

## ***Research in Post-Compulsory Education, Volume 9, Number 3, 2004***

### **Living in an 'Entrepreneurial' University**

IAN FINLAY

*University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom*

**ABSTRACT** This study set out to test the major criticisms of Burton Clark's book *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: organisational pathways of transformation* (1998). Both

Deem (2001) and Smith (1999) criticise Clark on the grounds that he interviewed only a selection of senior staff in the institutions he surveyed and, hence, did not get a closely grained account of change within those institutions. In this study, a selection of staff in one of the universities studied by Clark was interviewed to test the reliability of his findings. The article concludes that Clark's perspective reflects only one of a range of views held within the university in which there are a variety of cultures operating.

#### **Introduction**

At a training session for new heads of department organised by Strathclyde University, the group was presented with a summary of the findings of Burton Clark's research into change management in universities (Clark, 1998). Clark had used Strathclyde as one of his case studies and was complimentary of the change management processes used by Strathclyde. The group was also informed of the criticisms made of Clark's study by Rosemary Deem at the Society for Research into Higher Education conference in December 1998. Deem's criticisms will be discussed in detail below, but one of her main criticisms is that Clark's case studies 'appear to rely heavily on interviews with a small number of ... senior manager-academics and administrators and hence provide a rather one-dimensional picture of the institutions concerned' (p. 16). The report of both Clark's work and Deem's criticisms attracted some speculative debate at the session of the extent to which the views of other staff in the university may coincide with those of senior staff with respect, first, to the management of change within Strathclyde and, secondly, how the university may be characterised. It seemed to me that the first of these issues is largely empirical and methodological. In other words, if an appropriate methodology could be devised then the views of the kind of staff members ignored by Clark could be sought and the reliability of his findings could be tested. My initial aim was to conduct such an empirical test.

How Strathclyde or any other university can be characterised is more complex and one needs to consider concepts from organisational and social theory to get an insight into this issue. As I conducted the study, the wider issues of social theory were raised in different ways. The responses given by one of my interviewees raised two issues. Again, the details are considered below. Suffice to report at this stage that issues of agency versus structure, and the extent to which organisations (as opposed to individuals) can be considered to have agency, were both raised. By having agency I mean having the ability to

make decisions and act in accord with those decisions. These issues are briefly dealt with in the final part of the article.

Personal reflections on the kind of claims that can be made from Clark's small-scale study and from my own even smaller scale study led me to consider the way in which organisation studies are conducted. Etienne Wenger's (1998) work on communities of practice seemed to provide a human agency approach to the study of complex organisations like universities.

This article reports on a relatively small-scale piece of research. The initial attraction of the project was that it was small-scale and fairly bounded.

However, it was difficult to ignore some of the big questions about the nature of social enquiry, so it also includes an analysis of some of these big issues. I fully endorse and use as a guiding principle Wright Mills' (1970) characterisation of social enquiry as embracing 'both troubles and issues, both biography and history, and the range of their intricate relations' (p. 248).

Relating the personal troubles of the milieu to the public issues of the structure is the core challenge for all social scientists.

### **The Context**

Universities are living through turbulent times. Writing almost 30 years ago, Trow identified some of the tensions that would arise in the movement he predicted from elite to mass higher education systems (Trow, 1974). He predicted problems in funding, administration, recruitment and selection of students, curriculum and methods, and in the maintenance of standards. When Trow was writing, the age participation rate in European Universities had moved up from between 4 and 5% in the immediate post-war years to between 10 and 15% in the early 1970s. In Europe, America and Oceania, the age participation rates are all over 30% in the new millennium (Blight et al, 2000, p. 96). This leads to pressures on the public finance of universities (Trow, 1974, p. 59). Blight et al predict a continued increasing demand for university places, and an increasing demand for university research from both the public and private sectors. They also predict that it is unlikely that these demands will be met through increased public funding of universities (Blight et al, 2000, pp. 97-98). These predictions extend a trend that is already apparent in the United Kingdom, where we have seen a steady decline in the *per capita* resources for student teaching for over a decade. Also in the United Kingdom, reduced resources per student for teaching have been accompanied by increased accountability through quality assurance processes for both teaching and research (Scott, 1995, p. 82). Kogan & Hanney (2000) cite a wide range of factors that have contributed to radical changes to which higher education has been subjected over the past 20 years. These factors include demographic changes, economic changes, the impact of new knowledge, the reduction of professional hegemony, increased accountability and managerialism, increased economic instrumentalism in proposed outputs of universities and a shift to markets as allocative mechanisms. Thus, there seems to be wide professional agreement on the nature of the environment with which university administrators and academics are faced.

Clark's (1998) study was an attempt to investigate the response of universities to constant change, including the expansion of student demand, different types and ages of students, a growing array of subjects and programmes, 'growth of the knowledge industry', increased expectations of government and a reducing proportion of income from government (p. xiii). He sought to explore the ways in which universities used innovation and experimentation to meet the challenges of the changes outlined above. Clark's research design was to select five or six institutions that were identified through an informal canvass of European colleagues. These colleagues were asked to nominate institutions 'that had been involved in self-instituting efforts to change their general character for eight to ten years or more' (p. xiv). Clark finally settled on five institutions that included Warwick in England, Strathclyde in Scotland, Twente in the Netherlands, Chalmers in Sweden and Joensuu in Finland.

The research comprised two visits of 1 or 2 weeks to four of the universities and one visit to the fifth. During these visits Clark conducted interviews with around 12 academics, administrators and students. These interviews lasted between one and two hours. Clark also studied available documents provided by the institutions and sat in on meetings of senior managers. His purposes during the research were to identify both the individual characteristics of the institutions and also to identify common management of change characteristics. The common elements that form the basis of Clark's thesis emerged about halfway through the study after he had concluded his first round of four study visits. He followed up on these elements more closely during his second round of five visits. In other words, Clark followed an inductive-emergent approach to theory formation (p. 8).

During his first round of interviews Clark used fairly open categories for his questioning. He explored with his respondents:

- their personal background;
- the overall character of the university;
- the nature of leadership (both past and present);
- the relationships between the academic and administrative functions;
- the basis of financial support;
- the shape of research and advanced training (p. 8).

These initial interviews led to the 'emergence' of five categories that were explored in the second round of interviews. Clark views these five elements as an 'irreducible minimum' that enable universities to transform themselves to meet the challenges they face. These five elements are:

- A 'strengthened steering core', which 'must embrace both central managerial groups *and* academic departments' (emphasis in original). The example of this given for Strathclyde was the University Management Group, which is a small executive group that works alongside Senate and Court, but is able to be more flexible than these larger groups, whilst still being subject to their direction. The UMG comprises both members of the university's central

senior managers and the Faculty Deans.

- An 'expanded developmental periphery', e.g. 'outward reaching research centres'. Clark cites Research and Consultancy Services at Strathclyde, which acts as a service and support unit to help academic staff and departments to capitalise on their strengths through tendering for research grants, taking out patents and so on.
- A 'diversified funding base' especially 'third-stream income' (i.e. income other than mainline government funding or research council funds). This could include royalty income, alumni fund raising, funds from industry and charities. These funds provide income that can be used at the institution's discretion.
- A 'stimulated academic heartland' that 'accepts a modified belief system'. A key task here is 'reconciling new managerial values with traditional academic ones'. This is a core concern of Clark's. His research project, over a number of years and papers, has been to explore how, in loosely coupled organisations, central managers can be more pro-active in taking control of the direction of the university as a whole, whilst preserving the important traditions of academic freedom. He sees stimulating the academics to engage in entrepreneurial, as well as traditional activities as central to this imperative.
- An 'integrated entrepreneurial culture'. This follows on from the point above. Setting a climate in which entrepreneurialism is embraced at all levels in the university is seen by Clark to be important in addressing the issue of underfunding from state sources (pp. 5-8).

Several authors have cited Clark's work relatively uncritically, including Subotsky (1999), Rothblatt (2000), Wilson (2000), and Kogan & Hanney (2000). I have identified two critical examinations of Clark (1998). They are Deem (2001) and Smith (1999). Smith has a number of major criticisms of Clark's research. First, Smith challenges Clark's choice of case studies, which are 'from the ranks of successful (and self-confessed) entrepreneurial institutions'. Secondly, Smith criticises Clark's evidence as 'self-congratulatory and uncritical of both concept and practice' and which is 'drawn from a fairly narrow, mainly top-down, set of perspectives'. Thirdly, Smith identifies a 'problem of salience', which is a 'general problem of case study-based research'. In other words, case studies are essentially inward looking. Smith seems to be asking if the particular case studies used by Clark reveal anything that would not be revealed by studies of other universities. Finally, Smith suggests that there is a large set of questions that are unanswered by Clark's research: How do (universities) assess risks (in undertaking entrepreneurial activities)?

What happens if the risks fail to pay off?

How do you build the skills and knowledge necessary in promoting an entrepreneurial culture?

Can academics be entrepreneurial yet controlled?

What spans of corporate and disciplinary controls are required and what is the appropriate balance between control and freedom?

(p. 374).

Deem has an even larger set of criticisms, some of which overlap Smith's concerns. These are summarised below:

- The case studies used by Clark 'are not embedded'.
  - The case studies 'appear to rely too heavily on interviews with a small number of ... senior manager academics and administrators, and hence provide a rather one-dimensional picture of the institution'.
  - 'There is little or no attempt to subject the claims made by the universities concerned to any critical scrutiny.'
  - The extent to which Clark's categories emerged from the studies or were pre-ordinate is not made clear.
  - 'The longer term effectiveness of the five organisational structures cannot be derived from a single set of snap shot case studies reliant on a narrow range of interviewees and a limited interrogation of their statements'.
  - '... issues about validity and empirical generalisations ... do not seem to have been addressed when making claims for the generalisability of the data offered'.
  - 'The cases ... don't pay sufficient heed to ... the complexities of different cultures within the same institution'.
  - 'Little attention seems to have been paid to the selection of interviewees who would enable contentious or debatable statements to be interrogated or cross-checked'.
  - 'important questions, both empirical and conceptual are not asked', for example, 'How much do changes to academic work depend on other aspects of the cultures of particular institutions?'
  - 'Are male university academics and managers more likely to embrace entrepreneurialism than women in the same jobs and under what conditions?'
- As can be seen from both Clark's work and from the questions asked by his critics, there is a rich seam of work to be done on the response of universities to change, the response of individuals at all levels within universities and the usefulness of Clark's elements in his conception of an entrepreneurial university. Having provided summaries of Clark's research and the responses from his critics, I now intend to discuss my own responses to the two 'sides' prior to describing and justifying my own research design and methods.

### **Clark and his Critics: a discussion**

There does appear to be a major problem in Clark's work in the relationship between his research design and the kind of claims he makes in his book. Clark identified his five case studies through colleagues in Europe. He interviewed a relatively small number of (mostly?) senior staff in the universities selected. The universities were those identified by themselves and Clark's European colleagues as being successful, yet there is little discussion of the criteria of success used. The selection of cases and the way the cases were studied leads directly to the problems of the generalisability of the claims being made. It seems to me that had Clark simply claimed to report on the way senior

managers in five European universities represent the apparent success of their respective universities in responding to change, he would have been on strong ground. Had he created a typology of universities and claimed that, for universities of the type he studied, the conclusions he drew were valid, then he would have been on fairly steady ground. However, his claims that his five elements constitute 'an irreducible minimum' that enable universities to respond to changes they face is going well beyond the trustworthiness of his data. . The second justifiable criticism of Clark's work is that he concentrated his interviews on the cadre of senior academic managers and administrators in the universities he studied. This leads directly into some of the other criticisms of his work, such as the claim that his work is not multi-layered, that it gives a one-dimensional approach, that perspectives likely to challenge or debate the findings were not sought, and that multiple perspectives and cultures that exist in all organisations are not recognised. In these respects, Clark's work is very different from studies on similar topics by Palfreyman (1989) and Trowler (1998). Palfreyman interviewed over 50 staff at all levels in his study of Warwick University as an entrepreneurial organisation. Trowler interviewed around 60 staff in multi-layered approach to exploring the response of academics in a single institution to change.

Both Deem and Smith point out that there is a range of interesting and useful questions that are not addressed by Clark. This is true of almost all research. There are always boundaries to the project being reported upon. In fact, one criterion of good research is not that it answers all the questions, but that it identifies or opens up a range of new, more focused questions.

Deem makes a particular point that the extent to which Clark's categories were emergent from the research or predetermined is not clear. Certainly, one has to read the book quite thoroughly, since methodological and research design considerations seem to be scattered across the introduction and a couple of other chapters. It is also useful, in regard to this issue, to read the two journal articles that preceded the publication of the book (Clark, 1995, 1996). If one tracks through these readings, one can see categories from previous research undertaken by Clark that informed the initial round of interviews. The initial interview questions were framed in fairly general terms. The elements emerged from these interviews and were explored more thoroughly in the second round of interviews.

In summary, I propose that the criticisms that result from Clark's selection of cases and from the resultant claims he makes are fully justified. Also justified, in light of the claims he makes, is the criticism of his narrow selection of interviewees. However, he could hardly be expected to tackle the full range of additional interesting questions suggested by his critics. He was open about how his categories developed, although one had to hunt through his work to fully discover the genesis of these categories.

### **Research Design**

I work in the Faculty of Education in Strathclyde University, which was one of

Clark's case study universities. When I read Clark's work and some of the criticisms therein, it struck me that it would be interesting and potentially informative, to conduct a study into the perceptions of staff at different levels in the Faculty of Education, of Clark's representation of Strathclyde University. I elected to concentrate on the Faculty of Education both for a theoretical and a practical reason. As a member of the Faculty, access was easy to negotiate, and the interviews could be easily fitted into both the interviewees and my own time schedules. The Faculty of Education also provided an interesting case study. It was a previous College of Education that became the fifth faculty of Strathclyde University in April 1993, just before Clark started his study into Strathclyde in 1994. I felt that if any area of the university was likely to provide counter examples to Clark's elements then it was likely to be the faculty of education, coming as it did from a different culture. On the other hand, if my findings coincided with Clark's then they would provide a sound validation of his work by underlining the manner in which the Strathclyde spirit imbued a merging organisation.

Clark conducted two rounds of interviews. I decided to conduct a single interview with each respondent, but to have an interview designed in two parts. During the first part of the interview I asked general questions based on those that Clark used in his first round of interviews. In the second part of the interview I explored the five categories derived by Clark from his initial round of interviews with respondents.

I wanted to get a slice right down through the faculty, and I also wanted to gain a perspective from both academic and administrative staff. I was particularly keen to access some of the dissident voices, in other words, members of staff known to challenge the management's view of the organisation. I therefore set up a purposive sampling frame designed to include the following:

- academic and support staff;
- research active staff and staff concentrating on teaching;
- female and male staff;
- staff in the faculty prior to the merger with Strathclyde and those who have joined since the merger;
- staff from different levels – faculty senior management, course directors/heads of department, lecturers, senior administrative staff and unpromoted administrative staff.

In the event, I interviewed seven staff and have met all the criteria of the sampling frame with the exception of a head of department. Those interviewed included:

- three men and four women;
- five academic and two support staff;
- five pre- and two post-merger staff;
- three research active academic staff.

The interviews lasted between 15 and 45 minutes each. I have numbered my

respondents R1 to R7. All the interviews were tape-recorded and fully transcribed. The two parts of the interview were dealt with in different ways. The responses to questions in the first part were analysed using the constant comparative method (see, for example, Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, pp. 126-144), since this part of the interview was designed to see if similar categories emerged to those identified in Clark's research. The responses to the second part of the interview were simply checked to discover the extent to which they supported or refuted Clark's work.

### **Findings**

Clark conducted around 12 interviews in each institution. I conducted seven interviews in one faculty. Some of the statements supported Clark's findings; however, my findings illustrate a place of less certainty and more paradoxes, but also supportive of staff and of new initiatives.

Some of the responses indicated a university that is entrepreneurial. The following responses support the concept of Strathclyde as an entrepreneurial university:

Strathclyde as a university seems to be much more dynamic [than the older universities];  
new ways of doing things are encouraged;  
it's a very supportive environment;  
working here is a very open atmosphere and it's very forward thinking. (R1)

It is certainly a university, or my experience of it would suggest, that if you have ideas and enthusiasm you get lots and lots of support and encouragement and so on. (R7)

I think it does not restrict people and will listen to new ideas like part time courses and access issues and so on. I'm not saying everyone embraces these enthusiastically but there is enough of a consensus that it does see these important aspects that need to be addressed. (R6)

Several respondents expressed the view that Strathclyde has a kind of dual identity or uncertainty about its positioning among Scottish universities. Strathclyde University was created from a number of institutions and received its Royal Charter in 1964. It subsequently merged with Jordanhill College of Education, which became the Faculty of Education, in 1993. It is therefore historically situated between the ancient universities of St Andrews, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and the post-1992 universities:

I always get the impression that Strathclyde would like to be a traditional university but isn't. (R4)

It is still a kind of new university though I know it is not considered to be one of the new universities. (R5)



I know it is not a young university but there is still a feeling of trying to establish itself among the established universities. It is a funny mix, not quite schizophrenic but I think it doesn't always quite know where it wants to sit. It would like to sit with the Russell group but would like to be forging and entrepreneurial and all the rest of it as well and different bits probably respond differently to those two ends of where the university should sit. (R6)

This kind of uncertainty is not at all apparent in the reflections of senior staff interviewed by Clark. One respondent stated that it was not possible to give a general view of the character of the university as an organisation: I'm not sure you can generalise in that way. In my experience universities vary enormously from department to department, from faculty to faculty and even within departments and faculties. I am not sure you can actually label a university a particular type. I certainly don't see Strathclyde like that and I don't see other universities like that. (R2)

Although this was only one response and no other interviewee made a similar point, it does have some theoretical strength as a contrary view. The point being made above seems to be that, since universities comprise a range of cultures, one ought not label a university on the basis of any one of these cultures. In the quotation below, an individualist approach is taken. The respondent argues that there is not a leadership function within the university, but that different leaders display different qualities and operate in different ways. There is, within organisational theory, a strong strand that rejects the reification of organisations. This view, promoted by writers such as Greenfield (1973), rejects the view that organisations can have goals, missions or humanlike characteristics. Organisations are an amalgam of the individuals of which they are comprised:

It depends on the individual we are talking about, I mean particular individuals ... have particular strengths or weaknesses ... I really don't think you can characterise a university as having particular leadership qualities ... I don't think there is such a thing as a leadership function within the university that is different from the individuals who are playing these roles ... I would expect leadership to develop in a context. (R2)

There were varying views of the nature of leadership at central university level. Again, a sense of direction and support for new ideas were mentioned: There is a notion of where the university is going and it is quite clearly stated in the development plan and on the website but practically how that affects me – I don't feel a sense of that guiding my work particularly. (R1)

Leadership has been evident, I suppose, in the ways that new opportunities have become available.

I think there is a receptiveness in Strathclyde to reasonable offers being made. For example in my own department, the biotechnology lab. is perhaps an example of good practice. It was set up in partnership between a local enterprise company and the university based on a good idea that came from a university in New England, so that opportunities are sought and acted upon. (R3)

Other responses distinguished between leadership and good, consultative management:

I am not sure how much leadership there is of a sort of inspirational kind, the academic leadership that inspires people, that kind of thing. There is certainly a lot in terms of management and everything that comes in like QAA stuff and so on is always taken filtered, and looked at and consulted through committees and everything so there is ... a willingness that everything is sent out for comment and back again before the final version comes in. (R6)

I think there is genuine good will to be open and to be inclusive in the leadership. (R7)

This same inclusive approach was mentioned as being a feature of leadership at the Faculty level. The balance of a sense of direction by the leadership with inclusivity is well represented in the following response:

At the Faculty level ... the person at the top knows where he wants to be going, where he wants the Faculty to be going. I found that not in an individualistic way – I always have the impression that when things have to be moved forward often groups will be set up to look at various issues ... There is a sense that that is shared around in some ways and responsibility is not just centrally held by one person. (R1)

Interestingly, only one respondent mentioned the structures of management, for example, the Senate and the Court, yet for the senior managers interviewed by Clark, these structures, especially the University Management Group, were a major support of the leadership function in the university. Clearly for staff within the faculty, people as leaders were more important than leadership structures. The sample included members of Senate, so the responses were made by staff members who were aware of Senate and its function.

When questioned about the relationships between the academic and administrative functions, the responses once again focused on relationships between people, rather than structural or managerial relationships. The change from the Jordanhill College to the Strathclyde University structures was discussed in two of the responses:

There are inevitable tensions and issues associated with our ongoing transition. The tensions perhaps are to do with our relative naivety as a Faculty of Education in that academic and administrative roles were reckoned in different ways within Jordanhill College so that the realignment of these sorts of territories create that sort of

tension. That's not a particularly great problem but it does from time to time require clarification. For example, the Faculty Office has a substantially different role and set of responsibilities from anything that appeared in the former college ... But again I think it has to do with the evolution of the Faculty. (R3)

I saw a great difference in Jordanhill from starting in 1978 'til the end of Jordanhill as it was. When I came at first it was very much admin and academic. I think Dr Bone [Principal of Jordanhill College] and a lot of the senior managers at that time tried to make it, you know, more integrated. I felt that they would speak to us and I felt the secretarial staff were asked for advice and it was taken.

There was quite a lot of interaction. (R5)

In the University as a whole I still think down the road at the John Anderson Campus that the academics think they are quite a bit above the administrative staff. I am not just talking about my level, I am talking about higher administrative staff. (R5)

A very interesting response was offered by one interviewee who compared the relationship between academic and administrative staff with the relationship between politicians and the civil service before suggesting different foci of decision-making:

I think there is inevitably a tension between ... [the academic and administrative functions] I think of academics as the politicians and the administrative side as the civil servants. You know, they are trying to keep us on a steady keel while we are rushing off to do other things. But they keep reminding us what the laws are and what their regulations are and things. I think if it is a good relationship, then it can work well and balance each other out. If it is not working well, then some of the demands of administration can get in the way, okay I am thinking academically ... On the whole I think it works quite well. We have a strong cabinet of senior administrators who do, what I have found is that they do actually have the student at the centre rather than the staff at the centre, if you know what I mean. When it comes down to a decision it tends to be what is best for the student, are we giving the student a good deal rather than what's best for the staff and I know that sometimes annoys staff. (R6)

There is little evidence from the initial, open questions of the type used by Clark, of similar categories to his five elements emerging. This is not necessarily a refutation of his work. He was asking a different group of staff about the issues at a different time. It does appear that staff at other levels have a different set of concerns. There are points of contact, but the key concerns are different. In terms of the typology of management models proposed by Bush (1986), Clark seems to be working within a rational perspective. A much more subjective model is perceived by the respondents to my study.

During the second part of each interview, the respondents were presented with a summary of each of Clark's five elements of entrepreneurial universities

and asked about the extent to which they recognised these features in Strathclyde University.

When presented with Clark's concept of a 'central steering core' to combine academic and managerial values, only one of the interviewees recognised the University Management Group identified by Clark as performing this function in Strathclyde:

I can see perhaps what he is hinting at in that we have a university management group which I suppose exerts these core functions. (R2)

I think the problem with that is in a sense it removes decision making from many academics and puts it in the hands of a small group and I suspect the decisions of that group tends to reflect its composition rather than the way of managing the university. I don't feel Strathclyde is run on a particularly collegiate basis and I think that is one of its weaknesses. I think that decisions are often taken on high and many of us learn about them later and often it would have been useful to know policies which were being formulated in one's area. Yes. In a sense that is a strength because you get quick decisions taken and yes you can argue that it is entrepreneurial but there are costs obviously of doing that. At the end of the day it depends on what you think the university is about. You have to be careful about adopting business techniques in a university. (R2)

Clearly, here we have someone who has not been 'captured by the discourse' (Trowler, 2001) of managerialism. In quite a different way, another interviewee gave a response to the same issue. Again, there is a rejection of managerialism and an analysis that indicates the reluctance of the 'core' to impose some managerialist processes on departments:

I think that may be a growing model but it is not one I would readily recognise. I think the University is more loosely coupled than that would indicate in terms of departments and so on. But I think that some of the external pressures such as QAA subject reviews and some of the associated guidelines that come with it – they seem like high stakes in quality management and quality assurance schemes. Whereas in the university as a whole they are taking a much stronger line rather than 'it's up to you' kind of approach. So that the slightly more devolved and less imposed way of working is beginning to fade a bit. It is becoming more trampled in some of the things you do but it is external. It is not the way they like to work and they are finding it uncomfortable. When I say 'they' I am talking in terms of the university committees that I represent the Faculty on. I don't think they are very tightly controlled and I don't think they are very happy about having to impose restrictions upon the departments and because it is external they resent it more and more. (R6)

This is a fascinating response that illustrates paradoxes and tensions that were completely missing from Clark's analysis. We have a description of university

central academic managers who are much less happy about the way ahead. They are being resentfully bounced into going against their instinctive way of good management practice in a university, yet they are having to play the games because the stakes are high. This is another story of what is going on in Strathclyde. It is a different story of how the university is responding to the pressures being a university in the new millennium. It raises a major question that will be dealt with in the next section. How are agency and structure related?

There was greater recognition and agreement on Clark's other elements. Almost all the respondents could give examples of initiatives that they felt were part of the 'expanded developmental periphery'. Some of these examples coincided with those used by Clark in his book (1998). Others were more recent initiatives. The respondents could also recognise an 'integrated entrepreneurial culture' in Strathclyde and could cite examples. There were different reactions to the need for change implied by this culture. Two opposing views are cited below:

I like change and don't like things that remain static. That's easy for me to pick up and it's easy for me to feel comfortable with. I don't know what it must be like for say, older academics, who may have been on this campus for a long time and have seen quite a lot of change. I am quite sure there must have been a lot of organisational and cultural shifts that people have had to make. But then that has always been a feature of my professional life. So I find being here refreshing in that sense. Yes, that would be something I would immediately say I recognise in the University. (R1)

We are being told in all organisations that the way forward is to embrace change. My comment would simply be that it is far easier for some people than it is for others and some people embrace change and welcome change and others find it difficult and don't like it. I tend to fall into the latter category and I have colleagues who fall into the former. Whether you can generalise or not, I don't know. I suspect it is true that those who are more successful are those who can embrace change in that way and are happy to live with a pattern of change ... Change often brings money in the door or initiatives often bring money in the door, that's not necessarily the same thing as being an excellent university. There may be links, there may not be. (R2)

Finally, almost all the interviewees agreed that more diversified funding streams were becoming a greater feature of both the faculty and the university as a whole. The activities of most of those interviewed were largely funded through core funding council funds for teaching, but those in teaching departments were all able to cite major projects in their departments that were funded through competitively acquired funds.

## Conclusions

What has been discovered through undertaking this research that adds to the understanding of the behaviour of universities? In this concluding section, I reflect on my findings and how they relate to Clark's findings. I argue that Clark has an implicit yet inadequate model of the relationships between culture and individual action within universities. I relate both Clark's work and my work to organisational theorists, such as Johnson & Scholes (1997) and Wenger (1998).

Clark tells an interesting story about Strathclyde University, its structures and the way it is managed. His story is largely verified by the responses of those interviewed for this study. The big problem with Clark's account is not that it is false, but that he makes inappropriate claims for it. He presents his five elements as being an irreducible minimum for the successful negotiation of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century environments faced by universities. Yet clearly, there are additional characterisations of Strathclyde's culture.

Clark seems to subscribe to an over-reified view of universities as organisations. This seems to lead to a monocultural perspective. He appears to assume that the perspective or cultural images held by senior managers is the only authentic perspective. This is a view that is held by a number of writers on organisational culture. For example, Johnson & Scholes (1997) write about 'Characterising an organisation's culture' (p. 221), thus appearing to assume that there is an organisational culture. Miles & Snow (1978) present the over-reified perspective of organisations when they describe different ways in which organisations *behave* (my emphasis). My own view, which was supported by some of those I interviewed is that universities are not monocultural. There are varieties of cultures within organisations. Certainly, the cultures of the leadership group are likely to dominate actions at the university wide level or, in management terms, at the strategic level, but at the operational level other cultures prevail. Those at the operational levels may recognise the cultures of the strategic level when explicitly presented with them, but may have been operating very effectively on a different set of cultural constructs.

I would argue that the monocultural perspective is a consequence of an over-reified view of organisations. Clark writes of 'the entrepreneurial university'. He is falling into the same trap as Johnson & Scholes (1997) or Miles & Snow (1978) in ascribing human behavioural possibilities to organisations, which are social constructs. I suggest that both leaders and other personnel within organisations can be entrepreneurial, but that organisations cannot be (see Greenfield, 1973, for a detailed account of this position). Leaders also have the possibility of reconfiguring the structure of organisations in such a way that entrepreneurial actions either by themselves or by others are made easier (Palfreyman, 1989). In fairness to his analysis, this is what Clark seems to be suggesting occurs in Strathclyde and in the other universities he studied. There are different interpretations of the agency-structure debate. The responses

of those I interviewed would seem to suggest that they viewed the university as part of the structure, rather than as an agent or actor in its own right. They also clearly viewed leaders as having agency in that they gave several characterisations of what they considered to be good management practice. Since they had views on good management practice they must, by implication have a view of both poor management practice and of the possibility of either being exercised.

Although Clark promotes a monocultural perspective of Strathclyde and over-reified view, he does seem to recognise the agency of leaders within the university. Although he describes an environment that is beyond the control of the leaders of universities, he does imply that there is choice in the response to this environment. However, for Clark, the choice is closely circumscribed. Leaders either structure their universities around the five irreducible elements or else they fail. There was at least one challenge from my respondents to this narrow field of choice.

What alternatives are there to Clark's monocultural perspective. For an underpinning analysis, I turn to the work of Etienne Wenger and the concept of communities of practice. Wenger (1998) portrays communities of practice as having three main characteristics: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire (p. 73). Universities are complex organisations comprising a number of overlapping and nested communities of practice. These communities of practice will, in some cases, be mutually engaged with others and in other cases will be disengaged. They will have some joint enterprises in common and other enterprises will be separate. They will have some common discourses, shared stories, shared styles and histories that are parts of a shared repertoire, and they will have separate aspects of their repertoire. The strength of a university in facing the external pressures does not seem to me to be about increasing the overlap and similarity of the communities of practice of which it is comprised, but of recognising differences and creating strength out of these. Clark's programme seems to incompletely describe the Strathclyde and simultaneously promote a single prescription for the future. This, I argue, would be unattainable in practice and normatively undesirable, and is a view that would be supported by those I interviewed.

#### *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank Oliver Fulton, George Gordon and David Palfreyman for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Responsibility for both the content and the arguments made remain with me.

#### *Correspondence*

Ian Finlay, Department of Educational Studies, University of Strathclyde, Jordanhill Campus, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow G13 1PP, United Kingdom (i.j.finlay@strath.ac.uk).

#### **References**

Blight, D., Davis, D. & Olsen, A. (2000) *The Globalisation of Higher Education*, in:

- P. Scott (Ed.) *Higher Education Re-formed*. London: Falmer Press.
- Bush, T. (1986) *Theories of Educational Management*. London: Paul Chapman.
- LIVING IN AN 'ENTREPRENEURIAL' UNIVERSITY*  
433
- Clark, B.R. (1995) Leadership and Innovation in Universities: from theory to practice, *Tertiary Education and Management*, 1, pp. 7-11.
- Clark, B.R. (1996) Case Studies of Innovative Universities, *Tertiary Education and Management*, 2, pp. 52-61.
- Clark, B.R. (1998) *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities; Organisational Pathways of Transformation*. Oxford: Pergamon for IAU.
- Deem, R. (2001) Globalisation, New Managerialism, Academic Capitalism and Entrepreneurialism in Universities; is a Local Dimension Still Important? *Comparative Education*, 37, pp. 7-20.
- Greenfield, T.B. (1973) Organisations as Social Inventions: rethinking assumptions about change, *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, 9, pp. 551-574.
- Johnson, G. & Scholes, K. (1997) *Exploring Corporate Strategy; Text and Cases*, 4th edn.  
London: Prentice Hall.
- Kogan, M. & Hanney, S. (2000) *Reforming Higher Education*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research: a philosophic and practical approach*. London: Falmer Press.
- Miles, R.E. & Snow, C.C. (1978) *Organisational Strategy: Structure and Process*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Palfreyman, D. (1989) The Warwick Way: a case study of entrepreneurship within a university context, *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 1, pp. 207-219.
- Rothblatt, S. (2000) A Connecticut Yankee? An Unlikely Historical Scenario, in: P. Scott (Ed.) *Higher Education Re-formed*. London: Falmer Press.
- Scott, P. (1995) *The Meanings of Mass Higher Education*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education with Open University Press.
- Smith, D. (1999) Book Review, *Higher Education*, 38, pp. 373-374.
- Subotsky, G. (1999) Alternatives to the Entrepreneurial University: new modes of knowledge production in community service programs, *Higher Education*, 38, pp. 401-440.
- Trow, M. (1974) Problems in the Transition from Elite to Mass Higher Education, in *Policies for Higher Education: general report of the Conference on Future Structures of Post-Secondary Education*, Paris 26-29 June 1973. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- Trowler, P. (1998) *Academics Responding to Change: new higher education frameworks and academic cultures*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education with Open University Press.
- Trowler, P. (2001) Captured by the Discourse? The Socially Constitutive Power of New Higher Education Discourse in the UK, *Organization*, 8, pp. 183-201.
- Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice: learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge:



Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, A. (2000) Strategy and Management for University Development, in: P. Scott (Ed.) *Higher Education Re-formed*. London: Falmer Press.

Wright Mills, C. (1970) *The Sociological Imagination*. Harmondsworth: Pelican.

*Ian Finlay*

434