

Social Entrepreneurs?: University Academic Managers in Venezuela and Australia

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OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

- **Contextual and conceptual frameworks**
- **The Instituto Tecnológico at UCV**
- **The LEID Centre at CQU**
- **Conceptual and material implications**

CONTEXTUAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

- **International changes to the work of university academics/managers**
- **Work casualisation and intensification**
- **Tensions arising from steering between state and market (Danaher, Gale & Erben, 2000)**
- **Debates between “the liberal tradition of” and “the business case for” education (Bailey, 1999)**
- **Commodification of knowledge**
- **Commercialisation of university services**
- **Students as ‘learners’, ‘clients’ and ‘customers’**

- **Universities as a ‘greedy institution’ that “demands commitment and undivided loyalty from its voluntary members” (Franzway, 2001, p. 3)**
- **Pressures on academics to be(come) entrepreneurial and to acquire non-government funding**
- **“The term ‘Enterprise University’ captures the spirit of proactive networked engagement, underpinned by self-referencing identity, which characterises the new kind of non-profit institution in all of its academic, executive and administrative operations” (Marginson, 2002, n.p.)**
- **“...social capital identity resources...are the ability and willingness of people to engage in action for mutual or community benefit” (Kilpatrick, in press)**

- **Distinction between business/private and social entrepreneurs**
- **“...managers who use entrepreneurship in a way that is philosophically based on developing the community achieve outcomes for the good of the whole” (McConachie & Simpson, in press)**
- **“...when social[ly] entrepreneurial acts are motivated principally to create social benefit, they demonstrate when and how the higher education sector is being more responsive and responsible to its communities” (McConachie & Simpson, in press)**

- **“A social entrepreneur is a different kind of social leader who:**
 - **Identifies and applies practical solutions to social problems by combining innovation, resourcefulness and opportunity.**
 - **Innovates by finding a new product, a new service, or a new approach to a social problem**
 - **Focuses first and foremost on social value creation and in that spirit, is willing to share openly the innovations and insights of the initiative with a view to its wider replication**
 - **Doesn't wait to secure the resources before undertaking the catalytic innovation**
 - **Is fully accountable to the constituencies s/he serves**
 - **Resists being trapped by the constraints of ideology or discipline**
 - **Continuously refines and adapts approach in response to feedback**
 - **Has a vision, but also a well-thought out roadmap as to how to attain the goal” (Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, 2004, n.p.; emphasis in original)**

- **Poised between:**
 - **public/private**
 - **state/market**
 - **service/profit**
 - **social/economic capital**

social entrepreneurs can be seen as ‘boundary riders’ and ‘freedom fighters’, yet also as potentially co-opted by and complicit with the forces of late capitalism and globalisation

THE INSTITUTO TECNOLÓGICO AT UCV

- **UCV Venezuela's oldest university, founded by Royal Decree of King Felipe V of Spain in 1721 as the Royal and Pontifical University of Caracas**
- **Currently more than 50,000 students, 6,000 academics and nearly 8,000 non-academic employees**
- **Nine faculties in Caracas, two faculties in the regional city Maracay, five distance education centres and 12 experimental stations throughout Venezuela**
- **Provision for Indigenous students living in Amazonas region and Orinoco River Delta**
- **1996 began Samuel Robinson Program, a social intervention program directed at students from low socioeconomic backgrounds**

- **Instituto Tecnológico established in 1964**
- **Two kinds of courses:**
 - **short courses from eight to 40 hours' duration covering topics like the transportation and distribution of natural gas and the supervision of civil works**
 - **accredited programs through licensed agreements such as with the World Meteorological Organisation**
- **Broker services for external clients such as conducting mechanical separations and comparing meteorological data collected by conventional instruments and automatic weather stations to evaluating the results' accuracy and utility**
- **Particular challenges for social entrepreneurship in conditions of political instability and economic hardship**

THE LEID CENTRE AT CQU

- **Established in October 2003, as part of the Division of Teaching and Learning Services**
- **Interprets “Learning, Evaluation, Innovation and Development” in terms of policies, projects and publications relating to CQU’s teaching and learning**
- **Four core values: “Leadership, Empowerment, Integrity, Diversity”**
- **Boyer’s (1990) four scholarships:**
 - **Discovery (research)**
 - **Integration (linking research with own and other disciplines)**
 - **Application (service)**
 - **Teaching (transmitting, extending and transforming knowledge)**
- **Notion of ‘strategic scholarship’**
- **Some strategies of social entrepreneurship:**

- **guest edited special theme issues of journals (evaluation and open and distance education, multiliteracies and open and distance education, regional universities and their communities, rural education, vocational education and training)**
- ***Studies in Learning, Evaluation, Innovation and Development* (open source software, mentoring processes underpinning REACT section)**
- **stakeholder-focused program evaluations**
- **seeking to map multiple students' voices and academics' perspectives**
- **seeking to enhance quality and outcomes of students' learning (eg, student attrition and retention; reproductivist, constructivist and transformative views of assessment; evaluation as multiple interests; innovation as transformation of practice)**
- **Some constraints on social entrepreneurship:**

- **difficulties of access to staff members at international campuses and offshore sites**
- **complexities of coordination and integration across a multicampus institution**
- **enduring perception that teaching and learning are less highly valued than research**
- **some management discourses seek simple answers to multifaceted questions**
- **inevitable disruptions of an external organisational review**

CONCEPTUAL AND MATERIAL IMPLICATIONS

- **Social entrepreneurship is useful in drawing attention to alternative and multiple understandings of the purposes and effects of formal education**
- **Social entrepreneurship provides a potential basis for universities to recreate their relationships with their communities and constituencies**
- **Social entrepreneurship highlights many of the competing discourses and contradictory forces framing the work of contemporary academic managers**
- **Social entrepreneurship might be an unstable oxymoron, at least in universities**

- **Social entrepreneurs might be ethically attentive at the ‘micro’ level, yet swamped by entrepreneurial imperatives at the ‘macro’ level**
- **The remarkable resilience of strategies of marginalisation and of disempowering binaries creates an obstacle to social entrepreneurs’ transformative agenda**
- **Social entrepreneurs face a fundamental ambivalence around universities as agents of elitism and late capitalism and/or as sites of counternarrative and transgression**

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