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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 than 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; Dunleavy & 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

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

**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 transcendently 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, deliberately 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

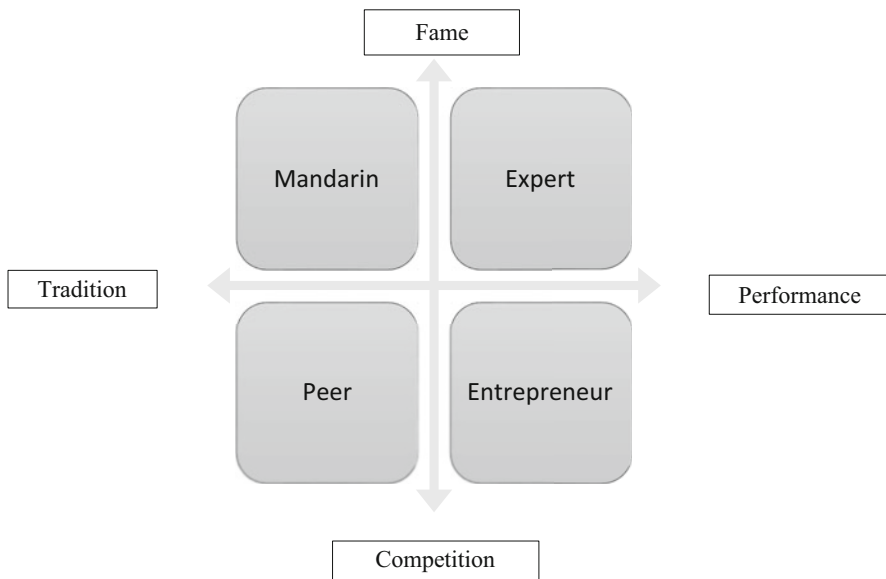
We now identify four different academic work conventions that each represent an ideal type that helps characterize the shift from a tradition of collegial, occupational professionalism to performative, organizational managerialism (see Fig. 8.2).

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).<sup>1</sup>

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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<sup>1</sup>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 spokespersons 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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