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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 (Bronfenbrenner, 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.

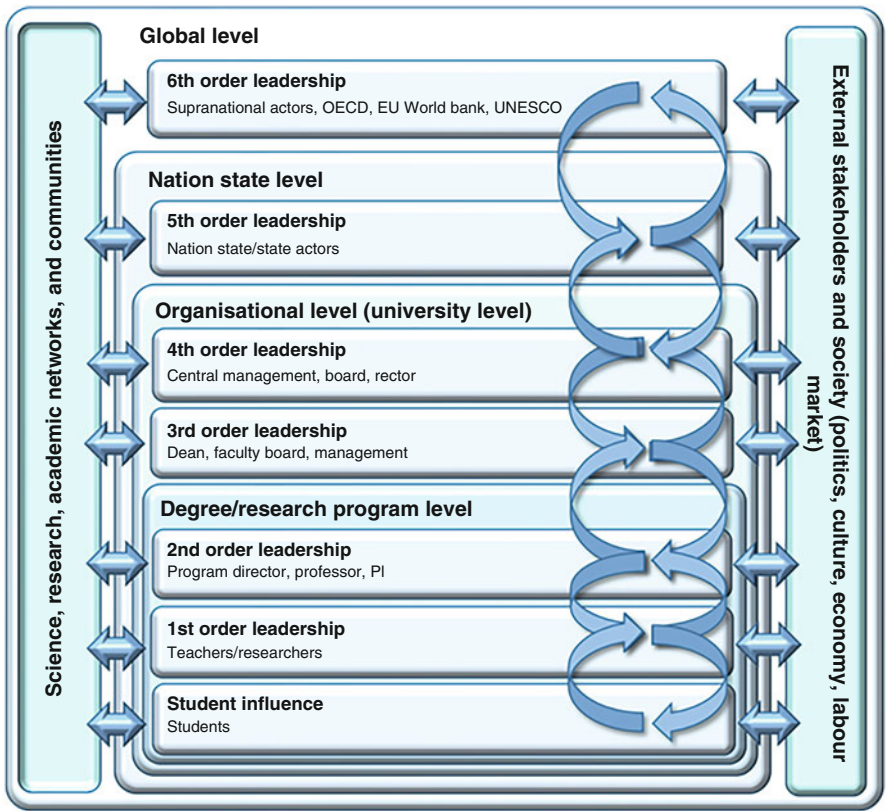
The above-outlined perspective regarding pedagogical leadership in a higher education context serves as an example of a relational and processual approach to leadership. From an NAT perspective, an entitative and dualistic perspective on leadership, viewing leadership activity as an isolated phenomenon 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 horizontal 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 (Humboltian 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 from 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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