abstract

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This article is a theoretical deliberation aimed at enhancing understanding of how the trans-national meets the national and the local in university governance. Given the conceptualisations of policy technologies as mainly trans-national, policy techniques as national, and power mechanisms as local, the idea is to develop analytical tools for comprehending policy transfer in the case of Finnish universities. Two tools are examined. First, some historical changes in policy techniques in Finnish university governance are analysed in the light of Stephen J. Ball's policy technologies and Pierre Bourdieu's idea of struggle in a discursive field,. Secondly, capitalising on Risto Heiskala's contribution in bridging resource theories with the structural approach to power, the author develops a cross-tabulation for scrutinising the effects of certain power mechanisms at the local university level. The concluding remarks concern the recent comparative research on educational policy transfer that came to light through this treatment.

Keywords: higher education policy · higher education politics · higher education governance · effects of power · policy transference

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Trans-national technologies, national techniques and local mechanisms in Finnish university governance

A journey through the layers

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Roger Dale (1999, p. 1) wrote almost a decade ago that the key to understanding the nature of globalization is to trace «how, and with what consequences, it affects national policies». It is no exaggeration to claim that his seemingly simple question, which is at the same time of Nobel proportions, is still pretty open. In spite of – or more probably by reason of – the enormous popularity of the «comparative global enterprise» in education (Nóvoa & Yariv-Mashal 2003, p. 425), there is no overproduction of theoretical tools promoting a comparative understanding of educational-policy transfer. Conversely, non-historical and decontextualised concepts such as *efficiency*, *accountability* and *quality* are colonising the educational world

undisputed and uncontested, largely due to the fact that they have been internationally advocated.

In this article I will make a journey, albeit a brief and sketchy one, through the layers of the trans-national, the national and the local in education policy, focused on Finnish university governance. It is a theoretical deliberation aimed at enhancing understanding of how the trans-national meets the national and the local in university governance. Given the conceptualisations of policy technologies as mainly trans-national, policy techniques as national, and power mechanisms as local, the idea is to develop analytical tools for comprehending policy transfer in the case of Finnish universities.

The article could be considered early ventilation associated with a major research project, Power, Supranational Regimes and New University Management in Finland[1]. In this project we are moving between three levels: the first is the trans-national level, especially EU University Policy; the second is the national level, Finnish university policy and governance; and finally, the local level concerns the effects of the new policies on the shop floor at four Finnish universities. One of the main aims of the project is to further understanding of the movement of policy, politics and the political between these levels. Historically, our study covers the period from the turning point of Finnish university policy in the late 1980s until now.

Our research material consists of documents and memoranda on higher-education policy and governance on the trans-national and national levels since the late 1980s. It will also include interviews with around thirty key policy actors, and two surveys of the entire personnel of four universities used as case material. The study will trace institutionalised operational logics of power in Finnish universities in the context of the new mode of trans-national educational. This article is on no account based on final research results, and is rather a theoretical and conceptual deliberation on a research project in progress. Hence, the function of the empirical data is illustrative and tentative.

The article is organised around three issues. First I consider trans-national policy technologies and the national discursive field of university policy in Finland. Secondly, my focus moves to national reforms, seen as the new policy techniques, and thirdly I will say something about local mechanisms of power and their effects. Instead of conclusion I will end by deliberating on questions concerning the comparative research on policy transfer that came to light through this treatment.

Trans-national policy technologies and the national discursive field of Finnish university governance

In two texts from the early 2000s (2001, 2003), Stephen Ball conceptualises market form, managerialism and performativity as the main policy technologies outlined in the OEDC discourse on public policy from the mid-1990s[2]. He describes these as «a set of policy technologies which 'make up' or bring about new values, new relationships and new subjectivities in arenas of practice» (Ball. 2001, p. 26). He states:

> Policy technologies involve the calculated deployment of techniques and artefacts to organize human forces and capabilities into functioning networks of power. Various disparate elements are inter-related within these technologies; involving architectural forms, functional tests and procedures, relations of hierarchy, strategies of motivation and mechanisms of reformation or therapy. (Ball, 2003, p. 216)

Ball (2003) applied the idea of three main policy technologies in his article: «The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity.» Janne Varjo (2007) showed in his dissertation on changes in Finnish educational legislation and policy since the late 1980s that this distinction also works well on the Finnish national level. Therefore, in what follows I will move on to the national level and apply Ball's conceptualisation to describe the discursive field of Finnish higher-education policy.

There is a growing consensus among Finnish social scientists that the period between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s was one of radical change, a turning point in Finnish society. This change has been characterised as the move from a *Welfare State* to a *Competition State*, and from *The Second Republic* to *The Third Republic* (e.g. Alasuutari, 1996; Heiskala, 2006; Rantala & Sulkunen, 2006; Simola, 2004). In terms of educational policy, the changes in the discursive field could be characterised according to the displacements and confrontations presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Policy technologies in the national discursive field of Finnish higher education policy.

Dimension of the discursive field	From the 1960s to the 1980s	From the 1990s on
Discipline	Bureaucracy	Market
Management	Professionalism	Managerialism
Ethos	Equality	Excellence

In the key dimensions of *discipline*, *management* and *ethos* there is a shift from bureaucracy to a market orientation, from the management of education professionals to managerialism, and from the ethos of equality to that of excellence.

In order to add some sensitivity to this unquestionably flat and scematic table we could use the well-known conceptualisation of doxa and discursive field developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977), as presentated in figure 1.

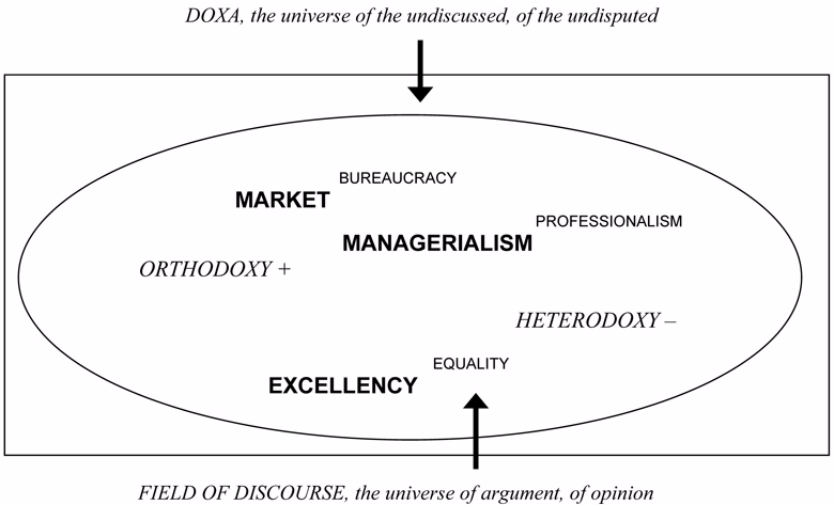

Figure 1: The discursive field of Finnish educational policy since the 1990s.

Bourdieu leaves no space for opinions in doxa: it is the universe of the undiscussed, of the undisputed. The established symbolic and political order is perceived not as arbitrary, not as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order that goes without saying, and therefore goes unquestioned. The universe of discourse is the

space for argument, the space for opinion. It is a field of political struggle in which one can always find two opposites that need each other and are bound to each other. On the one hand, there is orthodoxy or orthodox euphemism, supported by the dominant groups pursuing, as Bourdieu (1997, p. 169) says, «without ever entirely succeeding, to restore the primal state of innocence of doxa». On the other hand, there is heterodox blasphemy or heresy, supported by the dominated groups interested in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken-for-granted.

We could see the new policy technologies of the market, managerialism and excellence as orthodoxy, and the old technologies of bureaucracy, professionalism and equality as heterodoxy. The main tragedy of the classification struggle, according Bourdieu, is that the dominated groups rarely have the material or symbolic means for moving the vital borders between the doxa and the space of discourse: the dominant system is bound to the co-existence of both. The heterodoxy is thus, in a sense, captured and rendered impotent by the orthodoxy and in the service of doxa. It is essential to note that the bureaucracy, the professions and the problems of equality do not disappear from the social reality even though the discursive hegemony changes. What is essential, however, is that they articulate their existence through the hegemonic discourse of markets, managerialism and excellence (cf. Heiskala, 2006). It might be inviting, and also possible, to think that at the «top» level of national discourse, i.e. on the level of the most authoritarian policy rhetoric, there is not much difference between trans-national and national discourse. In other words, one might think that technologies are much the same even if the techniques and, even more the mechanisms, differ at the national and even local levels.

National policy techniques in Finnish university governance

In order to illustrate the concepts of policy technologies and techniques, on the one hand, and Finnish university policies on the other, I will now give a brief outline of some of the essential historical changes. This description, which is far from being exhaustive, is summed up in Table 2.

Table 2. Policy techniques in Finnish university governance.

Dimension of the discursive field	From the 1960s to the 1980s	From the 1990s on
Discipline	Discipline of Bureaucracy * national legislation and degree regulations * nationalisation of the universities	Market Discipline * internal quasi-markets * transnational degree reform * new financial and administrative status
Management	Authority of the Professors * professorial enfeoffment * university-specific implementation of administration reform	Managerialist Management * results-based management and steering * new salary system
Ethos	Ethos of Equality * regional and mass university policy	Ethos of Excellence * quality assurance and evaluation * Centres of Excellence * highly competitive research funding

From bureaucracy to a market discipline

The traditional academic era came to an end in Finnish universities in the 1960s, which could be seen as the birth decade of the modern national higher-education policy. The period between the 1960s and the 1980s has been described as one of development by legislation and regulations (Kivinen et al., 1993). The old Academy of Finland was completely reorganised in 1969, when it became a kind of state agency of science rather than a traditional academy of science (Eskola, 2003, 94). The Ministry of Education became the locus of the state regulation of higher education. All of the former private universities were nationalised during the 1970s, when the national degree reform – making the Master's Degree the basic university degree – was also implemented. Universities thus became one integrated part of the expansive and rationalised education system. Their general regulation was based on the very same norms and legislation-driven ideology of the state administration.

The market discipline has been implemented rather cautiously since the 1990s. Internal quasi-markets were created within the universities through the invoicing of space costs, administrative tasks and expert services between different units. Justified by the construction of the European Higher Education Marketplace, the two-cycle degree system was adopted in Finnish universities in 2005. This brought the market discipline not only to the degree structure but also to the contents. The working-life needs of the knowledge-based economy should now be taken seriously in all universities. Bureaucracy will, nevertheless, have a strong hold as long as it still rules the accounting offices of the state in an administrative sense. However, the political decision has already been made to change their financial and administrative status and make them more market oriented. The discussion is only about how far Finnish universities will go along that path, and how strong the voice of the markets will be in their decision-making bodies.

From professorial authority to managerialist management

During the traditional academic period the Finnish university belonged to the professors, to put it simply. This came about because of its special role in the construction of the nation state. The old administrative centre of Helsinki, Senate Square, symbolises this nicely: the Grand Cathedral of St Nicholas, the University of Helsinki, the Government Palace and the old Commercial House each occupy one side of the Square. During the First Republic (1917–1944), ten of the 22 successive Councils of State of the young nation were headed by a Prime Minister, who was a Professor at the University of Helsinki. It is not an overstatement to say that the era of «Professorial Enfeoffment» continued into the 1990s, as stated by some Finnish researchers:

> [A] university professor easily came to see his [sic] own discipline and what belonged to it as, if not exactly his personal property, at least his autonomous territory where his authority was unlimited. (Kivinen, Rinne & Ketonen, 1993, p. 236)

The same historical facts may account for the exceptionally strong influence the university student organisations had in Finland in the First and Second Republics. After its radical move to the Left for the first time in its history in the late 1960s, the student movement was able to bring the «one man one vote» policy nearer to full implementation in the university administration than any other contemporary student movements. In the end, however, the machinery of the establishment was stronger than the

movement. The Administration Reform was gradually implemented between 1974 and 1992, but in a vitiated form. The so-called tripartite principle (kolmikantaperiaate) nevertheless brought to an end the autocracy of the professors, and brought other staff and students into the decision-making bodies.

Neither the administrative reforms of the 1970s nor the later managerialist management reforms did away with the authority of the professors, however. One could say that professorial power was re-articulated in the new policy techniques. Since 1994 results-based management has been the watchword in the university field. This created the triennial performance negotiations and agreements between the Ministry of Education and the universities; the Rector negotiates and then agrees with the Deans and the Heads of the departments on:

> targets for university operations, such as the target numbers of degrees, the resources needed to achieve the targets, the monitoring and assessment of the target achievement, and the further development of operations. (Elomaa, 2005, p. 256)

The new university salary system (UPJ), which was implemented in 2005, gives strong carrots and sticks to encourage the application of results-based management. It consists of a job-demands component and a personal work-performance component, which are further divided to cater for teaching and research staff on the one hand and the general staff on the other. Under job demands the duties of every teacher-researcher are located on a scale from 1 to 11, and a proportion of the salary comes from this assessment. The other component, personal work performance, locates every teacher-researcher on a scale from 1 to 9. These two personal assessments will be carried out every three years. The key person is the Head of the Department, whose decision will go for confirmation to the Faculty Assessment Group and, finally, to the University Assessment Group comprising representatives of both employer and employees. What is remarkable here is that both the job-demands level and the final salaries are public information – only the assessment of personal work performance is private.

From the ethos of equality to the ethos of excellence

The 1960s brought a shift from an elitist university policy to the modern policy of mass higher education, which in the Finnish case was strongly influenced by regional politics. The number of university students has grown ten-fold since World War 2, and the number of professors five-fold. Higher education was universalised: while the youth cohort was 65.000 strong, the higher education sector, i.e. universities and polytechnics, took in 53.000 new students in 2000, for example Nevala (2003, p. 105). The country currently has 20 universities and 28 polytechnics, which could be a record if related to its population of five million inhabitants. In the spirit of equality, there are no fees in the Finnish higher-education system, but this will change in the near future when students from outside the EU will have to pay.[3]

The new policy of excellence was implemented in the early 1990s in various forms: the first Centres of Excellence in research and teaching were nominated in 1993; The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) was established in 1995; the University Act of 1997 subjected the universities to external and regular assessment, and international evaluation exercises have been carried out ever since; audits of quality assurance were implemented in 2006. All universities now have their Quality Systems, Quality Managers and Quality

Handbooks. On the political level, there are plans to reduce the number of universities, there are proposals to integrate three existing universities in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area to form a new Innovation University, and old universities are being pushed to be more competitive and geared to excellence.

In sum, one could say that managerialist technologies are clearly the most developed area in Finnish university policy, while the ethos of excellence and especially market discipline are still being challenged in the face of the continuing ethos of equality and bureaucracy. It is hard, however, to find any new policy techniques based clearly old technologies – the conglomerates are rather articulated through market discipline, managerialist management, and the ethos of excellence. We might find here curious intertwinements between trans-national and national tendencies.

Power mechanisms in Finnish university governance

Let me jump now to the shop-floor level and the work of academic researcher-teachers. How could we conceptualise the effects of these policy technologies and techniques? Here I will introduce the concept of *power mechanisms*. The Finnish sociologist Risto Heiskala (1997, 2001) made an important contribution towards theorising power by bridging resource theories with the structural approach. According to resource theories, power has distributive functions, as Max Weber illustrated, or collective functions as Talcott Parsons showed. Michel Foucault's structural approach considered power not as a resource but rather as a network of relations. Resource theorists consider actors, the poles of the power relation and their resources important, whereas in structural approach the focus shifts from the poles of the relation to the relation connecting them, which Heiskala calls the *mechanism of power*. Heiskala's contribution is to show that these theoretical viewpoints should not necessarily be seen as enemies and combat zones, but rather considered a means of creating a possible field of co-operation and a peaceful division of work.

Rather than going into the details of Heiskala's formulation, it is enough here to note that the two constitutive elements of a power relation, besides power mechanisms (m1 , m2 …), are actors (a, b, c…; cf. Weber, Parsons) and the specific relations produced by the power (R', R", R"', R""…; cf. Foucault). In tracing the effects of certain power mechanism (m) one could cross-tabulate the horizontal and the vertical dimensions as follows (Table 3).

Table 3: The effects of a power mechanism (m).

	Elements of power	
Political level	**Actors a, b, c …**	**Relations R, R', R" …**
'Politics' or 'the political-interest level'	Resources e.g., salary, working conditions, time budget, social support	Position e.g., among colleagues, in the web of power, in the field of education, career, record
'The political' or 'the deep political level'	Self-governance e.g., academic autonomy	Identity e.g., professional self-concept

The main elements of power relations formulated by Heiskala are to be found on the horizontal dimension. According to the resource-theory approach (Weber, Parsons) they are individual or collective actors. Respectively, the focus in structural thories (Foucault) is on the relations.

With regard to the vertical dimension, I will bring in here a fruitful distinction presented by Peter Dahler-Larssen (2003; see also Segerholm 2003) concering the effects of evaluation. According to him, effects on the level of politics refer to «who gets what, when, and how», whereas the political covers wider and more profound issues such as changes in societal values, the regulation of human relations, meaning-making, and conceptions of the surrounding world. Politics thus refers to conflicting interests, while the political concerns how human thinking, speaking and acting have changed. Hence, the vertical dimension also includes both Weberian and Parsonsian views on politics, while the Foucauldian view emphasises the political. Ball (1993; 1997, p. 25 ff.) comes close to making a similar distinction when he refers to first- and second-order policy effects. First-order effects are effects in practice or structure that are evident at particular sites and across the system as a whole: in the vocabulary used above this could be seen as the level of the political. Ball's second-order effects represent the impact of these changes on patterns of social access, social justice, and changes in inequality. This conceptualisation comes near to what is referred to above as the level of politics.

The cross-tabulation thus shows four kind of possible effects of a certain power mechanism. In the case of the academic shop-floor actor, *resources* refer to how a new mechanism affects your salary, working conditions and time targets, for example. If it brings changes in your place in the professional and social hierarchy, or in your career or record, then your *position* has changed. Further, your academic autonomy may be strengthened or weakened, in which case it is a question of changing *self-governance*. Finally, the dimension of *identity* focuses on changes that a new mechanism brings to one's professional self-concept. In other words, if we wish to study how academic shop-floor actors experience the new governance policies, and how these reforms have influenced their working lives, we could conceptualise different (national) policy techniques as different (local) power mechanisms and trace their effects on the actors' resources, positions, self-governance and identity.

What, then, could these local power mechanisms be, the effects of which are to be empirically studied on this conceptual basis? In the case of The University of Helsinki, the top ten power mechanisms of the new governance structure might take the following form as the local materialisations of governance policy. Without connecting these to the cross-tabulation, and only for the purposes of illustration, I list below some of the effects of each of the mechanisms, as commented on by some colleagues[4]:

(1) *New managerial authority for the Head of Department*

- the Head strongly suggests what kind of research-related activities and publishing are important in terms of making sense in the evaluations (a professor)
- the Head has put me right on the periphery in the department (a lecturer)
- implicit and sporadic effects; contacts mostly with grassroots-level workers (a faculty-level planning officer)
- some policies affect your work concretely, but some you don't have to bother about (a researcher)

(2) *The negotiation and agreement process for the new salary system*

- I clearly have a better salary than before

the UPJ, but there were arguments and I know it was the same with nearly all the professors (a professor)
- in the end it was the weakly formulated opinion of the Head that put my personal performance level as low as it is (a lecturer)
- a mediocre rise, good agreement with the boss, no effects on the content of the work (a faculty-level planning officer)
- a little rise, no opportunity to agree on salary (a researcher)

(3) *The planning of the two-cycle degree system*
- reasonable, laborious, and in particular it brought in pragmatic echoes of working life (a professor)
- supported the position of teaching (a lecturer)
- because I don't teach, this has no direct influence on my work right now (a researcher)
- potential effects of the third level of the Bologna process, which means the harmonization of doctoral training in the EU and better possibilities for transnational mobilization? (a PhD student)
- good opportunities to renew teaching and its planning (a faculty-level planning officer)

(4) *Electronic and anonymous student feedback*
- the results were transformed to the quality-of-teaching scale and discussed in the department meeting – awkward and derogatory (a professor)
- due to the anonymous and irrelevant criticisms from some students I had to explain and salvage my reputation in the eyes of the Head (a lecturer)
- discussions on the publication of student feedback and the contents of the sheet (a planning officer)
- good opportunity to obtain data for planning (a faculty-level planning officer)

(5) *Quality-development projects for teaching*
- may increase the appreciation of teaching and that is good (a lecturer)
- potential source of financial resources (a planning officer)
- good opportunities to a) get funding for planning work and b) renew teaching and management processes (a faculty-level planning officer)

(6) *The process of auditing the quality-assurance system*
- I was astonished at the escalation of the auditing, which should have only been the quality-assurance system, and not all the faculty (a professor)
- in spite of all the noise and shouting there was no connection to anything (a lecturer)
- stressed by all the nonsense and jargon (a researcher)

(7) *The international research-assessment process*
- while we had 7/7 and because it was a traditional peer review, I think it's appropriate (a professor)
- not much importance to my work, which is mainly teaching, nevertheless a lot of talk about lecturers doing research (a lecturer)
- glory perhaps, and funding (a researcher)

(8) *The international teaching-evaluation process*
- I have no idea what and when it was happening (a professor)
- I don't know how it was done, but in principle it's OK (a lecturer)

(9) *Centre of Excellence competitions*
- implies that only excellence is important (a professor)
- much paperwork in co-operation with the educationalists; no experience of centres of excellence on research (a faculty-level planning officer)

(10) *Work-time follow-up and focusing*

- I can see the idea behind checking how much working time has been used for different things but I doubt its usefulness (a professor)
- not in use (yet) (a researcher)
- follow-up is very useful for keeping track of time (a faculty-level planning officer)

What is clear is that these power mechanisms will produce strongly different effects depending on the power position of the subjects (from tenured professors to temporary research workers), for example.

Concluding remarks

A few concluding remarks may be worth exploring. First, we need to conceptualise relations between the trans-national, the national and the local in terms of distinctions between travelling and embedded policies, or even through vernacular or indigenous globalisation, as some researchers do (Ozga & Jones, 2006; Ozga & Lingard, 2007; Ozga, Seddon & Popkewitz, 2006). I referred above to «old» policy techniques precisely to illustrate that the «new» is always entangled with and re-articulated through the old. The «deep-seated historical traditions [now] institutionalised in the structures, practices and institutional cultures [that] are specific to each nation», as Andy Green (1997, p. 23) put it, are vital here.

Secondly and at the same time, we should also articulate this relation in terms such as *commonality within difference*, *exogenous trends* (Marques Cardoso, 1998; Sweeting & Morris, 1993; in Ball 2001, p. 26), or *paradigm convergence* as Ball (1998) does, for example. Indeed, we could see policy technologies, techniques and mechanisms in higher education producing something like a Foucauldian *dispositif*, a machinery that is characterised as inviting, tempting and persuasive, but also as coercive, hegemonic and dominant (Simola & Rinne, 2008).

Furthermore and thirdly, even «if these commonalities can be identified, they need then to be interrogated not simply in terms of their structural variety but also in terms of their inter-relationships and the resulting political and subjective effects over time» (Ball 2001, p. 25). Michael Apple (1996, p. 141) writes of this «difficult problem of simultaneously thinking about both the specificity of different practices, and the forms of articulated unity they constitute».

Fourthly and however, the closer we get to shop-floor experiences, the bigger is the variance. It is nevertheless an empirical question whether the policy effects on resources, positions, autonomy and identities would be experienced similarly among academic teacher-researchers in different countries. There is a Finnish saying from the 1960s that crystallises the distance even from one of the most authoritarian modern discourse to its effects: «The law is the same for all – only the adjudications differ» (Laki on kaikille sama, vain tuomiot vaihtelevat)[5].

Fifth, what Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 253) say about the need for reflexivity in general and participant objectivation in particular is vital in academic research on university governance policy and its effects. In this sense, it seems more than portentous that so little attention has been paid to «pre-neoliberalist» governance in the university field. There is every reason to claim that socio-historical analysis of the antecedent university regime has not provided a strong basis for governance studies today.

Finally, between orthodox dreams and heterodox nightmares is much more space for action than we used to think. Dreams and nightmares rarely come true; usually something else happens. I am therefore convinced that the main task of research is to find the boundaries between doxa and the space of discourse rather than to look for evidence of orthodoxy or heterodoxy.

Notes

1 The project started in 2007 and will end in 2010. It is funded by the Academy of Finland and located at the Universities of Turku and Helsinki. (See Rinne, Simola, H., Kauko & Simola, M., 2007)

2 His analysis is based on a foundational book entitled *Governance in Transition: Public Management Reforms in OECD.* Paris: OECD, 1995.

3 During the 1960s, the University of Helsinki lost its special status and all universities were treated equally by the state apparatus.

4 These notes are based on the experiences of and feelings about the consequences of the techniques as far as the work of some professors, lecturers, researchers, PhD students (tohtorikoulutettava) and administrative officers is concerned. The list is highly illustrative, and indeed tentative.

5 This is a well-known phrase in Finland but its origin is unclear. In English the following comes close: «The law is equal before all of us; but we are not all equal before the law.» (George Bernard Shaw)

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