership.

Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 did not follow the levels of HE leadership in an orthodox way, given that many of the phenomena discussed stretch over several levels and occur in various forms. Nevertheless, the chapters roughly follow the logic of moving from the macro levels down to the micro level. At the same time, we want to reiterate that the 'where', 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions of HE leadership occur at all levels. In principle, we may at least differentiate between three types of contexts. On the lowest level we find teachers pedagogically leading students. At a following contextual level we find leaders leading teachers, while a third level identifies leaders leading leaders. All of these leadership levels feature pedagogical dimensions. Thereby, while the questions are the same on all levels, they emerge differently. While the lower levels of the multi-level model focus on teaching and studying, the levels in between deal with the leadership of leadership and only indirectly with the leadership of teaching and studying. It has become increasingly clear that in multi-level organisations, all leaders' professional development is crucial. Leaders at different levels of higher education institutions need to continuously develop a wide variety of educational leadership competencies. Intentionally supporting leaders in their professional development, regardless of which competencies we discuss, is a pedagogical undertaking. Thus, we discuss the *pedagogical leadership of leaders' learning and developing in the field of educational leadership*. It then follows that pedagogical leadership be one of the competencies included in educational leadership. Consequently, pedagogical leadership is an object of pedagogical leadership. The argument of this volume has been that although the pedagogical 'how' question of HE leadership may receive different shapes at different levels, it still features characteristics that we can express using similar vocabulary across the levels (recognition, non-affirmative summoning to self-activity, Bildsamkeit/Bildung).

In moving from the macro levels to the micro level, the point of departure of Chap. 3 is at the global level; specifically, the argument that the condition of the Anthropocene is challenging contemporary education on a global scale. This relates to the *globopolitan* dimension of education. While the question raised in Chap. 3 queries how education is supposed to deal with the Anthropocene, topics related to the environment and sustainability are only a few of many legitimate claims to HE curriculum. These come alongside topics such as economic competitiveness, social justice and qualifications for employability. All are topics that HE must deal with. They need to be recognised due to their importance, but when these topics are dealt with pedagogically, universities as critical institutions should not affirm them. To affirm any such societal interests in higher education teaching would reflect indoctrination of varying degrees. Affirming some of these claims would risk instrumentalising education to serve external interests and thereby subordinate education to them, which would risk jeopardising the education of critically

reflective citizens for the open future of democracy. This is the general position of non-affirmative education theory. Chapter 3, however, questions the validity of such a point of departure. Lili-Ann Wolff et al. claims that the environment cannot be viewed as merely another field of societal practice to be affirmed or not affirmed. Rather, the environment is better seen as the fundament on which all fields of practice rely, and without which they cannot exist. In this respect, the fundamental character of the environment has been something of a blind spot for NAT. Therefore, in the chapter, Wolff et al. suggest that the environment should be seen as a fundamental frame of reference to which all fields of societal practice must relate. This argument may seem intriguing. However, it is merely a statement *that* education must relate to the environment; it has not answered *how* education should deal with nature. Wolff et al. argue that the environment must be recognised as the foundation for the existence of mankind. The question of how current and future generations are supposed to deal with this relation of dependency is, however, an open one. To *pedagogically* deal with humankind's dependency on the environment would thus be to raise the topic for scrutiny and elaboration but avoid uncritically affirming any predefined contemporary or future solution to the problem. Instead of focusing on providing predefined solutions, the focus should be on understanding the question that the solutions are meant to answer, thereby opening the possibility to develop new perspectives and solutions previously unimagined. The importance of a sustainable relationship with the environment must thus, in a way, be affirmed or recognised, but the topic itself needs to be approached pedagogically and non-affirmatively from the perspectives of various scientific disciplines.

In Chap. 4, Jussi Kivistö et al. focused on the national level by exploring the pedagogical dimensions of national funding of HE. The chapter argued that national funding is one of the major ways in which the political sphere of society influences higher education. This relationship is an example of the relation between politics and education. Kivistö et al. argue that in HE funding, HE is always recognised *as something*, or as being endowed with specific assignments. The logic behind the ways in which funding is allocated has different implications for HE. In national models characterised by large proportions of 'pillar one' funding (i.e. stable funding based on the size of the university, for example), HE is recognised as an autonomous actor capable of defining the aims of education, as well as the focus of research in various fields and disciplines, in dialogue with the rest of society. Such a funding model would reflect a non-affirmative approach to funding because it safeguards the autonomy of the university and does not aim to use funding as a mechanism for influencing decision-making or agenda setting in HE. National models that emphasise 'pillar two' funding (i.e. models where funding is based on predefined key performance indicators (KPIs)), the recognition of HE tilts towards emphasising universities as producers of predefined 'products', such as exams, study credits, research or funding grants. A substantial focus on KPIs forces universities not only to recognise the KPIs but also to affirm them, as non-compliance would have dire consequences for the universities' funding. The pedagogical element in this lies in that the funding models force universities to change the ways in which they perceive themselves and their role in society, their relationship to politics and their

relationship to the economy, as the KPIs not infrequently focus on targets related to labour market relevance or aspects of university–business relations. In this case, HE funding appears as an intentional act of summoning universities to affirm the logics and values that underlie 'pillar two'-based HE funding models, reducing university autonomy. This chapter thus brings a new perspective on HE funding by revealing how funding has clear pedagogical dimensions. It can be used as an instrument for influencing how HE institutions and academics perceive themselves and their role in society, which consequently leads to changes in how they act.

In Chap. 5, Jussi Välimaa et al. adopted a historical perspective on HE governance to identify how three broadly defined ideals of decision-making, collegiality, democracy and managerialism reflect the historical period in which they emerged. When approached from a non-affirmative framework, collegiality, democracy and managerialism exemplify how the first *regulative principle* relates to the second. The first regulative principle focuses on the relationships between different fields of societal practice, pointing out that the aims of education are created in the tensions, relations and dialogues between different societal fields. The second regulative principle of NAT deals with how these aims are transformed into pedagogical practice through governance, leadership and curriculum work. The chapter portrays a transition in HE governance from earlier forms of collegial decision-making to decision-making based on democratic ideals, then further towards decision-making characterised by managerialism. These transitions loosely correspond to shifts in societally formulated goals for education, with emphasis on democracy in the 1960s, and our current emphasis on a competitive knowledge economy. The societal focus on democracy in the '60 s corresponds with reforming governance in HE based on democratic ideals, whereas the latter focuses on a global competitive market that corresponds with strengthening managerialism in HE governance, exemplified by the New University Act of 2010 in Finland. How universities are governed (i.e. regulative principle 2) thus appears to relate to how the aims of HE form on a societal level. Whereas both collegialism and democracy as ideals for decision-making recognise the academic—and more broadly, the university—as capable of and responsible for formulating aims and deciding on procedures for HE, the current emphasis on a neoliberal and accountability-focused managerial mode of governance, to a larger degree, recognises academics and universities as implementers of externally decided agendas and as producers of commodities. In contrast to such a position, non-affirmative theory reminds us to recognise academics and universities as capable of critical reflection and of taking responsible action given various societal needs. Such a view reserves space for HE to recognise legitimate societal and individual interests but autonomously decide on the line of action, thereby also actively impacting society. Again, to recognise HE as an accountable implementer exemplifies an affirmative approach. This demands that HE both recognise and affirm external expectations and interests, thereby reducing the role of HE as an autonomous actor in society. From this perspective, it thus appears as if HE governance has moved from an autonomous and non-affirmative mode of decision-making towards more affirmative governance, leadership and managerial modes. At the same time, however, even if a managerial ideal of decision-making

prevails at present, none of the previous forms have disappeared. On the contrary, collegiality remains a guiding principle for the research community, and democracy still exists (e.g. in the democratically elected bodies that remain). We thus find many layers and modes of decision-making on top of each other in the current HE, which create a spectrum of more or less affirmative logics of decision-making.

In Chap. 6, Ingunn Dahler Hybertsen and Björn Stensåker take on quality assurance and quality management in HE. In this context, external quality audits can be seen as summons for HEIs and professionals, as these audits always include the goal of influencing the institutions' practices and perceptions regarding *what* quality is and *how* quality is managed. Quality assessment thus includes an element of pedagogic influence. Traditionally, quality management literature has identified two dimensions of quality assurance: one focused on accountability, and one focused on improvement. The accountability approach emphasises holding HE institutions accountable to the external actors that define the quality criteria and administer the evaluations. Quality work here is characterised by managerial control on all levels. Interpreting this phenomenon from a NAT perspective, this entails recognising the HEIs as subordinate and as not having the capacity to be trusted with autonomously defining and ensuring HE quality. The externally defined quality criteria thus represent conceptions of quality that HEIs are forced to affirm if they intend to pass the evaluation. Accountability enforced by external quality assessment thus comes across as an example of affirmative summoning.

The improvement approach to quality management emphasises quality in HE as something that is developed from within the organisation by HE professionals. From this perspective, quality is not so much about living up to externally defined standards as it is about working to reach a common understanding about what quality *is* and how it can be achieved in various local contexts. This entails recognising HEIs and the professionals therein as trustworthy and responsible actors who are capable of taking responsibility for quality. In this context, quality assessments come across as non-affirmative summons that aim to stimulate internal quality processes by directing the attention of HEIs towards certain topics without serving predefined solutions or criteria to live up to. Quality work in this context partly consists of creating spaces for collaborative elaboration and learning.

The two main approaches to quality assessment identified in the literature thus appear to correspond to, on the one hand, a more affirmative approach, and on the other to a more non-affirmative approach. In their empirical study, Hybertsen and Stensåker examined Nordic evaluation reports to determine what kind of quality management approach the reports communicate. Their results revealed that the reports emphasised the internal processes of collaborative quality work, and thus acknowledged the HEIs' capacity for dealing with quality issues. The results thus imply that a trust-based non-affirmative approach is present in Nordic HE quality assessment, but also that the accountability aspect is in no way absent. Nordic quality assessment thus appears to balance between the accountability and improvement approaches (i.e. between an affirmative and non-affirmative approach).

In Chap. 7, Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons problematised what universities, students, science and university studies are in contemporary society. They

pointed towards the challenges associated with the recognition of universities as producers of research or degrees, the recognition of students as autonomous and unattached 'learners' and the recognition of academics as detached and entrepreneurial producers of research outputs. The authors posed the question as *what* students, academics and universities are recognised as. Masschelein and Simons argued that overemphasising the individuality of students and researchers is at odds with the fundamental *relational* character of university study and academic research. This points towards the importance of recognising that an analytical lens focused on the teaching–learning relationship is too limited; it misses the key activity of *studying.* Conceptualising the relationship as a teaching–studying–learning relationship brings the importance of studying to the foreground. Identifying the object as teaching–studying–learning can be translated as the notions of summoning to self-activity and Bildsamkeit/Bildung described by non-affirmative education theory. Masschelein and Simons thus emphasise the relational nature of pedagogic interaction and point to the importance of acknowledging the impact of contextual factors such as the site, space, modalities or mediums of study in the act of summoning, as well as the collective dimension of relational influence. The individualisation of learners and researchers is de-centering *science,* which Masschelein and Simons argue has a fundamentally collective character and thus risks dissolving the fundament of the university. University leadership thus needs to have an elaborate understanding of the object of HE leadership, namely that of academic studying and academic research. Masschelein and Simons remind us that these phenomena are in constant transition and are constantly challenged by societal developments. These developments are not necessarily carrying positive long-term consequences for the university, so it is important that HE leadership have a reflected and nuanced perspective.

Chapter 8 by Romuald Normand et al. showed how sociological theory and educational theory can complement each other in approaching the changes in professional roles and work conventions to which academics have been subjected in recent decades. The sociological perspective captures the shifts and developments in the societal roles of academics, as well as the shifts in their relationships to other societal stakeholders. This perspective points out changing work conventions, providing us with a better understanding of how the mechanisms of policy initiatives come to form the operational spaces that frame subjective identity construction. These transformations of academic work over the past decades have resulted in academics accommodating new working environments and creating new professional identities in the process. These are outlined in the chapter as mandarin, peer, expert and entrepreneur, exemplifying how academics navigate and respond to changing policy contexts. The sociology of tests is a useful way of illuminating how these changes operate by subjecting academics to new tests, either of strength or of justification. These tests influence the self-formation of the academic's professional identity, as well as the networks and relationships that make up academia.

The concept of tests as seen from the sociological theory and the concept of summoning as seen from the educational theory both aim to explain interventions that, at least partly, aim to influence the self-formation of the individual. Both

concepts acknowledge that these interventions can be more or less 'open' in character. In sociological theory, tests are divided into tests of strength (closed) and tests of justification (open for deliberation). In educational theory, summons can be affirmative (closed), non-affirmative (open for deliberation) or something in between. Sociology and education complement each other. Sociology can point towards the societal processes from which the tests emanate, as well as, to some extent, their outcomes. Educational theory provides a more elaborate language for the relational dimensions of these tests/summons, as well as a foundational point of departure for approaching tests in the context of education. NAT complements the sociology of tests by providing a language to talk about the character of tests from a relational perspective; it asks to what extent and how these tests and challenges recognise the autonomy of academic staff and students and to what extent these framings are strategically manipulative or instrumental (i.e. how affirmative the tests are in character). It also provides a language to talk about the premises for this relational interaction. Maintaining the difference between education and Bildung provides a more detailed way of approaching the intentional ways in which academics' self-formation and work conventions transform.

The sociology of tests and NAT both use the concept of recognition. They highlight that the individual is always recognised as something, and this affects the nature of the pedagogic summons and the input to the process of self-formation that this summons provides. In tests of strength, an individual is generally recognised as an implementer of the test, as a means to an end that is external to him/herself and external to higher education. Tests of justification, on the other hand, leave room for interpretation and recognise the individual as a co-creator of direction with individual autonomy and the opportunity to influence the outcome of the test. The tests or summons directed at the academic community affect the constant self-formation of academics, as well as the work conventions in the university and the scientific community. Individual academics are thus summoned to redefine their professional identities and their professional conventions of work in a more or less affirmative way, depending on the character of the tests to which they are subjected.

Final Words

The above discussion demonstrates that pedagogical summons (i.e. summons that aim to influence how an Other perceives him/herself, some aspect of the world or their relation to this world) emerge in many different forms at many different levels of HE leadership and governance. Aims and expectations for HE occur in dialogues between different fields of societal practice. These aims and expectations always include recognising HE, academics and HE students *as something*. The formulation of aims and expectations based on this recognition includes the more or less explicit intention of influencing and changing the perceptions and actions of HE and HE professionals. As the provided examples show, approaching summons using the affirmative concept as an analytical tool reveals that summons can be more or less

affirmative (i.e. recognising HE and academics as more or less responsible and autonomous), which leaves varying space for autonomous decision-making and action. The operational space of HE and the professionals within HE is constructed by a multitude of summons, all of which aim to influence actions and perceptions in a more or less non-affirmative manner. Using the concepts of recognition, summoning, affirmativism and Bildsamkeit could, in our view, provide a coherent language to analyse the myriad of influences to which HE and academics are subjected. This would enable the pedagogical influence to be talked about on all levels with a coherent language, irrespective of whether the summons take the form of policy initiatives, funding, societal developments or global environmental challenges. NAT thus comes across as a promising point of departure for approaching the pedagogical dimensions of HE leadership and governance.

Although the chapters in this volume point towards the possibilities of NAT, they also identify weaknesses and blind spots. In Chap. 3, Wolff et al. argued that the humanistically focused non-affirmative theory is not explicit enough in describing the relationship between societal fields of practice and the environment as a fundamental frame for human existence. The Anthropocene era thus challenges NAT to, in a way, decentre the human being by recognising and affirming the fundamental role of the environment. Recognising and affirming *that* the relationship between societal fields of practice and the environment is fundamental does not entail affirming any predefined vision of *how* this relationship is supposed to be dealt with, however. In HE, this relationship can be approached in very different ways and across different scientific disciplines. The discussion in this volume demonstrates that it is fruitful to complement NAT with other theoretical points of departure. NAT is limited to talking about pedagogical influence and education on a fundamental level; it lacks the capacity to talk about all the other aspects of educational leadership. Combining NAT and sociology, economy or organisational theory, for example, as has been done in this volume, thus brings the added value of different theoretical perspectives that can shed light on different parts of the same phenomena. Combining theoretical perspectives can also work to safeguard against expanding the use of NAT beyond its boundaries; in other words, it is a safeguard against the risk of NAT being used as a *general* theory. There is a limit to what objects NAT can explain, and beyond these boundaries NAT needs to be complemented with other theoretical perspectives. As long as the object of research is education, however, the general aspects of NAT (i.e. the two regulative principles) are valid as points of departure. Further, as long as the object of study is some form of pedagogical influence, the two constitutive principles are valid, irrespective of in which context the pedagogical influence takes place. The two regulative principles are thus restricted to an educational context, whereas the two constitutive principles can be applied to pedagogical influence in any societal field of practice.

The aim of this volume was to adapt core concepts from pedagogical theory and apply them to explain pedagogical dimensions at different levels of educational leadership. While the pedagogical core notions developed within non-affirmative education were originally developed to elucidate the intersubjectivity that constitutes the pedagogical teaching–studying–learning process, this volume demonstrates that

their validity extends beyond this teacher–student relationship. Understanding pedagogical influence in a non-affirmative sense opens the door to applying these pedagogical core notions to other contexts, including different leadership levels within higher education.

In conclusion, when leadership aims to support the development of an Other's competence, qualifications, insights, identity and the like, regardless of whether we are talking about students, teachers or leaders at different levels, then we are talking about the pedagogical qualities of leadership for learning. As previous HE leadership has only addressed this topic to a very limited extent, we propose that this volume contributes to the field of higher education leadership by identifying the pedagogical qualities of leadership and offering a new theoretical foundation for grounding such research in the non-affirmative theory of education.