Book Review / Compte rendu

Austin, Ian & Jones, Glen A. (2016). *Governance of Higher Education.* **New York, NY: Routledge. Pages: 204. Price: $47.95 USD (paper)**

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Geared towards an audience of graduate students, practitioners and higher education scholars, this concise text makes an important contribution to the study of the governance of public universities. Austin and Jones argue that "universities have evolved to become one of the most complex organizational forms that the human species has ever created" (p.1). Although examination of corporate governance has been underway for some time, the authors claim that the governance of public universities has been under-theorized. This book aims to remedy that oversight, and challenges readers to extend scholarship beyond known inquiry.

In the opening chapter, the authors examine and discuss the difficulty of reaching consensus within the academy in terms of the definition of governance of higher education, which, by virtue of the distinct missions of universities, makes examination of the structures, processes and practice of governance more complex. Through inquiry and inspection of the literature, six models of university governance are catalogued and offered: the Continental Model; the Oxbridge Model; the Scottish Model; the Civic Model; the Higher Education Corporation Model; and the US Model. Within each of these models, patterns of professional self regulation, internal participation, and relationships external to the universities, such as states and markets, are factors for consideration.

In chapter two, Austin and Jones (2016) call for higher education scholars to incorporate more theoretical frameworks in their research to advance the discipline beyond the descriptive and normative. For this reason alone the book is worth the read! Through an examination of the literature, the authors synthesize a wide body of knowledge, offering a selection of theories relevant to the examination of governance of universities. Paradigms drawn from organizational behaviour, economics, psychology, sociology and political science are highlighted, together with institutional, agency, stewardship, and stakeholder theories. The offering of the external frameworks should not be mistaken as the authors' call for a renewed search for grand theory or cessation of internal or case-specific inquiry; in fact, the frameworks offered in chapter three also make a case for theoretical depth of inquiry in meso-level or organization specific research. Six theoretical lenses with the potential to advance meso-level or organizational specific knowledge of universities are presented, including an outline of the widely used structural theory. Scholars are chal-

lenged to consider adopting underused frameworks such as cultural theory, cybernetics, human relations, open systems or social cognition theories for research, particularly in studies that include the human dimension.

Readers will note that the book is geared towards governance of higher education in *public* universities. Examination of the "public," therefore, requires consideration, particularly with respect to complex state and society relationships. In this regard, the authors suggest that readers consider public policy goals, bureaucratic controls and principal-agent relationships. Opening with a discussion of relationships between universities and states/markets/industry, chapter four examines lines of authority and coordination. The enduring relevance of Burton Clark's (1983) triangle of coordination is referenced and noted, but the authors argue that innovation, technological advancement and knowledge transfer have shifted the contextual reference points in contemporary society. To further analysis, Triple Helix Models of university-industry-government relations are reviewed and presented for the reader's consideration.

Drawing on the literature, the authors comment on challenges to nation states arising primarily from the forces of globalization with attendant neoliberal ideas. New Public Management (NPM) moves beyond a command/control model of state management of public and publicly supported organizations and brings with it greater emphasis on accountability and compliance, adding to tensions and creating new challenges for universities and institutional autonomy. The authors are cognisant of similarities in policy implementation and cross-jurisdictional policy trends. They do not suggest a one size fits all approach through the lens of NPM; in fact, noting variations in state/university relations they argue that policy implementation is likely to be state or jurisdictional specific with respect to public universities as instruments of public policy. The authors go to considerable effort to offer typologies of state-university governance for consideration: evaluative states, regulatory state, and steering specific models. For those requiring examples of state-university governance, selected countries are discussed in chapter five, where the authors detail the United Kingdom, France, Germany, United States of America, Japan, and China as cases to understand processes and policy shifts over time.

The authors expand on the concept of NPM in chapter eight and discuss how practice has impacted higher education in recent decades. They provide a brief overview of neoliberal ideology and its philosophical roots. Readers seeking a deeper examination of neoliberal ideas, which underpin many of the aspects of the realignment of state/university relationships, may wish to consult the primary source of Milton Friedman's ideas and the concept of monetarism in *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962). What Austin and Jones (2016) do extremely well in this chapter is to provide context with respect to NPM and universities. Their conversation helps the reader understand the rationale behind some of the shifts which have occurred in recent years including market-like competition and businesslike management (p.171), along with descriptors (student-client) attendant with increased managerialism and commodification of higher education.

Academic self-governance is discussed in chapter six, where mechanisms and processes of participation are outlined. Collegiality (as culture, structure and behaviour), academic freedom and faculty autonomy, and the roles and function of senates and academic boards are examined, as are the governing authority and fiduciary responsibilities of trustees. Drawing on corporate literature, the major roles of governing boards are identified

and theories offered for analysis, providing the reader an excellent starting point to further knowledge through organization-specific focused inquiry. Graduate students and practitioners who have an interest in researching aspects of bureaucracy in their university, but who do not necessarily have a background in political science or organizational behaviour, will likely find the discussion of politics and processes of governance of public universities in chapter seven helpful. This brief chapter provides an accessible introduction to the organized anarchy and garbage can models of decision-making and includes some supporting examples of practice of formal authority, control of resources, structures, rules and regulations, decision-making and control. Readers seeking more detailed inquiry should draw upon the focused conversation about governing and management offered in chapter eight.

While authorship necessitates setting parameters, without which any project would become unwieldy and overly comprehensive, I was puzzled as to why the authors discussed in chapter nine, which has the title "New Issues and Challenges in Governance," the issues of risk, trust, information technology, shared services and organizational structures for large universities (centralization versus decentralization), but excluded other important existing and emerging themes such as open government, evidence-based policymaking, and stakeholder demands for increased transparency. Discussions about broader aspects of differentiation and diversification, renewed mandate agreements, and governance of colleges and other non-university postsecondary institutions are also missing. There is also silence on Indigenous peoples, other underrepresented groups in higher education, and the role of governance in advancing social justice.

Overall, the order of topics, coverage, and the structure of this book is good, seen from a reader's perspective. Deserving of recognition is the synthesis of the theoretical literature on governance of higher education and presentation of difficult concepts in a concise and accessible form. Pedagogical features of the text include discussion questions at the end of each chapter. These are a good introductory teaching tool, but I was left pondering as to whether they are a positive feature or a limitation—the deciding factor likely being the prior knowledge of the reader. The questions themselves are open-ended enough for a general class discussion, but given the complexity of material in some of the theoretical chapters, more challenging class questions may be needed. Perhaps students could be tasked with developing models and diagrams—there are only a few in the book—to illustrate the theories and concepts presented, coupled with their own organizational specific examples.

Given these points of limitation, readers should be aware that this book makes a significant contribution to the study of the governance of higher education. Critics who describe the literature and discipline of higher education as being largely a-theoretical and descriptive (Tight, 2004; Huisman, 2009) are likely to find their claims contradicted by this volume.✤

References

Friedman, Milton. (1962) *Capitalism and Freedom.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

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