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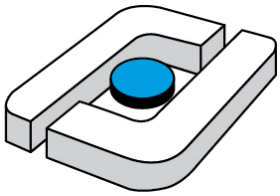
The Master in Research and Innovation in Higher Education (MARIHE) is an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course offered by a consortium of Danube University Krems (Austria), University of Tampere (Finland), Beijing Normal University (China) and University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück (Germany).

北京師範大學

BEIJING NORMAL UNIVERITY



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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE CREATION OF THE MASTER THESIS READER

Each year a master thesis reader as a summary of the cohort/year is published as an e-book. Therefore additional to the master thesis each student writes a “special summary” of the thesis, which is an extract of the thesis. This e-book is a collection of summarized master thesis produced as a final and individual research project within master’s course Research and Innovation in Higher Education, leading to graduation from MARIHE program.

The structure and the aims of the summarized master thesis give the insight into the research background, methodology, key findings and recommendations of the each master thesis project.

For further reading the full master thesis texts are available on the following web addresses:

- In the library of Danube University Krems accessible on the following link - http://bit.ly/1erZ17l.
- On the MARIHE web page accessible on the following link - http://www.marihe.eu/insidemarihe/marihe-e-book-series.
- The Reader is published in "EPUB" format, which can be viewed using the (free) software Adobe Digital Editions accessible on the following link: http://www.adobe.com/at/solutions/ebook/digital-editions/download.html.

INTRODUCTION OF MARIHE PROGRAM

In Europe as well as in other regions of the world fundamental transition processes are taking place in the systems of research, innovation and higher education: from regulation to deregulation and competition, from steering to market, from administration to management. Higher education and research institutions need highly trained experts who are able to analyse these new contexts and who have management and leadership skills to deal with the changes. The Master in Research and Innovation in Higher Education (MARIHE) is an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course offered by a consortium of Danube University Krems (Austria), University of Tampere (Finland), Beijing Normal University (China) and University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück (Germany).

MARIHE provides students a unique opportunity to develop a sound understanding of higher education systems and university development around the world. Students have the opportunity to study in at least three different universities and countries. During an internship provided by international enterprises and organisations they get insight into fields of practice.

As an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course, MARIHE is supported by the Erasmus Mundus Programme of the European Commission. By these standards, it is one of the leading master programmes in Europe. MARIHE addresses university graduates that want to pursue a career in the higher education and research sector as managers, administrators, consultants, policy analysts, researchers and decision makers. Possible employers are higher education and research institutions, public bodies such as ministries for science and education, enterprises specializing in education, think tanks and non-governmental organizations. Graduates of MARIHE are able take the lead in the future management and development of research and innovation in higher education.

International and European reform agendas have recently focused on a number of measures that are argued to lead to the modernisation of higher education as a sector and turn the higher education institutions into strategic organisational actors to develop countries and societies. The programme supports the development with respect to the professionalisation of institutional leadership and management functions accompanied by an emerging training and support structure for institutional managers and leaders. MARIHE is a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue

and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with Third-Countries. In addition, it contributes to the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in Third Countries by increasing mobility between the European Union and these countries.

The curriculum of MARIHE reflects on three perspectives on the change logics involved in the worldwide developments in higher education and in higher education institutions:

- the perspective on Systems in Transition, focussing on general developments and on globalization and regionalization (Europe, Africa, Americas, Asia) in higher education
- the perspective on System-Institution-Interaction (e.g. funding of research and innovation)
- the perspective on Institutional Change (e.g. “change management”).

Furthermore, modules on Theoretical Background introduce fundamental issues of higher education management. Another emphasis is given to Transferable Skills (e.g. research methods, presentation skills, languages).

For more information on the MARIHE program, please visit the program´s website: www.marihe.eu.

INNOVATIVENESS OF SERBIAN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Zana Bogunovic

BACKGROUND

This paper presents a summary of a master's thesis titled Innovativeness of Serbia Academic Community done as a final and individual research project within master's course Research and Innovation In Higher Education-MARIHE. The study explores innovativeness of Serbian academic community and it focuses on factors influencing the level of community members' willingness to accept changes and hence gives an insight into potential and capacity of the population to adopt or initiate changes on institutional and system level. The summary consists of four sectors giving brief insight into research' background, methodology, key findings and recommendations.

The study "Innovativeness of Serbian Academic Community" demonstrate the role of individuals' innovativeness in the transformation of the higher education institutions, national higher education system and wider society in general, using the example of higher education (HE) in Serbia. Research focus is motivated by the fact that the members of the Serbian academic community have a strong and central role in the Serbian HE system that gives them a conducive position to act as advocates or opponents to changes on all levels, to the extent that they can significantly influence changes in the whole system. A number of studies have been dealing with the changes on the system level mostly focused on power, politics or discourse in higher education reforms (Vukasović, 2014), however these studies rarely have psychological approach to the problem focusing on individual members and changes on micro level. In response to this, the study gave effort to demonstrate how members of the academic community who are showing willingness to adopt novelties or to question and modify ongoing ideas, practices and behavior may initiate a chain of changes in institutional and system level.

The study was particularly interested in the relation between innovative individual traits of employees of higher education institutions in Serbia (teachers, researchers and associates) and factors that might influence adoption of innovations. Based on a theoretical framework informed by Rogers' approach to diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 2003), factors of innovation which were of particular interest are: attributes of new ideas, practices and products that individuals are likely to adopt and the type of organizational culture they are surrounded by. These factors have been studied extensively, but not in relation with members of the academic community in Serbia. The basic idea was to distribute all respondents into five adopter categories according to their characteristics and time needed for them to accept new ideas, practices and/or products, using a carefully designed survey. The shape of distribution was supposed to reveal the potential of the Serbian academic community for change acceptance and to predict future course and speed of changes in the system.

The broadest interest of the study was whether the level of Serbian academic community members' innovativeness i.e. their willingness to adopt changes or to try new things, can be used to explain the flow of changes in Serbian HE system, both on institutional and system level. Mentioned process of changes the study is focusing on is seen and understood as a process of adoption and diffusion of innovations. To further operationalize and translate this wide topic to more concrete and measurable steps a theoretical framework was developed. Understandings of all significant notions and the ways they were analyzed and later interpreted were developed on the basis of Rogers Everett's Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory. This theoretical framework proved to be suitable for setting the starting assumptions and to be used as a guide throughout the entire study. The theory itself offers more than it was eventually employed in the research. Namely, Rogers and his colleagues were investigating how innovations are being diffused through a social system assuming that innovation has already been adopted. As mentioned before, this study was focusing on adoption of innovation process, i.e. only a part of entire diffusion process. This stressed the necessity to narrow down DOI theory and to apply it to the research interest and context within with it was conducted. Along with these lines, it is important to accentuate that the interest of this research was innovativeness understood as inter-individual difference among people regarding their reactions to new things and willingness to adopt them (Goldsmith & Foxall, 2003), not the entire process of innovation diffusion in the social system as described in DOI theory. To be more precise, adoption is seen as an individual or micro-decision

process which involves the series of stages one undergoes from receiving the first knowledge about an innovation to finally adopting it (Goldsmith & Foxall, 2003). Thus, the interests of this study are mechanisms ongoing within an individual and a so called trait-behavior model (Midgey & Dowling, 1978) of innovativeness is applied.

Further, diffusion of no particular innovation was observed within this study. General definition offered by said theory was proven to be appropriate for the intentions of this research as the focus was on the individual innovativeness, not on innovations. On the other side, such approach to innovation emphasized the need to find new ways of measurement, since the DOI definition was proven to be impracticable for such a task. Employing new measurement technique implied different definition of innovativeness itself. However, this has not changed Rogers' understanding of the notion, which allowed these changes to be implemented in the study in the first place.
An initial assumption in the study was derived from above mentioned theory which served as basis for the generalizations in specific Serbian context. The assumption was that it is possible to extract attributes of innovations, individual traits and organizational innovativeness as factors that influence innovativeness of Serbian academic community. As the focus of the research was on individual innovativeness this was treated as dependent variable of the research. Two additional variables developed through theoretical framework are so called intermediate variables: attribution of innovations and organizational innovativeness. In addition, independent variable comprised of bio-social (gender, age etc.) and working-educational (institution of engagement, work title etc.) characteristics were also developed. Variables are put into relations as shown in the Figure 1 .

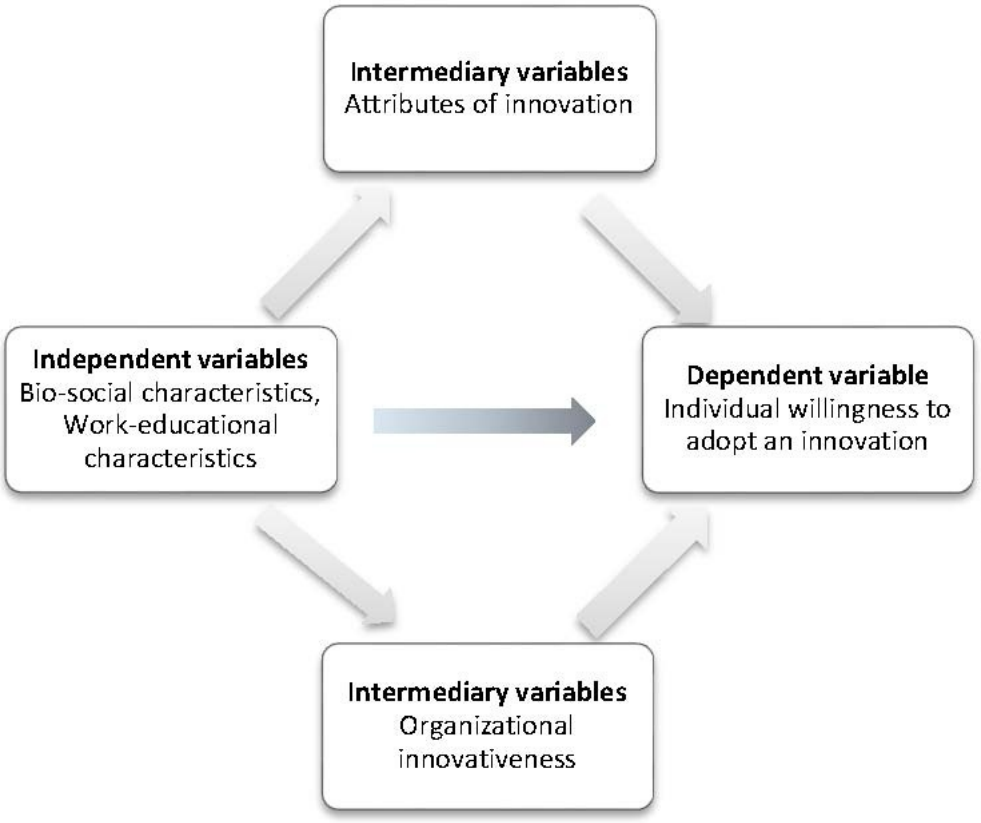

Figure 1: Relation of research variables

As it can be seen in the Figure 1 above, dependent variable is innovativeness (individual willingness to adopt innovations) and this study endeavor was to explore whether all intermediary variables as well as independent may show significant influence on it.

As individual innovativeness is dependent variable in the study and as standardized innovativeness scale (IS) was applied to measure it, this notion was operationalized as personality trait characterized as willingness-to-change or willingness-to-try new things as defined by Hurt et al. (1997). Attributes of innovations are grouped in one of the intermediate variables of the research and are seen as characteristics of innovations (Rogers, 2003). Level of organizational innovativeness

is another intermediate variable. For its measurement PORGI standardized scale was used and hence this term is understood as an organizational capacity to introduce new processes, products, or ideas in the organization defined by Hult et al. (2004). Adopter categories are defined by Rogers (2003) as "the classifications of members of a social system on the basis of innovativeness" (p. 22). The rationale behind is understanding that certain individuals are "relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than other members of a system" (Rogers, p. 22). Although the actual time of innovation adoption was not measured in the study, the assumption that individuals with higher levels of innovativeness (measured with IS scale) will be earlier in adopting new ideas allowed to keep such determination.

The general research question arising from such a research topic and theoretical framework were formulated as follows: what are the factors influencing the innovativeness of the members of the Serbian academic community? This was broken down into several more specific questions:

- How do bio-social (gender, age etc.) and working-educational (institution of engagement, work title etc.) characteristics influence the level of innovativeness of the Serbian academic community?
- How do attributes of innovations influence the level of individual innovativeness of the Serbian academic community?
- How does organizational innovativeness influence the level of individual innovativeness of the Serbian academic community?
- How is innovativeness distributed among the members of the Serbian academic community?

By answering above mentioned questions it was expected to provide a clarification of the current situation when it comes to innovative potential of the academic community in Serbia. Practical implications derived from such scientific analysis may lead to a deeper understanding of the driving forces of change and the ways in which it can be stimulated, as well as what actions can be taken to change the immediate work environment so that the members of the academic community become more receptive to changes.

METHODOLOGY

To perform set tasks and answer the research questions the study used a quantitative-non-experimental method applying both inferential and descriptive statistics in analyzing, presenting, and interpretation of gathered data. Using descriptive or univariate research analysis, general or specific behaviors of variables are observed and measured, independent from each other. This method is used to collect substantial but often inconclusive information on variables behavior tendencies (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). Having these limitations of univariate statistics in mind and given that this study aims to investigate deeper relations between variables, correlational or bivariate procedures were applied as well.

The instrument used in this study was an online questionnaire, including simple and multiple-choice questions as well as a set of statements for which the respondents were expected to indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was developed in relation to the population of interest – the members of academic community in Serbia - in order to collect data both on their bio-social and work educational characteristics, type of innovation and perceived problems related to introduction of innovations. Three Likert scales were employed to investigate individual innovativeness, attributes of innovations respondents prefer and level of organisational innovativeness. Innovativeness scale (IS) was a scale used for investigating individual innovativeness and the scale used to measure organisational innovativeness is Perceived Organizational Innovativeness (PORGI). Both scales are standardised and widely in use and proven to be highly reliable and valid by different authors.

As field research was conducted using online survey it was necessary to gather all available emails beforehand, therefore the research studied only a portion of available population. Field research was conducted during May in 2014. All identified members of targeted sample were contacted on three occasions via email addresses obtained by previously gathered publicly available data. Targeted sample members were asked to follow the procedure given in the email. After collecting all available email address it was established that the number of cases in such targeted sample counts 5,425 members of academic community on the territory of entire Republic of Serbia. From total sum, the actual sample counted 473 returns which give response rate of 9, 4%. Achieved sample was

well representative as far as the university of engagement and area of basic education and work. However, slight over-representation can be noticed of younger age categories which entails higher representativeness of shorter length of work experience categories and lower ranks work title.

After data were collected, statistical processing was applied. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively. Statistical analysis of provided quantitative results was afterwards interpreted on the basis of the theoretical framework. With regards to data analysis procedures, several statistical methods were used. First, to count the number of occurrences in each category of each variable, univariate analysis, i.e. frequencies procedure was applied. This was applied in order to gain description of the sample and to discover responses' tendencies allowing the comparison between groups of individuals. This was followed by calculating scores for the two standardized scales, IS and PORGI, based on scoring procedures. Frequency tendencies were performed for these scores as well, enabling to discover and to compare the distribution of individuals and organizations in each category. Finally, as this being correlational research, bivariate statistics was applied. Different correlational coefficients were used depending on the measurement levels of variables that were in the focus. As the choice of statistical method depend on the variable's scale of measurement, different correlation measures were applied according to the types of variables. For correlating two ordinal variables Spearman's rho coefficient was used while for correlating ordinal and nominal (also dichotomous) Cramer's V coefficient. One way ANOVA was additionally run for the field of basic education and work engagement factor to determine the difference between respondents groups regarding the level of individual innovativeness and disciplinary field they are coming from. To be more precise, Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between individual innovativeness level and organizational innovativeness level, attributes of innovations as well as with those parts of independent variable that were presented on ordinal scale (age, financial status , length of work experience and field of basic education and work engagement). Cramer's V coefficient was performed for nominal scales. For this purposes IS scale was treated as nominal as well.

KEY FINDINGS

Achieved sample of the study consisted mostly of younger, female, lower title rank members of the academic community. Majority of them is engaged at University of Belgrade, mostly in social sciences and humanities or in technical and technological disciplines with working experience up to 20 years. Such sample is well representative of population in terms of area of basic education and work and the university of engagement considering the ratio with the size of these universities and their representatives in the sample. Slight over-representation was noticed in younger age categories which entail higher representativeness of shorter length of work experience categories and lower ranks work title.

The first research question was how do bio-social (gender, age etc.) and working-educational (institution of engagement, work title etc.) characteristics influence the level of innovativeness of the Serbian academic community? Data analysis exposed that out of all measured indicators of independent variable only field of basic education and work engagement showed relevancy for the level of individual innovativeness. These findings imply how innovativeness of members of academic community is related with the scientific discipline they are engaged in. As it was addressed in the theoretical framework presented in the study, it was expected that behavior of members of different scientific discipline differs from discipline to discipline, the same can be expected with the regards to the willingness to try and adopt novelties. Data analysis revealed that the highest level of individual innovativeness possess members of academic community engaged in technical and technological scientific disciplines, thus it can be expected that members of these disciplinary fields will be the first to adopt new ideas, practices or products.

The second research question was how do attributes of innovations influence the level of individual innovativeness of the Serbian academic community? It was revealed that none of the innovations attributes defined by Rogers' DOI theory shows significance in relation with the level of individual innovativeness. This means that there are no characteristics of innovations members of Serbian academic community prefer more than other. In fact, it implies that all innovations have equal chances of being adopted or rejected, and that there is no need of applying special incentives related with investigated attributes for increasing level of individual innovativeness among the members of Serbian academic community. Additional aspects related to the type of innovations were also taken into consideration. Namely, data analysis also showed that the level of individual innovativeness

will not vary with any particular type of innovation. Therefore, for the level of individuals' willingness to try or to adopt new ideas, practices or products it is not important what attributes innovations have nor if they refer to the product, process, organizational or marketing innovation.

The third research question was how does organizational innovativeness influence the level of individual innovativeness of the Serbian academic community? Data analysis revealed that the level of organizational innovativeness is highly related to the level of innovativeness of Serbian academic community. It can be said that one of the initial assumptions that if the HEI is more open to adopting new ideas, practices and products, its employees i.e. the members of academic community will also be more willing to try and adopt new things. These findings imply that organizational culture does influence creating values and beliefs of its employees when it comes to innovation adoption. It can, likewise, be concluded that if flexibility and orientation to changes are dominant forces in an organization the same values can be eventually rooted in individuals' activities and decision making process regarding innovation adoption and acceptance of changes. Perceived problems related to introduction of innovations in the HE system in Serbia were also analyzed. None of the analyzed problems showed relevance for the level of individual innovativeness.

Final research question was how is innovativeness distributed among the members of the Serbian academic community? Distribution of IS scores gave the answer to this question. Namely, majority of respondents fit into early adopters and early majority categories. Having in mind age characteristics of the sample such distribution means that innovativeness is well distributed among younger members of Serbian academic community. According to Rogers' descriptions of these adopters' categories it can be concluded that the members of Serbian academic community (early majority category) mostly have good interaction with other members of the social system, that their time of innovation adoption is usually somewhat longer considering their precaution when making decision on innovation adoption. However, this process is not too long and they do not show too much resistance to novelties. Respondents who tend to fall into early adopters category have more chances to hold leadership roles and they often represent role models for the other members of the community regarding the innovation adoption. As it was indicated in the theoretical framework of the study, the willingness of the individual academic staff to change and to try new things fits in the core of HIEs where the most traditional academic values are rooted. As universities are bottom heavy and resistant to change, to implement changes and to transform a university a "critical mass" of individuals within university needs to show a will to change (Clark, 1998).

It can be concluded based on the research findings that with such detected distribution Serbian academic community has satisfying potential among its younger members to carry out or even to initiate changes on institutional and system level. Bearing in mind central role members of the academic community have in HE system in Serbia and the possibility such position gives them to act as advocates or opponents to changes, determined innovative potential and the level of willingness to try and adopt new ideas may be an indicator that a "critical mass" of innovative individuals exist in Serbian HE system among younger age categories. Key findings of this study revealed indications that a "critical mass" of innovative individuals does exist in Serbian HE system among younger age categories. Such findings not just that reveals current potential, but indicate potential for future courses of actions in HE system. However, with regards to the level of individual innovativeness distribution among members of academic community and considering high percentage of respondents in early adopters category and their theoretical chances to hold leadership positions, it is important that these individuals are elected for, or appointed to, such positions, in order to have more power to implement changes both on the institutional and system level. Developing mechanisms for identifying these individuals may also be one of the practical implications that could be developed from research related to diffusion of innovations. Related to this issue, new associates, or new members of academic community are mostly chosen from the pool of the most successful students, hence it is of utmost importance to apply suitable practices for their identification.

In the long term perspective certain program for stimulating creative and innovative thinking in order to raise innovative potential and create stronger and bigger "critical mass" of innovative individuals could be designed. Besides this, these individuals should be better connected between themselves. Creating opportunities for increasing academic community members' mobility, both national and international, not just that increases the likelihood of widening professional networks but by sharing new ideas, practices or products related to the science it may lead to scientific discipline development as well. With regards to diversity of academic community according to their disciplines data analysis showed individual innovativeness is correlated with the discipline members

of academic community are engaged in. This implies that members coming from certain disciplines are more innovative than members coming from others. Having this in mind it should not be expected that certain reforms will be accepted by all members equally. Discipline field with more innovative members will be faster in adopting a new policy or reform then other. Therefore, policy makers should apply certain adjustments in implementation plans according to these findings. Issues related to quality control, insufficient funding for research or lack of coherency in priorities set by the state and followed by HEIs are issues not solely directed to the level of individual innovativeness among members of academic community in Serbia, yet they all might have certain influence on it. Lack of focus towards applied research and strengthening links between universities and businesses may be seen as one of the reasons for lack of motivation among the members of Serbian academic community to take part in transformative actions of their organizational unites.

To conclude, to innovative way of thinking to become a common “practice” and an integral part of life in higher education field, attitudes of openness to changes among individuals and organizations should be permanently and systematically developed. Individual innovativeness should be fostered through both, bottom-up and up-down models within higher education institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All changes introduced in the theoretical were engaged due to context requirements, research interest and focus, yet the parts of the DOI theory that were not included in this research make a pool of ideas for further studies. Innovations are in the spotlight of HE developments, thus if applied on different populations, types of innovations or on different systems and with shifted foci, many interesting scientific findings can be detected and later applied in the practice. For example, applying either quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods, consequences of innovation adoption with regards to the characteristics of members, nature of the system as well as the nature and the use of innovations could be an interesting research idea for the future study.

With regards to the methodology employed, it was already mentioned that certain compromises were required to be accepted because of the population specificity and researcher’s possibilities. Namely, the only available way for the researcher was to conduct online survey and along with this the only way population could have been reached was via emails. Although this method of field research has a number of advantages, disadvantages that come along could be averted if certain circumstances change. Thus, full representativeness of the sample could be achieved by creating complete population database independent of available e-mail address, and subsequently by extracting stratified random sample just as it was originally conceived in this research. To such random-stratified sample could further be approached in person, face to face, thus avoiding the possibility that the questionnaire respond only those participants who are willing to answer it, those who have access to the information technologies, or feel more comfortable in using them, or at the bottom line, those who are more innovative.

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THE IMPACT OF UNIVERSITY PRESTIGE ON GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

Georgiana Mihuț

BACKGROUND

Higher education is the space of a contradictory phenomenon in relation to questions of social equity. On one hand, education often brings well-deserved benefits to hard working individuals and it managed to achieve unprecedented redistribution of privilege through the expansion process and by rewarding individuals that succeed based on their potential rather than based on their social origin. On the other hand, education brings further disparities between the privileged and the less privileged.

The first level of disparities created rests between those that attend and those that do not attend higher education institutions. The ones with higher education access and ability for completion will receive benefits that students outside the realm of this possibility, or without the capacity for completion, will not. Academic articles illustrating pecuniary and non-pecuniary returns of higher education spurred in recent years (Oreopoulos & Salvanes, 2011, Romele & Purgailis, 2013, Menon, 2008, Krueger, 1972, Maani, 1996, Tilak, 1989, Toh & Wong, 1999). The graduates are generally presented as better off than non-graduates and empirical data substantiates these claims.

The second level of disparities refers to the unequal value of degrees. Intuitive cases are reflected in the occupational prestige attached to various fields of specialization and the socio-economical indicators correlated with their prestige (Goyder, 2005, MacKinnon & Langford, 1994, Norredam & Album, 2007, OECD, 2013). The inequality between fields of study is matched, if not surpassed by the inequality between various institutions of higher education. Institutions that Harvey & Green (1993) define as representative for ‘quality as excellence’ carry a higher level of prestige, here classical examples include Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge. Graduates of such places are in the favorable position to use this prestige as a token in acquiring further potent social privilege (Oprisko, 2012, Grafton & Townsend, 2008).

The current paper joins the debate on equity and higher education by analyzing disparities between graduates of higher education institutions with a varying level of prestige. Specifically, the transfer of prestige in the employment process of graduates is analyzed. Representatives of the demand side of the employment process, recruiters and employers, are interviewed to understand the ramifications of university prestige when selecting candidates for job openings. Signaling theory and human capital theory are simultaneously used to analyze the results. Interviewees are asked to discuss aspects of the recruitment process, their perception over universities and the level of prestige associated with various types of institutions and programs, and to present their understanding of the relation between university prestige and employability. The interviews are conducted in two countries: Romania and Germany.

The primary aim of this paper is to understand the impact of university prestige in the employment process of graduates. The second aim is to gather a better understanding over the context dependent perceptions of prestige by collecting data from two different countries. The general pattern of what constitutes prestige might affect employability in unexpected ways in the two analyzed contexts, and this qualitative study aims at understanding how prestige might be perceived differently and act differently in various environments. The third aim is to understand the perception of university prestige from the perspective of outside actors to the university environment, namely employers and recruiters. Here, the paper engages with the debate of what constitutes university prestige and if definitions common to the higher education arena, where university prestige is often equivalent with prestige as illustrated by research output, match outside definitions of the prestige of higher education institutions.

The thesis draws on multiple concepts pertaining to multiple fields of study in order to create a well-rounded theoretical framework. The concepts of prestige (Weber, 2010, Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013, Gil-White & Henrich, 2000), diversification (Zha, 2009, Birnbaum, 1983) and excellence

(Taylor & Braddock, 2007, Montesinos et. al. 2008, Dill & Soo, 2005, Hazelkorn, 2009) in higher education, employability (Harvey, 2001) and meritocracy (Mason, 2001) are used to define and understand the dependent and independent variables of this study. Human capital theory (Schultz, 1959, Strober, 1990, Mincer, 1974, Becker, 1975) and signaling theory (Murray & Moore, 2009, Spence, 1973, Moore, 2003, Backes-Gellner & Tuor, 2010) are used to interpret the emerging results.

Drawing on the concepts and theoretical frameworks presented above, six working hypothesis were developed:

H1. In the perception of recruiters, skills are an important variable influencing the employment process

H2: Definitions of university prestige, as viewed by interviewees, differ from university prestige viewed as research excellence.

H3: In the perception of recruiters, the prestige of the university an applicant graduated from has an impact in the employment process.

H4: Areas of perceived difference between universities, as viewed by recruiters, determine the instance of the impact of university prestige.

H5: The aggregated prestige of the German higher education system is likely to positively affect the chances of employment of an applicant in the Romanian labor market

H6: The local differences in university prestige are likely to determine the impact of university prestige in the labor market.

METHODOLOGY

In order to gather respondents that have accumulated a wide and diverse experience in the selection and employment process, but at the same time maintain clarity and focus, both representatives of recruitment companies and representatives of human resources departments are interviewed. A sample of five interviewees from Germany and five interviewees from Romania is selected.

An interview is generally defined as a ‘conversation with a purpose’ (Berg, 2001, p. 6). Here, the purpose is to gather insights from recruiters on the impact of university prestige in the employment of graduates in Romania and Germany. For this purpose, a semi-structured interview (Berg, 2001, Doody & Noonan, 2013) seems to offer both the rigor necessary in exposing different interviewees to similar stimuli, thus assuring comparability between interviews, and the flexibility to accommodate for the different experiences and nuanced perceptions interviewees are equipped with.

Open-ended questions are the main type of questions used during the interviews, but ranking questions and written questions are included also. In constructing the interview questions, particular attention is given to avoiding bias and ambiguity (Keats, 2001). The interview conversation is divided into topical stages (Hermanovicz, 2002). Pre-prepared questions embrace a sequential structure with simple feedback loops, where the interviewer returns to crucial responses in order to avoid bias (Keats, 2001).

The interviewees that generously agreed to part-take in this study are experienced in working with different fields of recruitment and have conducted their activity for multiple companies of varying size. They engaged in recruitment activities at the local, regional, national, and in the case of one respondent, at an international level. With one exception, all interviewees that work for a human resources department of a company have gathered experience in at least two different companies. The breath of the experiences of interviewees facilitated the process of gathering multiple perspectives about the relation between university prestige and the employment process of graduates.

Thematic analysis as ‘a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ is used for the purpose of conducting the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2008. p. 79). This research blends the inductive thematic data analysis process proposed by Braun and Clarke (2008)

consisting of six phases for conducting thematic analysis with a deductive approach.

KEY FINDINGS

Perhaps ambitiously, this study advanced six hypotheses. This section with attempt at using the data collected as part of this thesis to confirm or infirm each of them.

The first hypothesis suggested that, in the perception of recruiters, skills are an important variable influencing the employment process. In the perception of employers, skills are not only an important variable in the employment process, but the most important one. Human capital theory rightfully predicted the importance of skills for employers, and this study only adds to the long tradition of academic work substantiating this claim.

The second hypothesis suggested that definitions of university prestige, as viewed by interviewees, differ from university prestige viewed as research excellence. The discourse of university prestige within the academia, driven by the popularity of university rankings defines university prestige mainly in relation research excellence (Montesino et. al. 2008, Dill & Soo, 2005, Hazelkorn, 2009). On the other hand, there is little reason to assume that employers might be more interested in the research outcome of a university than the quality a university equips its graduates with. This is the logic that informed the second hypothesis of this study. Most surely, this logic is supported by evidence from the interviews collected. University prestige was perceived to originate from the high academic standards of a program by most interviewees. For some participants, prestige was associated with the networks that universities have with established companies. In the very few instances where research quality was mentioned as a source of university prestige, research was perceived to have a positive contribution to the specialized education students receive. As such, for the participants of this study, university prestige is primarily not associated with research excellence.

Hypothesis three stipulated that, in the perception of recruiters, the prestige of the university an applicant graduated from has an impact in the employment process. Three types of impact were identified throughout the responses of the interviewees: conscious use, unconscious use and conscious avoidance. The impact of university prestige thus ranged from significant to none between the interviewees. Still, looking at the aggregated responses, it is difficult to ignore the instances where the impact of university prestige becomes apparent. Moreover, it was expected that the answers of the interviewees might have been affected by the social desirability bias, which gives the researcher reasons to believe that not all relevant practices to the research question were shared openly. The conclusion remains that university prestige has a contributory role in the employment process, thus confirming the third hypothesis. Further research is needed to confirm the extent and the scale of this impact.

The next hypothesis provided an educated guess in an attempt to identify where does the perception of university prestige derive from. The educated guess was that areas of perceived difference between universities, as viewed by recruiters, determine the instance of the impact of university prestige. There is little evidence in the responses given by interviewees to substantiate this claim. Often, it was difficult for interviewees to identify areas of difference between universities, and when such differences were presented, they were not linked to the perception of university prestige, and thus, they were not linked to the impact prestige might have in the employment process. The only exception to this is encountered in perceptions of the difference between public universities and private universities in Romania. Here interviewees actively suggested there are instances where private universities are preferred to a lesser extent than applicants from public universities, and that such candidates are subject to deeper scrutiny during the selection process. Overall, the responses of the interviewees only partially support hypothesis four.

The next hypothesis aimed at gathering insights on the impact of university prestige at a transnational level. The impact of the institutional prestige and the aggregated prestige of the German higher education system in the Romanian labor market was investigated. The fifth hypothesis suggested that the aggregated prestige of the German higher education system is likely to positively affect the chances of employment of an applicant in the Romanian labor market. The questions pertaining to this hypothesis were asked only to the Romanian interviewees. Most interviewees suggested that having a diploma from Germany would have a positive effect in the employment process. One of the interview exercises asked Romanian participants to select between candidates that came from different prestigious universities in Romania or from a prestigious

university in Germany. All respondents presented with this choice selected, for one reason or another, the representatives from the German university. An additional exercise required Romanian interviewees to select between a person that graduated in Romania and a person that graduated in Germany. No university name was provided. Again, a preference was given to graduates from Germany. In actuality, situations where graduates from German universities apply for job positions in the Romanian labor market are rare. They are likely rare enough for the value of a German degree to offer a competitive advantage to graduates. It is in the instance of observing the evidence for this hypothesis that one can claim the explanatory power of signaling theory, thus confirming hypothesis five.

The last hypothesis aimed at observing if the local differences in prestige are likely to determine the impact of university prestige in the labor market. In order to gather an answer to this hypothesis, it is important to look at the sample of this study. In the case or Romania, recruiters from three cities were interviewed: Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca and Timisoara. Each of the cities targeted is recognized as a university city and has respectively one or several universities that are perceived as prestigious at a national scale. In the case of Germany, given the difficulty of gathering participants, a different sample structure was followed, so the observations here apply less in the case of Germany than the case of Romania. In the case of Romania, unquestionably, the effect of the local prestigious university was higher than the effect of other prestigious universities at a national level. As such, the prestige of universities from Cluj-Napoca had a strong effect in the local employment process. The same applies for Timisoara and Bucharest. Interestingly, when the option to select an applicant from a German university was introduced to interviewees, a preference was given to the German university. Firstly, this suggests that the prestige of a local institution might have a local effect, and thus small degrees of prestige might have a large impact at a local level. Secondly, the prestige of local universities might be trumped in the few cases where an applicant with an outside degree that is perceived as more prestigious enters the selection competition.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations listed here address four main stakeholders potentially interested in the provisional answers given to the research question. As illustrated in the data analysis question, university prestige has a varying impact in the employment process of graduates that ranges from significant for few interviewees, to none in other cases. This result might be interesting for employers, universities, graduates and potential employees and legislators.

Employers might be interested in understanding the variables that are generally used in the employment practice in order to compare their own recruitment process with the practice of other companies. This research cautions employers in reflecting over the implications of using university prestige in making recruitment choices. Surely, every employer wants to maximize the productivity of each company, but there is no reason why the already fairly established recruitment process of measuring skills would not meet this purpose. While currently there are no legal implications for taking into account the university name of graduates in the recruitment process, it is still fairly easy to see how such a use might be perceived as deviating from non-discriminatory principles, as defined by interviewees themselves as part of this research.

University representatives might be interested to know that in some circumstances, the names of the universities they are representing might have an effect in the employment process of their graduates. It might be comforting for them to know that skills are still the most decisive factor. One of the mechanisms to either reverse or mediate the impact of university names in the employment process is to establish better networks with companies, as suggested by few interviewees themselves. Still, it is also important to note that often the effect of university prestige is driven by the focus of the higher education arena to enter the rankings and prestige game. In such a context, effects of university prestige outside of the higher education arena are understandable. The problematic aspect is that often, actors outside the educational arena are not fully equipped to understand the limitations of university prestige as measured by university rankings.

Graduates and potential employees should understand that sometimes, more variables than the ones advertised in job descriptions determine the outcomes of the employment process. Still, according to the interviewees that took part in this thesis, matching the skills required by a position will be recognized and rewarded. Such skills are not only the responsibility of universities to teach and enhance, but the responsibility of students also. A graduate looking for a job can do two things to

enhance their employment opportunities: be good and apply to as many job openings as possible.

Legislation aimed at preventing discrimination currently focuses on preventing discrimination based on unalterable criteria, or indices, such as gender, religion and race. Understandably, discrimination based on alterable criteria such as the name a university someone graduated from would be both difficult to prove and to regulate. The consideration for such a legislative case should be based on much more thorough investigations than the one allowed by the limitations of this study. Still, such investigations should be made in order to grant every potential employee equal opportunities in the selection process.

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IMPLICATIONS OF THE PERCEPTION OF ACADEMICS OF THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Krisztina Jaksa

BACKGROUND

The higher education quality agenda has progressed to the next stage in England when the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in 2012 published a code of practise on student engagement in internal quality processes (IQPs). This new framework has been an attempt to move away from a customer-oriented approach to quality management and to this effect it has been underpinned by the concept of 'partnership'. Treating students as partners in IQPs has increasingly been promoted as the new orthodoxy of improving the overall quality of education. However, the QAA acknowledged that the relationship between academics and students would have to be realigned before they could work together as ‘partners’. The literature also supports the notion that the difference in the way universities engage students in IQPs can be linked to how university management and academics perceive the role of students in education in general and in IQPs in particular (Lipsky 1980; Trowler, 1998; Newton 1999, 2000, 2002, Fielding, 2001; Laughton 2003; Johnson and Deems 2003; Lodge 2005; Gina 2006; Watty 2006; Little et al 2009, Trowler 1998, 2010; Brennan, 1997 cited in OECD 2010; Klemencic, 2011; Wenstone, 2014). In order to be able to set up, maintain or improve student engagement frameworks within IQPs policy makers, university leaders, administrators, student unions and academics as well as students themselves would need to understand the quality culture at their university especially in regards to how academics and students view their own as well as each other’s roles in IQPs. As Silver and Silver (1977, p.9) have pointed out "the meaning and implications of changes in the role of students rather than the assertion of changing definitions of students” should become the focus of research into the role of students in higher education.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

This research set out to study how a particular group of students (student representatives ‘representatives’) and academics work together through IQPs and to what extent their relationship is framed by principles of consumerism and partnership, concepts which underpin the most recent national guidelines on student engagement in IQPs in England.

The main research question was:

Q. How the perception of academics of the role and purpose of student representatives in internal quality processes affect student representatives' selfreported satisfaction with their engagement in these processes?

Q1. How the ‘role concept’ of ‘student representative’ is constructed by academics and representatives themselves?

Q2. Is there a tension between representatives’ conception of their role and purpose and academics' conception of representatives' role and purpose in IQPs?

Q3. How applicable the role concepts 'customer and 'partnership' are in empirical research on student engagement in IQPs?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Role theory, enriched with the operationalised definitions of 'customer' and 'partner' in the context of student engagement in quality assurance, provided the analytical framework for the study.

In order to provide a framework for an empirical research into student engagement in IQPs, two highly relevant role concepts in the English context 'students as customers' and 'students as 'partners'

were operationalised. The concept analysis focused on the attributes and antecedents of these role concepts and based on these a list of possible consequences of these two role concepts were created using Walker and Avant's (2005 cited in Rhodes 2012) concept analysis model.

The literature (Basave, 1998 cited in Zachariah 2007; Coates, 2005; Lodge, 2005; Clayson and Haley, 2005; Lomas, 2007; McCulloch, 2009; Streeting and Wise 2009; Kay et. al 2010; Little and Williams, 2010; Luescher-Mamashela, 2011; QAA, 2012; Wenston, 2012) suggests that if representatives were treated as partners they would be:

• involicaved in long-term educational developments
• involved in critl discussion on academic matters i.e. teaching methods, assessment methods
• seen as vital to the enhancement of education
• involved in the co-creation of solutions to educational issues and concerns
• student participation would be an integral part of IQPs and would be embedded in the quality culture of the university
• quality processes would focus on consensus building regarding quality values
• academics would have a proactive approach to quality enhancement and would proactively engage students in enhancement activities

The literature (Partington 1993 cited in Johnson and Deems, 2003; Zuo and Ratsoy 1999; Nadioo and Jamieson, 2007; Little et al. 2009; McCulloch, 2009; Little and Williams's 2010; Luescher-Mamashela, 2011; Klemencic, 2011; Wenston, 2012; Kandiko and Mawer, 2013) suggests that if representatives were treated as customers:

• they would be mostly involved in short-term educational developments
• representatives' main role in IQP would be to legitimise the process
• the culture of the university would be such that formal mechanisms were viewed necessary in order to ensure that students' voice was heard
• representatives' quality values would be the most important drive for institutional change and students would be final decision makers
• academics would be tasked with solving educational issues instead of involving students in creating solutions to issues
• the main role of representatives would be to voice the concerns and complaints of the wider student body

Role theory, enriched with the operationalised role concepts 'customer' and 'partner' provided a highly relevant theoretical framework for this research. It successfully captures the complexity of interaction between people in 'human organisations', such as universities, where the physical aspect of education plays only a limited role given that human interaction is the core activity of universities. The theory acknowledges the power of 'structures' (rules and social forces) which constrain individuals while it also recognises people's capacity to operate freely within these structures and even to change them (Luttrell et. al. 2009). The social-psychological concept of 'role' brought individuals to the forefront of the discussion and explored the socialpsychological process of defining roles and taking up roles.

Role theory sees human organisations as 'open systems of roles'. The framework explores the intertwined nature of how roles are created and how roles are carried out and explores what factors affect the process and the outcome of such interaction. The theory's elementary assumption is that the occupants of different roles have distinctive characteristics, attitudes, believes and perceptions and that these dimensions effect how various processes that involved human interaction take place. This 'human element' has indeed been the focus of this research enquiry.

Katz and Khan's (1978, p. 198-219) established the terminology used by role theorists today. Their work is visualised in Table 1 and summarised in the following section.

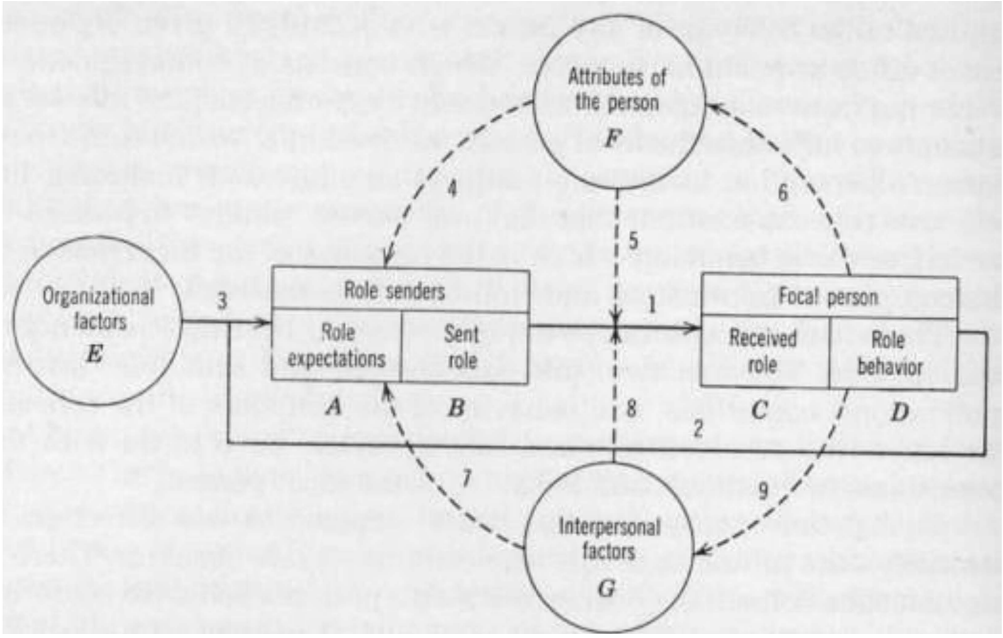

Table 1. Katz and Kahn, 1978 p.196.

According to role theory, roles are created and defined based on organisational and individual expectations and are 'sent' by 'role senders' who create roles based on their expectations (academics), which roles are 'received' by 'focal persons' (representatives). Katz and Khan (1978, p.200) defined role expectations as a 'set of expected activities associated with the occupancy of a given position'; this research focused on the individual expectation of academics towards representatives.

Role sending is seen as both a communicational and influential process where the role sender defines what they expect to be done and how they expect things to be done and directly or indirectly they siege the opportunity to influence others. The role is being sent in order to 'bring about conformity to the expectations of the senders' (Katz and Khan, 1978 p. 190-191). This is relevant to this research as academics can either encourage or discourage the participation of representatives in discussions on teaching methods depending on their perceptions of what the role of representatives should be in IQPs.

Furthermore, role theory recognises a link between lower level of satisfaction with one's role and role ambiguity (not knowing what one is expected to do as part of their role) and role conflict (where conflicting messages are given to the person carrying out the role or where the role concept of the focal person and role sender significantly differ). The extent of role ambiguity and role conflict are connected to role senders' and role receivers' perception of the role at question and therefore these 'side effects' of role sending and receiving formed part of the research enquiry.

Katz and Khan's (1978) highlighted the need for research at the level of specific role sending and enactment (p.204) and Lizzio and Wilson (2009), who used role theory to better understand students' motivations for undertaking the representative role, suggested that their research could be advanced by focusing on the ways in which the context of role taking, especially academics' concept of role of student representatives, impacts the engagements of representatives in IQPs. This research aimed to address both of these gaps by studying the relationship between a corresponding set of academics and representatives in the context of IQPs at a case university.

METHODOLOGY

Creswell's framework for research (2014), which recognised the connection between the research approach and the choice of design, method and philosophical worldviews, underpinned the planning and execution of this research. The basic philosophical assumptions of this qualitative enquiry were

in-line with constructivist thoughts (Creswell, 2014; Silverman, 2011; Kvale, 2007) as this study set out to explore the role of representatives in IQPs aiming to provide imperial data on how the role concept of academics might affect student engagement in IQPs and to investigate the complexity of the relationship between academics and representatives.

A case study design was found to be highly relevant having taken into consideration the limited time available for data collection, the large statistical population of universities in England and the limited access to the particular group of people whom on this study focused on. Furthermore, due to local differences in the way students are engaged in IQPs at universities in England analysing the effects of academics' perception on student engagement in IQPs had to be looked at in a particular local context. The case university under investigation was a mid-ranking, post-1992 university with a student population of 20,000.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method of data collection as such method allowed the exploration of not only the 'what-s' but also the 'why-s' behind representatives' and academics' complex experiences. Furthermore, through in-depth, semi-structured interviews the researcher could gain a detailed understanding of participants' perceptions, attitudes and believes (Lewis, 2003). In accordance with constructionist belief, interview responses were not considered to be true or false but were treated as “displays or perspectives and moral forms which draw upon available cultural resources’ within social discourses” (Silverman 2011, p.199).

The 14 questions presented to participants were derived from the concept analysis of 'students as customers' and 'students as partners' in the context of IQPs. Interviewees were provided two statements for each question and were asked to choose the statement that better captured their perception of the role and purpose of representatives in IQPs followed by an extensive discussion. Representatives and academics were asked the same set of questions.

Representatives were chosen as the target group of this research as they were directly involved and were actively engaged in IQPs. Also, while the set up of the representative framework differ from university to university, some form of representative framework is present at most universities and therefore the findings of this study were predicted to have high relevance to most universities in England. Upon recognition of the time constraint, limited resources and limited access to potential participants lead to purposeful sampling (Gadd, 1995). In total, interviews with 7 student representatives and 7 academics and one administrative member of staff were included in the findings of this study. To ensure that the research was ethnically sound, a number of considerations, including access to participants, the appropriate level of information provided to participants and data storage issues were considered.

While this qualitative research followed the traditions of constructivism meaning that ‘answers’ to data were not treated as 'proof of reality', issues related to reliability have been acknowledged. In order to increase the creditability of the research findings, the researcher followed the guidelines of Silverman (2006) and ensured a degree of replicability by making the research as transparent as possible. Furthermore, information on how the research was planned and carried out has also been provided, the theoretical stance of the research had been outlined and the presentation of data was strongly guided by the analytical and theoretical framework. In addition, interviews were voice recorded in order to ensure that the actual words of the interviewees could be presented in the data analysis meeting the need for low inference descriptors (Seale 1999 cited in Silverman 2006, p. 287).

In regards to validity, the degree of generalisation is a central concern of qualitative researchers. Due to the time limitations and the limited access to participants working with a single university was viewed to be appropriate. In order to ensure that the findings can be, to a certain extent, generalised, Silverman (2005, p.128) suggested that researchers should utilise theoretical sampling where a single unit, such as an organisation, was seen as representative of a wider population where the extent to which the case organisation is a ‘typical’ one was not the focus of research but the working relations between the actors of this organisation was. By having operationalised role concepts 'customers' and 'partners' in the context of student engagement in IQPs, the study provided a framework for future analysis into the relationship between academics' role perception and representatives' satisfaction with their engagement in IQPs.

Riessman's thematic narrative analysis was utilised to make sense of the data collected. This method

of data analysis focused on studying stories that developed throughout the interviews with a focus on what was said. In-line with a constructivist approach, narrative analyses tackles the problem of truth by seeing it as ‘truths of experiences’ (Personal Narrative Group, 1989 p.261 cited in Riessman, 1993 p.22). May (2008) also presented narratives analysis as an appropriate approach to data analysis when, as it is the case of this research, the question is how people construct identity or in our case 'roles'. Narrative analysis was viewed to be relevant as interviewees often created ‘hypothetical narratives' and ‘hypothetical conversations’ (Riessman, 1993). Interviewees used narratives to help them interpret their experiences, to explain their action and to justify believes or values and by analysing their narratives the research brought participants to the forefront of interviews (Silverman, 2011, Sarbin, 1986 cited in Riessman, 1993 p.22).

KEY FINDINGS

The findings of the study have advanced the literature on student engagement in IQPs. The rich qualitative data provided an insight into how the role concept of ‘representative’ is constructed by academics and representatives themselves. The extended interview scripts revealed that academics and representatives constructed their own identity in relation to one another in a complex way. In light of the interview data, it is clear that representatives were affected by academics' conception of their role although representatives’ self-reported satisfaction became meaningful when academics’ and representatives’ role concepts were analysed in relation to one another. The finding that representatives were perceptive towards academics’ concept of their role is in-line with Lizzio and Wilson’s findings (2009) and provided empirical evidence for the relevance of role theory to study interactions at universities. Representatives reported to have been affected in their role by the attitude of academics and they recognised whether they were marginalised or included in discussions, whether academics acted on their feedback or merely noted it down, whether they had real decision making power or had little bargaining power and whether they were appreciated.

When academics and representatives perceived the role of representatives in IQP in a similar way representatives reported to have high level of satisfaction while role conflict, derived from the difference between the role concept of academics and representative, lead to representatives feeling less satisfied with their engagement in IQPs. However, the relationship between academics’ role concept of representatives and representatives’ satisfaction with their engagement in IQPs was found to be complex. For instance even in cases where representatives and academics both perceived representatives as ‘customers’ in IQPs, dissatisfaction was reported. This was due to representatives having perceived their role as final decision makers while none of the academics, even those that perceived representatives as ‘customers’, were willing to hand over final decision making power to representatives. This in turn caused representatives to feel powerless and consequently dissatisfied with their engagement with IQPs. Indeed, the most significant dissatisfaction of representatives was detected in the cases where students identified their roles in-line with that of a ‘customer’ and where representatives and academics had opposing perception of the role and purpose of students in IQPs.

The unified resistance of academics to perceive representatives as final decision makers suggests that a truly ‘customer-‘service provider’ relationship in IQPs, where students have final decision making powers, is unlikely to ever become reality in the majority of higher education institutes in England. The findings of the study also suggest that a consumerist approach to student engagement in IQP would not lead to increased student engagement in IQP nor would it lead to higher student satisfaction. This is because those students who identified themselves as customers also indicated the need for having the final decision making power which academics were not prepared to hand over. To this effect, if representatives were to perceive themselves as having the attributes of a customer, they were likely to become increasingly dissatisfied with their engagement in IQPs.

While the QAA and the academic literature on student engagement in IQPs promote the partnership approach to student engagement in IQPs, both academics and representatives questioned the interest of students for more in-depth, partnershiplike work although interviewees reasoning varied. Some suggested that students’ limited interest in quality work was due to students having little interest in time consuming quality work, some suggested that students were sceptical about the institution's’ ability to change while others suggested that low student engagement was due to the hierarchical culture of universities as organisations. It can be referred from the findings that both academics and representatives agreed that IQP must be highly formalised and well-documented in order to ensure that the voice of students in IQP is heard, which indicated that students’ input into IQP is currently

not embedded in the quality culture of the case university.

In terms of the applicability of the role concepts 'customer and 'partners' in empirical research on student engagement in IQPs, expressions, metaphors and concepts such as ‘empowerment’, ‘bargaining power’, ‘expertise’, ‘partnership’, ‘democracy’, ‘consumerism’ and ‘customer’ were utilised by participants suggesting that the analytical framework of the study was relevant to empirical research on student engagement in IQP. However, a number of representatives found some of the concepts, such as ‘consensus building over quality values’ or ‘academics being proactive in regards to student engagement in IQPs’, to be somewhat confusing concepts or struggled to relate these concepts to their role. The majority of representatives and academics interviewed appeared not to have a holistic understanding of the role of representatives and of how representatives would best be involved in quality work at the case university. Furthermore, academics appeared to struggle with articulating the benefits of increased student engagement in IQPs which suggests that the role and purpose of students in IQPs are still unclear to most academics although all academics interviewed reported to believe that increased student engagement in IQPs was beneficial.

In addition, a number of representatives made contradictory statements regarding their role indicating that the conceptual framework utilised in the this study was less relevant to them as it was to academics who were more articulate about their role perception of representatives (although unsure of the benefits of involving representatives in IQPs) than representatives themselves were. As mentioned earlier, participants were asked to choose between sentences which captured the role and purpose of representatives in IQPs as either a ‘customer’ or a ‘partner’. While the majority of participants initially found it difficult to emphasise one role concept over the other in the majority of the cases, as the interviews progressed, interviewees find it increasingly easy to relate more to one role concept over the other. In most cases interviewees defined the partnership approach as something they believed to be ‘ideal’ while acknowledged that in reality students are not treated as partners in IQPs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study highlighted the lack of discussion between academics and representatives over the role of students in IQPs despite the existence of an extensive representative framework. Many of the interviewees, both academics and representatives, commented how useful they had found the interview process as it helped them reflect on the role of representatives in IQPs. Such comments indicate that there is a need for more open discussions between academics and representatives on the ever-evolving role of representatives in IQP.

Also, while many of the academics interviewed had an ‘ideal view of’ student engagement in IQP, they acknowledged their lack of understanding of how student engagement in IQPs could be improved and to what effect. While the literature on student engagement in IQPs is limited, the Higher Education Academy (Trowler, 2010) provided a framework which could be utilised by universities to accommodate an honest and open discussion between academics, senior management, students and students union over the role and purpose of student engagement in IQPs. If the rational for student engagement in IQPs is agreed upon, universities would be able to create student engagement frameworks that would serve their particular purpose.

As an external reference point to the field of higher education, future research could draw on the literature on partnership in the public health sector. A number of academics interviewed used the ‘doctor-patient’ metaphor to illustrate the power relationship between academics and students. The public health literature on partnership could be a promising alternative to the consumerist management models on ‘engagement’.

Finally, this particular research area would benefit from typology building where role concepts such as ‘partner’ or ‘partnership’ are further investigated taking into consideration the perceptions of both students and academics. As the prominence of student engagement and student participation in university governance continues to increase, decision makers, both at national and institutional level, must ensure that academics as well as students are both engaged with change processes and that student expectations are managed well through educating students about the quality work at their respective universities.

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HOW INNOVATION INTERMEDIARIES BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND BUSINESS PROMOTE STUDENTS` START-UP IN BEIJING: POLICY AND PRACTICE

Wanqiu Long

BACKGROUND

The higher education massification leads to large amount of increase in university graduates (Hua, Li, and Ren, 2012). The unemployment of university students has become a prominent social problem in China. The growing number of university graduates has created tremendous pressure in labor market. The graduates have reached nearly 700 million in 2013, 190,000 graduates more than 2012. Because of the difficulty in finding a job, start-up business has become the forth option for students besides finding job, continuing study, and study abroad. However, due to a skill mismatch between university and business, the Chinese university students have relatively low intention in entrepreneurship, the survival rate of students' start-up remain low (Hua, Li, and Ren, 2012). Facing abovementioned problem, government encourages students Start-up Company as one way to solve the employment issues. Start up is an organization formed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model (Blank, 2006). This study focuses on start-ups that initiated and managed by university graduate students.

In the national policy "Long-term Science and Technology Development Plan (2006-2020)", high technology is the key area to enhance national and regional innovation capacity. Beijing, as the capital city of China, possesses rich resource in technology development, such as Zhongguancun National Demonstration Zone, widely known as the China "Silicon Valley". It is also one of the important cities to implement new initiatives. Therefore, facing the employment pressure of university graduates, central and local government, universities, and business have started a non for-profit organization called "Zhongguancun University Graduates Innovation Entrepreneurship Employment Promotion Association" as a joint effort to promote entrepreneurship in students. There has not yet research been done in finding what facilitation of this organization has for students entrepreneurship and the affects on university business relation. Therefore, this research is going to identify the type and function of this organization in open innovation environment.

There are a mismatching in Chinese university education and entrepreneurial skills for business practice. University does contribute in encouraging entrepreneurial attitude. The contribution can be found in many ways, such student entrepreneurs establish initial willing together for start-up business through studying the same major or different major, or through university hold entrepreneurial competition. The university education provides the foundation for student' entrepreneurship. However, the down side of university entrepreneurial education is less adaptation of market because of lack of communication between university and business.

The communication barriers exist among three parties, namely students, university, and business, to solely provide available the options for students to encompass the vast range of possible entrepreneurial activities. Students with new ideas to for business usually have trouble to implement due to lack of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, channels, resource, and network. University has trouble to keep up pace with business due to its long research cycle and basic research focus. Business needs fast solution for market while the demands is difficult to be fulfilled by university due to the same reason.

Open innovation provides a solution for this gap. Open innovation has become a widely accepted concept in the changing knowledge paradigm nowadays. It is defined by Chesbrough as an innovation paradigm under which ideas can emerge both inside and outside an organization and have parallel paths to market (Chesbrough, 2003). Chesbrough has coined the concept of open innovation and has made the groundbreaking research on the shifting process from close innovation paradigm to open innovation paradigm. The difference between invention and innovation require close relation between innovation and market. The innovation on innovation is to upgrade the approach of innovation faster in innovation cycle and wider in participants. One prominent

characteristic of close innovation is exclusiveness. It is discussed by Chesbrough as in the “strong self-reliance” in research and development (R&D) covering the whole process from original idea to market occupation, intellectual property right, and so on. The main contribution to distinguish two paradigms is to show us the way to maximize the utilization of innovation ideas. This is also the main difference between two paradigms. Two approaches can rule out ideas that is “false positive” but open innovation can save “false negative” by sharing those idea through the permeable organization boundaries. In doing so, “false negative” in this organization might turn out to be right idea for other companies. There are three key actors in the open innovation paradigm: Industry, Government, and University. Among which, it is worth discussing the respective contribution that industry, government and university make to the breaking down of the innovation isolation.

RESEARCH QUESTION

To solve the mismatching, university, students, and business need to devote effort jointly. There are plenty of researches have been done on the main actors – university, industry, and government – in the field of industry-university cooperation in open innovation (European Commission, 2009; D’Costa, 2006; Reinhard, Osburg, and Townsend, 2007; UIIN, 2013), in different country context in Europe and Asia (European Commission, 2009; D’Costa, 2006, Jiang, Harayama, and Abe, 2006), in national innovation system and regional/local innovation system (Jiang, Harayama, and Abe, 2006). However, seldom has done to explore the role of innovation intermediaries in industry-university cooperation.

It is important to locate "Zhongguancun University Graduates Innovation Entrepreneurship Employment Promotion Association" (Hereinafter refers to as Z-park for Graduates) in open innovation environment. As an innovation intermediary agency, research has not been done on what type of innovation intermediaries Z-park for Graduates is and what the role of Z-park for Graduates is in the innovation process.

The research question in this study is:

How does Z-park for Graduates promote students’ start-up in Beijing China?

The research question can break down into two sub-questions:

1) What type of innovation intermediary agency Z-park for Graduates is?

2) How does Z-park for Graduates facilitate innovation between university and business?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Open innovation is beneficial for students’ entrepreneurship as discussed. As two key actors to promote students entrepreneurship, university and business are lack of mutual understanding. Innovation intermediaries as being the middle bridge solve this problem. However, what is the role of IIMs in facilitating this process, this chapter continues the discussion from knowledge perspective: innovation intermediaries as learning infrastructure to facilitate knowledge transformation between university and business.

The knowledge transformation cycle involving explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge in the innovation ecosystem. Knowledge is of the most essence in the process of innovation, and is underlined in the era of knowledge economy. Many researches have been done on the function of innovation intermediaries in knowledge dissemination (Howell, and more). Knowledge intermediation is one important role of innovation intermediaries to facilitate knowledge co-construction by stakeholders (Yang et al., 2014). However, less attention is paid to the contribution of innovation intermediaries in knowledge transformation, while the “absorptive capacity” of tacit knowledge is particular important in university-industry linkage (Kodama, 2008). The role of innovation intermediaries in assisting knowledge exchange between university and business community is confirmed (Yusuf, 2008). Nevertheless, there left a blank which type of knowledge is transferred and how. This framework is built intending to answer this question.

The first and foremost challenge for IIMs is lack of trust from multiple stakeholders due to the difference in organization culture and goals. The fundamental problem of cooperation is that individual has only partial interests that are overlapping (Ouchi, 1980). As the coordinator among

diverse participants in the open innovation process, the main task of IIMs is to match knowledge and facilitate the cross-sector cooperation. The knowledge matching is explored as one general function of IIMs in previous research. However, the discussion can go deeper to specify the type of knowledge that IIMs facilitate.

The adopted theory in this theoretical framework is Scharmer's learning infrastructure theory. By using this framework, it is intend explain how IIMs facilitate knowledge transformation as three levels learning infrastructures. Furthermore, it is to locate which type of learning infrastructure Z-park for Graduates is in this framework. Because Scharmer's learning infrastructure theory is built based on three other theories – Polanyi's two types of knowledge (explicit and tacit knoweldge), Nonaka's knowledge spiral model, and Scharmer's theory U – it is necessary to first introduce these theories and analyze how it is related to IIMs.

The relation of these three theories with learning infrastructure framework is briefly introduced here:

Polanyi divides knowledge generally into two types, the explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). In Scharmer's learning infrastructure, knowledge is further divided into three types, including explicit knowledge, tacit-embedded knowledge, and tacit-not-yet-embedded knowledge. Based on these three levels of knowledge, Scharmer develops three type of learning infrastructure to facilitate knowledge transformation process (Scharmer, 2000).

Nonaka's knowledge spiral model explains how different knowledge interacts with and transform from one to the other, i.e. tacit to tacit knowledge, tacit to explicit knowledge, explicit to explicit knowledge, and explicit to tacit knowledge (Nonaka, 1991). Different type of knowledge transform and the way of knowledge transformation are two criteria to distinguish different levels of learning infrastructure (Scharmer, 2000). The activities on different level of learning infrastructures are important to analyze different facilitations of IIMs between university and business.

Scharmer's theory U analyzes knowledge transformation in organization innovation through interaction with outside environment. It emphasizes on the role of tacit-not-yet-embedded knowledge in the knowledge transform process (Scharmer, 2009). The theory U support the analysis on type III learning infrastructure.

METHODOLOGY

The thesis aims to examine the emerging phenomenon of innovation intermediaries in facilitating industry-university cooperation in the open innovation paradigm in China, by looking at the process of innovation, at the key actors and their interactions, as well as at the role of innovation intermediaries in this development. It also aims to investigate how innovation intermediaries help with university graduates start-up companies in Beijing regional level, against the backdrop of knowledge economy and increasing interests from university to cooperate with local innovation actors.

Because this study is done in Finland during limited time, it is difficult to collect first hand data by conducting large scale of questionnaire or survey. Therefore, this study chooses the direction of qualitative methodology based on existing literature and individual interview. The research methods employed in this study include literature review, secondary statistic analysis and interview to form a qualitative analytical approach. Among which, literature review is the main method to identify research problem and to build up theoretical framework, while the data to support case study is collected through interview of Z-park for Graduates.

The literature review is done on two resources: academic publication and national/regional policies. The method of literature review is used to build up knowledge foundation from four aspects. First, literature is reviewed on open innovation, including the closed innovation, the driving force for shifting closed innovation to open innovation, and university business cooperation in the context of open innovation.

Second, literature is reviewed on innovation intermediaries. As the open innovation encourage cross sector collaboration, IIMs play more and more important role in bridging, networking, matching actors from different sectors. This part is consisted of previous literature on defining IIMs, the

functions of IIMs, the feature of start-up in company lifecycle, and the function of IIMs for start-up companies.

Third, literature is reviewed on innovation intermediaries as learning infrastructures in knowledge transformation. Because Scharmer's learning infrastructure theory is built upon the foundation of three other theories, it is necessary to include the review on these three theories to clarify the learning infrastructure framework. These three theories are Polanyi's explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge, Nonaka's knowledge spiral model, and Scharmer's theory U.

Fourth, literature is reviewed on open innovation and innovation intermediaries in China. This part starts with national and local (Beijing) policy review on innovation policy and innovation intermediaries' policy, following the historical perspective and highlight outstanding initiatives. At the same time, academic papers and reports are the main source to detect achievement and challenges in open innovation and IIMs in China.

The secondary statistic analysis is another research approach in this study. In order to have overall understanding on open innovation in China, statistics related to innovation is collected from government reports, i.e. National Bureau of Statistics, Science and Technology Statistic Center in Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China, Institute of S&T Statistics and Analysis Chinese Academy of S&T for Development, Beijing Statistic Information Net, etc. and international database i.e. OECD StatExtracts, Eurostat, UNESCO UIS Stat.

The statistics related to open innovation are collected on three innovation actors – university, business and government, such as in high-tech industry scale, Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D, R&D funding, R&D human resource in different sectors. Statistic analysis is done on the activities of the abovementioned three actors in manufacturing and high-tech industry in China. IT industry is emphasized to support the Beijing case study. The IT industry is one of the priorities of the Zhongguancun National Demonstration Zone for Graduate Students' employability, innovation, and entrepreneurship (hereinafter refer to as Z-park for Graduates), as it is embedded in Zhongguancun National Demonstration Park, the leading IT industry cluster in China.

Based on literature review and statistic collection, quality analysis is done on the following aspects: to crystallize IIMs' facilitation for start-up companies, to establish the connection between IIMs with learning infrastracture theory, to categorize the typology of IIMs in China between university and business.

The method of interview is employed to get insight from IIMs between university and business in Finland and in China. The interview case in Finland is Demola, an open innovation platform in Tampere, Finland to establish connection between students and companies. Interviews were based on observation in Demola spring semester project "Be a little Noksu" and regularly taking part in Demola pitching and other relevant events.

The interview case of Demola Tampere was conducted in March 2014 face-to-face with two Demoal facilitators, one for 40 minutes, one for 20 minutes. The observation and participation of Demola activities started from January 2014 to May 2014. The interview case of China is conducted in May 2014 through international calling and skype for 20 minutes and 30 munites respectively, to one association officer and one association manager in Beijing Zhongguancun National Demonstration Zone for Graduate Students' employability, innovation, and entrepreneurship association. Due to the geographical distance between author's location in Finland and Beijing China, the interviews were done through skype and telephone other than face-to-face.

The interviewees of Demola were approached by author through taking part in Demola open events. The interviewees of Z-park for Graduates were contacted through Email, QQ chatting tool, preliminary calling through cellphone. Please see the interview details below:

Interview Case	**Interviewee**	**Interview Method**	**Discussion Topic**

Demola	Two Facilitators in Tampere Demola	Face-to-face	Open innovation platform facilitation between students and companies, multidisciplinary communication, model copy in other European countries
Z-park for Graduates	one association officer and one association manager	Skype and Telephone	Driving force and background of establishment, main activities, the way of cross sector cooperation, role of Z-park for Graduates, current barriers of being an intermediary agency

KEY FINDINGS

This research is aiming to study on the type and function of Z-park for Graduates in open innovation under the Chinese context between university and business. Open innovation as the concept raised up by Chesbrough has drawn attention into the need for innovation reform from closed innovation to open innovation. The organization boundary should no longer be the reason to stop innovative ideas to share with others. The permeable organization boundary has enabled the possibility to maximum the utilization of scientific research.

The main findings of this research on research question – *How does Z-park for Graduates promote students' entrepreneurship in Beijing China?—* contain the finding on typology and function of Z-park for Graduates to answer two sub-research questions:

1. What type of innovation intermediary agency Z-park for Graduates is?

2. How does Z-park for Graduates facilitate innovation between university and business?

Finding 1: *Typology of Z-park for Graduates*

The establishing of innovation intermediaries topology in China is supported by the review on open innovation in China. China has been undergoing the transformation from manufacture-oriented to innovation-oriented country. The government has taken initiatives in enhancing indigenous innovation capacity through policy and implementation. The policy to promote innovation started from "Open Door" policy in 1978 until the recent important national policy of "Long-term Science and Technology Development Plan (2006-2020)". The reforms in innovation can be seen from the changes of policy and new policies. The achievement of the efforts in innovation capacity building is apparent with research and surveys done domestically and internationally. However, there are many problems left in current promising success. The problem cannot be solved only by more effective implementation, but a profound change in national and regional innovation system. The resource of university and business should be better integrated by building up an innovation-friendly environment. What's more, as the entrepreneurial start-ups and SMEs are also one diving force to improve the overall innovation capacity, traditional social value is the fundamental factor to be changed.

There are difficulties in defining what are innovation intermediaries. Different criteria have been adopted to illustrate a wide range of intermediaries. One of the most recognized categorization is done from the innovation process perspective. However, the typology adopted in this study is categorized based on the efforts that university and business devoted in innovation intermediaries to promote students' entrepreneurship. There are three types of IIMs between university and business: university-oriented IIMs, open innovation joint efforts, Business-oriented IIMs. The open innovation joint effort is the most important platform to link cross sector cooperation in open innovation environment. The benefit of close innovation is to enhance core competitiveness inside a company, which is necessary to exist. Organization resource can be effectively utilized on promising research instead of waste on false positive ideas. This helps an organization to build the foundation of core technology in research. However, there are downsides and social changing factors that force organization to change the existing model. The closed innovation requires large investment in

research and development. The concept of “Not Invented Here” is formed through doing all R&D inside one organization only. It leads to the question of how to balance building research capacity and optimizing finance investment. Because one organization has particular vision and planning, many the research results are put on the shelf or given up before it turn into application. The whole package of research and development in both basic research vertically and applied research horizontally is time-consuming and costly. What’s more, it not only creates waste in organization resource, but also harms researcher’s accomplishment and loyalty.

The open innovation environment is the key for university-business cooperation. The public funding reduction in higher education institutions and research institutes are pushing universities to diversify the funding resource. A complementary cooperation between business and university is formed based on two elements: knowledge and resource. By cooperating with university, business can focus on more applied research, market study, customers, and so on. By cooperating with business, university can achieve faster technology transfer and multiple funding resources.

However, because of different interest and organization inherent nature, there are obstacles exist in cooperation, for example, two sectors are incompatible in working because business need fast solution for market while university concentrate on long-term basic research. To tackle these problems, many kinds of intermediaries provide services to smooth cooperation during the innovation process. Therefore, to better facilitate university business cooperation, the joint effort in open innovation environment should be equally devoted from two sides. The innovation intermediaries oriented from one party can lead to unequal in motivation, resource allocation, outcome distribution, and so on.

It is clear to tell the initiatives taken by university and business in promoting students’ entrepreneurship. Z-park as the joint efforts from central and local government, key universities in China, and well-known enterprises, it performs as an open innovation joint efforts to facilitate university-business cooperation.

Finding 2: *the Function of Z-park for Graduates*

The theoretical framework of learning infrastructure contribute the most in identify which type of learning infrastructure Z-park for Graduates is in this study. The type I infrastructure is to facilitate explicit knowledge dissemination. The type II infrastructure is to facilitate sharing experience to through exchanging tacit knowledge among members. It is a process of reflection on action. Type III infrastructure is to build up a common ground for different parties to reflect, to reach common will, and to give guidance for the future planning. It is easy to be confused with type II. Type III is different from type II on two aspects. First, type III includes the activities of type II. Type II infrastructure only provide a common ground for members to come together and share experience. However, in type III, a common will is established based on shared experiences. This “common will” will guide members to move on the next phase of cooperation. In the new cooperation, similar process of reflection on action and common will are done again. Thus, type III is a repeated process. Second, type II includes embodied know-how level. Whereas type II focus on both tacit knowledge embodied and self-transcending knowledge.

As previously discussed, the function of innovation intermediaries is two fold. It can both facilitate knowledge transfer and strengthen the effectiveness of knowledge network (Yusuf, 2008). According to Yusuf, the university-industry linkage is suitable to disseminate codified knowledge and also to create tacit knowledge. The transformation from idea to commercial use can be done through these two parties working together with the assistance from innovation intermediaries.

Z-park for Graduates is transferring both coded knowledge and tacit knowledge to customers and partners. The customers of Z-park for Graduates are students. The partners of Z-park for Graduates are university and business. On the customer level, coded knowledge and tacit knowledge are disseminated to students through teaching. In this sense, Z-park for Graduates has the function of type I learning infrastructure. In addition, students gain knowledge also from take part in on-job internship, learning by doing. Tacit knowledge is accumulated in this process. Therefore, Z-park for Graduates also function as type II learning infrastructure. On the partners’ level, Z-park for Graduates focus more on tacit knowledge. University and business can reach common will through jointly taking part in training and incubation activities. However, Z-park for Graduates cannot be totally categorized as learning infrastructure type III, because of the barriers between university and business in communication and participation due to such as different organization interests, goals in

university business cooperation, social and cultural understanding on start-ups, social economic innovation environment.

Therefore, the function of Z-park for Graduates is identified in this study as a mix of type I, type II and type III learning infrastructure according to the type of knowledge it facilitate for students, university and business.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the review of national and local policy of innovation and students start-up in China, there are policy implications can be drew from this study:

On the start-up policy level, government should comprehensively coordinate in the following aspects: detailed policy explanation, concrete implementation, supporting service among government offices and social service support (Cui et al., 2010). The open information resource platform and management team can provide students with shared resource for better resource integration. Innovation intermediaries need to provide diversified services such as accountant, audit, asset evaluation, technology evaluation, patent, legal consultancy, advertisement, and so on (Qiu and Liu, 2013).

On the facilitating level, because of the difficulties in policy and implementation, it should promote facilitate service such as IIMs in implementation of government policy as part of the startup supporting system, including incubator, association, start-up training, improving students entrepreneurial quality in startup planning risk, evaluation system, trust and friendly environment, publicity in public media, finance, expanding network, simplify application process in government for students. A service platform should be built to connect university technology transfer with students' start-up (Hua, Li, and Ren, 2012). Government should provide enough support for intermediaries to support college students' start-up in funding, taxation, and policy. A financial supporting system should be built consisted of venture capital and multiple funding source channels, such as YouthBusinessChina (YBC) (Qiu and Liu, 2013).

On the regulation level, besides policy and financial support, government needs to take the responsibility in regulatory. Industry regulatory and associations need to be established to fulfill the function of supervision, evaluation, and arbitration (Qiu and Liu, 2013). Establish performance evaluation criteria of incubated companies in the following aspects: finance, customer, and internal operation. Finance aspects include current assets, asset turnover, inventory turnover and so on. Customer is a meaningful evaluation indicator that should take into consideration of market share, market position, market performance and so on. Students' start-up is different from social entrepreneurial start-up especially in management in market experiences. Thus, company management is one important indicator to evaluate performance as well (Wang, 2013).

There are limitations of this study in aspects. First, due to long distance between Finland and China, the first hand empirical data is difficult to collect in large scale. Although interviews were done to support the arguments, there should be large-scale of questionnaire and survey to verify the results in this study. When conducting the interview of Z-park for Graduates, the limited results provided by interviewees also shows the insufficient open innovation environment in China. Future study can explore the reason for this problem and how to build up a friendly open innovation environment in China as the contribution for better university-business cooperation. The theoretical framework adopted in this study is utilized to analyze IIMs for the first time. Therefore, more study by using this theory can help to verify the significance of this theory. What's more, this theoretical framework can also be utilized to analyze other type of IIMs outside the field of university-business cooperation.

As open innovation is the trend for innovation activities in company, between organizations, regional development, and national innovation system building, it is necessary to further explore the function of innovation intermediaries have in facilitating knowledge creation and transformation with more empirical in-depth case study and large-scale survey. The validity of the learning infrastructure framework needs to be further improved by testing in other different contexts, such as other cities or other country. In addition, Z-park for Graduates is a newly founded organization and its activities only started from the end of 2012. As such, it is hard to collect valid data and give evaluation on its performance. Follow up research on Z-park for Graduates and other similar type of

organizations should be analyzed. This is beneficial to monitor effectiveness of this type of organization in bridging cross sector cooperation and to give policy recommendation for future improvement as the foundation for integration with overall national innovation system building.

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MERIT AND STUDENT SELECTING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Luís Carvalho

BACKGROUND

In Europe, participation in higher education increased remarkably in the last century, from around 1% in 1910 (Ringer, 2004) to approximately 60% in 2007 (UNESCO, 2009). During the expansionist period, governments favored managerial and funding practices (new public management) stressing market principles, efficiency and competition to accommodate the increasing costs of expansion. Particularly, institutions have been increasingly pressured to compete among each other creating a hierarchical stratification of the system, where the most prominent gain more capacity to attract funding and students (Marginson, 2004, 2009). When competition becomes so influential, a contentious dilemma arises concerning the organization of admissions putting institutions under conflicting forces between a social pressure to guarantee chances of participation for all and, alternatively, the determination to admit the best applicants. This quandary has been epitomized as a tension between competing notions of equality and merit (Goastellec, 2010), equity and merit (Munene, 2002) and meritocracy and fairness (Nahai, 2013). The resolution of this tension, as Goastellec (2010) suggests, will become increasingly a responsibility for institutions.

As this tension remains a subject of academic dispute, the issue is of particular significance for Portuguese public universities since they lack autonomy to choose their own students. In a country where participation increased from around 50 000 students to nearly 400.000 in just forty years, new challenges have emerged in terms of inequalities of access, as several reports have shown (Amaral & Magalhães, 2009; Magalhães, Amaral, & Tavares, 2009; OECD, 2012; Schnitzer, Klaus, 2005). Recent studies also raised serious concerns about fairness in Portuguese admissions, since secondary grades have been shown to be inflated in private schools, making access more dependent on students' economic status (Nata, Pereira, & Neves, 2014). However, a central question that subsists concerns how can Universities implement a selection by merit without ignoring their larger social-oriented goals?

In most countries admission's criteria are predominantly related with individual academic performance (Cremonini, Leisyte, Weyer, & Vossensteyn, 2011; Edwards, Coates, & Friedman, 2012). The way universities operationalize their criteria of selection, nonetheless, varies across different contexts. Past research lacks empirical studies that explore how academics define the goals and selection criteria in universities. As far as it was able to find, few studies considered the views of academics in relation with admissions in universities. Nahai (2013) analyzed admissions in the University of Oxford interviewing admissions tutors and found a unanimous support for a meritocratic selection. Similarly, Killgore (2009) interviewed admission officers in elite American colleges and concluded that institutions produce their own concepts of merit in contingency with their market position and organizational goals. However, research focused on the views of academics about merit in the context of admissions remains unsatisfactory since the most relevant studies have been focused in settings where universities select their own students (US, UK), targeting admission officers, a professional group that does not represents the most generalizable testimonial of academics.

This paper examines how academics in the most selective university in Portugal perceive the underlying rationales of admission. The notion of merit will be used as a guiding analytical concept to examine their views. The results from this research should make an important contribution to support policy reform to address institutions' desire for increased autonomy in admissions, a debate also raised in other European countries (Cremonini et al., 2011). The findings will also provide greater insight into a larger societal debate concerning allocation of public goods, addressing social demands for fairer admissions and increased participation of underrepresented groups (Nahai, 2013).

ADMISSIONS IN PORTUGUESE UNIVERSITIES

Access to Portuguese universities follows a centralized process organized by the Ministry of Education that annually sets a fixed number of vacancies for each programme (numerus clausus). Candidates enter an annual competition to enter in university, even though the involvement of universities in admissions is very limited. The allocation of vacancies takes in consideration students' preferences (up to six can be listed). Then, admissions follow an automatic and centralized procedure that ranks candidates according with their entrance classification that derives from a pondered average between grades of secondary education (at least 50%) and the results from national examinations in core disciplines (at least 35%). A small proportion of vacancies is earmarked for specific groups (e.g., disable students, military). There is also an alternative entrance route for candidates older than 23 years, and for these candidates universities can do their own selection. Although this system has been used in the last 15 years, recent research has raised some issues to consider. Fonseca, Dias, Sá, & Amaral (2014) questioned the consequences of numerus clausus policy by describing a "wave of dissatisfaction" that characterizes an admission system "based on the assumption that there is a positive correlation between the aptitude of students to master a certain subject and develop a successful career and their application grades." (p. 146). The authors argued that since programmes have limited vacancies, those that cannot enter in the most desired ones (candidates with high grades) enroll in 'second-line' options, reducing the chances to enter in these courses for other students that aspired them in the first place. The consequence of this admission puzzle is an increasing number of unmotivated students in several programmes. In another study, Nata, Pereira, & Neves (2014) published a seminal paper describing an 11 year evolution of scores from Portuguese secondary education schools. With a disaggregation of results for public and private settings, the authors concluded that: independent private schools inflate their students' scores when compared to both public and government-dependent private schools. It is also plain that this discrepancy is not uniformly distributed across grades: rather, it is higher where scores matter most in the competition for the scarce places available in public higher education. (p.18). This study provides strong evidence that to enter in Portuguese universities, students do not compete with the same chances of admission because those with financial resources to afford private education have their grades considerably inflated in the private sector, increasing their chances to enroll in the most desired programmes.

METHODOLOGY

The research data in this paper was drawn from 12 semi-structured interviews conducted with academics from the University of Porto, the most sought university in Portugal (Serviço de Melhoria Contínua, 2013). A convenience sample was selected in collaboration with the pedagogic council's presidents from seven out of the 14 faculties of the University. There was a deliberate caution to select participants from both genders and from diverse disciplinary fields and faculties, acknowledging the existence of distinct cultures amongst disciplines, as Table 1 shows:

Code	Gender	Disciplinary Field	Faculty	Academic Rank
1A	M	Natural and Health Sciences	A	Full professor
2A	F	Natural and Health Sciences	A	Full professor
3B	M	Engineering Sciences and Technology	B	Full professor
4B	M	Engineering Sciences and Technology	B	Associate professor
5C	F	Natural and Health Sciences	C	Associate professor
6D	F	Social Sciences	D	Full professor
7D	F	Social Sciences	D	Associate professor
8E	M	Social Sciences	E	Associate professor
9F	M	Humanities and Arts	F	Associate professor
10G	F	Humanities and Arts	G	Associate professor
11F	M	Humanities and Arts	F	Associate professor
12G	F	Humanities and Arts	G	Full professor

Table 1 – List of interviewees

Additionally, 8 participants held the position of programme director, 3 were presidents of the Pedagogic Council of the respective Faculty, and 1 was member of the General Board of the University. The participants of this study cannot be labeled as specialists in admissions because Portuguese universities do not select their own students. Nevertheless, all interviewees had extensive experience in teaching, research and/or administrative roles (e.g., participation in pedagogic and scientific councils, leadership positions). Particularly, this purposive sample favored the inclusion of programme directors. By statutory regulation, each undergraduate course has a programme director responsible for overlooking all curricular, scientific and organizational affairs related with each respective academic programme (Estatutos da Universidade do Porto, 2009).

The reduced sample, from a single institution, carries more difficulties in terms of generalization of the findings, however, the selected number of interviewees allowed a deeper analysis that would be impossible to conduct in a study of larger scale. To mitigate the lack of statistical representativeness, individuals from diverse disciplinary fields and academic ranks were selected, increasing the prospects of reaching some degree of generalization.

The interview included 12 open-ended questions covering topics such admission goals, criteria and instruments of admission. To check the pertinence and validity of each question, the interview guide was tested with two master's candidates in the field of higher education and one professor (Killgore, 2009). To assure that academics' views were mostly derived from spontaneous reflection the conduction of the interviews prioritized a relaxed and conversional approach to build trust and rapport (Kvale, 2008). The interviews were conducted by me in the first 3 weeks of May (2014).

Data analysis consisted of integral reading of all transcripts to produce the themes of analysis. Successive readings allowed to continuously refine the organization of data in search for recurring units of significance that could be structured thematically. The QSR International's NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software was used to improve the quality and reliability of the coding process. This process culminated with a coding system (Table 2) organized through main and sub-categories that summarized the views of academics towards admissions in public universities.

KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The current study found that academics are concerned that two goals should be assured upon admission: (1) guarantee that candidates meet a set of core requirements that attest their preparedness to succeed in university, and (2) selection mechanisms do not favor or discriminate candidates by any arbitrary reasons. Additionally, there is a divide between academics views about what constitutes a fair process of admission.

ACADEMICS VIEW ON MERIT

There are common elements that characterize how academics define merit in the context of admission. First, all candidates should have a basic level of knowledge in the core disciplines associated with the pursued academic programme (e.g., an engineering candidate needs a "solid knowledge" on math). However, this is not the only requirement or even the most important. It is interesting to note that more than half of the participants consider academic credentials an insufficient indicator of candidates' academic potential. Instead, academics support an admission system that targets certain competences and attitudes that do not necessarily relate with disciplinary content. Second, the most prominent result, academics highly prize students' motivation to study in University. In a few cases this permanent inquisitiveness attitude and desire to learn is considered more determinant than academic credentials. Third, academics largely agree that candidates should have a set of general cognitive capacities that go beyond knowledge and disciplinary content, namely skills that can corroborate the capacity to reason and to be a critical thinker that are deemed as fundamental for a university candidate.

There are some explanations for these results. Zimdars, (2010) has discussed a homophily principle suggesting that academics have particular interest to teach students that share their own interests. This idea was recurrent in the interviews, where academics explicitly expressed the need to prioritize a specific profile of candidates, those that manifest a great motivation to be engaged in their studies. This preference for inquiring attitudes also shows that academics connect the goals of admission to safeguard the mission of the university as research institution (Goastellec, 2010).

The way academics operationalized merit can be explained by an Aristotelian teleological argumentation that proposes that an object or good in dispute should be distributed in utmost accordance with their purpose (telos). Following Sandel's (2010, p.188) example, if flutes were to be distributed, the best flute players should be rewarded since the purpose of a flute is to be well played. Analogously, academics endorse a distribution of placements in universities to those more capable of fully engaging in the fundamental activities of academic endeavor, as considered in Barnett's (1990, p. 202) idea of higher education: 'higher education' is essentially a matter of the development of the mind of the individual student. It is not just any kind of development that the idea points to. An educational process can be termed higher education when the student is carried on to levels of reasoning which make possible critical reflection on his or her experiences, whether consisting of propositional knowledge or of knowledge through action. These levels of reasoning and reflection are 'higher', because they enable the student to take a view (from above, as it were) of what has been learned. Simply, 'higher education' resides in the higher-order states of mind.

In addition, the great concern for motivation manifested by academics corroborates previous work from Fonseca, Dias, Sá, & Amaral (2014) that have demonstrated that a 'wave of dissatisfaction' populates many programmes in Portugal, causing an imbalance in the system since many candidates are unhappy with their final choice.
One question that needs to be raised is whether motivation can be truly assessed since it is a complex social construct that can follow different individual determinations. Most academics addressed motivation with a scholarly connotation, in relation to a desire to learn. However, it is not clear whether assessment of motivation upon admission can - or if it should even try - discern between more instrumental motivations, such as seeking a programme that will lead to a high salary, or, alternatively, a motivation more attuned with the academic values. Despite its importance, motivation poses complex questions since a display of motivation upon selection does not guarantee that students will keep it after enrolling (the logic works inversely). Moreover, while academics imparted on students the 'responsibility' to be motivated, studies from Tavares (2013) and Fonseca, Dias, Sá, & Amaral (2014) have shown that the problem also lies in the adequacy of the organization of the access national system, that should permit that students can enroll in their preferred options. Finally, lacking motivation and engagement during university cannot be only accountable to students, since academics also have the duty to prepare their lectures and activities in such a way that incentivizes - or at least does not discourages - students to be engaged.

THE EQUITY DIVIDE

Findings from this research corroborate the existence of an ongoing ideological debate between a selection that stresses opportunity for traditionally underrepresented groups and, alternatively, a selection that faces all candidates as equals, aiming to select best applicants. Even though all academics clearly support that selection should be focused in candidates' attributes, and not in any ascritptive trait, there is a marked difference between their views on notions of fairness and equity, and ultimately on how social justice can be achieved.

AN INCLUSIVE VIEW

The majority of academics explicitly support an admission system that pays great attention to groups of students that may be at risk of exclusion from university. On the root of this inclusive perspective is the perception that large social inequalities undermine the chances of social mobility for candidates from certain economic and social backgrounds. Although academics' concern for merit is vital, they recognize that some students have fewer chances to progress throughout the educational system, making these students less capable of achieving as high as other candidates with less life challenges. Therefore, mechanisms should be considered to level the field, not aiming to reduce quality standards of admission, but to take in consideration that many candidates may have higher potential to become good university students, despite their (culturally biased, and often lower) academic credentials.

The use of contextual data and positive discrimination is therefore seen as a possible compensation to tackle educational inequalities and imbalance of opportunities. Compensatory mechanisms are seen as a way to consider candidates' merit in a fairer perspective, i.e. one that considers the context of candidates' academic and personal progress and achievement, yet many academics have doubts and some degree of skepticism regarding implementation of such measures. A system concerned with equity is one that seeks to guarantee that everyone can have a chance to be selected.

AN IMPARTIAL VIEW

Alternatively, some academics prioritize the need that admission systems do not benefit or discriminate anyone. Thus, the process of admission should treat all candidates equally, regardless their personal circumstances. Merit is seen in absolute terms, candidates either have it or not, and how candidates reach their credentials is not the critical element. Instead, the most crucial element is that applicants fulfill the entrance requirements. Academics' support for an impartial admission is sustained by their believe that candidates adequacy for university should be manifested upon selection, even if they come from more disadvantaged backgrounds since the favoring students on the basis of class or economic background, would generate an unfair situation. Moreover, as admissions require selecting candidates from different parts of the country, academics argued, the objectivity and transparency of the admission criteria are fundamental to assure that all candidates are treated equally. A system concerned with equity is one that seeks that everyone faces the same system of criteria of admission. Findings also showed an agreement that the national exams are not an adequate proxy, neither for selection, nor for the educational development of students. This apprehension was translated in a desire to increase the freedom of universities to select their own students. However, this idea needs to be analyzed with caution, since logistic and technical requirements are not in place to assure a rigorous and effective process, capable of serving all students in the country. Moreover, there was a concern that if universities do their own selection, some can lower the standards of admission to tackle the increasing difficulties to attract students. A key policy priority should be to increase coordination between secondary and higher education. Doing so, some key issues as the adequacy of high-stakes national examination could be discussed, an also the university pretension for evaluation methods more focused on critical thinking and less on memorization.

FINAL REMARKS

This qualitative study examined the views of academics concerning student selection in public universities. Findings suggest that academic achievement, motivation and cognitive capacity constitute the primordial elements that define merit as perceived by academics. They also expressed a clear desire that candidates must be equipped with the necessary competences (high motivation to learn, intellectual acumen) to fully engage in the higher-order learning that defines university (Barnett, 1990). With a small sample, these results need to be interpreted with caution in terms of generalization. Still, the reduced number of interviewees made possible a richer data collection, with more space to explore depth and meaning in each testimonial (Killgore, 2009).

In most cases, the support for an admission system that uses merit as the central selection criterion, did not overcrowd the necessity to treat candidates as fairly as possible, also a crucial priority for academics. Nonetheless, they showed distinctive notions of fairness, one towards inclusion, comprising an explicitly concern for candidates at risk of being excluded from university and, alternatively, a determination that admission systems must treat equally and impartially all candidates, upholding academic merit as the only selection criteria. Academics also manifested dissatisfaction for the very limited capacity that Portuguese universities have to influence admissions and they expressed quite depreciatory views about the quality of pre-tertiary education and national entrance exams, arguing that they undermine students' capacity to become critical and purposeful learners.

Taken together, these findings contribute to the current ongoing debate centered in organization of student selection in higher education by confirming challenges that remain to be solved. Thus, before trying to find a solution, it is crucial to clearly define and agree with the extension of the current problem, which - I argue with this study - includes two dimensions.

First, admission systems, either national or institutional, need to consider that selection by merit cannot dismiss the circumstances in which the student has achieved any academic credentials or another commensurable performance. In the absence of such effort, universities promote a distorted meritocratic selection that takes academic performance as an absolute manifestation of the qualities and potential of candidates, ignoring if such performance is an intrinsic manifestation of academic potential or a result of socio-economic privilege (Baez, 2006; Bridger, Shaw, & Moore, 2012; Nata et al., 2014).

Second, an admission system that tries to narrow down merit to a reduced number of indicators such results in standardized tests or grades, conducts universities to an inaccurate selection, incapable of targeting the most suitable candidates. As suggested by this study, many academics consider that academic credentials are often empty of meaning. Instead they give more value to motivation, inquisitiveness and critical thinking, dimensions that require a more comprehensive assessment of candidates' academic potential.

To conclude, a key policy priority in the Portuguese access system should include the reform of a wasteful admission system that leaves so many programmes abounding with unmotivated candidates. Without the necessary sharpness to find academic potential and the sensitiveness to be socially inclusive, the system of access to public universities risks perpetuating a selection incapable of finding candidates with the necessary potential to solve the complex problems of our days, promote the progress in the sciences, culture and arts, and, ultimately, the advancement of a prosperous society, as it is a prerogative of University.

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UNIVERSITY INTEGRATION IN SLOVENIA: TRACING THE POLICY TRAJECTORY. AN EXPLORATION OF INTEGRATION AND HOW UNIVERSITIES DO IT

Andrew G. Traveller

BACKGROUND

THE TOPIC AND APPROACH

In a globalised, knowledge-intensive society, in which higher education (HE) is seen as inextricably linked to economic and social progress, how the university is conceived, and indeed valued, has come into focus. This thesis traces the trajectory of the resultant policies that imply a more integrated university actor.

This thesis is therefore primarily concerned with the university and its transformation, focussing on university integration in Slovenia. While this topic is salient in the region, there is a dearth of literature addressing it. Given the absence of foundations on which to build, the thesis provides a high-level overview of the topic, which goes some way towards mapping the terrain.

There are two main research aims: 1) to extend and deepen theoretical understandings of policy trajectories related to university integration. This includes seeking to understand systemic influences, national policies and their rationales and formation; 2) to produce detailed, critical and contextualised accounts of the interpretations and enactments of policies of integration in two universities in Slovenia. This thesis is therefore about how universities 'do' policy (Ball et al., 2012); how policies become 'live' and get enacted (or not) within universities.

In order to "bring together structural, macro-level analysis of educational systems and educational policies and micro level investigations, especially those which take account of people's perceptions and experiences" (Ozga, 1990, p. 359), the following sub-questions are posed:

a) What are the rationales underlying university integration, and policies thereof?

b) What are the formal/legislative/systemic/policy changes that have occurred due to/as part of HE reforms in Slovenia regarding university integration?

c) How are policies to integrate the university interpreted and enacted by institutional actors given the resources available to them?

d) How do socio-cultural, historical and contextual factors affect the ways in which universities interpret and enact a policy of integration?

To account for a complex and multi-layered change to the university institution, its organisation and its degree of integration, multiple analytical perspectives are required. Indeed, as Ball (1993, p. 10) asserts: "The complexity and scope of policy analysis – from an interest in the workings of the state to a concern with contexts of practice and the distributional outcomes of policy – preclude the possibility of successful single-theory explanations".

Therefore, this thesis addresses the topic of university integration through a *policy trajectory* approach (Ball, 1993). This allows for the analysis to progress through interrelated vantage points encompassing *policy formation*, *interpretation* and *enactment*, in other words, a "cross-sectional rather than a single level analysis by tracing policy formulation, struggle and response from within the state itself through to the various recipients of policy" (Ball, 2000, p. 1839).

However, it must be stated upfront that it is not possible to capture the totality of contingencies, modes of organisation, and institutional cultures that exist. Indeed, Goodrick & Reay (2011) point out that organisations are not merely subjected to one or two dominant institutional logics, but institutional fields are characterised by a 'constellation of logics'. At the risk of stereotyping, this

paper will nevertheless strive to provide a narrative of the dominant policy trajectories that can be perceived in Slovenia in recent years related to integration.

POLICY FORMATION

In order to understand the topic more fully, some context is first needed. Krücken, Blümel & Kloke (2013) have outlined three levels of analysis, which are useful for framing the issue; namely: the macro level of society, the level of HE governance (i.e. system level), and at the university level itself.

At the macro level, much has been written over the last few decades about the changing relationship between society, the economy and the perceived importance of knowledge and knowledge production for the prosperity of nations. In the post-industrial world, a strong narrative has emerged; that of the 'knowledge-based economy' (KBE) (Bell, 1973; Jessop, 2008; OECD, 1996), according to which knowledge replaces capital as the dominant factor driving production, growth and competition (Castells, 2000). In such a world, knowledge, skills and human capital make up the engine that drives economic, social and cultural development (OECD, 1996).

This changing relationship between knowledge, society and the economy raises the question as to where the university fits in this new world order, as other organisations encroach upon it's hegemony over knowledge production (Bastedo, 2012). How the university is conceived, and indeed valued, has therefore come under scrutiny. Consequently, increasing conceptualisations of the university come to bear: from the university as the pursuer of truth and the champion of knowledge and its dissemination (Thorens, 1996); to a student-centred view in which the transformational potential of HE is emphasised (Olds & Robertson, 2014); to an instrumental view of the university to fulfil social, political and economic interests (Nussbaum, 2010; Shapiro, 2005).

Overall, an instrumental logic of the university has become particularly prominent. Not only does the KBE narrative contribute to its legitimacy, but compelling changes have also occurred resulting in a closer relationship and the increased importance of HE in society; namely, the essential training of human capital, increased enrolments involving large segments of the population, the growing costs to both governments and families, and the perceived economic importance of HE, particularly in times of economic crisis (Altbach, 1999). Importantly, this instrumentalisation also includes inherent demands for greater social justice (Ramirez, 2006). Moreover, these phenomena are becoming discursively accentuated by governments, scholars and international organisations at the possible expense of intrinsic values (Galevski, 2013; Nussbaum, 2010; Zgaga, 2011).

Viewed in total, universities now operate in an increasingly complex world in which multifarious demands are being placed on them to satisfy their expanding roles. Thus the notion of the 'multiversity' has emerged (Kerr, 1995); an institution with a broad, and often conflicting, array of missions.

This complex operating environment has opened the door to a more market-oriented and managerial rhetoric as a means to cope with this complexity (Ramirez, 2006). Indeed, at the systemic level, New Public Management (NPM) has emerged in Europe as a policy ideology to deal with these new macro pressures. Broadly, NPM refers to government policies that seek to modernise and render more effective the public sector through a market-oriented approach (Hood, 1991).

This constitutes a momentous change from a dominant state to dominant market model (Neave & van Vught, 1991), which includes new modes of inter-organisational governing relations (Amaral, Jones & Karseth, 2002). "While the state is withdrawing to a more supervisory role via 'steering at a distance', universities have been granted substantial leeway with regard to institutional autonomy" (Krücken et al, 2009, p. 1).

Specifically, NPM reforms have resulted in: the introduction of new degree systems; increasing enrolments; reforming curricula to meet to the needs of the labour market; including an emphasis on transferable skills; diversifying institutional forms, missions, funding bases; changing the mode of knowledge production towards transdisciplinarity and cooperation; increasing competitive behaviour not only within but also between national systems (Nokkala, 2007); as well as the creation of stronger leadership structures, and systems for institutional evaluation and accreditation through the establishment of quality assurance agencies across the continent "in order to turn the institutions into dynamic, entrepreneurial, high quality enterprises" (Bleiklie, 2005, p. 32).

Such policies are evident in the European policy space in what is described as the *Europe of Knowledge* (Corbett, 2005; Vukasović, 2013), the main pillars of which are the intergovernmental Bologna Process and the European Union's Lisbon Strategy (and its successor, the Europe 2020 Strategy). Although non-binding, these two agendas - through a combination of policy activity (Colebatch, 2002), texts (Ball et al., 2012), and entrepreneurship (Corbett, 2003) – provide a strong normative influence on national policy makers (Czarniawska-Joerges & Sevón, 2005; Zgaga, 2013) and imbue HE and universities with new logics and identities in line with dominant neo-liberal trends (Jessop, 2008).

Accordingly, such policy trends have had ramifications for universities; the third level of analysis. Indeed, "organizations are open to the influence of the legal system, to what other similar organizations do, and to the discourse generated by professionals on how best to function as an organization" (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013, p. 696). As such, the European policy discourse confers a new notion to the university, which is assumed to be a 'complete' actor with strengthened organisational capacities (de Boer et al., 2007; EUA, 2005). The *Europe of Knowledge* policy agenda combined with related NPM reforms at the national level imply an organisational actor that is capable of engaging in the emerged HE market (Marginson, 2006) and accountable for their increased responsibilities as authority and roles are reshuffled across different levels of the HE system (de Boer et al., 2007).

In sum, this has inspired a different kind of thinking about the university as an organization. Consequently, attempts have been made to reimagine and reconstruct the university as a strategic organisational actor (de Boer et al, 2007, Krücken & Meier, 2006; Nokkala, 2007, Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000), an "*integrated*, goal-oriented entity that deliberately chooses its own actions and that can thus be held responsible for what is does" (Krücken & Meier 2006, p. 241).

Specifically, the thesis focuses on the element of *integration* inherent in this new conception of the university. But what is organisational/university integration? At the most fundamental level, definitions of integration assume two main points: that a single, complex system exists; and that the composite components can be optimally mixed to form an integral, and thus more effective, whole. It is assumed that these composite components - networks, structures, cultures and practices - can be transformed - the constituent parts combined to form an 'integral whole' - in a variety of ways. Thus, no one model of integration exists. Rather, *how universities do integration is highly contingent upon context*.

The author distinguishes between horizontal and vertical features of university integration. The horizontal feature relates to cultural and material practices that are specialised, or what Bernstein (1999, p. 159) describes as "segmentally organised". For example, *administrative* functions (e.g. HR and finance) can be conceptualised along a horizontal axis, the specialist knowledge pertaining to these functions being "segmentally differentiated". The same applies to *academic* tribes and territories (Becher & Trowler, 2001) (e.g. between history and biotechnology), modes of knowledge production (Gibbons et al., 1994), as well as to the roles of organisations within a wider organisational field or innovation ecosystem (Freeman, 1987; Lundvall, 1992) (e.g. between universities, research institutes, industrial firms, etc.). Horizontal integration is therefore about reducing such fragmentation and increasing cooperation and interdependent relationships between specialist groups of actors *within* the university and between the university and *external* organisational actors.

The vertical axis relates to material and cultural practices that form a "coherent, explicit, and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised, or series of specialised modus operandi" (Bernstein, 1999, p. 159). For universities, this refers to: firstly, the strategic alignment, again of both the internal members and of the university within the wider organisational field; and secondly, in order to achieve this strategic alignment, a new kind of rationalised institutional governance arrangement is needed, reshaping historical power relationships in what can be described as a more 'managed' organisation (Clark, 1998; Clarke & Newman, 1994; Deem, 1998).

In summary, one witnesses a major shift in both the *institution* and *organisation* of the university, and the consequent emergence of a more integrated model. Indeed, the waves of democratisation and marketization have given rise to an increasingly socially embedded university (Shapiro, 2005); the core elements of which are broad inclusiveness, social usefulness, and organizational flexibility (Ramirez, 2006). Concurrently, system level trends, especially NPM, have resulted in a more

rational and ‘managed’ university (Deem, 1998). Thus, integration has become a transnational trend in a global educational environment (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013).

THE CASE OF SLOVENIA

In order to more tangibly comprehend the diffusion of these predominantly European trends, this thesis focuses on a national case; that of Slovenia.

Slovenia has not been immune from changes in its European environment. Consequently, since gaining independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, Slovenia has sought greater university integration. Many of these attempts to transform university governance have occurred at the second level of analysis, i.e. the system level. Indeed, the emerged neo-liberal policy environment established autonomous, legally-integrated universities.

Moreover, the Slovenian policy agenda continues to imply a more strategic and integrated university actor. Concretely, two key texts form the current policy basis for Slovenian HE; the HE Act (which has undergone a series of amendments since 1993) and the National Higher Education Programme 2011-2020 (NHEP). NHEP is particularly explicit in setting out a strategy that aims to integrate the university, proposing actions such as: more block grants for universities plus a new developmental part of funding; independent management of tangible assets by universities, autonomous preparation of study programmes, academic standards, selection of staff and students; autonomous management and financial decision-making; and a new career system, allowing universities’ greater freedom for career development (OECD, 2012).

However, the new, normative notion of the university as an integrated entity is particularly challenging for countries whose historical legacies significantly differ in terms of both how the university is imagined and organised. As Ramirez & Chirstensen (2013) put it, different ‘roots’ result in different ‘routes’. Slovenia is a case in point. The traditional institutional structure of Slovenian universities consists of powerful, legally autonomous faculties under the symbolic umbrella of public universities, rather than as complete legal, organisational or sociological entities. This regional idiosyncrasy resulted in weak institutional integration and a significant variance in funding and quality among these entities (Zgaga, 1996; Huisman & Vrečko, 2003).

Compounding this tension between transnational influences and the Slovenian legacy is the fact that the implementation at the level of the university of such systemic changes involves not only those from inherently different backgrounds and paradigms, but also who have little say in the re-design of HE systems (Bergan, 2012). Thus, while universities have sought to adapt to the new environment, a dichotomy has emerged between international norms and local identities (Zgaga, 2013). As such, the integration of universities has been fraught with challenges in Slovenia and across the Western Balkans.

Furthermore, in Slovenia and at the level of the university, the situation regarding how integration has been interpreted and enacted by universities is unclear. Indeed, while it is evident that the aforementioned systemic changes towards integration have occurred, there is a dearth of literature as to how this notion of a unified university has manifested itself ‘on the ground’.

METHODOLOGY

The empirical part of the thesis aims to determine how university actors in Slovenia have interpreted and enacted policies of integration. Indeed, as Bleiklie & Kogan (2007, p. 480) remark, “one cannot necessarily deduce actual practices in specific instances from general trends or ideals in policy documents”.

In terms of methodology, *figure 1* straightforwardly represents the research design, incorporating the previous section’s outline of the systemic and policy contexts.

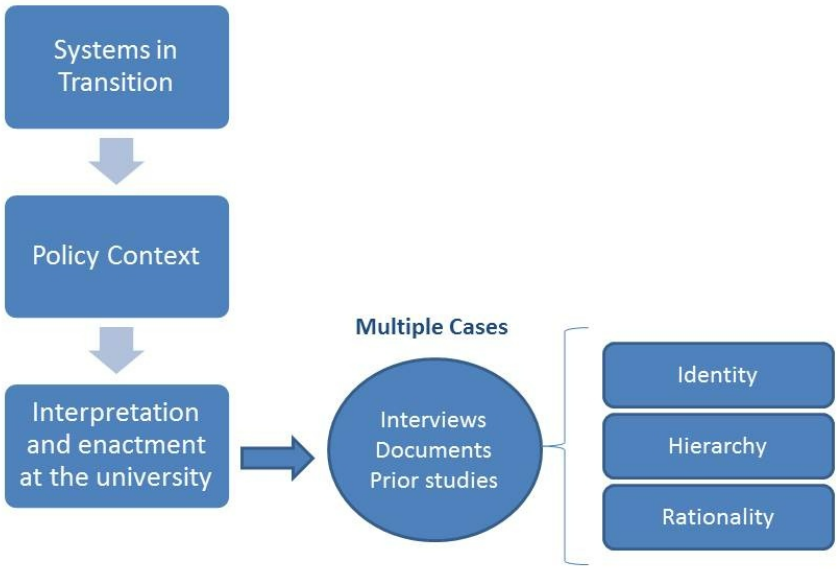

Figure 1: Research Design

An embedded case study methodology seemed most appropriate given it is difficult to separate variables related to university integration. Also, given the limited timeframe for the production of the thesis, it was imperative to define a bounded system, in which multiple sources of rich information could be accessed. Therefore, two cases were chosen for study, - the University of Ljubljana (UL) and the University of Maribor (UM) - the intention being that *multiple* cases would provide a broader and nationally-diverse picture.

This kind of research design also allows for flexibility in terms of data collection and analysis, integrating an array of data from different sources (Yin, 2011). Within the context of this thesis, this means a diverse sample of documents and interviewees from various units from the three institutions. The following three sources were utilised for the collection of data:

- Documentation
- Semi-structured interviews
- Data from other research

This data was then triangulated, integrated and used to address the research questions.

A conceptual framework was employed to frame the collection of data. Indeed, the multitude of variables related to university integration needed to be operationalised for the pragmatic execution of research and the collection of data (Dooley, 1984). A conceptual framework helped focus the empirical investigations, creating some boundaries within the vast amount of possible data sets and raising salient questions (Creswell, 2003).

An existing framework by de Boer et al. (2007) provided a useful, well-theorised basis on which to structure the research. The authors focus on the (re)construction of *identity*, *hierarchy* and *rationality* (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000) to systematically analyse various aspects related to the transformation of the university towards a corporate actor. The framework provides constructs, dimensions and detailed indicators. However, generalised, Western-theorised concepts to a foreign context were not universally applicable. Accordingly, a number of the specific dimensions and indicators were slightly re-conceptualised, and a modified version was utilised to guide the empirical investigation.

The interview data consists of thirteen interviews. The interviews, which took approximately one hour, were semi-structured. This means that the conceptual framework formed the basic structure of the interview but specific questions and content were not pre-determined. Instead, the author attempted to reflexively guide the interviews based on the knowledge and characteristics of the interviewee. Thus, most questions were open-ended. They aimed to explore interviewees' perceptions of and reactions to university integration (and policies thereof), as well as to collect concrete examples of material practices; i.e. interpretations and enactments.

The study also includes content analysis of a rich collection of documents produced by the case institutions, public bodies and third parties. In total, 29 documents were analysed. Examples include university visions and missions, strategic plans, internal and external evaluations, university statutes, work programmes, organisational charts, policy statements, project reports, presentations, web content, etc.

The research also draws upon data from other studies, most heavily on a regional study conducted by the Centre for Educational Policy Studies at UL (Zgaga et al., 2013).

Through careful, structured sampling design, the study aims to provide data which is balanced, reliable and valid. The author therefore took steps to ensure that the sample represents a broad cross-section of institutions, interviewees, roles, and perspectives. Specifically, the institutions were chosen to represent different sizes and types of public institutions; the oldest, biggest, capital-city, 'flagship' university (UL) as well as a 'newer', smaller one in Slovenia's second largest city (UM). Together they represent almost two-thirds of the Slovenian HE sector. Regarding interviewees, consideration was given to distinctions between academic groups within the university. Two major categories were identified. The first is the vertical distinction between the level of seniority and responsibility of academic staff (Teichler, 2012) and the second is a horizontal distinction between disciplines and types of knowledge production (Leisyte et al., 2009; Gibbons et al., 1994). Moreover, one member of the student council and two administrative/professional staff members were also interviewed.

KEY FINDINGS

INTERPRETATION

According to the content analysis, there were different ways in which university integration was interpreted. Indeed, dichotomies were apparent both between and within universities as to how integration was defined, from where it should be initiated, and how to achieve it. This is most clearly evidenced by contrasting data from the university level with the faculty level.

At the level of the university, UM demonstrated a more determined attempt by the rectorate to integrate, with a myriad of well-designed and aligned strategic documents, an assertive rectorate, a number of new, university-wide organisational units, and overall a more structured approach stemming from the central administration. On the other hand, UL evidenced a rather more democratic, ad-hoc, yet not altogether ineffective, approach. It has taken what is described as a 'functional' approach to integration, in which selected, isolated functions are linked for the sake of expediency. In practice, this means that integration initiatives, such a joint programmes, are initiated at the level of the member (faculty) or confined to specific 'functions' of the university; most notably, there is a strong quality management drive. However, the central administration does not play a prominent role and these functions tend not to be integrated in terms of organisational structure.

At the faculty level, there appears to be a disconnect between what is declared at the university level and the subjective interpretations of university integration by individuals. In other words, the interpretation of policies of integration by members or individual actors did not always align with the official university rhetoric. Indeed, it is probably not possible to totally reconcile these dichotomies. As one interviewee put it: "whose responsibility is it to develop shared identity? I would say the top. The top would say 'bottom-up'" (Interview 6; 7/4/2014).

Such definitions and approaches to university integration do not happen in a vacuum. External influences impact the way in which universities do policy. According to the content analysis, several prominent themes emerged: namely, accreditation, internationalisation, rankings, the financial crisis,

and the legislative and systemic environment. These provide both opportunities and constraints for university integration, the common theme being that such influences required increased strategic action from both faculties and the rectorate.

Internal factors also influence how universities do policies of integration. In this regard, a number of internal dynamics were identified that shaped interpretation. Firstly, the author warns of the folly of solutionism (Morozov, 2013). Indeed, according to the content analysis, technical solutions to integration were sought, in many cases appearing in declarative form with little involvement or support from a reasonable percentage of staff. This attracted criticism from many interviewees. Secondly, inequality between faculties – in terms of size, power, resources, degree of integration, etc. - stood out. This may be partly due to the historical legacy of independent, self-governed faculties or indeed as a result of the aforementioned external influences, such as successful internationalisation, accreditation (and the associated strategic planning), research funding, etc. Naturally, these discrepancies posed challenges when trying integrate disparate parties according to standardised criteria (e.g. quality management procedures).

Given that integration relates to the optimisation of a system, an important concept that hindered the adoption of such initiatives was 'reflexive positionality'. In the context of the thesis, reflexive positionality is an ideal, which refers to an individual's affiliation with and awareness of their role as being part of, and contributing to, the holistic institutional environment. The author observes a lack of reflexive positionality at both universities. All interviewees either described or demonstrated the fact that their social identity related to a limited field of activity usually confined to their immediate disciplinary group or the faculty; academic tribes and territories seemed to prevail. Exceptions were those in university-wide positions of responsibility, who exhibited a greater degree of reflexive positionality, as would be expected.

ENACTMENT

The three constructs from the conceptual framework – namely, *identity, hierarchy* and *rationality* - proved a useful lens for which to group the emerged themes related to policy enactments.

Identity relates to enactments that attempt to socially reconstruct what the organization is or would like to be. There are two main levels on which to analyse the enactment of university integration as it relates to identity; the university and the faculty level.

Firstly, on the university level, the content analysis suggests that both UL and UM have transitioned from being social institutions in the most fundamental sense - i.e. something that transcends individual reflection and intentions (Miller, 2012) - to organisational actors. This entails more specific goals, missions and a self-determined sense of direction, as well as the ongoing elaboration, expansion and differentiation of formal organizational structures (Krücken, 2011). Indeed, the myriad of strategic documents and the development of university-wide systems, projects and structures indicate this fact.

However, the extent to which formal attempts to produce a common organisational identity actually impact individuals in questionable. As one interviewee noted, "We made an action plan. But it's general good wishes; no clear actions. And nobody is pushing" (Interview 6; 7/4/2014). Whatever their espoused identities, the author argues that UL and UM are both still in their infancy in terms of developing an integrated organisational identity.

On the faculty level, the content analysis suggests that university-level attempts to develop a shared identity do not permeate the members. Indeed, internal borders between faculties remain quite strong. During the interviews, all members provided examples and anecdotes related specifically to their own faculties, and only those in the rectorate demonstrated a holistic, university-wide identification. Even strategic thought was predominantly confined to these borders. Phrases like, "in our school", and "at our faculty" were ubiquitous during interviews. Indeed, "we" almost exclusively referred to the faculty, rather than the university as a whole. Moreover, the diversity of logos and faculty-level strategic documentation confirms this disparity and fragmentation.

Thus, there exists a certain contradiction between an increasingly coherent organisational identity and the persistence of strong, independent faculties. While a degree of integration at the systemic and university levels is evident, responses to these initiatives tend to take place within disparate organisational units.

The second construct relates to issues of hierarchy. Indeed, the implication of university integration is increased central coordination and control; a kind of hierarchization of the university. In this regard, three main aspects stand out in terms of enactment, namely: changes (or lack thereof) to decision-making structures; the professionalization (or lack thereof) of management; and internal power relations.

Indeed, university integration implies a rationalisation of governing mechanisms in the pursuit of efficiency, and the effective implementation of institutional strategies. For both UL and UM, such notions represent a change to traditional collegial governance, in which decisions pass through the rectorate, the senate, the governing board and the student council to gain approval. This model is still employed. In fact, collegial governance seems to be highly supported by the Slovenian academy, with deans and academic staff seeking to retain autonomy, and sceptical of shifting power to the university level (Zgaga et al., 2013). Accordingly, there were few signs that an increasingly hierarchical power structure would replace the current model anytime soon.

In saying that, UM did demonstrate a bolder, more decisive rectorate. Both the university and faculty leadership demonstrated a willingness to impose sanctions on poor performing faculty, with two interviewees referring to mandatory retirement, dismissals, and some consequent court cases. But given that the current governance model does not allocate more responsibility to leaders, such persons had little room for executive decision-making and were expected to gain consensus in order that their plans would be approved.

Contrary to the preference for collegial governance, the academy felt “it is necessary or inevitable to professionalise the management of universities” (Zgaga et al., 2013, p. 41). However, the majority of interviewees at both universities articulated the fact that, despite this attitude, professionalisation of university management has not yet been realised. This was confirmed by the lack of new, specialised positions and units.

Inherent in hierarchy are issues of power. Indeed, relative differences give faculties impetus to pursue relative differences in the exercise of power. In this context, power is not simply based on *legitimate*, formal sources but also on *social* sources (French & Raven, 1959). Accordingly, the author noted that the rectorates tended to derive power and spur change through the provision of resources and information, what can be described as *informational* sources of power (Raven, 1965), while the exercise of power by stronger faculties was primarily based on knowledge, experience, skills and talents; i.e. *expert* sources of power (French & Raven, 1959).

The final construct is rationalisation. At the most basic level, this means setting and measuring objectives. Accordingly, the emergence of explicit strategic objectives at UL and UM has already been mentioned However, while a vast array of documents have been published, the actual goals tended to be broad and imprecise. This results in difficulty in measuring success. Additionally, these goals and objectives are still far from being a common standard across the entire university.

At both universities, quality management and ICT are the two areas receiving most attention in terms of rationalisation. The focus on quality as a means of rationalisation is significant in and of itself, as it indicates a strong connection to the European HE policy space. Indeed, quality development is one of the few areas to which the EU can directly contribute. The author argues that while a focus on quality may have some positive implications for university integration, it also provides numerous challenges related to the relevance of the specified criteria as well as the perceived bureaucratisation and administrative burden that comes with such tasks.

CONCLUSION

Evidence suggests that attitudes are shifting within the two Slovenian universities to accept the inevitability of change, particularly amongst senior leaders. This includes the acknowledgment for a more socially-embedded, flexible, professional, rational, socially-just, meritocratic and *integrated* university. Accordingly, there are an increasing number of initiatives to this end that are taking root, particularly the recent implementation of longer-term strategic planning and quality management. It is difficult to say whether examples of integration are a ‘result’ of policy, or whether they are simply subjective responses to real, external pressures inherent in global trends, such as competition, demographics, globalisation, and financial crises.

Yet overall there remains a degree of variation as to how the two universities interpreted and enacted such change. While favourable attitudes and initial actions were detectable, they certainly were not universal. Dichotomies were apparent between and within universities as to how integration was defined, from where it should be initiated, and how to achieve it. Certainly, UM demonstrated a more determined attempt by the rectorate to integrate whilst UL evidences a rather more democratic, ad-hoc, yet not altogether ineffective, approach.

Socio-cultural and historical identities, coupled with scepticism towards transnational policy discourses, prevents the whole-hearted adoption of change. This may be justified given the negative fallout of recent market-oriented HE policies, such as a burgeoning private sector with questionable quality and integrity, the troubled implementation of the Bologna process and the increased demands on the professoriate with little demonstrable benefit. Such features may not just be particular to Slovenia but symptomatic of academia at large in Continental Europe.

As Bleiklie & Kogan (2007, p. 481) note: "In European public systems, the extent to which rhetoric based on the corporate management ideal has been followed up in practice varies and exists in a sometimes uneasy relationship with bureaucratic steering and the social responsibilities of universities as civil service institutions". Therefore, the current changes towards more integrated universities may in fact be less far-reaching that the political rhetoric suggests, buffered by traditional characteristics and modes of organisation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The thesis uncovered many artefacts, which warrant more targeted digging. Any one of the variables related to the policy context or to interpretation and enactment in Slovenia could be pursued.

Specifically, new theorisations of integration in non-Western contexts would be insightful. In Slovenia, a number of topics are potentially interesting, particularly socio-cultural phenomena like identity, reflexive positionality, resistance to technical solutionism, power and politics, all of which require sophisticated analytical tools. More practical areas of focus could be governance and decision making structures, case studies of new projects, strategies or organisational units, and analyses of policy, funding models, resource allocation, and career structures.

There are also practical implications from the thesis. Notably, dichotomies need to be addressed. At an institutional level the notion of subsidiarity is proposed as a means to resolve the conflict between collegial governance and efficient, effective, empowered and responsible faculty and staff. In general, subsidiarity aims to have most tasks determined and carried out as close as possible to the recipients of such decisions. However, it allows for intervention by a central authority both in terms of determining policy and in in terms of executing decisions and tasks, should the central authority be more effective at doing so. Applying this concept to integration would allow greater strategic coordination at a university level, while still ensuring that individuals could exercise their discretion at a more localised level.

However, this requires strong university-wide systems, processes and policies, as well as strong human resource competences, in order to support the 'front line' and respond and correct errors made at a local level (Birnbaum, 1988).

Thus, concrete recommendations include:

- invest in human resource development so that all members of the university can operate professionally and take responsibility;
- invest in systems so that the rectorate can communicate with, monitor and regulate members; this includes simples things such as a common and well-resourced intranet;
- devolve responsibility and decision-making in real terms to the 'front line' so people take ownership of their tasks;
- have clear, well-publicised policies and procedures to guide organisational behaviour;
- make integration meaningful and engaging; demonstrate benefits, enhance service, involve and connect tribes and territories, recognise differences, limit standardisation, increase trust; and

- a more balanced approach to quality assurance and enhancement in which quantifiable measures are balanced against more qualitative methods that account for local practices and promote trust and professional autonomy.

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THE ACADEMIC PROFESSION IN MACEDONIA: CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES

Martin Galevski

BACKGROUND

Different aspects of the academic profession have received growing attention in many parts of the world throughout the last decade. While the literature available provides quite a variety of cases, the experience of academics in a number of smaller *peripheral* higher education systems is still something of a 'black box'. The Macedonian higher education system seems to be no exception in this regard.

Current discussions on the academic profession in Macedonia are predominantly based on anecdotal evidence and a few public commentaries by some members of the academic community, while no major theoretical or empirical investigations in the field of higher education exist (Vukasovic 2014). There is no study yet on the conditions of academic work or on the academic profession in general. Occasionally, the Macedonian higher education system is mentioned only 'in passing' as a presumably similar system with the other countries of former Yugoslavia – thus allowing limited space to capture its idiosyncratic developments in the last two decades.

If we use Teichler's typology of higher education researchers, the majority of those who write on higher education in Macedonia are only "reflective practitioners" (Teichler 2005: 461). In this respect, higher education research in the country is still more a question of sporadic effort on the part of individuals rather than an organized or comprehensive effort. Unlike some other countries in the region (notably Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia), there is no institute, department or educational programme which deals exclusively with higher education research. Such absence of serious and systematic investigation of recent higher education developments, renders the Macedonian higher education system as one of the most under-researched systems across Europe.

It is against this backdrop that the academic profession in Macedonia deserves special attention. The main objective of this study is to explore major developments around the academic profession in Macedonia by examining the perceptions of academics in three key areas:

(1) **Academic work and working conditions.** In the first section I examine the perceptions of academics about a number of factors that compose and contribute to job well-being. The major issues to be addressed here include the academics' assessment of working conditions (facilities, resources and personnel); allocation of workload; interest in teaching and research and actual use of time; additional employment; remuneration; and the social prestige of the academic profession.

(2) **Vertical career mobility, horizontal career mobility (academic inbreeding) and research productivity.** In this section I discuss first the commitment of academics to their choices of career by measuring their intention to make a major job change. This is followed by a discussion on the attractiveness of the academic profession both in terms of retaining current academic staff and recruiting new one. Hence, I investigate *vertical career mobility* by looking at the different paths of recruitment, the opportunities and expectations for advancement and promotion to a higher academic rank, as well as the transparency of the process and the compliance to the formal procedures. Moreover, I discuss an (informal) practice – commonly called 'academic inbreeding' - when universities hire their own graduates who subsequently remain employed at their Alma Mater for their entire careers. Here, I discuss the factors that contribute to the *horizontal career mobility* of academic staff and those that inhibit it. As high levels of academic inbreeding have long been assumed to have a damaging effect on scholarly practice I also test the hypothesis proposed by Horta (2013) that less mobile academics (inbreds) have lower levels of scientific productivity than non-inbreds.

(3) **Higher education governance and influence of academic staff on decision-making.** In the last section of this study I focuse on how academics perceive, interpret and evaluate recent attempts of reform in the higher education system and how these intended reforms influence academic values

and practices. Moreover, I examine how decision-making power is distributed both on system and institutional level and if there has been a shift of power recently. In this section I consider the level of discrepancy between the reality and the rhetoric as well as the gap between the intended policy and its practical implementation.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, an online questionnaire of 33 (multi-item) questions was produced, broadly based on a previous survey on the academic profession in Europe (EUROAC) (see Kehm and Teichler 2013; Teichler and Hohle 2013; Teichler et al. 2013). In order to ensure a genuine comparability of the findings in Macedonia with a number of other countries where the EUROAC survey has been previously administered, the questions replicated from the EUROAC questionnaire were not alternated. However, a few additional questions (8 in total) that I found relevant in view of the local context and the idiosyncrasy of the Macedonian higher education system were added. On the other hand, some questions contained in the original EUROAC questionnaire that were perhaps less relevant to the thematic scope covered in this study were removed. Such strategic decision, among other things, considerably reduced the number of questions compared to the original EUROAC survey (53 questions in total), allowing (at least potentially) a more promising response rate.

The final version of the questionnaire was divided in three main sections, each of them closely (though not necessarily entirely) corresponding to structure of the main chapters in this study. An additional fourth section on personal background was placed at the end of the questionnaire.

Given that there is no central or comprehensive list of e-mail addresses of academic staff in Macedonia, they were collected manually from the institutional web sites. A problem in this respect was that a number of institutions (around 10%) had fairly outdated web sites with limited contact information. Nevertheless a sufficiently high number of e-mail addresses was collected (3070) which broadly corresponds with the total number of academics (3354) according to latest official data from the State Statistical Office (SSORM 2013). However, as this is not a complete list of all e-mail addresses, I was not able to utilize a simple random sample design. In view of the fact that e-mail addresses where collected based on their relative ease of access, a convenience (availability) non-probability sampling was used instead. An additional problem, partly specific to the Macedonian academic community, was that some of the official e-mail addresses provided on the institutional web sites are used or checked infrequently, as many academics prefer to use their personal e-mail addresses for professional correspondence.

On March 26th 2014, the questionnaire was sent out to all potential e-mail recipients, followed by two reminder messages in the following two weeks (April 1st and April 8th). The invitation e-mail letter briefly explained the main objectives of the study and the ways in which confidentiality and anonymity is maintained. My contact information was also provided to allow recipients to ask questions, provide comments or report technical problems with the survey. Furthermore, recipients were given the chance to opt out of future e-mails relating to the study. The survey was sent electronically using Lime Survey software. A relatively high fraction of e-mail addresses (450) immediately 'bounced back' as in-active. Out of the total number of invitations that actually made their way (2620), fully completed questionnaires were received from 487 respondents, yielding a response rate of 18.6%. Respondents who only partially responded to the survey were excluded from the sample.

For the purposes of data analysis independent variables were recorded in binary categories. Namely, based on the *type of institution in which academic staff have their primary employment*, I have created two categories: (1) academic staff working at public and (2) academic staff working at private institutions. Based on *academic rank*, academic staff have been collapsed into two main categories: (1) senior academics (consisted of all academics elected in teaching-scientific positions: docents, associated professors, full professors) and (2) junior academics (consisted of all academics elected in supporting staff positions: junior assistants, assistants and junior lectors). Finally, according to the scientific discipline, academics are classified in two broad categories: (1) social sciences, humanities and arts in one category as 'soft sciences' and (2) medical sciences, natural sciences, technical sciences and applied sciences as 'hard sciences'.

KEY FINDINGS

EXPANSION OF THE HE SYSTEM AND ITS EFFECTS ON WORKING CONDITIONS

Following a change of government in 2006, the higher education landscape has expanded beyond recognition, mainly as a result of a series of state initiated reforms focused on the process of democratization of access to higher education and the dispersion of higher education institutions (HEIs) – with new Faculties being added to the existing public universities in quick succession and two new public universities being set up in different regions within the country. The number of newly opened Faculties and HEIs has tripled in less than a decade, while the proportions of enrolment rates are increasingly rendering higher education an *education for all*. The multiplication of institutions (both public and private) and rising number of students also led to nearly a twofold increase in the number of academic staff for the same period. While the expansion of the system has been received somewhat positively, because of its potential to decrease educational disparities between regions and the possibility to provide more equal access to higher education, the abrupt expansion does not go unchallenged as it is frequently described in terms of quantitative success only.

Public criticism by Macedonian academics has been mainly addressed as regards the adequacy of the (uncontrolled) dramatic rise in enrolments and the erection of new Faculties and its far-reaching consequences for the quality of higher education on offer, particularly in view of the scarce state funding. Although the expansion of the system alone may not be the only cause for the deterioration of higher education standards, it is increasingly evident that working conditions have worsened largely due to such a rapid growth. While some private HEIs have managed to provide better physical conditions, the large majority of HEIs remain coping with antiquated equipment, outdated facilities, lack of space and minimal support towards research. The inadequacy of the infrastructure is mostly apparent in the newly opened dispersed public Faculties that lack even the most essential equipment and facilities for operation. Hence, lectures are often held in wedding halls, hotels, theatres and other venues that do not meet even the basic requirements for teaching. In such circumstances, the physical conditions for academic work at most HEIs are barely comparable to those found across Western Europe.

REMUNERATION

While an academic career provides a reasonably high level of social prestige, it does not always provide a reasonable standard of living. A precise evaluation of academic salaries is an extremely difficult task, as considerable variations in salary levels exist according to academic rank, even within the same institution, since Faculty units have a significant flexibility in creating their own pay scales. Academic salaries are not typically determined by reference to productivity or merit, but rather allocated based on academic rank, length of service and teaching loads. Unlike many senior academics, a full-time junior academic cannot afford what is considered to be a middle-class standard of living. An entry-level salary is hardly sufficient to support even the daily living expenses, and rarely exceeds the nation-wide average salary of 350 euros. The survey data gathered reveals a high dissatisfaction with salaries among junior academics (65.3%). Their senior counterparts reported fairly equally high dissatisfaction levels with their salaries (56.9%).

Basic salary alone does not provide a complete picture, since obtaining a reasonable income often depends on institutional bonuses and additional employment. Many senior academics that teach in public HEIs also hold part-time positions at the private sector. Some of them choose additional employment as a necessity, others simply because an opportunity has emerged. While additional employment allows academic staff to survive economically, it also means that only a few of them are able to devote their full attention to academic work. To reach a middle-class income level, many junior academics require additional employment, however, such positions are rarely available to them. Unless salaries at the lower end of the hierarchy improve, HEIs in Macedonia will struggle to attract the *best and the brightest* to choose an academic career.

ACADEMIC CAREER: A TEMPORARY CHOICE

The terms and conditions of academic appointments and opportunities for advancement are also of central importance for the future of the profession. Despite sporadic efforts to make the hiring process more competitive and transparent, academics are still often hired trough personal networks or political considerations.

According to the results of the survey, 24.2% of academics believe that promotions are not entirely based on achievements. Climbing the career ladder requires waiting and it is subject to a lengthy process, which nevertheless does not automatically guarantee promotion. Nearly a half (42%) of the respondents in the survey did not view the career opportunities of young academics as particularly promising and every second junior academic (51.4%) reported feeling insecure about their future employment. In such circumstances, the careers of many young academics are almost exclusively based on promises, but rarely on realistic prospects; potentially causing large-scale migrations to other professions.

The results of the survey indicate that an academic career is increasingly considered as a temporary choice only, as 43% of academics have considered the possibility of abandoning their academic career. Concerning the possibility of taking up an academic position abroad, if such an opportunity would arise, the situation is equally worrying. Almost two thirds (63.3%) of junior academics have considered taking up an academic position outside the country, while the same holds true for every second (52.5%) senior academic. The potential readiness of academics to abandon an academic career or to pursue an academic career abroad is not only indicative of the problematic situation, but also suggests realistic prospects of potential academic exodus.

GOVERNANCE: HIGH PRESENCE OF STATE INTERVENTION

In terms of governing the higher education system, while in many European countries the role of the state is diminishing, state authorities in Macedonia still assume a major role – with high presence even on the institutional level. The findings of the survey suggest that state interventionism is strongly present, as 70.9% of the respondents perceive that the extent of state influence is high. With the above reported high levels of state interference, it comes with little surprise that the overall financial and institutional autonomy of HEIs are considered low by 61.4% and 56.5% of the respondents respectively.

Although a number of state initiated reforms have been introduced recently, the actual change and transformation seem to have rarely occurred beyond cosmetic interventions. While many of the reform projects introduced by the state have been undertaken precisely under the motto of improving the quality of higher education, as high as 68.2% of the respondents considered that the quality of higher education has decreased in the last five years. The pessimistic overtone that prevails among the majority of academics might suggest that they respond to change more as a source of potential crisis, rather than one of opportunity. While some of the disinterest of academics to changes comes from negligence or the historical collective memory of the Humboldtian ‘good old days’ to which many academics hope to return, the sharp criticism of academics being voiced against almost all recent reforms partly explains why academics and HEIs have firmly resisted deeper change.

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ACADEMICS COPING WITH QUALITY: A STUDY OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GEORGIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Mariam Shurgaia

BACKGROUND

The demand for quality assurance (QA) and accountability measures in Higher Education became central concern in European countries and presented significant challenges for institutions. In Georgia, similarly to other European countries, QA systems became integral part of Higher Education system after the adoption of the new Law on Higher Education in 2004 and joining Bologna process in 2005, which created legal and political demand for individual universities to establish Internal quality assurance (IQA) systems. The call to dedicate institutional efforts to develop effective and robust IQA systems voiced in the Berlin Communique in 2003, was supported and prioritized by Georgian Government. It was advocated that Georgian universities should build up an effective IQA system that would be guided by the common set of European standards for IQA framed under the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance document (Darakhvelidze, 2012). In this context HEIs were required to adjust to the new national policy instruments and go through the organisational change as a result of the implementation of IQA systems to meet the requirements of the National Accreditation Centre.

While HEIs as a whole have been affected by the changes initiated in the domain of QA, they also influenced day-to day activities of individual lecturers in many ways (Westerheijden, Hulpiau, & Waeytens, 2007). Academics who are faced with changes in their working lives introduced by IQA may respond with the different degrees of acceptance, support or resistance. It has been argued (Newton, 2000) that whether QA systems lead to improvement of educational processes or to formal compliance and ritualistic behaviors largely depends on the responses of academics. As Newton states, if academics have pivotal role in improving the quality of teaching and learning more attention needs to be paid to how they adjust to QA arrangements, which will lead to a better understanding of how to manage change process to get more support.

While number of researches on how academics view QA arrangements are conducted, the comprehensive study on how academics deal with the organizational changes after the establishment of IQA systems are absent in Georgian context. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to investigate whether academics' attitudes (cognitive, emotional and behavioral) are more positive or negative towards current and upcoming organisational changes related to the introduction of IQA systems and their requirements such as ECTS, self-assessment forms, student feedback forms, syllabus etc. The study answers the following research questions:

I Key question: which factors influence academics' attitudes towards changes followed by the introduction of IQA systems in Georgian universities?

1. Are the academics' attitudes towards changes followed by the implementation of IQA systems more positive or negative?
2. Do academics perceive impact of IQA on teaching and learning processes as more positive or negative?
3. Are there any connections between perceived impact of IQA on teaching and learning processes and academics' attitudes?
4. Do academics perceive the level of such contextual factors as change related information, change-related self-efficacy and involvement in change processes high or low?
5. Are there any connection between the contextual factors (change related information, change related self-efficacy and involvement in change process) and academics' attitudes?
6. Are there any connections between academics' individual characteristics such as gender, experience in working with quality, program supervision, academic affiliation and disciplinary affiliation?

7. Are there any connections between institutional arrangements (type of institution) and academics' attitudes?

II Key question: How should the IQA system be developed so that it underpins the expectations of academic staff?

In order to meet the objectives of the study, individual level (the micro-level perspective) grounded in organizational change literature will be used. This approach implies that organizational change is only possible if staff members are ready to change their mind-sets (Bouckenooghe, 2009).

Having underlined that the successful implementation of policies heavily depends on how staff members' view the change process, the conceptual framework provided by Elizur and Guttman (1976) of attitudes towards change will be utilised for the purpose of the study. This concept derived from organizational psychology literature, covers a cognitive, affective or instrumental-behavioral modality. Cognitive response refers to the opinions about the advantages and disadvantages, usefulness and necessity of change; affective reaction to change refers to feelings of being linked to, satisfied with or anxious about change (Piderit, 2000), behavioural responses are the actions that are taken or are intended to be taken in the future for or against proposed change (Elizur and Guttman, 1976). This concept allows identification of individual responses of two different poles towards change: positive and negative attitudes. Using three-dimensional perspective of attitudes towards change concept to study how academics deal with new quality arrangements will allow to cover key processes of human function: the processes by which individuals feel, think and act (Smollan, 2006).

While the main purpose of the study is to identify variables that would be likely to affect academics' attitudes towards change in their working environment, the review of the organizational change literature, as well as higher education studies was conducted. The following variables were identified as likely to be affecting how academics staff looks at IQA systems: change-related information, involvement in change process, change related self-efficacy and perceived favorability of outcomes.

As the review of the relevant literature demonstrates, both: change process, associated with the quality of information regarding the change, involvement of academic staff members in the decision making processes and change-relate self-efficacy, together with the perceived outcomes of change introduced by IQA should represent two dimensions that are important in shaping academics' attitudes towards change introduced by IQA and towards IQA system in general. When we take into consideration change process and perceived impact of change, along with the individual characteristics of academics and institutional arrangement they belong to (as portrayed in the Appendix 1), we can get a fairly complex picture of the factor influencing academics' positive and negative attitudes.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed quantitative research method, namely survey research. As it has been suggested the survey research is the best way to gather information from the large group of people, to summarize the characteristics of different groups and to measure their attitudes and opinions (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh & Sorensen, 2010).

The key participants for the study-academic staff involved in teaching in three public and two private Georgian universities -were selected based on utilizing convenient sampling strategy. The main criterion for selecting universities was that they are accredited and therefore, have established IQA systems. Secondly, all selected universities are comprehensive higher education institutions and offer multi-profile educational programmes. All three selected public universities benefited from the Tempus programme projects related to the development of IQA systems, thus, they have developed the capacity to administer QA processes internally. All three public universities are one of the oldest and biggest in Georgia. In terms of academic staff within the selected universities, the snowball sampling method was utilized. The attempt to make the sample as homogenous as possible was made including academic staff with different disciplinary affiliations.

The instrument consisting of forty one questions was developed. In the process of development of the questionnaire, previously established measures of each of the study variables were employed:

attitudes towards change questionnaire (Vakola, Tsaousis & Nikolaou, 2005), perceived impact of IQA scale (Kleijnen et al. 2011) of QA and contextual factors' scale as predictors of attitudes (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Additional questions were added to the scales based on the analyses of the relevant literature and the given context. Some items were either adjusted to reflect the context of Georgian universities, or removed from scales to more adequately capture academics' opinions. All items were translated from English to Georgian.

All closed items were formulated as statements and participants were asked to indicate their agreement on a five-point Likert type scale (1 = fully disagree, 2= disagree, 4= agree, 5=fully agree, 3= neutral). There were also options "I don't know" and "I refuse to answer".

The content validity of the overall instrument was determined by seven experts: six academic staff and one head of the IQA office. The experts evaluated if the items of the sub-scales were relevant and clear in the selected context; if the items measured the construct they attempted to measure; if the statement were phrased in a way to avoid ambiguous answers.

Construct validity of the sub-scales was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis. As a result the following variables were extracted from the data: attitudes towards change (positive and negative), perceived effects of IQA (negative and positive), change-related information, change-related self-efficacy and involvement in change related process. These results suggest that the instrument indeed measures theoretical constructs that it is designed to measure.

The data collected through questionnaires were coded, entered cleaned and analyzed using special software: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20). The following statistical analyses were conducted: descriptive statistics including the mean scores per item and per scale, standard deviation per item and percentage distribution; the independent-sample t-test (to determine if two different groups of academics have different perceptions and attitudes by determining statistical significance between their mean answers); one way analyses of variances (ANOVA) (to determine whether there are any differences between the means of more than two groups of academics); the Pearson product moment correlation (to measure whether there are statistically significant relationships between attitudes towards change and independent variables) and linear regression analyses (to assess the value of independent variables as predictors of attitudes towards change).

Content-analyses method was used to analyze qualitative data derived from open ended questions and to discover patter themes.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study explored the literature on organisational change suggesting that employees' resistance or commitment to change process can significantly affect the success of the change. The important variables that might shape the positive attitudes towards change were also identified. As it has been argued, change related processes such as communication with the staff members about the change, letting staff members participate in decision making processes and encouraging them that they *can* cope with the change situation, together with the perceived favourability of the change outcomes, are dimensions that increase employees' commitment to the transformation process. The literature on perceptions of academics towards the organisational changes associated with the implementation of IQA systems in the university context was also carefully reviewed in order to identify their possible impacts in Georgian universities. The literature analyses showed that perceived outcomes of QA on educational processes is a subject of strong controversy and academics' evaluation may range from negative (such as increased bureaucracy, divergence from teaching and learning, threat to academic autonomy etc.) to positive (such as improvement of educational programmes, empowerment of students etc.).

While the negative attitudes of academics can be a major obstacle to the successful implementation of the IQA systems (Cardoso, et al., 2013), the result of this study is promising because it shows that academics are in general positive about the effects of IQA and are open to the changes introduced by the system in Georgian universities. Even though the primary purpose of the establishment of IQA systems in Georgian universities were mainly accountability driven and were aimed at complying with the minimum standards of the National Accreditation Centre, which, as it has been argued, does not receive the approval of the academic staff (Cardoso, et al., 2013; Harvey, 2004–12; Watty, 2006), the processes of accountability, such as monitoring of educational programmes, may have led

to the improvement of educational practices in Georgian universities. This assumption can explain the study results that in general, academics have positive attitudes towards the IQA systems. Furthermore, securing and enhancing quality of teaching and learning processes by means of IQA systems which closely follow the Bologna guidelines, might be seen by academics as one step forward towards the country's integration with Europe, which results their openness to the changes introduced by IQA systems.

Despite the fact that positive voice is dominant among academics, still the significant number of respondents were either openly or potentially against the IQA systems. One of the most important implications of the study results relate with how to reduce or overcome this resistance. As quantitative and qualitative data suggest, lack of involvement in decision making processes is the major concern of academics together with the lack of clear communication line about the necessity, benefits and outcomes of IQA practices. Furthermore, the need for trainings and staff development activities are strongly emphasized. While positive attitudes of academics are strongly linked with the belief that changes introduced by IQA contribute to the development of educational processes, the communication line between university management and academics needs to be strengthened in order to disseminate the benefits of IQA activities and enable academics to better reflect on the necessity and outcomes of the IQA arrangements. Secondly, encouragement of staff members that they can cope with the change related situations through offering more opportunities for staff development, should increase staff members' belief that they can cope well with the IQA requirements and in turn, their commitment to the system. Finally, as the findings of the study suggest, more involvement of academic staff in decision making processes through various means, such as opportunities for structured dialogue (Kezar and Eckel, 2002), or asking academic staff their opinions about the change processes emails, should help to reduce negative attitudes and encourage faculty members to feel that they can shape the changes in teaching and learning processes themselves.

Whereas existing research on institutional change as a result of implementation of IQA systems in Georgian universities has been focused at drawing general picture of academics' attitudes towards this change and variables shaping those attitudes, further research might need to assess individual differences related to academics openness or resistance to change on more evenly distributed sample. Furthermore, in order to extend the generalizability of the results of the current study, inclusion of academic staff working in HEIs outside of the capital of Georgia is needed. Another suggestion for the future research is that more theoretical and empirical work is needed to further validate some of the sub-scales of the used instrument, such as of "perceived effects of IQA" or "perceived change related information". Additionally, it might be also interesting to look at additional variables that might be shaping academics' attitudes towards IQA systems and the changes they are implementing. For example, further research might test the assumption put forward in this study: that the overall positive attitude of Georgian academic towards IQA which might be influenced by academics' strive for the country's reintegration with Europe.

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CHANGING ACADEMIC WORK IN CHINA: UNDER THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIC PROMOTION POLICY

Gaoming Zheng

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Today, higher education (HE) is perceived as peculiar among the various sectors of production and service in modern society: higher education institutions (HEIs) are regarded as institutions with 'a relatively open set of multiple goals; a loose mechanism of coercion, controlled and steered from above; and a high degree of fragmentation and strong influence of the principal workers' (Enders & Musselin, 2008) . Enders and Musselin (2008) pointed out that these 'principal workers' are 'academics', and they are 'on the determination of goals, the management and administration of institutions and the daily routines of work' (p.126). 'Academics' are understood as 'academic staff working in universities and other higher education institutions in different ranks, with different contracts and at different stages of their career...[Not only] 'professoriate' as the traditional core of the academic profession, but other faculty groups [are included] as well.' (Enders & Musselin, 2008). To be more specific, 'academics' in this study refers to full-time academic staff members with different academic ranks in Chinese public universities.

Academics have been considered as key stakeholders and academic profession as the key profession in terms of its significant influence on institutions, as well as on the interrelations between higher education and different sectors of production and service (Enders & Musselin, 2008; Pang & Shen, 2012). Nevertheless, several researches (B. F. Li, Yang, & Zhou, 2012; X. J. Li & Su, 2007; Song & Fang, 2008; Yuan, 2010; Z. H. Zhang & Su, 2012; Zheng, 2005) suggested that today academics in Chinese Universities are under intense pressure, especially the job pressure, which makes them become the social vulnerable group in universities.

There are many reasons for academics under pressure, but striving for academic promotion is regarded as one of the most influential factors (L. L. Li, 2010; Z. C. Liu & Sun, 2009; Y. N. Wang & Zhu, 2011). Intense job pressure is one significant manifestation of the effects of academic promotion on academic work. Academic work means 'what is it that academics actually do?' (Clark, 1987, p. 70). Academic work in this study, is understood as 'the daily duties and practices of an academic life' (Clark, 1987, p. xxvii), covering research, teaching, social service, and the different combinations of research, teaching and social service. Another noticeable effect, which we cannot fail to pay attention to, is the misconduct of academic activities. *The 'Qiushi' Case* in 2005 is one impressive example, which shocked the Chinese academy like a bomb at that moment, and led more than 400 academics to gather in Beijing and sign against Shen's misconduct. Shen, a Chinese associate professor in Tianjin, plagiarized 13 academic papers of others', and got them published as a monograph, just for the purpose of meeting the requirement of academic promotion, which was admitted by Shen himself (H. Zhang, 2005). During the past decade, similar cases have been reported by mass media from time to time (Nandu, 2014). Li (2010) analyzed the reasons for academic plagiarism and his analysis result showed that the pressure to get promoted and economic effects related to promotion is one of the most significant reasons behind plagiarism. Another study concerning the science research activities in China HEIs by Mohrman et al (2011) also supported Li's (2010) viewpoint. Mohrman et al. (2011) maintained that there is a major connection between current instances of misconduct in scientific research and the evaluation of academics. Liu (2008) believed that the current academic promotion policy was the fundamental reason for the multiplication of worthless publications in China. Besides, Pang and Shen (2012) also stated that the quantification of performance indicators and criteria in evaluating and promoting academics is regarded as the key element affecting the healthy development of academic profession in Chinese HE system.

As previous studies and data show, though the academic promotion policy in China is intended to motivate academics to produce excellent teaching , research and provide social service (Zou, 2006), it might also have other un-intended effects on academics, e.g. intense job pressure, misconduct of

academic activities, multiplication of worthless publications, etc.. Considering that academics are principle stakeholders in HEIs and important for the development of HE system, we find it significant to research on how the academic promotion policy affects academic work in China's context. For one thing, to study the effects of the academic promotion system can help people better understand the Chinese academic promotion system. For another, to explore the way in which the academic promotion is influencing academic work may be useful for policy-makers, university managers and academics to work together to provide a supportive environment for academics. However, currently although there have been some studies regarding the academic promotion system in China, there are considerable gaps in our understanding of the impact of the current academic promotion policy in China's context.

So far, there has not been a single study conducted concerning the impacts of the current academic promotion policy on academic work in Chinese universities. The publications about Chinese academic promotion system are scarce. Some studies discuss the topic, academic promotion system, indirectly, when studying other related topics, such as faculty life, faculty salaries, historical development of academic profession, etc. (Ma & Wen, 2012; Mohrman et al., 2011; Shen, 2007; Shen, 2008; Yan & Chen, 2008; Yan, 2010). In the latest publications, some studies directly addressed the issue of academic promotion system (Gonzalez, Liu, & Shu, 2012; Lai M, 2013; J. N. Zhang, 2013), but they have never touched the topic of how the academic work changes under the impact of academic promotion policy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As mentioned before in last section, there are knowledge gaps in the aspect of understanding the impacts of academic promotion policy. In order to increase our scholarly understanding of the impact of performance-based management, especially the performance-based academic promotion policy, on academic work, we should study the impacts of the current academic promotion policy on academic work in China's context should be carried out. Therefore, this study is designed and carried out to fulfill this aim. The objectives of the study include:

- to describe the current policies and practices of the university academic promotion in China's context;
- to explore the perceived effects of academic promotion on academic work, including different activities: research, teaching and social service;
- to understand the ways and the extent the policy and practices of academic promotion may influence academic work;
- to provide some implications for policy-making.

Therefore, the research question of this study is:

How do the policies and practices of current university academic promotion influence academic work in China's context?

Sub research questions:

1) What are the policies and practices of the current university academic promotion in China and in B University?

2) What are the effects of academic promotion on academic work in Faculty E in B University?

3) In which ways and to what extent are the policies and practices of academic promotion affecting academic work in Faculty E?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to answer the research questions proposed above, the researcher has developed an analytical framework based on new institutional theory as shown by Scott (Scott, 2010). Scott (2010) maintained institutions are comprised of regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive pillars or elements, which provide the institutional environments to have impact on individuals' decision-making and actions. If we understand the current academic promotion policy as an aspect of

regulative elements, academics as social actors in institutions, academics work or academic activities as social actors' actions in the institutional environment, we can use the framework of three pillars of institutions, which is proposed by Scott (2010), as the theoretical framework to understand and analyze the issue (see Figure 1).

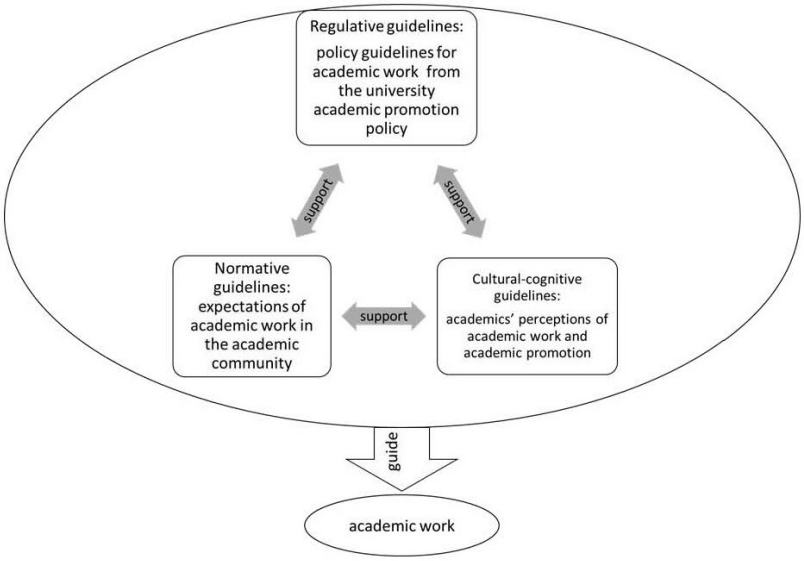

Figure 1 Regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive guidelines for academic work

METHODOLOGY

Case studies are the preferred method when:1) "how" or "why" questions are being posed, 2) the investigator has little control over events, and 3) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2014). In this research, the research question is a "how" research question. The researcher has little control over the effects of the policies and practices of university academic promotion, and the focus of the research is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. Hence, case study is an appropriate research method for this study.

Regarding that the research results or the lessons learnt from the single case are assumed to be informative about the experiences of academics in the average universities or faculties., as well as that the theory underlying the case study is the institutional theory, which is of a holistic nature, a single case holistic design was selected for this study.

The logic of selecting a case for this study is to find a representative or typical case that can represent a commonplace situation of a community of academics in China. Following this logic, the community of academics in Faculty E in University B was selected as the case. B University is one of the top 100 universities in China. Located in Beijing, the capital city of the country, it is a Chinese key university, well-known for its research on social science and humanity, especially on the disciplines such as education, Chinese literature studies and psychology. Faculty E is one of the biggest faculties in B University. It is also one of the leading institutions in educational field in China. The Committee of Human Resources (HR Committee) in each faculty is the decision-making body of evaluating and promoting academics at faculty's level, consisting of the directors of departments and senior managers in the faculty. Currently, there are 19 members in the HR Committee in Faculty E, 17 full professors and 2 associate professors.

Multiple sources of data, including documents, literature and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data as to increase the likelihood that case is being understood from various points of view. The data of major national academic promotion policy documents in China covering the period since 1986, policy studies of that period, and relevant university and faculty documents in the case covering the period since 2009, news and existed literatures, which are relevant to the topic, were collected from September 2013 to December 2013.

Interview questions were designed differently for academics, university and faculty policy-makers, and a faculty manager (see Appendix 1 Interview protocol). The key questions for academics were related to academics' personal perceptions of academic activities and conception of academic promotion, and their opinions about the expectations of conducting activities. Policy-makers' interview questions dealt with the current academic promotion policy and rationales for policy-makings, at both the university's and the faculty's level. The interview questions for the faculty manager covered the topic of implementation at the faculty's level, his perceptions of the current promotion policy. The views of policy-makers and managers provide complementary information for the literatures and document. This information was also used to cross check the results of the document analysis. For confidentiality and ethical consideration, all interviewees are anonymous in this study and were labeled with number, e.g. P1, M1, A1. (Policy-maker=P, M=Manager, A=Academic staff member).

Interviews for policy-makers and managers were taken from November to December 2013 in Beijing in China. Contact was established vie the introduction of a middle man, the vice dean of Faculty E. 1 university policy-maker (Interviewee P1), 2 faculty policy-makers (Interviewee P2, P3), 1 faculty middle manager (Interviewee M1) were asked if they were willing to participate in the study. All of them agreed to participate in the study.

The researcher invited all the 18 applicants (at faculty's level) in the latest round of academic promotion in 2013 in Faculty E to accept interviews via email. 7 (38.9 %) academics accepted the invitation (labeled as Interviewee A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, and A7). Interview of A6 was carried out on December 17, 2013, through face-to-face communication. The interview of A6 was an un-structured interview, which served as a key step to make preparation for developing the interview protocol. Other interviews of academics were carried out in April 2014 through telephone or email, with the researcher in Tampere, Finland and interviewees in Beijing, China. Before interviews of these six academics, a pilot interview was conducted through telephone (with the researcher in Tampere, Finland and the interviewee in Beijing, China), as to testify and to further modify the interview protocol.

A total of 11 interviews were carried out in Chinese, the mother tongue of participants. With the consent of 10 interviewees (except P1), the conversations were recorded and lasted from 40 minutes to 90 minutes depending on the availability of time and saturation of data obtained. Anonymity was assured. The interview protocol was used in all interviews. Field notes were taken during the interviews and after to record the setting, as well as possible observations about the interview context. After each interview, the researcher recorded her self-reflection of the interview, including her impression of the interviewees and interview, her self-evaluation of her interview performance, and suggestions for improvement in future interviews. Interview records were transcribed verbatim, and the transcriptions were translated into English when citations were needed. The interview data was complemented with information drawn from observations, field notes and gathered policy documents.

Data analysis involves 'reducing and organizing the data, synthesizing, searching for significant patterns, and discovering what is important' (Ary et al., 2002). Following Ary et al's (Ary et al., 2002) suggestions for data analysis, the researcher carried out the data analysis procedures in three stages: organizing the data, summarizing the data and interpreting the data.

First, organizing the data: Coding was used to organize the data. The code categories were derived both from the interview protocol and the analytical framework. The field notes, transcripts and other qualitative data were coded and categorized. The researcher read all the data carefully, marked each unit (paragraph or sentences) with an appropriate code by using marginal labels. After all the data were coded, the researcher placed all paragraphs or sentences with the same coding categories together, by cutting with scissors according to the codes and putting materials with alike codes together in a marked envelope. The constant comparative method was used to categorize data and further improve the coding categories. The researcher examined each new units of meaning to determine its distinctive characteristics, and then compared existed categories and grouped them with similar categories. If there were no similar units of meaning, a new category was formed.

Second, summarizing the data: the researcher examined all entries with the same code, merged these categories into patterns by finding links and connections between categories, and made some statements about relationships of categories in the data.

Third, interpreting the data: the researcher made generalizations based on the connections between categories, and evaluated the plausibility of some hypotheses that had evolved during the analysis.

KEY FINDINGS

The major findings of the research are discussed as follows:

First, regarding the practices and policies of the current academic promotion in Chinese universities which is corresponding to sub-research question 1 (what are the policies and practices of the current university academic promotion in China and in B University?), the analysis reveals that academic promotion is a centrally-controlled system in China. Though the state has been decentralizing the authority of promoting academics to universities as well as to provincial governments since the 1980s, all policy-making is still top-down, i.e. academics are hardly involved in the policy-making process. Policy-makers in the B University claimed the practice of academic promotion in B University is a mixed approach with both top-down guidelines and bottom-up involvements but we can also notice that the top-down regulations have a more fundamental impact on deciding how many academics and which academics should be promoted. The voices of peer academics as well as of students are almost neglected in the evaluation of academics in promotion procedures. Top-down approaches constitute the base of the current academic promotion system, while inside the system, only very few approaches are bottom-up. Basically, academic involvement in the decision-making of academic promotion only can be seen in the voting process in the faculty HR committee meeting and the external peer review. Even so, the external peer review does not have much influence on the decision-making results while the voting process in the faculty HR committee meeting only involve a few powerful academics rather than the majority of academics, held by interviewed academics.

Second, regarding the impacts of the current academic promotion policy on academic work, which deals with the second sub-research question (what are the effects of academic promotion on academic work in Faculty E in B University?), the analysis of the intended effects of the current academic promotion policy on academic work shows that the regulative guidelines for academic work from the current academic promotion policy and practices intend to guide academics in Faculty E to accord high priority to research, value the quality rather than quantity of research, cooperate with other researchers in a research group to do research, internationalize their academic activities, improve social engagement and perform managerial activities. We can notice that most of the intended effects have been realized, if we compare the policy-guiding activities with the real practices of academics. Under the regulative guidelines, interviewed academics have prioritized research, placed more emphasis on the quality of research, formed or joined research group and worked with other academics together to do research. Academics in Faculty E have been internationalizing their activities actively. Academics in Faculty E have also come to realize the importance of social service and participate in activities of social service.

Third, in terms of the way and the extent that the policies and practices of academic promotion affecting academic work in Faculty E (the third sub-research question), the comprehensive analysis of regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive guidelines for academic work has tried to provide a comprehensive answer. The analysis shows that academic work are guided by the varying constellations of regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive institutional pillars in the academic community. In other words, the current status of academic work is a product of the interactions between current regulative guidelines and policies for academic promotion, academics' binding expectations and academics' perceptions of academic work and conception of academic promotion. The current academic promotion policy does have impact on academic work, as mentioned in the last paragraph. However, not all the intended effects of the current academic promotion policy on academic work are fully realized. For example, though the policy intends to guide academics to perform managerial activities, the majority of academics try to avoid involving in managerial activities. Currently only one third of academics participate in managerial activities in Faculty E. It became also clear that not all these policy guided activities will persist. The analysis result shows that academics in Faculty E will continue internationalizing their activities, according high priority to research and involving in activities of social service. However, other policy-guiding activities, including joining a research group and doing research in the form of collaboration, publishing academic papers in international citation indices, and involving in managerial activities, might not persist in the future, for the reason that they are not supported by either the expectations of academic work (normative guidelines) or the academics' perceptions of academic work and academic

promotion (cultural-cognitive guidelines), or both. For example, though academics are required by the current academic promotion policy and normatively induced to form or join a research group and conduct academic activities in the form of collaboration, academics' perception of academic work tell academics that this (collaboration of research) is not the best way for academics to do research because it has limited academic freedom. Academics might choose to quit working in a research group and begin to work individually in the future as to maintain their academic freedom. Interviewee A7's story of quitting working in a research group is a good example to support this point. Academics in Faculty E are also doing some other activities under the impact of the expectations of academic work in the academic community and academics' conception of academic work, which are not guided by the current academic promotion policy, i.e. balancing the needs of research and teaching and connecting research to teaching. Because these activities lack the regulative support in the institution, they are also fleeting and one day academics might stop doing them in the future. In regards of the future development of academic work, we expect that these fleeting activities might persist or disappear, depending on the changes of regulative, normative, cultural-cognitive pillars of the institution.

Actually, the study does not just provide answers to the three sub-research questions as shown above. Analysis of the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive guidelines on academic work in Faculty E shows that the impact of the current academic promotion policy on academic work are in particular noticeable in three areas: evaluation criteria, research groups and involvement in management.

The research also exposes that fair and recognizable evaluation criteria to measure the quality of academic outputs are missing. Gradually academics come to realize that quality of research is more important than quantity, while a few years ago they were all racing to increase the number of publications. Unfortunately a lack of fair and recognizable evaluation criteria for research quality stalls their motivation of improving the quality of research. The interviewed academics were worried about the over-emphasis of international citation indices in evaluating the quality of publications and the under-emphasis of peer review. Besides, the evaluation of teaching quality is also neglected in academic promotion, which discourages academics' motivation to perform quality teaching. The absences of clear, fair and recognizable evaluation criteria for quality gives leeway to the development of officialdom in academic promotion which may result in a loss of the academic spirit in academic ranks. Academic profession in China calls for a fair and recognizable evaluation system of the quality of academic outputs, which is based on peer review instead of bureaucratic logic, and takes both academics' and students' voice into account, instead of only the voices of senior academics and management. Also all different aspects of academic work, i.e. teaching, research and social service, should be included, instead basing academic promotion only on research output.

The imperfections of doing research in the form of collaborative work in research groups, which are widely criticized by interviewed academics, deserves our attention. It serves as a typical example of academics' behaviors, which is formed under the mutual impact of the idea of new public management and Chinese traditional culture, but goes in an unexpected direction. The aim of working as a group instead of working individually is to use limited resources more effectively and productively. However, research groups in universities are formed under the impact of traditional values of 'social groups' in the *danwei* era, in which group members are connected through *guanxi* and are expected to be loyal and committed to the group leader. As a result, research group members feel hijacked by the traditional values of 'social groups' and have to contribute their academic outputs to their group leaders as to demonstrate their commitment to the group. Inbreeding relations especially the supervisor-ship (*shimen relationship*) have great impact not only on the daily academic work, but also on the promotion of academics. From a surface perspective, we observe that research activities are carried out in a more efficient and effective way, but if we look inside the research group, we can discern that academics not only feel depressed by limited academic freedom and over-workload, but also are incensed about the unfair distribution of research outcomes. The characteristics of 'social groups' feature heavily in research groups in universities, which makes 'research group' no longer a basic research unit in the pursuit of knowledge and truth. As a result, academics who persist with academic freedom and choose not to join a research group might be marginalized, whilst academics who join a research group might worry about their lost academic freedom and research outcomes. The competition for research projects and funding opportunities is originally introduced to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of resources; however, when the competition become a group-to-group competition, not a person-to-person competition anymore, it furthers the differentiation orders of research groups in the academic community, and

even enlarges the disparity between powerful and powerless academics in the organization. If the situation continues, it might lead to the development of academic hegemony in a university, which has great influence on resources distribution as well as academics' personal development.

The enforcement of managerial activities from the university management is another example that shows the lingering impact of Chinese traditional culture on academic profession. We can see from the case that faculty commitment is still highly valued by the university management, but academics are more eager to break the reckless of faculty commitment and to fully concentrate on the development in their disciplines. As mentioned before, this manifests that academics are evolving from *danweiren* to 'academic worker'. Actually, Faculty E's managers' emphasis of faculty commitment in academic promotion as well as their expression of disappointment at the majority's resistance to fulfill the management work reflects that the university management are anxious by the fact that under the impact of current performance-based academic promotion policy, academics become more self-centered and more independent from the organization, and intend to solely focus on their own performance. Indeed, it is difficult to make a judgment whether this transition of academic identity is a merit or not, if we consider the issue from the standpoint of the organization management: organization commitment is very important for an organization's sustainable development. But one suggestion for the university management might be that university can diversify the ways of faculty commitment, instead of pushing academics to perform managerial activities, which is regarded by most academics as a distortion of academic work and a limitation of academic autonomy. For example, a possible solution could be to encourage academics to use the housestyle of the university when they are doing various activities.

The call for fair and recognizable criteria for the evaluation of the quality of academics' performance, the reflection of imperfections of research groups and the conflicts of enforcing managerial activities in an institution all reflect the fact that academic profession in China is faced with the challenge of making a good use of managerial tools in the context of Chinese traditional culture. The research shows academic work in Chinese universities is changing under the impact of the current academic promotion system, but we also need to consider that whether the changes are beneficial, sustainable and suitable for Chinese academic profession.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Finally, the researcher would like to propose some possible avenues for future research: first, we can extend the scope of the research to validate the applicability of the theoretical framework and gain further empirical insights in a comparative way. For example, the number of cases can be expanded and include more faculties from different disciplines in different levels of universities in China. It would be interesting to see differences and commonalities between different disciplines and different levels of universities, and it would be also interesting to see the whole picture that they depict of academic work in Chinese HE system. By doing so, the empirical breadth might expand. It would be also interesting to make a multi-county comparative study. For example, make a comparison with the same case study in an American university? Since most of interviewed academics mentioned the current Chinese He system is developing under deep impact of American system, it would be interesting to see the differences of impacts on academic work from the same approach in these two countries. Second, we can also extend the depth of the study of academic work. For instance, we can study the impacts on academics' preference of research projects, research methods, teaching methods, and academics' conception of teaching and learning relationship. It might be interesting to see how the academic promotion policy influence academics' daily practices. Third, we can also do a follow-up study and revisit the selected faculty, since such a longitudinal approach is rare and would allow a more detailed study of the impacts of current academic promotion policy on changing academic work.

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STAKEHOLDER INVOLVMENT IN QUALITY ASSURANCE OF INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN AUSTRIA

Jovana Savanovic

BACKGROUND

By virtue, universities have been international institutions from medieval times and have attracted students and scholars from different parts of the world. However, the forceful growth of globalization in the economic sector influenced the behavior of higher education institutions, and placed the process of internationalization into the spotlight. The demand for higher education institutions to become more reactive to the needs of knowledge society, to modernize and innovate became common to all institutions. Undeniably, the importance given to internationalization of higher education institutions has grown over the last years and internationalization is becoming more intimately connected to the core of institutional vision and mission.With this, the need to assure its quality is welcomed and needed. In the literature four different mechanisms to assure the quality of internationalization were identified. These are:

- regular quality assurance assessment approaches which include internationalization as a separate dimension (such as institutional audits or accreditations procedures),
- different tools to assure the quality of internationalization (self-evaluation tools, tools which lead to certificate for internationalization, ranking tools),
- legal mechanisms or contracts between government and higher education institution such as performance agreements and annual reports as well as student exchange agreements/ learning agreements between institution and a student,
- platforms for discussion (events, conferences forums and workshops) for several stakeholders to engage with issues related to the quality of higher education.

However, efforts to assure quality of internationalization throughout these mechanisms should be properly handled among several key players in the higher education arena. While the state and higher education institutions usually enforce certain standards in order to assure the quality of its teaching, learning and research, these should not be the only stakeholder groups responsible. It is of crucial importance to go beyond the state-institution relationship and include other stakeholder groups that are usually absent from these mechanisms.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

If internationalization carries a responsibility for being one of the indicators for the overall quality in higher education (De Wit 2010; Van der Wende 1999, Dittrich and Frederiks 2010), any desire and attempt to internationalize should be accompanied by the responsibility to assess its progress, andits quality. Ideally, most of the activities of internationalization would be a subject of internal or external quality assurance, however this is not usually the case. Van Damme (in Santiago et al 2008, 285) believes that national quality assurance systems are inadequate in dealing with the international aspect of higher education. Initiatives to assure the quality of internationalization are usually embedded only into standardized reporting of mobility-oriented figures or they are undertaken independently by the institutions or individuals within institutions, in a bottom up initiative (Aerden et al. 2012).

In a system such as the Austrian one, stakeholders of higher education enjoy a large degree of autonomy (OeAD 2010) which also includes the ability to design institutional policies for internationalization tailored to meet specific needs, and the ability to involve new institutional actors in policy and at operational levels (Leidenfrost et al 1997). With the rise of university autonomy, issues pertaining to quality assurance should receive more attention. This involves the need to clarify if crucial stakeholders are involved in opportunities which could enhance the quality of internationalization at higher education institutions or not. However, stakeholder groups essential to the quality assurance of internationalization are still somewhat undefined within higher education.

By the same token, academic literature also lacks engagement with the extent to which quality assurance of internationalization reflects the key stakeholder expectations. Several researchers (in Auvinen and Mariasingam 2012) warn that the views and perspectives of the stakeholders have not been given significant consideration in planning and implementation of higher education activities and its quality. In addition to this, the absence of individuals and groups directly involved with the improvement of teaching, learning and research is also noticeable (Huston & Paewai, 2013). This practice not only questions the objectivity of quality assurance systems, in regular teaching and research activities, but also questions if responsibility among different stakeholder groups for something that should be an integral part of the quality of teaching and research, such as internationalization, is shared.

AIM AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

With the presumption that higher education institutions want to internationalize and use internationalization as one of the ways to achieve their institutional goals, this research should be able to clearly answer the question: **How involved are stakeholders in mechanisms to assure the quality in internationalization of higher education institutions in Austria.** Before answering this question, it is essential to firstly (a) examine who are the important stakeholders in the area of internationalization and its quality assurance. As the academic literature is not explicit in identifying such stakeholders, the current research attempts at covering this gap. After that, (b) their expectations regarding quality assurance in internationalization with particular reference to Austrian higher education system are investigated. Finally, more importantly, as was already stressed, this research would emphasize (c) stakeholder involvement in any of mechanisms which could lead to quality assurance of internationalization and pay a close attention to relative inequalities between groups. Finally, how a higher education system and its institutions proceed to identify, prioritize and engage with its communities/stakeholders reflects the level of evolution of universities (Jonbloed et al. 2008, 304). Therefore, analysis of stakeholder involvement in general might have an important implications for higher education institutions. It could provide essential data for the allotment of resources and planning of educational activities so as to increase the satisfaction level of different stakeholders (Zaharie et al. 2011). With this it might be understood as a strategic move and purposeful extension of institutional strengths (Sursock, 2012).

THEORY IN USE

Maintaining good communication with key stakeholders is an essential element of the quality of any organization (Auvinen and Mariasingam 2012) as dialogue with stakeholders is key in learning how the services of organizations are valued and how they could be improved. And while its origins lie in the business sector and its translation into higher education should be made with certain limitation (Jongbloed et al. 2008), the careful re-appropriation of stakeholder theory is relevant for most organizations as the core message of the theory is that the success of a business rests in creating value for its stakeholders. As all stakeholders are important, one can not look at any of them in isolation (Freeman, 2009). In times of market competition and higher responsibility towards its communities organizations need to consider and analyze the influence of their stakeholders (Mainardes et al. 2012). Furthermore, this stakeholder analysis involves three steps: identification of stakeholders, development of the processes that recognizes their respective needs and interest, and establishing and building relationships with stakeholders (p. 1862). This practice is not novel to the higher education arena, as universities are constantly forced to carefully reconsider their role and the relationship with their surrounding communities (Jongbloed et al. 2008). In addition to this, Weick (in Asif and Raouf 2011, 2016) believes any implementation of quality assurance in higher education should as well start with the development of strategic plans, which includes the identification of stakeholders and their requirements.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the aim of this research, qualitative approach is selected to address the main questions and create a scene for further discussion on the internationalization and its quality assurance at higher education institutions in Austria. The driving wheel of the qualitative approach is to understand individuals as constructor of reality (Freankel and Wallen 2006) and to answer questions such as „who, what, when, where and how" (Zikmund, 2003, 55). In relation to this approach, interviews were chosen as the most appropriate technique to explore individual thoughts and perspectives on the topic of the research and are conducted in a structured format, to allow

comparison between and within seven crucial stakeholder groups in this research. Questions were divided into four parts (identification of main stakeholders to assure the quality of internationalisation in HE system in Austria, expectations regarding the quality of internationalization and their involvement in mechanisms to assure the quality of internationalization). Prior to these three parts, it was important to clarify the definition of most commonly used term in this study, internationalization. This required the exercise of explaining to interviewees how is internationalization defined in the scope of this study, and encourage them to identify set of activities offered which define the state of internationalization in the context of higher education institutions in Austria.

After each interview, the data was transcribed. The transcripts were then analyzed in details, key themes were identified in relation to the research questions, using a method which quantified the data such as counting frequencies of occurrence of characteristics or themes, at the same time reserving its qualitative nature. In relation to this, for one question in particular coding technique was implemented, as to allow easier comparison between answers. Finally, for better visualization of data, Microsoft Excel 2010 and Wordl program were used to create word clouds and with this, highlight the words that appear more frequently in the interview transcripts. In total 24 individuals were interviewed representing seven different stakeholder groups. These seven groups were identified in the literature review as crucial for the topic of this study and are: Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy; The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria); Federation of Austrian Industry; Leadership/ Rector's office; academics; international office and students. Selection of all representatives assured that stakeholders come from the governmental, the educational and the corporate sector. To clarify, representatives from the Rector's office, academics, international office and student stakeholder group were coming from three different higher education institutions in Austria. It was of crucial importance to grasp the diversity of the Austrian higher education system and to include representatives from institutions of different disciplines and educational setting. For this purpose representatives were selected from a private medical university which offers a variety of postgraduate programs and degree courses, a university of applied science which offers a variety of bachelor and master degree programs in the fields of Applied Life Sciences, Engineering, Social Work, Health and other disciplines and a university for continuing education specifically oriented toward the needs of working professionals.

KEY FINDINGS

INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN AUSTRIA

Finally, having in mind that internationalization is a complex phenomenon realization of which widely varies between different higher education settings and given the absence of a concrete internationalization strategy at the national level in Austria, a wide diversity of international activities driven by higher education institutions was expected. However, no substantial differences were noticed among the representatives coming from the various institutions included in this research. Student exchange was overwhelmingly mentioned by a majority of representatives, and is regarded as a core activity at their originating institutions. Other activities mentioned frequently were percentage of foreign students, cooperation with foreign partners, international lecturers or international curriculum. However some of these activities should be labeled as international with caution, as they include national curriculum offered in English and a high percentage of German and Swiss students being referred to as international students. This illustrates the problem that there is no common agreement by representatives in higher education system on the meaning of internationalization. Also in an attempt to indicate the extent to which higher education institutions in Austria are internationalizing, the answers revealed a puzzling contrast between the current and the desired level of internationalization. Elkin et al. (2005) believe that is important to distinguish and understand the current and the desired level of performance for decision making purposes and to create better investments in activities which could impact the quantity and quality of internationalization. While student exchange might be in its mature stage other activities seem to lack prioritization.

IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

The seven selected groups already mentioned were defined as crucial also by representatives or interviewees included in the research, which was encouraging for the researcher. However, the total number of crucial stakeholders identified was 15 which confirms the expected diversity knowing that higher education institutions established multiple relationships with its communities (Jongbloed

et al. 2008). Other groups identified were: Associations which represent universities on the national level, Austrian agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research, The Austrian Science Board, Higher Education Institutions as a unitary stakeholder of all sub groups of stakeholders, Society at large, Program directors, Office of student affairs, Public Relation office and Families of students and academics. According to the collected responses, students are believed to be the crucial stakeholder group in assuring the quality of internationalization at higher education institutions as *"the direct leading user of student exchange*," which was the most common activity of internationalization identified by representatives in this research. While the importance of this group did not reveal any surprises, it is expected that groups such as the Ministry receives higher prominece than it did due to the component of funding internationalization activities and high interest in the provision and the quality of higher education to meet the needs of its consumers and society (Jongbloed et al. 2008). The same applies to the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austriawhich as a body of quality control seems to be relevant to many aspects of higher education and quality assurance (Kalvermark and Van der Wende, 1997), yet its importance was barely recognized. While external actors in this research prioritized stakeholders at the national level, academics, international offices and students selected stakeholder groups within the institution. However, these answers could be based on representatives working position at the moment. On the other hand there were differences within the groups. In particular representatives coming from university of applied science gave a high importance to the corporate sectors. This could be explained once on how the profile of an institution have influenced the relations institutions have with stakeholders (Jongbloed et al. 2008).

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE QUALITY OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

As much as this it is troublesome in the quest to define quality in higher education (Tang and Hussin 2011), it is necessary to understand it in order to avoid making false projections on the expectations of others and invests in activities that are not of major interest to stakeholders (Shanahan and Gerber 2004).It was not surprising that the student perspective stressed the need for good preparation before the student exchange and indicators that were crucial to their studying process and study life. However, non-of the student interviewed emphasized in particular experiences gained abroad or possibilities for social life as these indicators proved to be commonly mentioned characteristics of a good higher education institution and its activities according to student group in the recent research by Udam and Heidmets (2013). Representatives from international office and academics seemed to prioritize inputs, dealing with pre mobility issues, financial support and teaching staff requirements as those characteristics important for successful internationalization. However, according to the characteristics of quality which are in favor of other stakeholder groups it seems that expectations of students, international officers and academics regarding the quality ininternationalization are situated on the other side of the table and do not overlap with the quality expectations of others to great extent. Typically, students care about individuals advantages and not about the advantages of the nation as much as the Ministry and the AQ Austria, due to their different interest and level in the higher education experience. These differences could also indicate that more cooperation among groups is necessary, while an analysis of commonalities and differences among various stakeholder groups helps to identify areas of current or potential cooperation (Knight 1997, 28). In addition to this Udam and Heidmets (2013) believe that the balance between these groups leads to better implementation of the quality assurance system.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN MECHANISMS TO ASSURE THE QUALITY OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

The tool of assuring the quality of internationalization at institutions of higher education in Austria most often referred to by interviewees was the performance agreement. Many higher education systems use it as a tool in which the Ministry and individual institution agree on goals for the period of few years on the basis of on their own situation and national priority in higher education sector, with the aim to achieve improvement of institutions and the system (Yutronic et al. 2010). In Austria, the Ministry and the rector's office have the right to change or influence decisions stipulated in the agreement and to propose new topics or goals concerning internationalization. The active roles of both of these groups were emphasized by other representatives, particularly in the case of the Ministry, since government still plays a key role in creating the frameworks and opportunities for the internationalization not only in Austria but in most of the countries (Van der Wende 2007, 284). Another mechanism identified to assure the quality of internationalization, annual report, requires involvement of rector's office and the international office of an institution. While the first is responsible of approving the report before its submission to the Ministry, the

international office seems to be partially involved through collecting data on internationalization as a part of the annual report. Other formal tools to assure the quality of internationalization at institutional but also at individual level are the application form for mobility exchange, learning/training agreement documents and the student report. These three documents concern student exchange and involve the work of students and the international office. Finally, several national and international events play a role in assuring the quality of internationalization directly or indirectly. Here, different stakeholders can bring their preferred topics to the floor for discussion. However, while these events are of crucial importance to discuss issues related to internationalization in Austrian higher education system, they usually take place outside of the institutional area, and could serve as evidence to support the view that internationalization is as an isolated exercise (Van Damme 2001).While no other tools have been discussed by more representatives at once, the integration of internationalization through regular quality assessment procedures seems to be an apple of discord between representative from university of applied science and the AQ Austria, who denied that internationalization is included as a distinctive standards and should not be understood as dimension integrated to assure the quality in regular audits and accreditation procedures. However, with that being sad, the role of academics and students, which is usually crucial in external and internal quality assurance procedures (BMWF 2002), is not important at this stage, knowing that assurance of internationalization through regular quality assurance procedures does not exist and should not be understood as a mechanism in use, since internationalization has not been a strong feature of internal subject review (QAA in Westerheijden 2010). This was confirmed also by representatives of both groups, the academics and the students. Judging by this, the absence of AQ Austria should not come as a surprise. However, those who did not opt for the agency as being the crucial stakeholder in assuring the quality of internationalization, might have been driven by the desire to remain free in choosing the agency which supports the university in their quality assurance work (ENQA 2007, 8), since this is a characteristic for Austrian higher education system.In relation to this, academics, are yet another group completely absent from these mechanisms. While one representative from this group stressed that: "*quality assurance of internationalization usually takes place through informal dialogue with the students."* Other representative from this group particularly referred to program directors as holding the largest responsibility for assuring the quality of internationalization. It is hard to distinguish out of a statement as such, if academics prefer to leave the responsibility for quality to higher levels and remain resistant to quality assurance. The fact that certain conflicts exists between academics and other stakeholders in higher education regarding the concept of quality is notorious (Kis 2005). Academics are usuallythe critics of quality assurance practices by referring to it "as over-assertive management or bureaucracy, imposed at a distance from the academic practitioner and institutions" (Williams 2009, 51).

Finally, there were conflicting opinions regarding the role and involvement of employers. While the Ministry and representatives from university of applied science seem to be highly supportive of this group, others do not mention them, which might be problematic, having in mind the need for graduates to become more employable (Beso et al. 2008, 6) and the skills needed on the market. This calls for a tight collaboration between representatives from higher education and the corporate sector (Knight and De Wit 1999, 18). However, as already mentioned, collaboration with employers is highly emphasized by representatives from the university of applied science, therefore the importance given to certain stakeholder group may be highly influenced by the perspective taken into consideration (Jongbloed et al 2008).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, as universities in Austria enjoy a substantial level of autonomy, they also have the freedom to set up their own objectives and priorities in terms of internationalization. However these activities should respond to the need of the ever more demanding environment and society, through promoting principles of accountability. Performance agreements, among others, serve as mechanisms of quality assurance and monitoring in many higher education systems and meet accountability principles. In this sense, universities are not completely autonomous, but they share the responsibility for quality of teaching, learning and research with the Ministry. Even though initiatives to assure the quality of internationalization are usually embedded only into standardized reporting of mobility-oriented trends and figures as is the case in other higher education systems (Aerden et al. 2012). Nevertheless, with internationalization included and recognized as an important dimension of the performance agreements, this research also reveals that the quality of internationalization is shared among two groups: the ministry and higher education institutions. The government in Austria is an

aid which can potentially enhance internationalization through financial support, creating an internationalization strategy at a national level and by removing bureaucratic procedures, as it is the case in other countries as well (EUA 2013). However, institutions tend to be the driving force of successful internationalization and monitoring at the institutional level. In the case of Austria, this is particularly characteristic, as there is no internationalization strategy at the national level. Finally, the responsibility for assuring the quality of internationalization through mechanism or documents on institutional or individual level includes the work of the rector's office, international office and students as individuals. These three groups along with the Ministry, seem to play an active role in assuring the quality of internationalization and the overall quality of the mobility exchange, as the core internationalization activity.

While it was an intention of this research to identify those who are involved and those who are not, it was out of the scope to point out on who should play a leading role in assuring quality, as that is still determined by institution, which have the autonomy to choose its own stakeholders and profile. However, what could be highly criticized are the mechanisms to assure the quality of internationalization identified in the Austrian higher education system, which illustrate the quality assurance of one particular activity, student exchange. This raises the issue over the quality assurance of other activities and the reasons for absence of other stakeholders.

Furthermore, it would be of particular interest to see, as Teichler describes (2004, 22) which modes of steering and management are most suitable for the continuing trend of internationalization and if this sharing of responsibilities for quality assurance of internationalization between these four groups is the most suitable manner to assure quality of internationalization also in the future. In the end, higher education institutions have to adapt to certain changes that match the needs of the environments and its stakeholder groups. Student and staff exchange became the landmark instrument and activity of internationalization, however one needs to be aware that internationalization is a more complex and meaningful phenomenon (Aerden 2014).

While new activities of internationalization are continuously emerging across the world, it is important to think in advance on the upcoming trends in the field of internationalization in higher education and its quality, as well as the new stakeholder group that might emerge as a consequence to this. A good example of such an activity is information-communication technology which offers a new provision of education educational opportunities via e-learning for less money, at a greater flexibility, and meeting the international scope of curriculum (Henard et al 2012; Altbach and Knight 2007). It is worth observing that while some argue its quality depends on the pedagogical model employed (Henard et al 2012, 28), this might bring not only the new stakeholder groups to the fore, but introduce of a new mechanisms to assure the quality of this activity. It is indeed likely that in the future, the number of mechanisms as well as the stakeholder groups important for assuring the quality of internationalization will change along with the changing nature of internationalization.

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RATIONALES FOR THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: THE CASE OF RUSSIA

Gunsyma Shaydorova

BACKGROUND

Although universities have developed international activity since the Middle Ages, the 1980 - 90s witnessed a new wave of interest to issues of internationalization in higher education. Over the past three decades, the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship has risen dramatically, from 0.8 million worldwide in 1975 to 4.1 million in 2010, more than a fivefold increase **(**OECD, 2011; OECD, 2012).

Growing interest in internationalization of higher education can be explained by different reasons. Firstly, the process of globalization of the economy and labour markets pushed demand in internationally-competent workers with knowing of foreign languages, social and intercultural skills. As world economies become increasingly inter-connected, multilingualism and intercultural skills have grown in importance on a global scale. Secondly, an export of educational services has become one of the sources of revenue for higher education institutions (HEIs) and national economies in many countries.

Advantages of internationalization of higher education are apparent: improvement quality of training, joint research projects, implementation of international quality standards and enlargement of international cooperation. Alongside these positive accounts, however, there has been skepticism towards the quality, effectiveness and relevance of education and research through international cooperation as well as increasing concern over inequity and marginalization.

Currently international dimension of higher education is being increasingly promoted on the national and institutional levels in many countries. It should be noted that both levels are very crucial. The national level has a significant influence on the international dimension of higher education through policy, funding, programs and regulatory frameworks. Yet it is usually at the institutional level that the real process of internationalization is taking place (Knight, 2004, p.6 -7). To some extent, institutional level is a mirror which reflects national policy. More and more higher education institutions became independent and strategic actors in the process of internationalization. According to the 3rd Global Survey Report of International Association of Universities' (Knight, 2003a), based on the analysis of survey responses from 745 institutions in 115 countries, 78% of institutions consider internationalization as having increased in importance within their institution over the past three years.

Today with increasing internal and external pressures, Russian universities as well as many universities in the world are expected to develop strategies in all areas, including the international dimension to make their competitiveness appealing to both domestic and global markets. Russia's education potential has traditionally been seen as an essential resource for the country's development. Since the Soviet era, Russia has boasted a wealth of experience in attracting foreign students. It should be noted that the Soviet Union used higher education mainly as a geopolitical tool and as an "ideological weapon" especially during the Cold War. With 126,500 foreign students enrolled in 1990, Russia was ranked among the first 10 countries in the world providing academic services for foreign students (Sheregi F., Konstantinovsky D. & Arephiev A., 2006). However, after the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia's share of the world's educational services market has been on a steady decline.

The post-Soviet period of the internationalization of higher education can be divided into two stages. The first stage (1990-s – mid 2000-s) is characterized by activities mainly at the institutional level and lack of a policy at the national level. Many HEIs participated in exchange programs, established cooperation with abroad universities, also this period is marked by active work of international organizations. Since the mid - 2000s, internationalization has been high on the agenda in Russian higher education policy. With increasing internal and external pressures, Russian government had to develop strategy in the area of the international cooperation in higher education

to make universities more competitive and appealing to both domestic and global markets.

It should be noted that joining the Bologna process in 2003 was an important movement and it promoted the internationalization of higher education in Russia and the integration of Russian HEIs into the European Higher Education Area. Whereas exchange programmes such as ERASMUS were aimed at the individual student, teacher or institution; with the Bologna process the internationalization of higher education has been taken to the national level through reforming the structures of degrees to make them more comparable between the different countries. Nevertheless, there is a low level of integration into the world market of educational services where the competition is growing. According to OECD statistics (OECD, 2012, p.364), in 2010 Russia was the 7th most popular destination for international students. It attracted a relatively modest 4% of all students, compared to 17% in the United States, 13% in the United Kingdom and 6.4% in Germany.

The internationalization of higher education has become a pressing issue over the past years and the Russian government has paid attention and made a lot of efforts to internationalize universities. Recent initiatives of the government in the area of higher education include innovative educational projects, development and support for national research universities and most recently, the international competitiveness program. Why are the government and HEIs interested in international activities? What are rationales for the internationalization of higher education in Russia from the perspective of main stakeholders (the government and higher education institutions)? How have rationales for the internationalization of Russian higher education changed since the 1990s? A clear understanding of rationales is significant because, they dictate the kind of benefits or expected outcomes one would expect from internationalization efforts… rationales are reflected in the policies and programs that are developed and eventually implemented (Knight, 2004).

Growing interest in international dimension of higher education induced research on issues of the internationalization. As Teichler and Kehm pointed out, 'the general state of research is characterized by an increase of theoretically and methodologically ambitious studies without a dominant disciplinary, conceptual, or methodological "home" (Teichler & Kehm, 2007, p.260). According to Teichler and Kehm (2007), complexity of issues of internationalization and interplay with other problems explains mainly an inter-disciplinary area of studies of internationalization. The main topics of research on the internationalization of higher education include various issues, among them are interplay between globalization and internationalization of higher education, different types of mobility and exchange, mutual influence of higher education systems, internationalization of the content of teaching and learning, financial aspects, supranational, national and institutional policies of internationalization.

One of the significant areas of research on the internationalization of higher education is from the perspective of national policy, i.e. studies about the internationalization of national systems of higher education.

Authors have identified rationales for internationalization differently over time. Aigner et al (1992) described three reasons for internationalization: safeguarding international security, maintaining economic competitiveness and fostering intercultural understanding. Scott (1992) identified seven grounds for governments to internationalize their higher education system. They include the increasing competitive nature of economics, countries' wish for environmental interdependence, the multicultural and multi-religious diversity within nations, the growing number of foreign owned firms within national borders and the pressure they exert on local businesses, the multi-raciality of academic supervisors and the striving for peaceful relations between nations.

Other authors stressed the importance of economic factors in internationalization processes in higher education. For example, Davies has added to Scott's work that internationalization is "closely linked with financial reduction, the rise of academic entrepreneurialism and genuine philosophical commitment to cross-cultural perspectives in the advancement and dissemination of knowledge" (Davies, 1992, p. 56). The conceptual framework of the master thesis is based on the literature on internationalization of higher education (Huisman & van der Wende, 2004) and particularly on concepts of Knight (2004) and de Wit (2002). Knight's updated and developed conceptual framework (2004) provides some clarity on definition, meaning and principles to guide policy and practice. She updated the definition of the internationalization as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education. (Knight, 2003, p. 2). This definition is applicable both to institutional

and national/sector level.

Political rationales include such subcategories as foreign policy, national security, technical assistance, peace and mutual understanding, national and regional identity. They have been very important in all periods especially postwar period (World War II), the period of restructuring the relationships with the former colonies, as well as during the process of integration of the European Union.

The economic rationales include financial incentives, labour market, economic growth and competitiveness. They are related with the short and long term economic benefits. Short term benefits mean first of all tuition fees and the other money international students bring with them during their stay in a country. Regarding long-term economic benefits, international students can fill labour shortages and they can improve a country's research capacity. Economic rationales are currently considered as one of the main drivers of internationalization policies in many countries.

The third group of rationales are *academic rationales*. They include international dimension in research and teaching, extension of academic horizon, institution building, profile and status, enhancement of quality and international academic standards. Despite the fact that economic rationales are becoming very important educational and academic rationales remain crucial for many countries. In contrast to the economic rationales, academic rationales for internationalization tend to promote policies based on cooperation, although it is necessary to point out that cooperation and competition go hand in hand (Huisman & van der Wende, 2004).

As for the *cultural and social rationales*, internationalization is often considered as an important way to promote and preserve national culture in response to the globalization processes In this sense, the internationalization of higher education is viewed as a way to ensure cultural and ethnic diversity.

Knight (2004) points out emerging rationales at the national level such as:

- human resource development;
- strategic alliances;
- income generation/commercial trade;
- nation building;
- and social/cultural development and mutual understanding.

The conceptual framework proposed by Knight (2004) and de Wit (2002) is modified with the aim of: 1) making a specific framework focusing on the national level and 2) reducing the overlap between the rationales.

Firstly, it should be noted that such academic rationales as international dimension to research and teaching, extension of academic horizon, institution building, profile and status are predominantly institutional level rationales. As for enhancement of quality and international academic standards, they refer more to national level. Enhancement of quality is generally a top-level rationale whereas international academic standards is a more specific rationale which contributes to quality. Also it necessary to point out the growing importance of international rankings especially for evaluation of competitiveness of universities and higher education systems on the whole. University rankings have become an integral part of the global higher education system. They have important functions in supporting communications, informing stakeholders about universities and acting as instruments of transparency and image-building for universities at the national and international levels.

There appears to be an overlap between two rationales as Financial incentives and an emerging one as Commercial trade. Many national governments consider higher education as an export commodity and encourage various internationalization income generating activities as contract education, recruitment of foreign students and international education advisory services. Characterizing growing importance of commercial trade Knight means mainly cross-border delivery of education, which include franchise arrangements, foreign or satellite campuses and online delivery. In my opinion, commercial trade can be included into financial incentives. The framework proposed by Knight (2004) includes one rationale called Labour market as well as an emerging rationale entitled Human resources development which can be included into Labour market. Some rationales have been removed in order to reduce the overlap. For example, rationales as Intercultural understanding, Citizenship development, Social and community development can be combined

under more general rationale Social and cultural development.

A modified framework for national internationalization rationales is proposed in Table 1.

Political	**Economic**	**Academic**	**Social/Cultural**
Foreign policy	Economic growth and competitiveness	Enhancement quality of education	National identity (including cultural identity or preservation and promotion of language and culture)
National security	Labour market	Ranking and competitiveness of higher education system	Social and cultural development
Technical assistance	Financial incentives		
Regional identity			
Nation building			
Peace and mutual understanding			
Strategic alliances			

Table 1. Rationales Driving Internationalization at the National Level.

METHODOLOGY

The research has a qualitative approach and there are two reasons to undertake this kind of study. Firstly, the qualitative approach is determined by the nature of the research question. In a qualitative study, the research question often starts with what or how; in our case begins with "What are rationales for internationalization ..." that requires the understanding motives of stakeholders for internationalization. Also it is crucial to underscore the understanding of the particular context within various stakeholders such as government bodies and agencies or HEIs are acting (Maxwell, 2005). This is in contrast to quantitative question that ask why or how many and look for a comparison of groups or a relationship between variables, with the intent to establish a relationship or cause and effect. Secondly, utilizing a qualitative study can be explained because of sufficient time and resources need to be spend on extensive data collection in the field and data analysis mainly of "text" information (policy documents).

DATA COLLECTION

The study is based on using such methods as a documents analysis and an interview. The main research method is the documents analysis. Documents included for the analysis can be classified as:

- legislation (e.g., Law on Education in Russian Federation);
- policy documents of different government bodies and agencies of the Russian Federation (e.g., Concept of Government Policies of the Russian Federation on Developing National Human Resources for Foreign Countries at Russian Educational Institutions (2002);
- universities strategies and programs on internationalization;
- others (e.g., verbatim records, reports and presentations of an expert group 7 "Labour market, post-secondary education and migration policy" for preparation Strategy of socio-economic development of Russia 2020).

The first and the fourth groups of documents are used for background information. The second and the third group of policy documents represent the most significant and numerous part of the documents body and can be regarded as a statement of the courses of action that policy-makers and administrators intend to follow. According to Scott (1990), there are four criteria for assessing

policy documents: firstly, the authenticity of the document; secondly, the credibility of the document; thirdly, is the document representative, and, fourthly, the meaning of the document. For the purposes of this study, government and higher education organizations' policy documents are selected and analyzed. The documents are reached through web-pages of government bodies as well as universities, also on-line databases will be used. The analysis covers documents published between 1991 - 2013.

Analysis of rationales for internationalization of higher education from the perspective of the higher education institutions is based on universities strategies and programs on internationalization. According to statistical data, currently there are 1046 higher education institutions, 609 of them are public and municipal and 437 non-public institutions. (Russia's 2013: Statistical Pocketbook, 2013, p.13). Because of the time constraints and limit of resources, ten higher education institutions with high ratings on internationalization criterion are analyzed in the master thesis. The selection is done according to the National rating of classical and research universities of 2012/2013 academic year.

The second method of the research is an expert interview. The expert interview is an important source of information since experts have high insight in aggregate and specific knowledge. Two individuals will participate in the research representing different positions and opinions related with the topic of the thesis. The experts are identified through specialized literature review. Their capacity as experts is based upon their formal positions as senior administrators:

- the head of an institute of education of an university, an expert member of a working group 7 "Labour market, post-secondary education and migration policy" for preparation Strategy of socio-economic development of Russia 2020;
- a professor, the head of a regional center for academic mobility.

Moreover, three interviews published in official sources are used for the research as a secondary data.

DATA ANALYSIS

In order to define rationales for the internationalization of higher education from the perspective of the government and universities, a content analysis is used for analysis of policy documents and interviews. According to Berg (2001), content analysis as "the interaction of two processes: specification of the content characteristics (basic content elements) being examined and application of specific rules for identifying and recording these characteristics" (p. 248). In other words, certain content elements, such as words, paragraphs, items, themes, concepts are coded. King (2004) describes a code as "a label attached to a section of text to index it as relating to a theme or issue in the data which the researcher has identified as important to his or her interpretation" (p. 257).

Padgett (1998) explains the process of coding qualitative data as " a process of identifying bits and pieces of information (meaning units) and linking these concepts and themes around which the final report will be organized" (p. 76). Based on Knight's classification of rationales, a template of categories is constructed with some modifications. The process of coding is done during the review of the policy documents by hand using the a template of categories.

KEY FINDINGS

Exploring rationales for the internationalization of higher education is crucial, but the difficulty is that they are often formulated implicitly or described in general terms, such as ' enhancement quality of education' or 'competitiveness of higher education' and cannot be measured. A clear understanding of rationales is necessary because, they dictate the kind of benefits or expected outcomes one would expect from internationalization efforts… rationales are reflected in the policies and programs that are developed and eventually implemented (Knight, 2005, p. 14–15).

This study has found that the government sector has all four rationales for the internationalization of higher education whereas universities mainly academic and economic ones. As the examination of the government sector policy documents showed, political and economic rationales are regarded as having high priority while both academic and social/cultural rationales are considered as having moderate priority. A disaggregated analysis of categories has demonstrated that a type of political rationales - foreign policy - is regarded as having high priority. This analysis has also proved the

following subcategories of economic rationales having high priority: economic growth and competitiveness, financial incentives and labour market.

Universities as one of the main stakeholders do not have one exclusive rationale, but a combination of rationales for internationalization. The diversity of rationales and greater importance of institutional level rationales partly can be explained by the fact that internationalization was not given much importance at the national level especially in early of the 1990s. At the institutional level, the most preferred rationales are academic ones: international profile and status, international academic standards and research and knowledge production. In comparison with the Soviet period, income generation through export of educational services is becoming a motive for international cooperation although it is not among main rationales.

Analysis of current rationales for internationalization from the perspective of the government sector and universities and comparison with rationales before the 1990s allows to identify certain change in motives. Firstly, it should be noted the shift from the political rationale to the economic, as well as a shift within the political rationale from peace and mutual understanding and technical assistance to foreign policy. The overarching rationale of the internationalization policy on the national level is an economic one.

As for academic rationales, they often remain implicit reflecting the general consensus that internationalization improves academic quality. Analysis of documents and literature review allow to conclude that the before the 1990s international academic standards were main motive for the internationalization for institutions of higher education whereas currently international profile and status is dominant. Finally, cultural motives for the internationalization of higher education are not so strong as they were before the 1990s.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The internationalization of higher education in Russia is relatively an unexplored topic. So, there are various directions for further research. Few studies have analyzed the rationales for the internationalization of higher education in Russia from the perspective of different stakeholders. Analysis of rationales for the internationalization of higher education in Russia requires taking the viewpoint of the students and the staff. This will allow to have a comprehensive picture of the rationales for the internationalization of higher education. One of the possible directions for further research is a comparative study of rationales for the internationalization of higher education in Russia and other countries.

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HOW DO PREVAILING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS AFFECT UNIVERSITY CONTRIBUTION AND TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS BUILDING AN ENTERPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY?

Anne Swanson

BACKGROUND

The European Commission has argued that while European research institutions are good at producing academic research outputs, they are not successful in transferring these outputs to the economy – the so called 'European Paradox' (European Commission, 2007). To improve competitiveness, an array of EU funded projects has been implemented across the 13 regions established for transnational cooperation and development activities. Nevertheless, there is a realisation that, *"Too much of the research conducted in the region is not transformed into products and services for the market. There is still more to be done on building links between business and knowledge institutions and this is particularly urgent for SMEs, which often do not have the networks or capacities to access new research results"* (The North Sea Region Programme Secretariat, 2013. p.5). Recognition exists that policies for the knowledge triangle are insufficiently joined-up, an example being the relatively minor role that the education and training dimension of higher education receives in policies for the European Research and Innovation Area (FarHorizon, 2010). There are various underlying structural problems concerning technology-transfer existing in Europe. A lack of coordination of policy instruments for research and innovation is causing problems within the enabling environment, which suggests that research must be carried out in order to measure the factors at play (Conti and Gaulé, 2009). Further research is also required to explore the internal organisation dynamics and external innovation ecosystem (IKTIMED, 2013), given university technology-transfer is underutilised in many National Innovation Systems.

Yet Etzkowitz noted as far back as 2004 that universities can contribute more towards economic and social development through third mission activities in the modern knowledge society. This agrees with Bercovitz and Feldman (2006) who concluded that an understanding of the evolution of the role of the university in systems of innovation certainly warrants further attention. They believe that if we are to think creatively about public policies towards increasing university technology-transfer, a focus on the larger innovation context is necessary. This also agrees with Marxt and Brunner's (2013) findings that more research needs to take place to determine the measurability of higher education in relation to innovation at national level. Van Looy et al. (2011) found during their study that detailed studies are needed at university level to analyse the differences in strategic orientation, incentive arrangements and support structures (TTO), in order to determine the entrepreneurial practices deployed in universities (e.g. Debackere and Veugelers, 2005; Rothaermel et al., 2007). They also identified a gap in the documentation and analysis of the impact of (national or regional) innovation system characteristics in which universities are embedded, as an important complementary research endeavour. They contend that considerable opportunities for growth in the European Research Area is possible, on the basis that future research confirms the crucial role of national innovation system characteristics on the entrepreneurial performance of universities. In addition, during the course of their study, they noted a number of strong differences between European countries on the level of the entrepreneurial performance of universities, signifying the importance of further analysing these anomalies transnationally.

This is particularly interesting given Gunasekara (2006) highlighted the importance of understanding policy perspectives for university engagement at regional level, regarding the sustainable operation of universities. He suggests that there may well be heightened interest in how university engagement at a regional level can provide a basis for the sustainable operation of universities themselves. This suggests that there is a gap in knowledge regarding university transformation in relation to the regional system in which it functions. Nevertheless, Allinson (University Industry Innovation Network, 2013) succinctly pointed out that universities have to be many things to many people, and are facing a lot of challenges which require complex decisions. She highlighted that it is important for universities to protect and maintain their core mission, as this

element needs to be strong for the future, as well as the need to protect fundamental research. This signifies the complexities universities face internally, through trying to balance core activities with those arising from interaction within innovation systems.

Drawing together the lessons learned from the literature, it is recognised that universities can play an important role in university technology-transfer activities within innovation systems. However, it seems that it is not easy for industry to collaborate with universities, and vice versa, given the variety of disciplinary orientations and missions of different

universities, and the differing aims and goals of industry. This means universities have to become more entrepreneurial through professional transformation in order to ease collaboration processes, and attract diversified sources of funding. Nevertheless, further research is required to explore organisational dynamics and bottlenecks, both internally within universities, and with external innovation ecosystem actors, in order to fully understand how the innovation system is influencing university transformation, and which bottlenecks are most restrictive towards transformation and output. This is certainly recognised as an important element to investigate to potentially enhance innovation systems, and understand how universities are responding to such changes, whilst also servicing their core missions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of this study is to understand how prevailing regional and national innovation systems affect university contribution, and transformation towards universities becoming more entrepreneurial.

The focus lies at the interface between universities and the innovation system. This should highlight the impact changes at regional and national level within innovation systems has on university contribution and transformation, thus pinpointing successes and challenges within the system; and secondly, determine similarities and differences through comparatively analysing these findings at regional level. The Life Sciences sector has been selected to narrow the focus.

The Main Research Question

How do prevailing National and Regional Innovation Systems affect university contribution, and transformation towards building an Entrepreneurial University?

Sub Research Questions

1. How and which **actors** of the innovation system have influenced universities to become more entrepreneurial?

2. What **mechanisms** (funding, platforms, programs, regulation etc.) exist in the NIS / RIS to harness university contribution to innovation and economic development?

3. What are the **organisational barriers and enablers** for university engagement to become more entrepreneurial?

4. How do actors and mechanisms of the innovation system ease contribution processes by universities?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature pertaining to the phenomena under investigation was examined to analyse the main theories and concepts relating to the overarching themes: Innovation Systems, and the evolution of the Entrepreneurial University. As such National and Regional Innovation Systems, Triple Helix Theory and issues relating to university transformation were explored.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS

The concept of the National Innovation System (NIS) was originally developed by Freeman (1987), Lundvall (1992) and Nelson (1993), whereby the overall notion was defined to describe the interaction of elements and relationships to produce and diffuse knowledge which is economically

useful within a country's borders (Lundvall, 1992). It is clear that much of the work carried out pertaining to the NIS was targeted to small countries such as Sweden ,Norway, Denmark, Finland, Japan, and Cyprus for example, which is evident in various author's work (e.g. Lundvall et al., 2011; Kapetaniou and Lee, 2013). Interestingly, Lundvall et al. (2011) found that these small countries prosper because they have a highly developed capacity to absorb and use new technology used elsewhere - something they have in common with developing countries. The literature to date can be split into two categories, encompassing a narrow or broad approach. The narrow approach focuses on institutions and policies directly involved in innovation

such as the STI policies (Science, Technology and Innovation) (OECD, 1999). Whereas the broad approach takes into account the social, cultural and political environment (institutional system / framework) of the country context. This includes a nation's financial system; its monetary policies; the internal organisation of private firms; the pre-university educational system; labour markets; and regulatory policies and institutions; as well as the aforementioned narrow components (Feinson, 2003).

Fagerberg and Sapprasert (2011) highlight that literature regarding the systems approach towards innovation has grown rapidly since 2003, across a range of disciplinary areas. What is clear is that such systems must respond to needs, thus the coupling of mechanisms and policies is a bid to achieve a well-functioning NIS which delivers upon the technological and social innovation needs of a nation (Godin, 2010). Lundvall et al. (2011) point out that old style hierarchical modes of organising work may increasingly become barriers for the kind of intra-organisational interaction that is necessary to become a lead innovator. Lundvall (2005) noted that some of the conceptual openness of the concept of a NIS refers to the fact that historical and local context affects where the limits of innovation systems are set. These findings highlight the importance of fully understanding the historical context and existing framework of a NIS, when designing and implementing changes within the system. It is clear that innovation processes are evolutionary and path dependant (Johnson, Edquist, & Lundvall, 2003), meaning you cannot easily transplant a 'high performance element' from one system to another and expect similar results (Lundvall, 2005). Lundvall (2005) noted that the NIS highlights importance of interaction with universities on the innovative capabilities of SMEs, which is important for innovation and regional and economic development. Yet gaps exist in understanding how the formation and openness of the NIS affects how universities interact, and indeed contribute towards economic development within the system. Lundvall (2005) posits that more research is needed to understand the openness of national systems, and the relationships that exist within this dynamic, particularly given the varying role governments' play in economic development.

Given the regional focus of this particular study, it is apt to consider innovation systems from a regional perspective. Johnson, Edquist and Lundvall (2003) note that systems of innovation can be delimited in a number of ways: spatially, geographically, sectorally, or according to the particular activities they focus upon. As such, systems of innovation with a geographical emphasis can be considered at the local level, regionally, nationally, or at supranational level. it is important to consider the RIS within the frame of the prevailing NIS given the institutional elements of the RIS are largely shaped by the overarching national system; as such, their organisational structure, funding, and activities are dependent on national level policies and public resources (Doloreux, 2002). Governments, particularly those situated within advanced economies, realise the potential of regional innovation systems. As such, clustering policies and regional innovation have been promoted as a means to boost national competitiveness (Cook and Memedovic, 2003).

Universities' role within RIS has evolved considerably over the last 20 years, given the extension towards partaking in 'third mission' activities has transformed how universities function internally, but has also transformed how they are perceived within innovation systems (Gunasekara, 2006). By way of a comparative university case study, Gunasekara (2006) noted the importance of understanding the policy perspective for university engagement at regional level, with particular regard to the sustainable operation of universities. He argues that the distinctions highlighted through the Triple Helix model and university engagement literatures are material, given the need for real evidence to inform policy as to how university engagement at regional level can provide an appropriate basis for the sustainable operation of universities themselves. This statement highlights the need to bridge existing theories regarding these phenomena with real life situations, thus compounding the need for the current research endeavour. Interestingly, Gunesekara (2006) noted that a combination of institutional and economic factors determine the role universities perform in the development of a RIS. Despite this, the general university engagement approach (which

emphasises universities contribution towards the economic and social development of a region) plays down the differences in university missions; path dependent evolution and positioning within a region; and also oversimplifies the willingness and indeed capacity of universities to adapt their functions in response to external signals (Gunesekara, 2006). What's more, Asheim and Coenen (2005a) identified that analysis of different types of RIS must take place within the given context of the knowledge base at industry level, given a range of industry sectors may be present.

TRIPLE HELIX THEORY

Triple Helix theory, developed by Etzkowitz and Leydesdroff (1995) explores the relationship between university-industry-government as sub-dynamics within innovation systems. It is imperative to understand the complexity of each node, given government can be considered at local, national, regional or supra-national level (Marginson and Rhoades, 2002); industry can be classified into different sectors and type of business (Metcalfe, 2010); and universities can be further classified by various sub-dimensions such as public or private control, size, geographic location, and institutional ranking, to name a few (Metcalfe, 2010). Therefore, the Tripe Helix thesis can be considered as widely applicable, yet it can also enable a narrow focus on specific elements within an innovation system through appropriate selection and analysis. The Triple Helix explores the 'systemness' of an innovation system and thus benefits from the confines of geography to delimit particular empirical case studies under investigation (Leydesdorff, 2012; Leydesdorff and Zawdie, 2010). It highlights the potential for innovation and economic development through the generation of new institutional and social formats for the production, transfer and application of knowledge (Ranga and Etzkowitz, 2013). It focuses on innovation systems at various levels in terms of institutional and functional categories, which can potentially contribute towards the improvement of the effectiveness of innovation policies at regional and national levels (Leydesdorff and Zawdie, 2010). Etzkowitz (2002) defines the first dimension of the triple helix model as the internal transformation within each of the helices, in the case of the university this could constitute the progression towards an economic development mission. He states that the second dimension pertains to how one helix influences another. Lastly, he contends that the third dimension deals with the creation of a new overlay of trilateral networks and organisations, which evolves from the interaction between the three helices. Therefore, this creates a spiral model of innovation, which acts to capture multiple reciprocal relationships at various points throughout the process of the capitalisation of knowledge.

Nevertheless, Leydesdorff (2012) argues that the definition of a system is no longer what it used to be, and remains in transition given dynamics relating to local, regional and supranational environments and actors. In addition, he contends that when more than two helices are in operation, this opens the possibility for chaotic behaviour, which requires stabilisation along a trajectory, with government tending to provide this stabilisation through ongoing interactions, and perhaps domination in some contexts. Nevertheless, Leydesdorff (2012) also points out that dynamics within individual nodes are two fold, given that although nodes develop upon their internal axis (i.e. their own primary paths), they will inevitably be affected by external developments which impact the functionality of interaction and communication. In addition, they are also constrained by their own specific institutional settings, functions and culture. This highlights why it is so important to understand transformation within universities in relation to their prevailing innovation systems.

Throughout TH theory's development, differing perspectives have been explored including the (neo) institutional perspective, the (neo) evolutionary perspective, from the perspective of the Entrepreneurial University, and through the concept of Triple Helix Systems of Innovation (Stanford University, 2014). Regarding the current study, the (neo) institutional perspective and perspective of the Entrepreneurial University are most relevant for further exploration. The (neo) institutional perspective examines the growing prominence of the university among innovation actors through national and regional case studies, which reflects the current methodology employed in this study. In addition, this particular perspective focuses on various aspects of the university 'third mission' of commercialisation of academic research and involvement in socio-economic development (Stanford University, 2014). As such, it takes into account the variety of stakeholders, drivers and barriers, benefits and impact, university technology transfer and entrepreneurship, contribution to regional development, government policies aimed to strengthen university-industry links, and so on. (Stanford University, 2014). Importantly, it differentiates between three main configurations in the positioning of government, industry and university in relation to each other, including the statist configuration, the laissez-faire configuration, and the balanced configuration; whereby the intersection of these three spheres in this balanced configuration is perceived to provide the most

favourable environment for innovation (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000).These configurations highlight the dominance of State control in the statist model, the disconnection between individual spheres in the laissez-faire model, and the favourable overlap between spheres in the balanced Triple-Helix model. This overlap is particularly important, given the development of trilateral networks and hybrid organisations which have developed in order to enhance interactions between and among spheres. This is of course essential to produce, accumulate, and diffuse knowledge for promoting competitiveness through innovations (Lundvall and Johnson, 1994; Archibugi and Lundvall, 2001).

Of particular relevance, is the concept of the Entrepreneurial University, which is a central concept within the Triple Helix model. Academia's role in creating and applying new knowledge through 'third mission' activities is a salient feature of the Entrepreneurial University. This is because socio-economic development is a fundamental outcome associated with its activities and role within the Triple Helix, particularly given intellectual assets are considered renewable and thus a strong source for continued regional development (Etzkowitz and Dzisah, 2008). As such, the economic impact of universities through R&D effort to GDP is noteworthy (Farinha and Ferreira, 2013), however, Kapetaniou and Lee (2013) and Hazelkorn (2006) argues that a university needs to be directly linked to the industry in order to maximise the industrialisation of knowledge. A number of authors have argued the importance of these three institutional spheres (university – industry – government) as fundamental components to enhancing regional and national innovation systems (Etzkowitz, 2003a; Etzkowitz, 2003b; Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000; Leydesdorff and Meyer, 2006; Cooke and Leydesdorff, 2006; Smith and Bagchi-Sen, 2010; Etzkowitz and Dzisah, 2008; Huahai et al., 2011; Galindo et al., 2011). Importantly, it is recognised that universities may indeed perform an elevated role in innovation within the context of knowledge based societies (Etzkowitz, 2003a; Etzkowitz, 2003b; Leydesdorff and Meyer, 2006; Etzkowitz and Dzisah, 2008; Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000). This is especially true as nations aim to move from industrial economies to knowledge based economies. Further, the formation of collaborative links between innovation actors is a central concept of the Triple Helix model, and universities have found themselves at the centre of such developments through their valuable production of scientific research. Nevertheless, one problem of the Triple Helix model is its focus on a top-down system level, rather than on the peculiarities of individual actors **(**Leydesdorff and Zawdie, 2010). This is pertinent given no two universities are the same, or indeed follow any typical path towards becoming entrepreneurial. Therefore, this highlights the need to better understand the impact of interaction on university transformation.

TOWARDS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY

The availability of funding has changed dramatically over the past decades, with reductions in national public funding allocations for universities. There has been an orientation towards linking HE policies with economic innovation strategies (Hoareau, Ritzen and Marconi, 2012), and designing funding mechanisms to increase economic activity. This is likely due to the recognition that universities' are perceived as potentially key actors in processes of entrepreneurial discovery which lies at the centre of smart specialisation processes (ESMU, 2012). As a result, growing political pressure is present for universities to increase their own research funding options through intensifying interaction with industry, given level of competitiveness is likely to be impacted if reducing public funds are not matched by private sources (Muscio, Quaglione and Vallanti, 2013; Hoareau, Ritzen and Marconi, 2012). Koryakina, Teixeira and Sarrico (2012) also noted the importance of income diversification in European universities given the deficit in funding resulting from shortages in public finances. They note that governments have tested different approaches as a means to attract finance to higher education systems, through providing tools for revenue diversification, and also through the introduction of market mechanisms. In addition, Koryakina, Teixeira and Sarrico (2012) argue that this diversification of income is a potential source to improve the current deficit in innovation, through promoting knowledge transfer within public-private partnerships. Nevertheless, the introduction of market mechanisms has created a more business like environment, given universities now have to compete for research funding and attract tuition fees. As a result, how universities are run is transforming in response to such measures, as outlined by Clark (1998). He notes this business-like behaviour in the way universities are changing structurally and also managerially, and uses terminology borrowed from the business world to describe the types of strategic thinking, committed leadership, institutional governance, entrepreneurial culture, and flexible and responsive organisational structure, to illustrate this evolutionary pattern (Clark, 1998). Work by Bercovitz and Feldman (2006) on university-industry links emphasises universities' role in regional systems of innovation as the primary driver of economic development. This ideology

agrees with Palmintera (2005), who believes there is no doubt that university technology-transfer and commercialisation activities are impacting local, state, and national economies. As Bercovitz and Feldman (2006) conclude, an understanding of the evolution of the role of the university in systems of innovation certainly warrants further attention. They believe that if we are to think creatively about public policies towards increasing university technology-transfer, a focus on the larger innovation context is necessary. This also agrees with Marxt and Brunner's (2013) findings that more research needs to take place to determine the measurability of higher education in relation to innovation at national level.

Overall, universities recognise the increasing need to supplement their funds to carry out their multiple missions, with results from Koryakina, Teixeira and Sarrico's (2012) Portuguese case study highlighting that revenue diversification activities were recognised as drivers of institutional dynamics and development. This shows the enormous impact regarding how available funding streams within innovation systems have the power to create transformational change within universities. Clark (1998) found, an entrepreneurial university can be analysed from five dimensions; namely, strengthened steering core (whereby universities need greater organisation internally in order to become quicker and more flexible in their ability to adapt to changing demands in the wider environment); diversified funding base (whereby universities need to increase financial resources through expansion of possible third stream funding sources); expanded development periphery (whereby universities need to create appropriate infrastructure in order to forge links with outside organisations more easily and professionally); stimulated academic heartland (whereby measures must be taken to stimulate university staff, particularly academics to embrace and carry out change for ultimate transformation); and entrepreneurial culture (whereby universities must develop an institutional culture over time that embraces change, in order for it to become rooted in practice, and become a shared value amongst staff). It seems that a university not only requires structural change in the first three dimensions, but also requires buy-in at the cultural level described by the remaining two dimensions, especially given universities are people oriented institutions, whereby people are the driving force to enact change. Interestingly, Kivisto (2007, p.194) noted during his study that in general terms, the government-university relationship seems to contain the essential conditions that should be present in an agency relationship: namely informational asymmetries and goal conflicts. This illustrates the difficult relationship between government and universities by highlighting issues of transparency which lead to issues of mistrust, and also the differences in end goals which persist between these two actors. Literature pertaining to academic capitalism discusses to great length the differences in orientation of academics to pursue third mission activities (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997). There is a tendency in some settings for individual academics to pursue such commercial activities, with strong resistance from the majority of the collegial body to such developments (particularly in the more traditional universities). In other cases, entrepreneurial spirit appears to be more embedded in the organisational culture, with modern universities displaying this type of entrepreneurial drive.

Organisational structure plays an important role in the successes of entrepreneurialism. Considering that adhocracy and market quadrants dominate in entrepreneurial universities, flexible organisational structures are required for responding to the external environment more quickly, which is particularly important given the competitive nature of this environment. Therefore, universities must be strategic and adaptable to change (Spanier, 2010), and the easiest way to aid change is through the hierarchy and organisational structure in place. Glaser (2012) argues that the internal and external governance structures of the university have shifted and become more entrepreneurial, meaning the relationship between the ministry and the universities shifts to vertical steering structures based on negotiated objectives and performance contracts. Nevertheless, Martinelli, Meyer and von Tunzelmann (2008) argue that differences in motives and organisational structure can lead to conflicts due to cultural differentiations in how administrators and academics carry out their activities, with the former too aggressive in bargaining, or acting in an excessively bureaucratic fashion. In addition, Martinelli, Meyer and von Tunzelmann (2008) found that individual characteristics and perceptions about potential risks of external links for scientific values may explain the personal propensity to different types of entrepreneurship better than university policies and organisation.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study has been designed as a case study, given this method is designed to focus on a specific problem, in order to determine the characteristics of the selected case within a bounded

system, through utilisation of multiple sources of data (Ary et al., 2010). Based on Yin (2009), Bray, Adamson and Mason (2007) and Creswell.

(2007), this case study is designed as an empirical enquiry. It utilises a pragmatic yet holistic approach, to investigate this phenomenon in-depth within its real life context, through abductive reasoning. This collective case study explores two bounded systems (the regions of Vienna and Stockholm), thus enabling an in-depth analysis to take place (Creswell, 1998; Ary et al, 2010). Predominantly qualitative primary and secondary data will be utilised, given the study is heavily context based. The limited focus of this study is designed specifically to cope with the numerous variables which are likely to present themselves, given data is designed to be obtained from multiple sources. Nevertheless, multiple source data will be useful for triangulation purposes. This study will benefit greatly from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2009). Focusing on Level 2 of Bray and Thomas's (1995 as cited in Bray, Adamson and Mason, 2007) Cube, emphasis is placed primarily at regional level, with a broader focus to capture the prevailing context of the national innovation system, given this has a strong bearing on what takes place at regional level. Perspectives from the concepts of National Innovation Systems (Lundvall, 1992), Triple Helix (Etzkowitz, 2002), and Entrepreneurial Universities (Clark, 1998) have played an important role for the formation of the analytical framework and consequently, the formulation of interview questions and data analysis, which will be discussed shortly. A comparative approach has been utilised to study the problem through a combination of two theoretical lenses, in order to deduce explanations of relationships identified, and thus provide insights to the problem.

Given the unique focal point of the study, elements from three concepts has been utilised to design a frame of analysis specifically for this study. As such, Lundvall's (1992) National Innovation Systems, Cooke, Uranga and Etxebarria's (1997) Regional Innovation Systems, Etzkowitz and Lededorff's (2000) Triple Helix, Metcalfe's (2010) focus on Tri-lateral relationships within the Triple Helix, and Clark's (1998) Elements of Entrepreneurial University Transformation have been adopted. First, the research question has been framed by considering how the university fits within the National Innovation System, this has helped to identify the focal point of the research at the interface between university and the external innovation system. Secondly, the actors, relations, and mechanisms have been considered based upon Triple Helix principles, to design the sub-research questions, and ensure the study maintains questions which relate to the innovation system, and connect to the specific actors under study. Finally, three main dimensions from Clark (1998) (Strengthened Steering Core; Diversified Funding Base; and Entrepreneurial Development Periphery) have been adopted specifically to design questions which probe university transformation in relation to prevailing innovation systems. Nevertheless, the remaining two dimensions of Clark (1998) (Stimulated Academic Heartland; and Entrepreneurial Culture) have been considered in conjunction with these elements given transformation lies with the actors who carry out the change, and consequently, these dimensions have an impact. However, given studies already exist exploring this particular phenomenon, this element has taken a minor role in the current research endeavour. The Analytical Framework is shown in Table 1:

Conceptual Elements	Identified Target Groups (Interviewees)				
	Government	Funding Agency	Industry Representative	Bridging Organisation	University
Actors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mechanisms	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organisational Barriers and Enablers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strengthened Steering Core					✓
Expanded Development Periphery					✓
Diversified Funding Base					✓
Stimulated Academic Heartland					✓
Integrated Entrepreneurial Culture					✓

Table 1 Analytical Framework (Source: Own depictio).

Multiple sources of evidence were utilised, with a case study database created to hold and organise all literature, data, raw data, and analysis, as the project progresses. Unique case sampling was the favoured method in order to select specific universities involved in the life sciences sector, to maintain a narrow focus. In this instance, 4 universities and 8 innovation system actors have been selected from 2 regions identified as areas where the Life Science sector is of economic importance. This particular selection is based on the need to interview expert trilateral actors as reflected within the Triple Helix literature of the importance of trilateral relationships for stimulating interaction (Metcalfe, 2010). University actors were selected on the basis of ensuring representation from different levels within the university (i.e. management, technology-transfer office, and researchers) in order to understand the impact and implementation of transformation processes at different levels within the university. In addition, the semi structured interview approach was adopted as the primary data capture method, given it enables flexibility to follow interesting paths as they arise, is advantageous as it supplies large volumes of in-depth data, and provides deep insights into that particular person's perspective on the situation. The aim was to target between 20-24 interviewees, with a minimum of 15-20 considered an acceptable lower limit. In the end, 17 interviews were obtained. Questions were piloted and amended before use to ensure reliability, and interview guides compiled to address targeted data collection from the variety of actors involved. As such, comparable questions were constructed according to the adopted criteria within the analytical framework to address each indicator. Secondary data sources were identified to gather information relating to the national and regional innovation system. National sources (e.g. BMWFW, Vinnova) and supra-national sources (e.g. EU, OECD) have helped to give an overview of the prevailing innovation system in which the case studies are located. In addition, it was noted that indicators used in secondary data can give a limited view. As such, definitions and supplementary qualitative analysis helped overcome any potential erroneous traps.

Each semi-structured interview was recorded for accuracy of transcription, and subsequently coded and tabulated to enable comparisons internally, regionally, and trans-nationally. Checks were made systematically, to ensure avoidance of misinformation, or mistakes during data collection and analysis. After data was coded, and organised, themes were selected based upon the analytical framework (outlined above). Data analysis took place to first search for significant patterns in the data, and then individually address the selected indicators and ultimately answer the research questions. This enabled a theory to be constructed as the investigation progressed. To promote credibility of the project, evidence is based upon structural corroboration through the selection of several representatives per university; several representatives from the innovation system; and utilisation of secondary data relating to the universities and innovation system. This has enabled

triangulation of data. Regarding transferability, it is feared that generalisations of the results cannot be readily applied to all universities within the countries under review, given the sample size is too small. Nevertheless, as cross-case comparisons are being utilised as the core element of this research endeavour, it may be possible to generalise to a small extent, but one must bear in mind the selection effects of the adopted narrow focus on the Life Science subject area. In addition, the results are also contextual, given the regional focus of the study, again affecting transferability of the results.

KEY FINDINGS

After investigation, it appears that prevailing innovation systems and their overarching institutional frameworks affect the level of university contribution. This echoes and extends Hoareau, Ritzen and Marconi's (2012) finding that political systems may influence performance of their public policies. Interestingly, the regional dimension of innovation did not have as much impact as the overarching national dimension. This is due to the fact that many mechanisms and policies are rolled out at national level. Nevertheless, it was clear that the regional dimension came into effect

concerning actors and small proportions of regional funding which are targeted towards the Life Sciences sector. This reflects findings by Davey et al. (2009) who found that regional strategies play to key strengths of a region. Yet in the Swedish case, it was clear that the national system prevailed, with only regional competition being highlighted as a detrimental factor to development. However in the Austrian case, it seemed that regional dynamics played a stronger role, as Federal States seem autonomous in their activities, and very much disconnected. This disconnection also echoed in the governance of the innovation system, with knowledge triangulation policies still quite disconnected in their orientation (European Commission, Erawatch, 2014a). The structure of the system definitely echoes the principles of the National System of Innovation (Lundvall, 1992). Nevertheless, the system seems quite hierarchical and disconnected, and could potentially learn from Sweden in this case, given Lundvall et al. (2011) pointed out that intra-organisational interaction is necessary, as hierarchical modes of organising can create barriers. As such, the Triple Helix approach prevails in Sweden, which is possibly aided by the flat structure present in the country, as well as the types of funding programmes and various mechanisms in place to stimulate collaboration between different nodes. This reflects Lundvall's (2005) finding that historical and local contexts affect the extent to which innovation will take place. Therefore, focusing on the system dimension, rather than solely on STI policy creates greater connections which are contextually relevant to the case country's economic, political, and cultural traditions (Lundvall, 2005; Ramstad, 2009). However, much work still has to be done given closer inspection revealed that transfer of funding between sectors does not take place to a large extent (European Commission, Erawatch, 2014b). This particular anomaly requires further analysis to determine why.

In both country cases, government (or its associated agencies in Swedish case), appear to have a fundamental impact on how universities are transforming. This can be attributed to policy changes (in the Austrian case) whereby further autonomy has been granted to universities as a means to enable them to professionalise and secure diversified sources of funding from elsewhere in the innovation system. It can also be attributed to various short-, mid-, and long-term funding projects (in both country cases), whereby universities are being steered towards priority thematic areas, and to also collaborate with other actors in the innovation system, given the rules and regulations of acquiring such funding. Nevertheless, the disciplinary focus and traditional orientation of each university case reflected its level of entrepreneurial activities and transformation. Both BOKU and KTH Royal Institute of Technology have had close links with industry for several decades, and this reflected in the structural and organisational transformation that has taken place over time, and the generally positive attitudes of academics towards contributing to the innovation system. Therefore, although bridging organisations are vital to connect actors, and industry are incredibly important in collaborating with universities, it seems government plays a pivotal role in creating the appropriate entrepreneurial innovation environment whereby universities have enough autonomy and resources to contribute efficiently, whilst also maintaining their core missions.

In particular, the University Act 2002 and uni:invent programme have played pivotal roles in the Austrian system for the entrepreneurial transformation of universities. Although Swedish universities feel restricted in their autonomy, they have also benefited from targeted funding for the development of Innovation Offices. This particular infrastructural development has been a positive development to bridge university commercialisation in the innovation system. Competence Centres have also been highlighted in both cases as being pivotal, considering the unique innovation

environment and platform it provides. Its long-term orientation also enables trust building, which has been noted as a fundamental element in university collaboration processes. In addition, government funding programmes in both country cases has been noted as being particularly important in order to increase funding allocations to universities. Nevertheless, government need to provide more risk capital to bridge the gap created by the low number of venture capitalists, given current institutional frameworks and prevailing cultures are still in their infancy in this regard in both country cases. From the university perspective, having support from university management, and inclusion of entrepreneurial activities within strategy documents and development plans of a university, seems to promote successful transformation, given entrepreneurialism permeates throughout the system as a result. Other important mechanisms such as IP policies and the Teacher's Exemption have also highlighted that elements from these mechanisms could potentially be adopted into systems to ensure transparent collaboration, and also incentivise academics to collaborate.

Nevertheless, a number of barriers were highlighted which were common to both innovation systems under analysis. A lack of funding was the main barrier, highlighting that targeted funding could reduce current bottlenecks in the system. Areas requiring attention include the need for higher levels of basic university funding from government, in order for universities to be able to match fund industry projects and maintain their independence in such collaborations. Higher allocations of risk capital is also missing within the system, requiring government to bridge the current 'Valley of Death'. In addition, further funding is required to improve and increase infrastructure within universities, and enable the recruitment of further human resources for TTOs, given the current situation is limiting its collaboration volume potential, thus capping its income potential. This reflects Koryakina, Teixeira, and Sarrico (2012) who noted that there is a need for appropriate infrastructure to support emerging third mission activities. From a structural and organisational perspective, external innovation actors noted difficulties relating to the variety of university structures present, thus requiring varying individual approaches. Further, the vast number of people external innovation actors need to know within universities also increases the time taken to form collaborations, which adds complexity to creating collaborations. In addition, bottlenecks exist regarding knowledge transfer internally within universities and what is made available externally to innovation actors. This requires the design and utilisation of knowledge management systems in order to avoid duplication of research, enable greater transparency of projects, and create efficiencies in the distribution and development of knowledge for commercialisation. However, it seems tensions exist within universities between operating a professional business model and performing the core traditional functions of the university, which stems from limitations in time, funding, and in some cases, academic cultures present within universities, and their subsequent resulting engagement in commercialisation activities. Care must be taken to overcome this hurdle, given conflict between academics and administrators within universities can inhibit transformation and development (Martinelli, Meyer and von Tunzelmann (2008). Culture plays an incredibly important role within such processes, both within universities and in the broader innovation system, and it was found that differing cultures between nodes also created tensions during collaboration. Therefore, this requires a balanced approach, taking into account structural, organisational, and cultural bottlenecks simultaneously.

It is also important to align these barriers identified at the micro level, with those highlighted at the macro level. In the Austrian case, the prevailing bureaucratic structure, and perceived lack of a clear strategy and goals, and indeed varying goals and strategies between actors, was considered a major inhibitor for development within the system. In the case of the Life Sciences sector, the complicated situation regarding the healthcare system was also identified as an inhibitor. Despite its proximity to universities, its governance structure currently creates a major barrier for the uptake of innovations flowing from universities and the innovation system. However, this particular issue goes beyond the scope of the project. In the Swedish case, it was clear that a differing governance system was in place, with much more control afforded to the associated agencies. However, the legal system was perceived as a barrier given rules and regulations associated with basic university funding. Despite this, the Swedish respondents felt happier with the level of basic funding received. Nevertheless, both country case representatives noted that the academic emphasis on producing publications rather than number of commercialisations has great impact on output, reflecting similar tensions found by Martinelli, Meyer, and von Tunzelmann (2008). This can be attributed to the traditional tenure system in place, which also impacts the mobility of researchers between industry and academia, particularly later in their careers. Therefore, this requires attention at system level, in order to create balance and overcome issues between public and private knowledge. Returning to the issues of culture, it appears that a culture for innovation and entrepreneurialism prevails in Sweden, which could indicate why, despite their identified bottlenecks, they are still categorised as an Innovation

Leader. It would be interesting to delve further into their differing governance structure, to understand how applicable this system may be in other country cases such as Austria.

A number of enablers were also identified in both country cases, with Competence Centres identified as an excellent long-term initiative, providing a much needed platform where trust building could take place. In addition, expanding the development periphery of universities through the addition of TTOs has also been hailed as a successful development for easing the collaboration and contribution processes of universities within the innovation system. This is likely due to the professionalisation of the system, and the increased visibility of this interface, whereby external actors can interact and collaborate more easily. However, it should be noted that presence of the TTO alone is not enough, and requires a commitment from leadership, and appropriate processes, functions, and IP policies in order for it to be successful. Elements of the Teacher's Exemption, a highly debated issue within the study, could potentially yield good results if

adopted carefully within a university system. Pressures on academics and their general orientation towards the core missions of teaching and research, tends to reduce the efforts directed towards commercialisation. Nevertheless, balance is required when considering to incentivise commercialisation, given its potential detrimental impact on these aforementioned core functions. As such, additional human resources could potentially alleviate such burdens, and thus requires complex strategic solutions to overcome this issue.

It appears that all actors play a role in easing university contribution to the innovation system, however government plays an elevated role due to developments in national and EU strategy documents, their allocation of funding through various mechanisms, and changes made to legislation (e.g. University Act 2002 in Austria). Targeted funding towards the development of TTOs in both cases has enabled universities to professionalise their organisation and functions in response to the innovation system. The most successful transformation cases included those where entrepreneurial activities were embedded within the mission and the strategy of the university, and considered as day-to-day activities. Therefore, this incorporates the same importance placed on the other core missions of the university, echoing the University of Waterloo's approach towards promoting entrepreneurialism throughout its vision and mission statements, as a means to serve as an institutional enabler of entrepreneurial culture within their institution (Bramwell and Wolfe, 2008). Nevertheless, the traditional orientation of the university plays a strong bearing on how well it can interact and contribute to the innovation system, with the Life Sciences area considered a strength in this respect. It was also noted that the formation of broader schools within universities went some way towards creating conducive environments for collaborative activity. Nevertheless, the creation of unstructured platforms through internal clustering seemed to be a successful addition in the aim towards creating cross-disciplinary environments- an area many respondents felt was underdeveloped and underutilised. However, due to the lack of funding available within the system, universities have to take strategic decisions regarding which IP is pursued, and as such identification of niche markets has been a pivotal strategy to deal with lack of funding, but place focus on key strengths of universities. Therefore, it is apparent that it is not only actors and mechanisms in the system that eases university contribution, but also universities themselves through transformation and professionalisation. However, successful transformation needs incremental change over a considerable period of time (Clark, 1998), which appears evident, particularly in the case of BOKU and KTH Institute of Technology. In addition, a mixture of structured and unstructured transformations appears to be conducive to the entrepreneurial development of universities, and subsequently, their contribution potential. This could be due to the fact that structured transformation provides a visual organised and professional model which is clearly understood by external actors, and can be managed in terms of day-to-day functions, and financial health. Whereas the unstructured approach to platforms and academic networks utilises the flexibility, freedom, and individual characteristics of research disciplines and the people carrying out the work. Therefore, this highlights the symbiotic nature of solutions required between universities and external actors to increase growth of the innovation system, through creation of a dual structure. Nevertheless, given the high complexity present, simplification is imperative to ease collaboration processes through reducing bureaucracy, and attempting to control chaotic behaviour that can take place when two or more nodes collaborate. This could be further eased through reducing competition in the system and increasing collaboration to create efficiencies.

From a comparative perspective, the life sciences are a very important sector economically in both the Stockholm and Vienna regions. Governmental strategies in both regions pay attention to this area; however, Sweden has taken a stronger long-term strategic approach to development through

directing large public investment towards the sector and its infrastructure. Nevertheless, Austria is not far behind in its approaches, however strategizing and investment is more conservative in this case. The comparative analysis of the case universities highlights that all universities are becoming increasingly professionalised and entrepreneurial, although this is taking place at differing levels and time scales. The medical universities appear to be more traditional in culture and structure, particularly in the Swedish case. However, this is changing, as pockets of academic entrepreneurs are increasingly participating in collaborations and technology-transfer activities. Nevertheless, it was highly noticeable that both KTH Royal Institute of Technology and BOKU are much more entrepreneurial, and also have a longer history of development in this respect. Additionally, a culture for entrepreneurial activities was strong in both institutions. This may be attributed to the fact that entrepreneurialism was given greater emphasis within the mission and strategy of these universities in comparison to the medical universities, with buy-in from top management clearly evident in the long-term planning for collaborations, particularly in the case of KTH Royal Institute of Technology. Overall, it appears similar barriers exist for universities in both regions, which suggests that these are national system level anomalies. Therefore, there is a need for structural easing, particularly regarding autonomy in the Swedish system. Additional funds are also required, particularly in the Austrian system, in order to give universities more flexibility and power, and also bridge current funding gaps.

Comparing national and regional innovation systems, the national system predominates in both country cases; however, some regional differences occur, particularly in Austria, where federal regions appear quite autonomous in their strategies and approaches. In this case, Austria has afforded more autonomy to its university system in comparison to Sweden, which has enabled universities to take more decisions, and professionalise accordingly. This particular move would be beneficial in the Swedish system to increase the scale at which universities can make decisions regarding infrastructure and the financing of technology-transfer activities. Interestingly, the governance structure in Sweden is quite different to that in Austria, with governmental agencies having greater power and autonomy to interpret strategies and distribute funding. Despite disconnections, fragmentation and disjointed structural problems in each case country, the clarity and focus of innovation strategies appears stronger in Sweden. Nevertheless, both regions, and indeed countries, face similar issues, including the gap in funding known as the “Valley of Death”, which is ultimately causing a gap in innovations within the system. Weak links also exist between academia and industry generally, despite some universities having elevated success in this area. It will be interesting to track the progress of the current large targeted financial investment in Sweden, especially given governments there have identified the importance of investing in infrastructure and research in a centralised way in order to get more out of capital expenditure in research and development. As such, timing of investments and targeting towards pivotal areas seems to have been what has led to greater success in the Swedish case, given investment in the life sciences, for example, has been identified as an area for building long-term competitiveness. The development of incubators clusters and bridging organisations seems strong in Sweden, although Austria is also making good progress in this respect, with various Centres of Excellence and bridging organisations such as LISA Vienna easing collaboration processes.

Following Triple Helix theory, it seems governments are aware of the importance of connecting the dots between academia, industry and government; however existing National Innovation Systems and their prevailing institutional frameworks dictate the complexities of enabling these connections to be made. This highlights the need to consider how prevailing governing structures and legislative frameworks are impacting innovation system dynamics. This is particularly evident in the Austrian case where the Ministry of Finance controls allocation of finances, despite being disconnected to the Ministries formulating policies within the realm of R&D and university reform ((European Commission, Erawatch, 2014c). This is further exacerbated by the fact that education policy is not fully integrated in knowledge triangle within Austria at present (European Commission, Erawatch, 2014i), thus creating the need for more joined up thinking. Fragmentation also exists within the Swedish case, given public and private R&D systems are separate in Sweden, with universities carrying out most public R&D (European Commission, Erawatch, 2014n: European Commission, Erawatch, 2014t). Nevertheless, governmental programmes aim to encourage public private partnerships, and greater efforts are being made in the Swedish innovation system to involve universities. However, at present, it seems too much competition exists between regions, which create an environment that restricts collaborative activities. Each country case has individual elements which are outperforming the other, yet Sweden appears to be slightly ahead of Austria, due to governments being more supportive of R&D in Sweden in comparison. Both countries are actively designing programmes and projects to stimulate collaboration; however one main lesson

arising from this comparative study is the need for more funding and infrastructure for strategizing for long-term competitiveness and growth. Importantly, there is a need for more governmental support for universities and technology-transfer, and an increasing need to invest in basic research in order to maintain a successful innovation system. Therefore, increasing university autonomy, and creating opportunities for structural easing within prevailing institutional structures at system level should provide a framework upon which innovation can flourish from a practical system perspective.

Overall, comparing systems, it is clear that convergence in approaches are taking place, however it seems a leap is required in order to embrace new ideas and nodes of thinking, thus requiring further flexibility and openness within the system. Nevertheless, availability of funding is the core problem to overcome in this mission. In addition, the culture and ideology to adopt new ways of doing things is necessary. Interestingly, within the Austrian system adopting mechanisms such as tax incentives and further autonomy are elements that the Swedish system recognises it requires. Nevertheless, the structure and governance of such systems are starkly different, which may begin to shed light on why perhaps Sweden is an Innovation Leader. However, this seems strongly connected to prevailing cultures which tie closely with the institutional framework in place. Nevertheless, it is clear both systems are not without their challenges. Of most significance was the finding that structure of university systems is perhaps not as important at first glance as actual processes and cultures present. However, upon closer inspection, it seems structure has an important role to play in providing the physical infrastructure to complement an institutional framework upon which such processes can take place. Drilling down into the problem areas highlighted, it is clear that the overarching NIS and institutional framework influences how innovation will take place. In turn, this has influenced how universities respond, perhaps more reactively in the case of Austria. As such, prevailing culture has a major role to play both inside universities, and within the broader innovation system.

This study has gone some way to bring observations regarding university contribution and transformation from both sides of the innovation system, thus extending current literature by bringing the observations of various nodes together in one place. This has important implications for policy, given the findings not only highlight bottlenecks within the system, but highlight perceived issues from each actor collaborating with universities, and vice-versa. Therefore, it is anticipated that this study has pinpointed areas where future policy design can have significant impact for the growth of the innovation system, and the efficient development and contribution of universities. Therefore it is suggested that more inclusively designed studies are carried out in future to capture the collective thoughts of various actors for cross-analysis. Various issues have been raised within this study, requiring deeper analysis at individual topic level. Therefore, these two approaches towards research analysis have potential to provide practical insights for future development.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Like a rubrics cube or complex drainage system, it can be difficult to find a blockage or create conducive alignment. This study goes some way towards exploring this phenomenon, and it is clear that universities have the potential to contribute significantly to the innovation system. This study has exposed a number of barriers and enablers at the junction of collaboration. Therefore, the following conclusions and implications may be interesting for policy makers and university managers in both Austria and Sweden. Generic conclusions applicable to both country contexts will be discussed first, then unique country specific implications for Austria and Sweden will be highlighted, before drawing lessons for policy design at university and governmental level.

In both country cases, funding has been highlighted as a key bottleneck for transformation and contribution of universities to the innovation system. Availability of infrastructure is restricting the amount of collaboration that can feasibly take place, thus limiting the amount of diversified funds universities can realistically acquire. Therefore, government need to understand that targeting funding to this aim would create a positive investment for the future, enabling universities to source funds elsewhere in the system, thus potentially reducing their level of dependency on public funds. The “Valley of Death” has been pinpointed as a major inhibitor towards commercialisation of research. Therefore, targeted government funding is required to provide risk capital that is currently extremely sparse within both country cases. This should help to transform more research into products and services for the market, which is noted as lacking at present (The North Sea Region Programme Secretariat, 2013. p.5). It should also increase the returns on public investment, given

too many projects have to be killed off because of lack of funding to continue their development. At present, there is also too much competition within the system, requiring strategic measures to promote collaboration. Therefore, greater alignment between regions and federal states will not only create efficiencies, but ensure knowledge transfer permeates throughout the system, thus raising innovation potential nationally, rather than within specific hotspots. In addition, the need to target more funds towards basic research was also highlighted by actors, given a lack in basic research will ultimately restrict the amount of applied research that can be carried out, thus stunting the research system. This reflects Allinson's (University Industry Innovation Network, 2013) finding that funding mechanisms has reduced time and funds for the pursuit of new knowledge. Therefore, this appears to be a common problem beyond the case countries under analysis.

Another commonality to both country cases is that the traditional orientation and structure of universities varies greatly, which slows the process of collaboration due to bureaucracy, difficulties in identifying the right people to contact, and a lack of visibility regarding how business negotiations should take place with universities. Funding through various mechanisms has seen the implementation of TTOs which has enhanced the interface between universities and the innovation system. However, more needs to be done to enhance the business models of universities in order to further professionalise university operations, particularly with regard to management of collaborations, so that universities are able to operate more entrepreneurially, and thus enhance and extend the third mission activities in which they are involved. This includes the need for further infrastructure and human resources, which has the potential to increase commercialisation activities. Various issues were also exposed regarding the successful implementation of university transformation. Embedding entrepreneurialism within the mission and strategy of the university is imperative. In addition, strong leadership, and development of trust within the system is needed to get academics on board. Pressures to service the core missions of the university, as well as third mission activities, is facing major limitations due to available time and funding. Therefore, university managers must design solutions which are contextually sensitive to the prevailing organisational, structural and cultural environment present. The case studies analysed within this study go some way to illustrate successful methods and challenges which could be useful for benchmarking purposes.

Platforms such as the Competence Centres have been highlighted as a positive addition to both country cases' innovation systems, given their long-term orientation and capacity to enable trust building between actors. Davey et al. (2009) also maintain that sustainable high-level commitment is required, not only with respect to funding models (found in Koryakina, Teixeira, and Sarrico's (2012) study), but also softer aspects such as communication, motivation and time horizons of stakeholders in order to promote collaboration between actors. It is suggested that further funding is directed to support longer-term endeavours in conjunction with mechanisms designed to deliver results in the short to mid-term. Providing greater synergies and connections between policy areas could potentially enable the fruitful design of complementary mechanisms which will not only provide efficiencies, but deliver intended results. Nevertheless, knowledge transfer systems are needed within universities, and externally to communicate research endeavours with other innovation actors. Such a system could speed up the development of research by reducing duplication in the system and aligning interested industry partners with appropriate research groups for collaboration.

Significantly, two particularly unique country specific implications were also highlighted during the study. In the Austrian case it is clear that disconnection exists within knowledge triangle policies (European Commission, Erawatch, 2014i), which echoes findings by FarHorizon (2010) and the Austrian Council (2009), as even after 5 years, work still needs to be done. Therefore greater alignment in policies could potentially enhance output of the system. However, culture plays a pivotal role, and mechanisms must take account of current prevailing cultures, and strategically design systems which will promote entrepreneurial activity. In the Swedish case, further autonomy should be afforded to universities in order to overcome legal barriers pertaining to the funding of commercialisation. By providing an appropriate regulatory environment, universities will increase their performance if they are empowered to do so (Hoareau, Ritzen and Marconi, 2012).

Overall, adoption of the aforementioned suggestions should aid the design of a more flexible system incorporating synergies and mechanisms to encourage collaboration and knowledge transfer, which should ultimately lead to economic growth, and may help to overcome the European Paradox (European Commission, 2007). However, ignoring these structural issues, particularly regarding targeted funding and development of infrastructure, will ultimately stall developments within each

given system. This could potentially have lasting consequences on innovation and national competitiveness as a result, if private funding does not increase to meet the shortfall (Hoareau, Ritzen and Marconi, 2012). Therefore, funding endeavours must be regarded as a long-term investment to the system, in order to reap the benefits of economic growth, and create efficiencies within the system. This study has highlighted the importance of including all actors and being sensitive to their needs, as well as having a well-functioning and stimulating enabling environment, which has been proven to be heavily influenced by the prevailing institutional framework and innovation system. Therefore, improving interactions and providing a conducive environment increases the chances of innovative activity and potential economic development, which is imperative to try to improve return on public investment. However, it is also important to balance competing objectives within the system and within universities, given the varying missions universities are expected to carry out. Therefore, this study has enabled a snapshot of how this has impacted university transformation towards becoming more entrepreneurial, and where actors collectively see bottlenecks, which, if addressed, would ultimately increase university interaction and contribution to their respective innovation systems.

These lessons can be utilised in both country contexts to redesign policies and initiatives to be conducive to universities and the wider system, in order to create greater returns, and protect and maintain the core mission of universities. Understanding the role of proximity at regional, national and international level, both geographically and culturally may be useful in order to further develop technopoles (Doloreux, 2002) such as Competence Centres, to encourage interactions and cross-pollination of knowledge between actors, and further enhance activity in both country contexts. In addition, universities can benchmark and find solutions to meet the range of demands placed upon them. Importantly, governments need to provide funding and policies that provide a supportive mechanism promoting university interaction and contribution (through technology-transfer), rather than a restraint or bolt on requirement. Taking account of the lessons learned in this study may go some way to help Austria in its endeavour to become an Innovation Leader, and help Sweden to further elevate its activity. In a globalised and competitive world, now is the time to address these challenges in order to remain competitive and ensure these innovation systems and universities continue to develop, considering university technology-transfer is underutilised in many countries within Europe (IKTIMED, 2013).

During the course of the study, several areas were identified requiring further research. It would be useful to carry out this study in more depth, including more participants, across other European countries. Considering the EU wish to solve the European Paradox, further insights at the interface between universities and other innovation actors may highlight whether similar bottlenecks exist in other country cases. This would enable better targeting of EU funds in order to service the aims and objectives of Innovation Union, in order to aid competitiveness and functionality of the system. It would also be beneficial to carry out a targeted study specifically on the bottlenecks highlighted within this study in order to look for possible solutions that could be implemented within each case country. In addition, investigating why transfer of funding between sectors is low in Sweden would be useful to determine how to improve Triple Helix interactions. The complex structure and organisation of the health system in conjunction with university hospitals requires further analysis in order to simplify the complex landscape and ease bottlenecks for innovation within the system. Also, further insights into differing governance structures are imperative to identify how influential this locus of control is. Considering Sweden places a lot of power to government agencies, and Austria has a more bureaucratic system with relatively autonomous Federal States, it would be interesting to investigate how differing institutional framework models affect output, and thus identify their adaptability and application in other systems for the benefit of innovation. This type of study would also benefit through recognition of prevailing cultures, given this has been highlighted as a key component dictating the success of mechanisms within a system, whether at micro or macro level.

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IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY: THE CASE OF HOCHSCHULE OSNABRÜCK

Salome Bilanishvili

BACKGROUND

This thesis seeks to contribute to the discourse on strategy implementation in higher education institutions, which is considered to be the most challenging part of strategic management. A case study of implementation process of Hochschule Osnabrück was carried out to collect empirical findings regarding critical factors affecting implementation process. Potential critical factors of implementation were identified based on the literature as propositions guiding data collection and analysis, which were later examined in practical context. Research findings point out that theory is relevant to the practice of case institution and that multiple factors influence strategy implementation process simultaneously which affect each other as well. This thesis explains practices and characteristics, as well as the level of importance of each factor for implementing strategy in Hochschule Osnabrück. By providing empirical examples on most important factors for strategy execution process, this study can help university managers to pay attention to vital aspects and cope with uncertainties and problems while implementing strategies.

Strategic management has gained importance in higher education field since early 1980s. Its significance has grown highly in recent years and currently these two words are probably most overused terms at national or supranational policy and institutional levels throughout the world and particularly in Europe too (Shattock, 2000; Taylor &Mirou, 2002). Strategic management is meant and expected to help universities overcome difficulties and improve their performance, particularly in the time full of uncertainties and challenges (Kothamäki, 2010). However, strategy is a challenge itself. Some problems go back to the strategy initiation, to the issue of right purposes or appropriate processes of formulation phase, but most difficult part of strategic management proves to be the implementation (Hrebiniak, 2006) - especially in the context of higher education where unique features of universities as organizations are added to the already complex idea of strategy implementation. Even though strategic processes have been studied extensively, strategy implementation has received less attention and is considered as under-investigated subject compared to strategy formulation issues (Yang, Guohui&Eppler, 2009; Johnson, Scholes & Whittington, 2005; Chebat, 1999). Along with the existing gap between saying and doing (Rowley & Sherman, 2002), there is also need for more studies on appropriate theoretical concepts and empirical findings on strategy implementation specifically for higher education institutions (Mouwen, 1997; Keller, 1983). Since copying and overtaking business-like models for universities is considered as one of the reasons for strategy failures (Tavernier, 2005; Mintzberg& Rose, 2003) such research is necessary to help and guide universities to better understand the distinctive features of strategic management for HEIs. Even the general concepts and factors need to be examined in practice. As Noble (1999b) points out, there is a great need for empirical studies, which would examine and validate many of the constructs that are considered to influence strategy implementation. To address the gap of absence of empirical findings on implementation issues in HEIs and the lack of studies examining theoretical constructs relevant to implementation in practice, this thesis represents a study on implementation process in case institution – Hochschule Osnabrück (HO). HO is currently in the process of implementing a strategy "Project 2023" which was adopted in 2013 and thus, represents very interesting case for looking at critical factors that influence this process. The success of Project 2023 depends highly on the nature of activities that are being carried out at the moment. By looking at implementation process carefully and checking factors that are affecting the process, critical points for "walking the talk" can be identified, which could be for HO important to consider during the long time span of implementing Project 2023.

The main research question addressed with this case study is as follows: *How is the strategy implemented in Hochschule Osnabruck?* The sub-question that helps to focus and determine direction of the study is: *What are the critical factors of strategy implementation in Hochschule Osnabruck?* Another sub-question that helps to create conceptual framework of the study and is answered in theoretical part of the thesis is: *What are the factors affecting strategy implementation in organizations and higher education institutions, in particular, as described in scientific*

literature? The purpose of this case study is to describe the process of strategy implementation in Hochschule Osnabrück by looking at critical factors affecting strategy execution. This thesis seeks to contribute to the discourse on strategy implementation in higher education institutions with empirical findings regarding factors important for implementation process in case institution. This work employs three different theories to build the theoretical and analytical frameworks for the study. Firstly, higher education institutions are understood as the complex adaptive systems (CAS) (Taylor & Taylor-Machado, 2010; Halász, 2010). Such systems have profound understanding of their past achievements and practices and might assume that these can be effective in the future too, but since the environment changes their survival depends on their adaptability. This becomes particularly relevant for universities, which seem very stable from outside, but in reality they are in constant vibration state (Mintzberg & Rose, 2003) and it is suggested that organizations should be in permanent adaptive mode in order to survive, to succeed or "to avoid deterioration" (Halász, 2010, p. 1; Anderson, 1999; Taylor & Taylor-Machado, 2010). For CAS theory, strategic management is "the never ending journey of adaptation" (Anderson, 1999, p. 230) and is needed to tackle wisely challenges and maintain success. In such environments, strategic processes are needed to establish the boundaries and define the direction that would enable self-organized and effective solutions to emerge.

Second theory helps to explain strategic processes in higher education institutions. If we understand universities as complex adaptive systems, probably the most appropriate perspective to look at the concepts of strategy and strategic management is the perspective of configuration school of thought (see all ten schools in Mintzberg, et al, 1998), which implies that strategy is concerned with the continuity and stability of the organization, whereas strategic management is about determining and changing the direction of organization in order to achieve stabilization. For this type of strategic management the aim is to ensure stable development of an organization based on adaptable strategic change, but periodically recognize the need for bigger transformation and lead the change without damaging organization. Configuration school envisages that strategy is formulated and implemented with high level of participation from all levels of management (top, middle and lower), used communication channels are both formal and informal, and that organization is flexible and allows both, top-down as well as bottom-up initiatives. Configurational approach looks at strategic processes from holistic point of view. Theory suggests, that there are multiple interdependent key factors affecting strategic management and that these factors only make sense if they are studied as a whole (Okumus, et al, 2010).

In order to track the strategic management process components and rationalize the key factors influencing implementation, Noble's framework (1999a) is employed as the third theory. Noble (1999a) suggests that implementation effort is organized around four major stages: 1. *pre-implementation;* 2. *organizing the effort*; 3. *ongoing management of the process*; and 4. *maximizing cross-functional performance*. He suggests that by understanding the components and peculiarities of each stage enhances success rate of implementation process. The framework has been initially developed for demonstrating the urgency of forming and involving certain networks in implementation process and describing their participation forms. For example, in pre-implementation stage important concepts such as involvement in formulation process and choosing functional representation were underlined. The stage of organizing effort was meant to concern with resources, leadership, implementation plan and capabilities. Management process was understood to deal with organizational barriers and resistance, as well as personality issues. The last stage, named *sustaining performance* in this study (as seen in Yang, et al, 2008), underlined terms such as "achieving buy-in" or "maximizing performance" with the links to sustainability and control. This four stage model was used as a basis for studying critical factors also by Yang, et al (2008, 2009) and proved to be broad enough to entail different aspects of strategy implementation. Additionally, to make clearer classification of the factors that will be identified based on the literature, factors related to institutional issues will be linked to stage of organizing implementation, whereas human factors will be put under management aspect of implementation. This framework is used not for separating phases of implementation or for labeling certain factors, but rather to show the integrity and continuity of the strategic management process.

Political	Economic	Academic	Social/Cultural
Foreign policy	Economic growth and competitiveness	Enhancement quality of education	National identity (including cultural identity or preservation and promotion of language and culture)
National security	Labour market	Ranking and competitiveness of higher education system	Social and cultural development
Technical assistance	Financial incentives		
Regional identity			
Nation building			
Peace and mutual understanding			
Strategic alliances			

METHODOLOGY

A case study has been chosen as the research method for this thesis. Qualitative case study was considered to be perfect solution to address the identified lack of empirical findings on implementation issues in HEIs and to examine relevance of theoretical constructs considered important for implementation in practice. This research is designed to be descriptive holistic single case study. The study has a critical approach (Yin, 2009) testing an implementation theory with clear set of propositions (critical factors) in the case institution. Critical approach helps to examine relevance of theoretical constructs, here critical factors of strategy implementation, to practice. Possible outcomes of such study can either confirm the theory and propositions or challenge them and propose modifications of the theoretical framework (Yin, 2009). The propositions were developed based on relevant literature and helped to define boundaries of the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The 16 factors formulated as propositions (see table 1) were used as the framework during data collection and analysis. The chosen analytic strategy of relying and building research on propositions, on the one hand, helps to determine and keep the direction and scope of the study throughout the research lifespan (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and, on the other hand, increases the confidence of findings (Yin, 2009). Since the propositions present the basis for conceptual and analytical framework, it ensures that case study report remains focused and answers research questions methodologically (Baxter and Jack, 2008). *List of Critical Factors of Strategy Implementation in HEIs*

Table 1: various sources, assembled by author To answer the main research question this study uses expert interviews as the primary source of data, since they help to discover and present multiple realities and views on the subject of the case study (Stake, 1995). The actual strategic document - Project 2023, together with the article of the president of the university on strategic processes were used as secondary sources. They were helpful to understand strategic goals and strategy making / formulation dynamics in the university. Unstructured conversations with some professors and administrators of the university also channeled deciding on sampling and data collection methods. Primary data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews divided into two parts. First the conversation followed certain set of open questions. Later, the propositions – critical success factors of strategy implementation were presented and interviewees were asked about the facts of a matter and their opinions about events (Yin, 2009). The sample population has been chosen based on purposive sampling method (Yin, 2011). To ensure that the wide range of perspectives on the subject of the study is taken into consideration, representatives of different organizational levels of the university were carefully chosen to take part in the interviews. In total eleven participants were selected based on their current position and previous experience. To avoid bias of having only single sided view, participants that have not been directly involved in strategic processes were considered as well.

Results are based only on interview data; hence, represent participants' subjective views on implementation process. No direct observation of process and its components was conducted, thus the study lacks fact based evidences. The findings of the study represent the situation as of May 2014. Results might be different if the study is done in different period of time, since the processes within university are constantly fluctuating, together with the perceptions of process participants regarding them.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings prove that the propositions developed based on the literature are relevant and true for practical case. All 16 critical factors could be identified in case institution, some of them having more influential character, but still all were defined as relevant. Even though, maybe some points have not been considered earlier while formulating or implementing a strategy, certain components of each of them are present in current processes. The study revealed one additional critical factor for implementing strategy in HO - flexibility, which due to its closeness to university nature can be added to the framework developed based on literature. Prediction of the theory that there are multiple interdependent key factors affecting strategic management including implementation (Okumus, et al, 2010; Mintzberg, et al, 1998) has been also proved with this research. Results proved once again, that implementation process cannot be linear or sum of consecutive steps (Yang, et al, 2008). Due to the high level of interdependence between critical factors and chain affects they caused in case institution, all of them need to be paid attention simultaneously. The major findings suggest that strategy implementation is participatory process at HO. Mostly participative approach was employed to describe pre-implementation phase, the strategy planning and formulation processes. Hereby the importance of consensus and commitment from the process participants is underlined. As observed, success of participatory approach highly depends on the factor of communication. HO attempts to follow a strategy of open and inclusive communication which implies also the platforms of broad discussions on strategic matters as described above, or regular top-down communication of leadership with the faculties and employees. However, current channels of interaction prove to be insufficient and there is information gap both at horizontal and vertical levels. Ensuring participation and commitment is linked with organizational culture very closely, which is also affected by communication patterns inside the university. HO tries to establish culture of cooperation and commitment to university development that would resemble the "feeling of us together as the university". Partially, the change of culture is already in place and acknowledged by community members. But the process of moving culture into certain direction is time and energy consuming and needs consideration of various sub- and disciplinary cultures to be more effective.

All the above mentioned factors depend on the factor of leadership, as with the change of leadership, strategies and its implementation methods change as well. At HO, leadership is considered to embody the desirable culture trying to make sure, that communication is flawless and as many members of community are attracted and motivated to take part in strategic development as possible. In this sense, leadership serves as change agent during implementation. Further change champions, such as successful faculty on international matters which is used as benchmark for other faculties, or individual professors that openly support strategy are employed to encourage units and persons to following the path of Project 2023. The same message is spread also using short term wins, such as number of successful research projects, international students, etc. that demonstrate achieved success in strategic fields. Participatory approach envisages, that as many undertakings as possible should be initiated by professors and employees. Therefore, flexibility of carrying out activities within defined strategic priorities has been chosen as implementation method at HO as opposed to specified operational strategies. Since the strategy is very broad and contains large number of directions and goals, and allows flexibility to develop concrete actions bottom-up, implementation does not happen simultaneously and in equal shares in all areas. It depends highly on faculties, on departments, even on individual persons involved in the process. As it was pointed out by the interviewees, at lower level of administration, fulfilling strategic goals highly depends on the will of line managers or professors, whether unit heads deliver information to their employees, encourage their staff to participate and develop ideas within given strategic direction. Generating ideas for specific strategy oriented actions is the task of Innovation Centres which were installed since the initiation of Project 2023. Their recommendations and proposals are discussed and approved by the leadership of the university. Based on their suggestions, structure has been used to support strategic development fields at HO as new units were created that facilitate

specific activities and assist professors and administrators. On the other hand, planned ideas and projects are not always easy to implement due to the lack of systematic approach on how to institutionalize them, which is linked to resource distribution as well. Financial resources are used to support strategic direction of HO by providing funding tools at different – central and faculty levels. Interdisciplinary research activities, cooperation start-ups, internationalization activities, etc. are getting financial support from the university. However, it is considered rather complementary factor, than of major importance.

In relation to implementation, organizational structure was named to be critical as well. On the one hand, the so called matrix structure, where the deans are also vice presidents responsible for specific organizational fields creates positive environment for committed and homogenous decisions, and allows homogenous opinions in the leadership, on the other hand, there is a lack of opposite opinion and professional link between Presidium and administration. Many decisions need to go through Presidium which slows down the implementation process. The connection between presidium and administration was suggested to be necessary to provide professional support and assistance to leadership for strategy implementation. New strategic direction and the growth of the university brought HO to higher level of centralization of processes which are still sought to be further harmonized. However, not all structural units have capacity and time to keep the pace of growth and changes.

Study results proved the relevance of theoretical suggestions to practice as well. If all HEIs are complex adaptive systems, HO is of the same kind as well. Strategic processes and implementation at HO follow the characteristics of such systems in great part. Focus on environmental changes, flexibility, continuous development, culture of moving forward, all fit well as features of CAS. Besides, Project 2023 defines strategic direction of the university and establishes boundaries in frame of which all activities that would enable self-organized and effective solutions are encouraged to emerge (Anderson, 1999). Strategic processes at HO show significant resemblance with theory of configuration school of thought as well. Here during implementation general emphasis is on configuring sustainable, stable and participative environment for strategic development, but also changes and transformation of e.g. organizational culture are attempted (Mintzberg, et al, 1998). HO as typical institution following configuration school formulated and tries to implement strategy with high level of participation from all status groups (leadership, professors, administration, students) encouraging bottom-up initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Study shows that factors influencing strategy implementation need to be paid attention very carefully especially, by the university leadership, since they carry the responsibility of reaching projected strategic aims. By doing so, opinions of various status groups are necessary to inquire. This thesis is first study focused on methodological description of implementation practice at HO based on selected representative group from university community and looking at implementation factors from holistic point of view. Thus, it enables understanding of characteristics of current situation regarding Project 2023 and can be relevant for detecting strong and weak points and addressing them accordingly in the future, since the project is intended to run for 9 more years. Follow up research on the progress of implementing Project 2023 could check whether the factors which are relevant now continue to be important over time and whether their critical nature is sustainable. Such research would be useful especially if it includes observation part along with interviews as data collection method. This should be a case for separate research project, since it requires longer term research activity.

Considering progress reports and outcome evaluations, if available, would add value to future studies as well. The outcomes of this thesis work suggest that the propositions' model used here and the framework of critical factors are relevant for studying strategy implementation process in other higher education institutions as well. By doing so, first, having results of multiple single case studies relevance of theory to practice can be further researched; second, the framework can be enriched with more factors found in universities specifically; thirdly, more empirical findings will be available regarding the usefulness of and problems/successes examples of each factor; fourthly, the rich data and findings can serve for developing practical guidelines for universities which will be focused on most common issues to facilitate strategy implementation processes and help them avoid failures and frustration attached to it. Implementation of a strategy, which is proved to be the most challenging part of strategic management, has been explored based on its components – critical

factors of implementation suggested by theory. Special features of higher education institutions have been taken into consideration as well. The relevance of the theory to case institutions practice is clearly supported by the current findings. Particularly, this thesis has explained the central importance of human factors on implementation in case institution, such as communication, commitment and consensus or leadership. It also pointed out high relevance of institutional aspects of the process, such as organizational culture, structure or flexibility.

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INTERNATIONALIZATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN AN ETHIOPEAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

Rediet Tesfaye Abebe

BACKGROUND

Ethiopia, a landlocked nation on the Horn of Africa, possesses a 1,700-year tradition of elite education linked to the Orthodox Church (Saint, 2004). However, secular higher education was initiated only in 1950 with the inauguration of the University College of Addis Ababa. Since the last decade, however, Ethiopia has aggressively expanded its higher education triggered by an educational system reform in the 1990's with a stated goal of massification as a way to reduce poverty and develop the nation. Accordingly, the number of public universities climbed from less than 5 to 35 while a similar radical proliferation also took place in the private sector.

However, such massive expansion brought about acute concern on educational quality among other things. The enlargement of the sector put considerable strain on funding, academic staff, governance and leadership, physical resources, infrastructure and facilities, employability of graduates and other aspects (Ashcroft, 2010). The combination of these challenges has made the concern over quality of education more ardent. The perception of a declining quality thus has become a common understanding among different internal and external stakeholders.

In response to this, Ethiopia introduced the practice of quality assurance to its higher education both at national and institutional levels with the help major proclamations. At national level, the Higher Education Proclamation (No.351/2003) made provisions for the establishment of Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) which allowed the agency to exercise the mandate of safeguarding and enhancing the quality and relevance of higher education in the country (FDRE, 2003, article 78-85). Over the last decade, the agency has been handling accreditation permits, evaluation of performance reports, supervising standards of institutions, and gathering and disseminating information on the status of quality.

The most important legal framework that laid ground for institutional quality enhancement was the 2009 Higher Education Proclamation (No.650/2009). It required the setting up of a continuously improving and reliable internal system for quality enhancement at every institution (FDRE, 2009, Article 22). This was facilitated by the understanding that many higher education institutions of the country have lagged behind in developing quality assurance strategies and establishing efficient structures that promote a culture of continuous quality improvement at institutional level. Complementary to the commendable efforts of HERQA, institutions of higher learning have already worked towards adopting structures particularly working on institutional quality enhancement since 2009. Investigating this process of institutionalisation of quality assurance systems at higher education institutions hence becomes essential to understanding how the provisions of the proclamation has been adopted and translated in to action by universities.

RESEARCH GAP

As far as Ethiopia is concerned, existing studies on the issue of quality have focused on examining the concept (Rayner, 2006; and Ashcroft, 2004), methods and procedures of carrying out quality evaluation (Weldemariam, 2008; and Adamu & Addamu, 2012), the organisation and practices of assuring education quality (Seyoum, 2011; Ashcroft & Rayner, 2012; Kahsay, 2012; and Regassa et al., 2013), accreditation of private higher education institutions (Bekele, 2009), stakeholder perception on quality (Lodesso, 2012), role of quality education for meeting development needs, and other related themes. However, little is researched about the institutionalisation process of internal quality assurance in public universities. In fact, none of the existing studies were dedicated exclusively to investigating the course of institutions towards assuming and discharging the responsibility of maintaining the standards of their own education quality. The adaptation of internal quality assurance as opposed to previous dependence on external quality control by HERQA thus largely remained unaddressed. Not enough knowledge exists about the institutionalisation of quality assurance in higher education unlike in other contexts. There is also lack of information on the

status of essential elements necessary for the process and the phase at which current institutional quality assurance practice have reached. This study therefore is dedicated to filling this research gap.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The main research question of the study is *how quality assurance has been institutionalised in the context of an Ethiopian public university?*

The main research question, as an overarching line of inquiry, is broken down into the following sub-questions:

1. *What are the quality assurance activities carried out by the institutional quality enhancement (IQE) centre of the case university?*

2. *What is the state of essential elements necessary for institutionalising quality assurance at the case university?*

3. *At which phase of institutionalisation is the current institutional quality assurance practice of the case university found?*

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The study uses an analytical framework for the institutionalisation of quality assurance adopted from the discipline of healthcare in order to carry out its main inquiry. Although borrowing a framework from health care science is rather unorthodox, the framework suitably fits the theme of this study. Most higher education researchers are accustomed to working with instruments and models from sociology, economics, management, psychology and other less-distant disciplines. As far as this study is considered, justification can be made for slightly deviating from the common trend; 1) Unlike others rudimentary frameworks, it is comprehensive and has superior relevance with regard to its capacity in monitoring and evaluating developmental progress in the institutionalisation of quality assurance. 2) The framework was developed from ample scientific evidence collected through a series of studies which strongly underscores its credibility as a valid tool of analysis. 3) Higher education research allows for inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary exchange of knowledge.

The analytical model for the institutionalisation of quality assurance incorporates two major elements: essential elements for institutionalisation of quality assurance and phases of institutionalisation (Askov et al., 2000; Franco et al., 2002; and Silimperi et al., 2002).

Essential elements for institutionalisation: These are the building blocks necessary in the process of developing, implementing and sustaining quality assurance activities. The elements are broadly categorised into three: internal enabling environment, organisation for quality assurance, and supporting functions. Certain elements within an internal environment of an organisation that support the initiation, expansion and development of a quality assurance practice are necessary. These include policy, leadership, resources, and core values. In the meantime, the institutionalisation of quality assurance necessitates a structure or other form of organisation to which clear roles and responsibilities are bestowed for carrying out quality care programs. With this regard, many organisations set up quality assurance departments or directorates. In any case, some sort of mechanism or structure for monitoring, decision making, implementing, supporting and coordinating quality assurance activities is decisive.

Finally, an effective institutionalisation of quality assurance demands the existence of certain ongoing support processes. These include capacity building, information and communication, and a mechanism of incentivising and rewarding quality.

Phases of institutionalisation: This part of the framework deals with explaining the roadmap for the process of institutionalisation. It covers the stages through which the entire process passes. Accordingly the main phases include awareness, experiential, expansion, and consolidation. In reality, the passage through these phases occurs in between an initial state of pre-awareness of quality assurance and ends in a state of maturity. In other words, a state of pre-awareness precedes any formal awareness phase while a state of maturity comes after the consolidation phase has reached its full impact. Organisations may progress, regress or stagnate along the course. It is also

possible that organisations may operate between more than one phases at the same time.

Although the analytical framework facilitates the analysis of institutionalisation of quality assurance, the team of experts who formulated the framework noted that all essential elements may not necessarily equally improve within the same phase or between phases. By the same token, all eight essential elements may not necessarily exist in the same phase; instead, each develops at different speed simultaneously determining whether the organisation advances along the institutionalisation phases. It is therefore crucial to examine the advancement of each essential element separately (Franco et al., 2002; and Silimperi et al., 2002).

METHODOLOGY

The study uses a qualitative research method since studying the institutionalisation of quality assurance in the context of an Ethiopian public higher education institution requires relying on the views of participants, asking broad and general questions, collecting data consisting of mainly verbal explanation from participants, describing and analysing these words for themes, and conducting the inquiry. The qualitative design provides a suitable method to generate adequate in-depth information on quality assurance practices, essential elements necessary for institutionalising quality assurance, and phases of institutionalisation.

The study uses one anonymous public university as a case institution. Even more, the study is further confined to examining the operation of the university's institutional quality enhancement (IQE) office. This is to maintain decent manageability of the scope of the study. In addition to this, shortage of time and other resources justify the need for studying a smaller research population. In this study, the unique aspect of choosing the case institution is maintaining anonymity or confidentiality of its identity. The central argument behind maintaining confidentiality is to ease challenges in data collection. Besides, anonymity of the university could help objectify the findings of the study without prejudice to the particular identity of the institution. Considering that it could have been conducted at any public university of the country, therefore, the results of the study could offer a broad reflection on the situation of institutionalisation of quality assurance in Ethiopian public higher education. Removing the name tag of the case university hence could augment these advantages.

The selection of study sample employs purposive sampling technique to include respondents who are believed to have a better knowledge of and involvement with the operation of the IQE office of the case university. Therefore, the main respondents of the study include department quality assurance committee members, an academic unit head, the director and campus coordinators of the IQE office. The study collects detailed first-hand information from these respondents through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. On the other hand, collecting secondary data involves analysing national higher education policies, proclamations, strategic plans, and official documents of the office including senate legislation, institutional academic quality assurance policy, institutional plans, performance reports, official communications, meeting minutes and other documents. Moreover, the study employs non-participant observation to cross-check information obtained through interviews and focus group discussion.

The collected data is subject to a qualitative inductive analysis as the key data analysing strategy. The method is adopted from the works of Thomas (2006). Analysing the data involves reducing large amount of raw data into a summary format by creating and developing code categories or themes. The general and specific research questions of the study consistently provide the required focus through the process. The framework for the institutionalisation of quality assurance applied in the study also helps to frame these leading inquiries and identify relevant categories and themes based on which the coding of the raw data takes place. In other words, the code categories are consistent with the contents of the framework. In general, the steps in the coding process are also based on the illustrations by the same author: initial reading of text data; identify specific text segments related to research objectives; label the segments of text to create coding categories; reduce overlap and redundancy among the categories; and create a model incorporating most important categories (Thomas, 2006).

KEY FINDINGS

The Ethiopian higher education has been undergoing a recent development that strives towards developing internal quality enhancement processes in addition to a prior exclusive dependence on external quality assurance. Based on this national trend, the study investigated how quality assurance has been institutionalised in public universities. Within this broader inquiry, the study answered all three of its key research questions. A brief summary of the discussion is presented as follows:

What are the quality assurance activities carried out by the institutional quality enhancement (IQE) centre of the case university?

The findings of the study showed that the IQE centre of the case university carries out several activities primarily targeted at assuring academic quality. These include carrying out internal quality audit; monitoring and supervision of quality assurance; conducting program and course audits; curriculum review; developing instruments for quality assurance; giving trainings for academic staff; ensuring fair distribution of courses; liaising with HERQA; and celebrating educational quality day. Although currently not operational, the centre has also made preparations to begin conducting academic programs quality prize competition and follow up on graduate employability. It developed the necessary criteria for ranking and prizing the performance of departments on their academic quality. The IQE centre has also started working on documenting the contact addresses of graduates which will be used later to assess their marketability and employability. In general, the IQE centre strove to lead and assist the continual assurance and improvement of academic quality and relevance in the university.

The quality assurance activities of the IQE centre overemphasised on academic issues. There was very limited effort explicitly targeted at assuring the quality of research, community service and administration of the case university. There is policy for academic quality assurance but not for other core functions of the case university. Besides, the IQE centre does not differentiate between quality assurance and quality enhancement.

The task of conducting institutional quality assurance has been a part-time activity carried out by a handful of the IQE centre staffs who are overburdened by routine teaching, research, administration, and community service duties. Internal quality care has not yet become a full-time responsibility. This however constrains the development of institutional quality assurance and enhancement. Mechanisms of motivating this strained staff should also be in place in order to further encourage the IQE centre.

Most of the achievements attained in the institutional quality assurance of the case university were the result of individual efforts of the IQE centre staff. From developing an academic quality assurance policy to securing material resources and office facilities fell on their shoulder.

What is the state of essential elements necessary for institutionalising quality assurance at the case university?

On the other hand, the study showed the state of essential elements necessary for institutionalising quality assurance in the IQE centre of the case university. Accordingly, findings indicated that there are appropriate policies and structural establishments. In addition to existing national policy and proclamations, the IQE centre also prepared a comprehensive academic quality assurance policy for the case university. The structure of IQE centre for internal quality assurance is found at different levels; Senate, colleges, campuses, and departments. Although very weak, there is also an effort towards expanding the structure into students. On the other hand, leadership, resources, and information and communication are inadequate. The findings of the study indicated that the IQE centre received limited support from the university management. The centre also suffered from an acute shortage of human, material and financial resources. The budget given to the centre remained meagre which put pressure on non-administrative activities. The size of its staff continued to be very small and strained. Even worse, the status of capacity building, core values and rewarding quality has been low. The staffs of the IQE centre lack the required expertise and training to carryout quality assurance activities. Mechanisms for enhancing overall institutional capacity towards implementing internal quality assurance are rudimentary. Respondents also reported that quality is far from being truly valued; although the desire towards assuring and improving quality exists, practical action lags behind. Recognising and rewarding good quality performance is nearly non-existent. The culture of appreciation barely became part of the institutional mind-set.

At which phase of institutionalisation is the current institutional quality assurance practice of the case university found?

Finally, the study revealed that the institutional quality assurance of the case university vacillated between the experiential and early expansion phases of institutionalisation. The university duly recognised the concern on deteriorating institutional quality and made decision to implement quality assurance in order to achieve improvement. The university also set up the IQE centre to develop and implement institutional quality assurance. The centre assumed all operational responsibilities in managing and supervising internal quality. In its operation over four years now, the office strove to experiment internal quality care. Although the scope of the implementation was initially confined to delivering trainings, it gradually progressed to carrying out several internal quality assurance activities. The indications that quality assurance brought decent improvement to the academic quality of the university increased the desire to further expand the institutional quality enhancement effort. Using the experience from the experiential phase, the IQE directorate engaged in strategic expansion of the scale, scope and magnitude of its institutional quality enhancement activities. As a result, the centre expanded its organisation by setting up branch structures at different levels. The expansion was not only structural; the IQE centre also diversified its quality assurance unlike its prior engagement confined to coordinating trainings targeted at enhancing academic quality.

The findings of the study also showed that the challenges of structural confusion, negative attitude, and limitation in certain essential elements constrained the IQE centre from comfortably expanding into complete expansion phase and other succeeding phases.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study investigated the institutionalisation of quality assurance through studying the institutional quality enhancement (IQE) centre of the case university. Therefore, it exclusively focused on examining the entire IQE centre and its activities. All the data used in the study was collected from the IQE centre staff (i.e., director, campus coordinators, department head, and department quality assurance committees). Thus future studies could focus on other aspects that are not adequately addressed in this study.

- Investigating other aspects of an institution in addition to institutional quality enhancement structures to comprehensively capture overall institutional processes towards developing internal quality assurance.
- Studying how university management influence the practice of institutional quality assurance. This is important because from making formal decision to experiment quality assurance to allocating and mobilising necessary resources concerns leaders and senior managers. Thus, detail examination of the role of university management in raising concern on deteriorating quality and providing institutional focus towards taking necessary measures to improve it can be an appropriate area of future studies.
- Analysing the integration of institutional quality enhancement centres within the overall organisational structure of universities. Though sufficient structure exists, this study indicated that the IQE centre suffered from structural confusion. With this regard, studying the accountability and reporting structures of IQE centres and how this fits into university chain of command becomes important. By examining problems in the existing structural integration, future studies can indicate improved ways of setting up structural organisation of the centre.
- Examining the nature of relationship that exists between IQE centres and HERQA can also be another area of future studies. This study showed that limited form of communication exists between the two bodies where the agency provided assignments and centre submits the reports on the assigned tasks. Further studies can be dedicated to thoroughly investigating the exact landscape of the relationship. This helps to understand the strengths and drawbacks of the existing relationship. It could also shade light on the range of support and supervision the agency can provide to institutional quality assurance endeavours.
- Examining the performance of less experienced newly established universities in institutional quality assurance. This could show where these institutions stand in contrast to older and more experienced universities of the country. It also helps to depict a comprehensive picture of the state of internal quality assurance at all expansion phases of public universities. The phases represent varying overall institutional resources and facilities

which considerably affects internal quality care.

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INDICIA OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE CONCEPT IN THE ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Ayenachew Aseffa Woldegiyorgis

BACKGROUND

Since the time of its ancient civilization Ethiopia had its own indigenous formal education. This two millennium old traditional education is strongly linked to the Ethiopian Orthodox church and has remained as the predominant form of producing the elites of the country, until the emergence of modern and secular higher education only in 1950 marked by the establishment of the then University College of Addis Ababa (Wondimu, 2003). In the following two decades a number of specialized technical colleges were also established to offer professional trainings in the fields of agriculture, engineering, public health, and teacher education (World Bank, 2003).

During the *Derg* era, from 1974 to 1991, the development in the Ethiopian higher education was very slow. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education was very low and increased slightly over the period, Addis Ababa University remained the only university until the opening of Alemaya (now Haromaya) University in 1985, and no graduate program was offered until mid 1979 (Weldemariam, 2008; World Bank, 2003; Araia, 2004).

The 1991 change of government opened a new chapter in the history of the country, and consequently in the development of its higher education. By that time, education in general and higher education in particular was left far behind even by the standards of Sub Saharan Africa. Cognizant of this, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) identified education as one area of priority and in 1994 issued a comprehensive Education and Training Policy (ETP) aiming at improving the overall state of education at all levels and ensuring that education makes the required contribution in the country's development. The policy essentially opened the door for a period of all-inclusive, far-reaching reforms and massive expansion.

After the policy paved the way, a number of radical reforms have been introduced in the higher education subsector. In 1998 the long term Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) was launched, so far covering four phases (though the earlier phases focused more on lower levels of education); in 2003 the Higher Education Proclamation (HEP) was enacted and later revised in 2009; and a number of other reforms were introduced addressing different aspects of higher education. In effect, the subsector was opened up for private investment, enrolling about 18 % of the total student body as of 2010 (MOE, 2011), tuition fees in a form of student cost sharing have been introduced, HEIs have been granted substantial autonomy, diverse new fields of study have been launched, block grant method of budgeting has been introduced, and government agencies for quality assurance and strategic direction have been established (FDRE, 2003). Besides, the government budget for higher education has substantially and progressively increased, and massive expansion has taken place resulting in the surge of number of students by more than ten folds in about twenty years (MOE, 2005; MOE, 2010; Waweru & Abate, 2011).

However, in spite of this glamorous success in terms of reform and expansion, the Ethiopian higher education has been struggling with a number of challenges. These include, among others, the issue of equity, quality, autonomy, accountability, brain drain, academic freedom, lack of adequate resources and facilities, teachers' working condition, salary and incentives, etc (Semela, 2007; Woldegiyorgis, 2013). Some of these challenges have indeed been identified by the government and solutions are being implemented, though the problems seem to persist.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS

Having officially claimed to be a developmental state, today, in Ethiopia government controls and leads with a firm hand. Since the coming to power of the current ruling party in 1991, the country has undergone a number of reforms in different sectors including education. Higher education has also seen its share of changes both in policy and practice. While there is a lot of debate on whether Ethiopia is following the 'right path' of the developmental state model in its economic, agricultural,

trade and industry policies, there exists no study addressing the question in the education sector – and hence the higher education sub sector.

However, this is also, more or less, the picture at the international level. The astounding economic success of Southeast Asian countries in the 1970s and 1980s has attracted considerable interest in academic work trying to explain how those countries achieved such a swift progress. Yet, much of the research is concerned with different aspects of economic policy making and implementation. In the field of education, most of the academic work is overwhelmingly focused on lower level education and, to some extent, on vocational trainings. Researches attempted to explain and theorize how education contributed to economic development by examining the triangular relationships between education, economy and the state.

Nevertheless, higher education largely appears to have been left out of such inquiry within the notion of the developmental state. Consequently, there is poor literature that elaborates the nature and role of higher education in the developmental state paradigm, particularly in the context of those early developmental states, the background of which is more or less similar to that of current day Ethiopia.

Therefore this research primarily aims to address the knowledge gap about how the concept of developmental state is represented in the Ethiopian higher education. However this requires first understanding the nature of higher education in a developmental state in general. Put differently the main research question will be:

How does developmental state concept manifest in the Ethiopian Higher Education?

And, more specifically, the research first attempts to formulate a frame with which the Ethiopian higher education shall be observed in terms of its nature pertinent to the developmental state concept. Hence the research has the following two questions to answer:

a) What are the distinct features of higher education in a developmental state?

b) How are these features evident in the Ethiopian higher education system?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The vast literature available on the benefits of education stretches back to antiquity. Although the idea that investing in oneself improves productivity seems intuitive, the entire theory of human capital hinges on it. The human capital theory provides a framework for the wholesome adoption of education and development policies, and stresses how education improves “the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings” (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008, p.479).

In other words, the human capital theory holds that education (formal and informal) and training (on and off the job) increase the stock of human capital of a given society, which in turn interprets in to economic growth by increasing efficiency and productivity. In the past few decades, there have been efforts to substantiate this thesis by attempting to establish a pattern of relationship between education and economic growth. Albeit contested in different ways, evidences from researches (see Ashton et al, 1999; Benhabib & Spiegel, 1994; Wolff & Gittleman, 1993; Amsden, 1989) suggest that there is a positive relationship between the two, encouraging countries to increase their investment in education.

Given the evidences suggest that human capital has such a crucial effects on the economic growth of developing countries, the natural question that follows would be how can the level of human capital be raise through education and training. More particular to the interest of this study, the essential question will be: what should governments do in the fields of education and training so as to increase human capital?

To answer this question there are two dominant and contending approaches with differing views on the interaction between market and the state – the neoclassical approach and the statist approach. These two have opposing positions on what the role of the state should be in relation to the functioning of the market. Taking the experiences of high economic performance of East Asian

countries in the 1970s and 80s as a basis, the Word Bank appeared the main advocate of the neoclassical approach.

The neoclassical approach considers the market as a sovereign entity serving as the most efficient basic framework for education and training, as it is for all other commodities. It is assumed that the market reflects the value of human capital by setting a certain level of demand for particular kinds of skills with certain levels of price. When the demand is high and the price is attractive individuals get good incentive to undergo and fund their own education or training. However it has been for long noted that the presence of externalities in education and training makes it possible for individuals and/or firms to benefit from the investment made by private individuals in their own education and training. This approach holds that state needs to intervene in the functioning of the market only to correct the failures of market and to augment its shortcomings (see World Bank, 1993; Campos & Root, 1996; Middleton et al., 1993; Verma et al., 1995).

This study rather rests on the contending view – the statist approach. The statists strongly criticize the neoclassical view for taking a very simplistic consideration of the nature of the state, and conveniently ignoring the role it plays. In skill formation, the statist approach does not rest on the prior assumption of the market being the best or the only coordinating force for factors of production. Rather, it takes a due consideration of the power and influence of the state as well as its political characteristics as a major actor in the skill formation process.

The state actively engages in promoting economic growth by providing high quality, well planned and well managed labor force, giving strategic leadership for concerned economic agents, and effectively managing transitions and technological diffusion (Ashton et al., 1999). The state, therefore, is responsible to planning and re-skilling the labor force as per the demands of the planned industrial development. But the question remains: whether government policies shift to respond to market trends or the policies lead the market. In education and training, if the state is using policy instruments to respond to market trends it means the demand is primarily created by the business and the state intervenes to adjust the supply. However, if the state leads the market then the state is involved in both the demand and supply sides of skills. Wade (1990) argues that there are more evidences showing the state as an active player in both demand and supply of skills in many of the East Asian countries.

Gerschenkron (1962) hypothesized that for developing countries (late industrializers) the active agency of the state is of significant advantages in terms of capital accumulation, facilitation to adopt the latest technology and methods of industrial policy making. Amsden (1989, p. 3) builds on this hypothesis and looks in to the process of ‘catching up’ as a process of learning how to compete. Adoption of borrowed technology is essential in the development of late industrializers. This in turn implies the importance of education and training at the center of the economic policy making and the pivotal role of key institutions. An interventionist state, large diversified business groups, abundant competent managers, and abundant well-educated labor all play their respective roles.

Though criticized for its shortcomings of putting the state as a solid entity that functions on its own, and putting too much emphasis on state while the state is inherently an inefficient institution (see Kim, 2012; Sung & Raddon, 2014 forthcoming; Clark and Chan, 1994), generally, the statist view lays the foundation for the concept of the developmental state pertinent to higher education. The statist view admits that the demand and supply interaction of skill in the labor market has a significant role in determining the path of economic growth in a developing country. However, it underlines that the state has the power to influence both the demand and the supply of skills through appropriate policies and intervention mechanisms. It is believed that the state is in a better position to forecast future demands because, on one hand, the state can better read market trends through its bureaucratic means, and on the other, the state itself influences, or even creates, the demand. As Law (2009) puts it, the states set their plans for industrialization with a targeted time span, and determining the skills demand. Then they invest in education and training institutions to prepare them for the task and they use their policies to manage the supply of skills. While governments may generally be much less efficient and slower than private agents to respond to market needs, when it comes to skills supply, state led adjustments could be more flexible and rapid, if political legitimization is linked to economic development (Ashton et al, 1999). However, the actions of the state should not be viewed as happening in a vacuum. State itself interacts with market and other spheres of economic life in a wider socio cultural setting.

METHODOLOGY

Following Babbie's (2006) categorization of social research on the basis of purpose as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, this qualitative research employed an exploratory research design with certain shared characteristics of descriptive research. The subject of higher education in the context of the developmental state has been little researched. Particularly in the case of Ethiopia no prior research is available on the issue. Hence, this research is intended to provide preliminary understanding on the subject, instigating specific questions in this line of inquiry. Therefore the exploratory research design is most suited to the purpose sought – exploring the nature of higher education in the context of the Ethiopian developmental state.

Data for this research is primarily obtained from official documents of the government of Ethiopia and is analyzed using the content analysis method (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Mogalakwe, 2006; Bowen, 2009). More specifically, a theory driven deductive qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) is used where priorly formulated aspects of analysis, originating from the theoretical concept of developmental state and built up based on literature review, are used in connection with the content of the selected documents. Review of [official] documents has the edge of providing objective and verifiable information on a subject (Berelson, 1952 sited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006) specifically for quantitative records and study on official policies and programs. Besides, since the study is concerned with preliminary level exploration of the issue (rather than evaluation of implementation and effect) at the system level, documents of policies, programs and strategies will provide the necessary information.

Taking in to account the purpose of obtaining the most reliable and sufficient system level information that can show how the developmental state concept manifests in the Ethiopian higher education, both in policy and practical spheres, the following documents are selected for review and analysis: Education and Training Policy (1994), Higher Education Proclamation (2009), and Education Sector Development Plan I to IV (1997 to 2015). The education and training policy gives a general direction, the proclamation, along with other proclamations and regulations, provides the legal framework within which the policy goals are to be achieved; and the education sector development program presents the practical aspect in the development of education, particularly higher education in the country. Hence, a combination of these three kinds of documents gives more or less a complete picture of how higher education is placed in Ethiopia. To complement the information, other related policy documents, reports, statistical abstracts, surveys, studies and academic researches, news, opinion articles, speeches, videos, interviews and the like have been consulted.

The analytical framework for the study is developed based on review of relevant literature. It has identified the seven major characteristics of higher education typical to the developmental state of the 1970s and 80s in the East Asian region. A document review guideline, which follows the components of the analytical framework, is used to dictate the review of the key documents identified in the previous section. The guideline includes a total of 27 specific questions under the seven categories (see appendix). Each document is reviewed and relevant information is obtained and categorized in accordance with the guideline and in a manner that addresses each specific question under every category. Similarly, the analysis and interpretation is made following the framework. Finally, the developmentalist nature of the Ethiopian higher education is discussed in light of what higher education looked like in the time and region of what is often considered the pinnacle of the developmental state model.

KEY FINDINGS

Based on literature, the study has found out that higher education systems in developmental states are tightly controlled and coordinated by the state; have an admission system administered by a central body, highly emphasize on technology transfer as a means to learn from other systems; constitute different type and tiers of institutions with different functions; emphasize science and technology as priority areas; experience large scale expansion and give due attention to sideline goals focused on nation building.

In Ethiopia the level of importance attached to education is very significant that begins with its very definition relating education with the basic purpose it serves in human life. Education is viewed as

an instrument with which knowledge and skills are created, accumulated and transferred for individuals and societies to pursue all rounded development. The official documents such as the education and training policy, the higher education proclamation and the education sector development programs all have common objectives of creating citizens endowed with problem solving capacities towards enhanced development of the country.

Though relatively less emphasized, higher education is embedded in what is formulated for education in general in terms of objectives and justification for the formation and reform of the system. In recent years the role of higher education has gained more recognition that is reflected in how much it is addressed in different documents and the amount of resources that are being geared towards improving the subsector. Higher education is recognized to have a pivotal role in the developmental endeavors of the country, which is responsible for the training of the manpower needed to support the development projects. With the vision of turning Ethiopia to a middle income country by the year 2025, higher education is expected to prepare skilled and motivated professionals who will make sure that this development vision will be realized. This making up the foundation for the developmentalist nature of the Ethiopian higher education, further indicia can also be traced in different aspects of the system that are consistent with the typical characteristics of higher education in the developmental state paradigm.

Often justified by the need to coordinate activities and resources of different institutions towards common development goals, state control is very strong in the Ethiopian higher education. Indeed how efficient the coordination is among the concerned bodies is a question that remains open for further investigation. There are indications, however, that the coordination is focused more on institutions with in the education sector itself than with other sectors. Higher education appears to be more under the direct purview of the federal government, compared to lower levels of education which are under the joint auspice of the federal and regional governments. This has provided higher education with more unified direction and the possibility for better coordination. Still, the involvement of a number of parties in the ESDP, along with the formation of the steering committee at the apex of its structure, with no legally defined personality and solid power over resources, pose challenges to effective coordination.

Various mechanisms are used to the effect of state control over the higher education system. The legal framework composed of the higher education proclamation at the top and establishing laws of different institution, regulations and guidelines at the lower level make up the broadest and strongest control mechanism. The proclamation calls for the establishment of different institutions with varied roles, powers and responsibilities which all create another aspect for the state control. The two most important of such institutions are: the HERQA which is given the power and responsibility of overseeing quality and relevance of higher education in all public and private institutions, and the HESC which is endowed with a wide range of responsibilities to shape and lead the higher education subsector at policy and strategic level. Reporting and supervision also constitute the other effective mechanism of state control. HEIs are required to keep record of data and publish periodic reports for public access besides their obligation to report to the ministry and its respective agencies on regular basis. Similarly, the implementation of the ESDP is also under a close purview of the central government since the different structures of the ESDP organization are required to make periodic reports all the way up to the central government in addition to review meetings conducted at different levels.

Even more direct and tangible control mechanisms come in the form of financing and the appointment of top managers of HEIs. These two methods are specifically applicable for public HEIs where nearly the whole budget of the institutions comes from the federal government and all the top management positions are filled with appointment by the minister directly or indirectly. Of course, public HEIs are in principle, allowed to generate their own income. However, in practice the institutions hardly have the capacity to generate income from their own sources, and in the case of financing by a third party for researches the institutions are required to make sure that the terms of their negotiation do not contradict with their government-set-mission. On the other hand the regulation set forth for the appointment of top managers (board members, presidents and vice presidents) of public HEIs ensures that each of these positions are filled by individuals who are committed to the ideology and developmental interest of the government. There is an exception to this rule where the position of the vice president is filled through competitive means, though still needs to be approved by the board.

These control mechanisms provide the government with strong opportunities for coordination and synchronized development planning and implementation. However, it is also noticeable that institutional autonomy, one of the fundamental characteristics of an academic institution, is largely compromised. Though the proclamation stipulates that all HEIs are autonomous, this practically makes a lot of sense only for the private HEIs.

Put together the Ethiopian higher education system has devised multitude of mechanisms for state control. State control mechanisms, however, are not everything that a developmental state needs for effective planning and coordination in higher education. There is no sufficient evidence which shows that the education sector, and the higher education sub sector in particular, is sufficiently coordinated with other sectors, as it is within itself. Such coordination requires a central body responsible for continuously monitoring the other sectors and use data for coordinating the planning and implementation of education policies and strategies with that of other sectors. There is no clear statement as to the existence of a central body responsible the long term planning of higher education and for the coordination of such with the economic and other social policies. The HESC seems to have a broad range of responsibilities concerned with shaping the future of higher education, though coordination with other sectors in its activities seems undermined.

The notion of the statist approach to education planning requires the state to plan and coordinate not only on the supply side, where the Ethiopian case seems to be well concerned, but also on the demand side. Talking about TVET programs ESDP-I says that "steps are being taken to improve the relevance of these programs so that more TVET graduates can get jobs … The economy will benefit from more trained and skilled labor" (MOE, 1998, p. 8). This indicates that the employment of TVET graduates is put as a primary goal for the reforms and improvements that are deemed necessary in the ESDP-I, and the economic outcome is seen as a sideline or spillover effect of such improvement. This seems to have rested on the assumption that the labor market is not something that can be managed or manipulated with the deliberate actions of the state – which opposes the fundamental idea of the role of the state in human capital development and economic growth under the developmental state model. While there are indications in other documents and other parts of the same document that the developmental state model is pursued in the education and training sector, this statement at its best can be described as a lack of clarity in direction.

Similarly, the same document identifies a potential risk in the implementation of the program as "What if the economy does not grow" (Ibid, p. 22). Indeed, since Ethiopian economy is largely dependent on agriculture which also depends on rain fall and other natural conditions, there is a chance that things could go wrong in the economy. And since a large part of the program budget was set to be domestic it was a legitimate point to have been raised. However, this statement also reflects the assertion that the conditions of the economy are prerequisite to what happens in the education sector. In the statist view on education planning education is considered as a tool to make change happen in the economy. It presumes that education and economic reforms are to be set in parallel both under the influence of the state. Not that what happens in the economy would be a determinant for what happens in education.

Admission to higher education is centrally managed based on the completion of the preparatory program (second cycle of high school) and result in the national entrance examination. This is basically for regular undergraduate programs, where for other programs the institutions are at liberty to determine their own admission requirements. All those who have passed the entrance exam will make their choice of institutions and specific programs. The ministry of education, the body in charge of admission, will then assign students to different HEIs and specific programs. Often the assignment is based on the government's desire to produce certain combination of professionals as seen fit for the needs of the economy. The documents, including the directive for placement of regular degree students, do not make any clear statement of the criteria, nor the procedure, used in the placement process. In effect it can be seen that the central placement system deprives students of their right to pursue a field of study and career of their choices. Moreover, it appears that aptitude, motivation, skills and the like have no place in the placement process.

Technology and knowledge transfer, one of the most common modes of catch up for developing countries, is given a massive recognition both in the policy and the higher education proclamation. It is set as one of the objectives of higher education targeting on the accelerated development. HEIs are required to allocate enough funds for research focused on technology transfer, and to engage in research partnerships with institutions from advanced systems. Further, the HEIs are encouraged to

establish permanent cooperative relationship with industries and the society at large that constitutes different forms of services by the institutions and delivery of non formal programs that would facilitate transfer of accumulated knowledge. Ethiopia has also chosen English as a language of instruction which further facilitates knowledge transfer since much of accumulated knowledge in the world of academics is found in the English language.

Following the legal outlines, the ESDP also emphasizes technology and knowledge transfer as important elements in the development of education. However, the ESDP also admits that in practice technology transfer did not materialize as much as needed. Besides, the ESDP goes unclear on the specific responsibilities of HEIs and TVET institutions as to how they contribute to effective technology transfer. It is observed that in the later phase of the ESDP technology transfer lays to be the major responsibility the TVET, where HEIs are set to knowledge creation. However, it is discernible that TVETs do not have the required capacity to do in depth research on technology transfer and adaptation, while in the same fashion, the HEIs do not have the capacity for knowledge creation. What would have made a better sense is if HEIs were responsible to undertake the researches while TVETs provide tailored and practical training for lower and middle level professionals needed by the market.

HEIs of different type and status, with different governance system and different purpose are common in developmental states. In Ethiopia the education and training policy calls for all HEIs to be invariably research oriented, while the higher education proclamation outlines different status of institutions but with no significant differences in purpose. Distinctions are made in terms of the requirement the institutions have to meet to be granted each status with no clear separation between research universities and teaching universities, no identification of tiers of institutions reflecting their prestige and resource advantage. The proclamation determines not only the functions of all public HEIs to be similar but also their governance systems. HEIs are required to constitute certain predetermined elements of governance and have to go through a rigorous procedure to introduce any change on their structure.

The HEP indeed recognizes differences of institutions in their capacity to offer graduate programs, and suggests that those institutions more endowed with resources in this regard should assist the rest in development of academic staff. In the fourth phase of the ESDP diversity of institutions has been introduced where a target of setting up ten institutes of technology and two universities of science and technology is set for year 2014/15. However, there are no further explanations as to how these institutions will differ from the rest and why.

As per the HEP institutes are required to offer training in at least one field/discipline (which is the minimum requirement in the list), and is not required to conduct research (Article 14). However, the experiences of other countries implies that institutes are rather specialized for certain field and engage in wide research activities in the area – often multi/inter disciplinary. Moreover, public universities (which account the huge majority of the HEIs in capacity), are established as ‘just universities’ where there has not been any sort of distinction and usually enjoy government’s favor (Article 15) in that they are established with the full status of a university even though many of them hardly meet the requirements.

What relates to the diversity of institutions is the identification of priority areas in the higher education policy and strategy. Prioritization has been repeatedly mentioned in official documents but there is hardly any explicit statement of what the priority areas are what specific target outcomes are set. It is only in ESDP-IV that science, technology and innovation are set to be the area of emphasis as a means to create wealth. This is accompanied by the goals of establishing institutions dedicated to these areas and a shift in the student intake that designates 70 % of student population to be in the natural science and technology fields.

Though there is a ministry for Science and Technology, there is no clear guideline stipulated on how the ESDP and the focus on science and technology shall be coordinated with the works of the ministry. Indeed, according to the establishing law of the ministry one of its major responsibilities is to facilitate conditions to ensure strong inter linkage among higher education, research and development and the industrial sector with regard to scientific research and technological advancement focusing on production activities (MOST, 2012). Nonetheless, nothing meaningful has been mentioned in the ESDP that ensures the co-working of these two concerned government bodies.

With regard to expansion, higher education, like all other levels of education, has experienced unprecedented rate of increase in its size over the past fifteen years. The expansion has demanded different moves to generate resources for financing. The government budget for higher education has risen both in absolute amount as well as in relative share to overall education budget. Concurrently, in 2003 student cost sharing scheme has been introduced which allows the government to collect certain portion of expenses made to the higher education in the form of repayment or services by graduates. Private investment in higher education has been another contributor to the expansion of the subsector, though the private institutions still account to a small portion of the student population (less than 20 %) compared to the relative share they have in terms of number of institutions. Finally, income generation by the HEIs is another attempt made to ease government expenditure in higher education. However ESDP indicates that too few institutions generate too small portion of their budget.

The expansion is predominantly financed by the state and is focused on ensuring fairness and equity in the distribution of HEIs in different regions. This predisposition has caused the government to open as many universities as possible in different regions which are exactly the same to one another rather than strengthening and specializing the existing ones in line with the needs of the economy and towards maximization of their economic contribution. Partnership between the private and public HEIs is also deemed to be very low and ESDP-III called for strengthening such partnerships, though nothing has been reported in ESDP-IV.

Neither the legal documents nor the strategies on education development view higher education to be a purely economic instrument. Repeated statement has been made about the non economic functions of higher education in shaping citizens with desired values and in terms of contribution in state building. HEIs are required to promote such values as freedom of expression, efficiency, fighting corruption, building democratic practices, workmanship and discipline, etc both in their institutional practice and the content of their teachings. In support of this goal, civic education is given to students of all fields. In recent years, as a response to the growing ethnic and religious tension particularly in public HEIs, the ministry of education has issued a guideline for regulating behavior and interaction in universities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of the research indicated that the Ethiopian higher education clearly demonstrates indicia of the developmental state concept. However, two limitations need to be noted. First, the research is limited to examining certain documents and related literature as its source of data. Second, the research is meant to provide a preliminary view that establishes insight in to the issue and does not cover implementation side.

Therefore, taking this research as a starting point, future inquiries need to go deeper looking at aspects of both policy making and implementation, and by incorporating primary data pertinent to both processes. Furthermore, the developmental nature of the Ethiopian higher education needs to be carefully examined in terms of each of the major aspects identified in this study.

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CURRICULUM EUROPÆUM

Alfred Rafael Garcia

BACKGROUND

THE CASE OF AN ERASMUS MUNDUS MASTER COURSE IN A SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT: REFLECTIONS ON THE BOLOGNA PROCESS, COURSE DESIGN, AND TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION PROVISION

Curricular reform in European higher education, as one of the three dimensions of the modern ization agenda as appropriated by the European Union aims to make Europe the most competi-tive knowledge economy in the world. This, however, does not belong to the exclusive compe-tence of the EU's Lifelong Learning Program: the three-cycle system, competence-based learn-ing, flexible learning paths, recognition of qualifications, are hallmarks of another model, theBologna Process, which aims to promote compatibility and comparability between national edu-cational systems within Europe and beyond. These complementary, even mutually symbiotic,instruments have shaped different actors' perceptions on the direction have influenced the policy and practice of European higher education as we know today. (Batory and Lindstrom, 2011; Corbett, 2011: 36-38; Weymans, 2009).

But what exactly does this mean for the curriculum, inherently national as its universities? For allits talk of reforming teaching and learning, there have been criticisms of the uneven implementa-tion of Bologna instruments (Adam, 2006), or an obeisant compliance of the language of theseinstruments as nothing but a fad (Karseth, 2008). As a point of departure in understanding howthis supposed convergence operates, a point of departure would be to look at curriculum as howit is arranged, as it is, after all, in a context that exemplifies the pinnacle of these three concep-tions of the European dimension of higher education: the Erasmus Mundus Program.

The primary goal of the research is to illuminate to what extent the rationale behind the, as wellas the instruments of the Bologna Process is reflected in educational programs. To this respect,the study and practice of curriculum will lend theoretical and methodological means to under-stand how a program and its modules are arranged, and perhaps shed light as to the education-al considerations undertaken can also reflect the political and social rationales that permeatehigher education systems and its sub-units. Reflections on this arrangement will hopefully inform key decision-makers on potential factors to be involved in matters of course/module and pro-gram design, once an educationist perspective is balanced with the political and the social.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is through looking at the curriculum that one can determine the extent through which educa-tional considerations are manifested and conveyed. For this research, an understanding of cur-riculum will be presented and following the argument presented above, the Erasmus Mundus Program, as representative of Bologna and Lisbon recommendations, will be a preliminary de-terminer of the so-called European dimension in higher education. The question, with the follow-ing sub-questions, is phrased as follows:

"How do lecturers, course designers, and program administrators in Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses perceive curriculum design?"

- How significant are differences in perception with regards to course design?
- How can these differences be explained based from a theory of curriculum?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Of the massive reforms enacted by Lisbon-Bologna, the impact on curriculum is manifest in dif ferent ways, not in how classes are taught, in se, but at the factors that affect the arrangement ofteaching in learning, as suggested by the Bologna action lines (Adam 2006). One, in particular,the

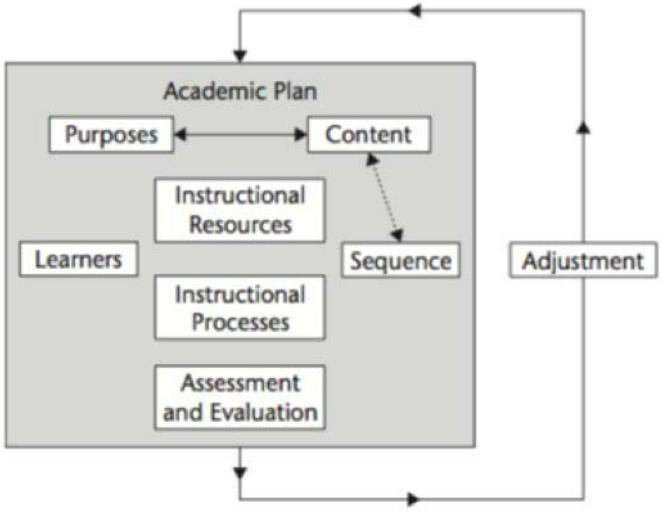
“European dimension” has come to mean the embodiment of the implementation of Bolognain a higher education (Weymans 2009, p. 571). While some aspects have been readily adopted,their implementation in the level of instruction have been less so, because of tensions in the un derstanding of curriculum that have been traditionally in the realm of teaching. Karseth (2008) states that due to the scaling of these issues on a national-supranational level, higher educationappears to be taking on a ‘new architecture’:

“*…curriculum issues that used to be dealt with on an institutional level have become political issues on a national and even supranational level. Implicitly and explicitly a framework indicates what ought to be the pur-pose, content, sequence and evaluation of a programme, which all repre- sent central elements of the definition of curriculum.* (2008, p. 52)”

To this point, the Erasmus Mundus Program can best exemplify an illustration of if this “new ar chitecture” operates in reality, one that fulfills all three dimensions of the ‘European-ness’ towhich both Bologna and Lisbon aspire. It is the hallmark European program according to Wey-man’s conceptions of the ‘European dimensions’, primarily through the competitive grantscheme through which university consortia (i.e. a cooperation between two or more universities) can apply. It fulfills both conditions of being aspiring to be competitive in the global academic market for foreign students, as well as competitive within the European space for institutionalfunding. And perhaps most importantly, it is the ‘truly’ European program, in the sense that themobility scheme associated with the courses are detached from the national-ness of the univer-sities. It had been imperative, to fulfill these conditions for applying for Erasmus Mundus funding,that the Bologna instruments (as interpreted by EU member states) are in place (Weymans 2009, 576-577).

CURRICULUM

Stark and Lattuca (2009) state that complex understandings of curriculum are rare, despite thefact different actors within and outside of an education space assume to know what it is. Their Academic Plan Concept builds on foundational theories of curriculum that provides a heuristic with which to understand different elements at work, as actors make decisions whether or notthey are aware of these elements. An analysis of curricula, therefore, is essentially ‘design-in-reverse’: an examination of outcomes to arrive at purposes, motivations, and meaning behindinstructional decisions (Conrad and Pratt, 1986; Dressel 1971, 1976, 1980; Dressel & DeLisle, 1970; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Toombs, 1977–1978; Toombs & Tierney, 1993, in Stark and Lat-tuca, 2011, p. 3-4, 16-17, 19).

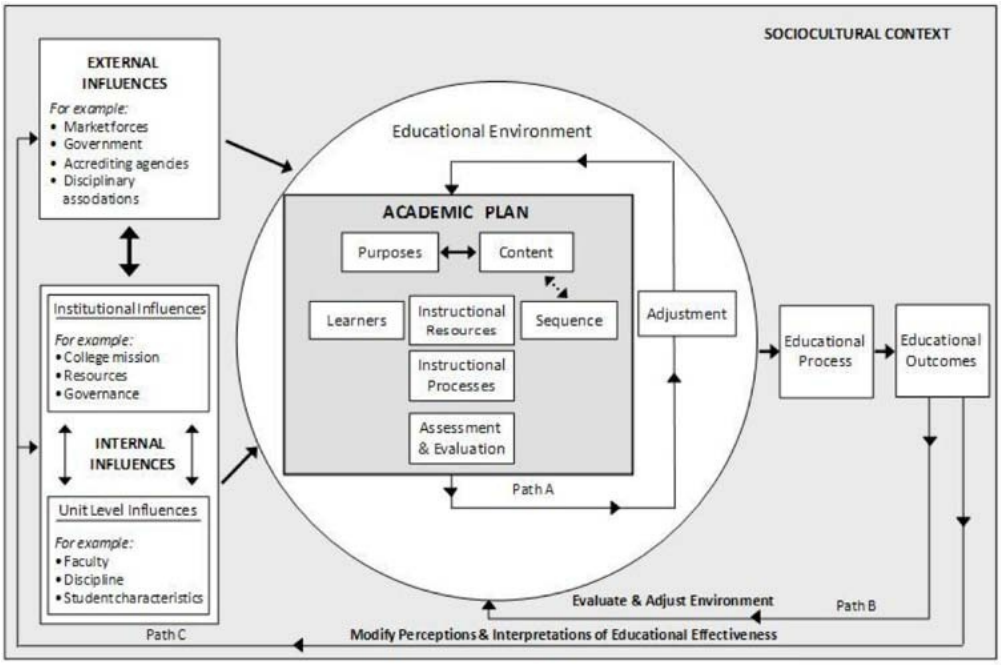


The exhaustive heuristic on how to understand curriculum in terms 1) the elements with which it is constituted and 2) the factors andagents that shape curriculum and 3) how they all fit in an education-al space. The curriculum is termed as an ‘academic plan’whereby it assumes that instruc tion (teaching and learning) is acritical, integral part of the curricu-lum process (whereas some indi viduals would distinguish them).The three determinants of this plan are the 1) faculty members, who they argue as the key actors in the whole process; 2) existing academic plans/curricula, and 3)

salient features of the academic environment. In considering innovation, different changes might include course content, institution or abolition of modules, instructional and assessmenttechniques, to name a few. The academic plan has eight elements, as from the figure inset (Stark & Lattuca, 2009, pp. 8-11).

"*Understanding a curriculum requires more than an examination of its dif-ferent elements. To grasp why, and often how, a particular curriculum is organized, we need to consider the contexts in which it was created and implemented. In a larger sense, a complete picture of college and universi-ty curricula in the United States (or any other country) requires a sense of how and why these institutions evolved over time.*" (Stark & Lattuca, 2009, pp. 11-12).

Academic plans are not operationalized in vacuum in se, but are managed in relation to various features in which it is situated. This situation, as a whole, is the sociocultural context where dis-crete features influence each other and contribute to the academic plan. In its immediate con-text, the academic plan functions in an educational environment, where the academic plan situ-ates itself in an institutional and organizational context, e.g. a university. Path A (Adjustment) op-erates in this environment, where an individual/collective faculty adjusts the elements of theacademic plan according to its immediate results, i.e. assessment and evaluation. The educa-tional environment is shaped both by external (market forces, government policies, accreditationagencies, professional organizations, to name a few) and internal influences, commonly referredto in literature as external and internal "stakeholders". External and internal stakeholders have a discursive relationship with each other, one influencing the other in a flux (Stark & Lattuca, 2009, pp. 2-22).



Using Stark and Lattuca's (2009) Academic PlanFramework, the researchwill attempt to illustrate aprovisional model for thearrangement of Erasmus Mundus modules, giventhe specific external andinternal forces which shape educational envi-ronments, such as theErasmus Mundus Master Courses. If we follow the arrangement of their mod-el, the hypotheses positedby the model are as fol-lows:

1. Purpose and Content should figure to be most important in the arrangement, and that they areclosely related
2. Sequence, Instructional Resources, and Learners figure in second place, with Sequence be ing moderately linked with Content
3. Instructional Processes and Evaluation and Assessment figure third and last, respectively,with Adjustment as a preter-dominant feature.

Because of the historical and political developments in Europe, it is hypothesized that this arrangement will not hold, in which Karseth (2008) argued that curriculum reforms, or at

leastreforms being advanced by supra/inter/intra/sub-national, are headed towards a direction inwhich sequence should figure less in the arrangement, theoretically in favor of the other ele-ments.

METHODOLOGY

This case study follows an instrumental case study approach, hereby defined as an in-depth de scription of a single unit that is selected as representative of a general event or phenomenonunder investigation. As such, the topic of interest is assumed to be inherent in the selected case,and the unit is studied in an attempt to investigate its inherent characteristics and the relation-ships of its components. The ensuing findings are expected to provide insights in the under-standing of the general phenomenon under investigation as resultant from the study of the se-lected case. The approach provides for the possibility of depth in terms of data and context, butmay suffer from fallibility in generalizations due to the potential particularity of a case in its envi-ronment (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010, pp. 455-458). However, the purpose of this research is not to generalize about this case with similar other cases, but to investigate how a theoreticalframework operates in a given case, that when applied with similar cases, potentially similar,comparable results may occur (Yin, 2009, p. 9).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The case was designed according to the methodology suggested by Yin (2009), in which a sin-gle case with multiple embedded units would govern data collection and analysis. The primary rationale is that this design allows the research to test “a well-formulated theory…[wherein t]hetheory has specified a clear set of propositions as well as the circumstances within which thepropositions are believed to be true. A single case, meeting all of the conditions for testing the theory, can confirm, challenge, or extend the theory. The single case can then be used to deter-mine whether a theory's propositions are correct or whether some alternative set of explanations might be more relevant” (p. 47). The case selected is the researcher’s own Erasmus Mundus Master Course, the Masters in Research and Innovation in Higher Education (MARIHE).

Several elements are proposed to be under the focus of investigation: 1) program administrators working in an 2) Erasmus Mundus program and their perceptions of 3) course design. The rele-vant unit of analysis in this research is an operational educational program design under theErasmus Mundus framework. “Program design” is here understood under the theoretical propo-sitions of the academic plan framework (Stark and Lattuca, 2009), hitherto interchanging “cur-riculum” and “course design” interchangeably as the primary unit of analysis. Using an instru-mental case study approach, the framework is investigated under the backdrop of European re-forms in the past decade, namely the Bologna Process and its successors. The primary objec-tive of this study is to describe operational curriculum design in a specific context, one that hypo-thetically challenges interpretations of a theoretical framework. Secondary objectives include,but are not limited to, provide reflections on curriculum designs in similar contexts, e.g. other Erasmus Mundus or similar transnational educational program offerings occurring in Europe or elsewhere.

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

The data collected follows a variety of techniques; primarily document reviews and expert inter views. These sources were expected to corroborate the reliability of data from varying datasources. The documents include

1. Public documents: information about the MARIHE program as available in the official website.
2. “Semi-public” documents: artifacts of course designs throughout the program (module syllabi,MARIHE Moodle Learning Platform
3. Recommended documents occurring in expert interviews and other sources
4. Disseminated questionnaire to all MARIHE faculty members

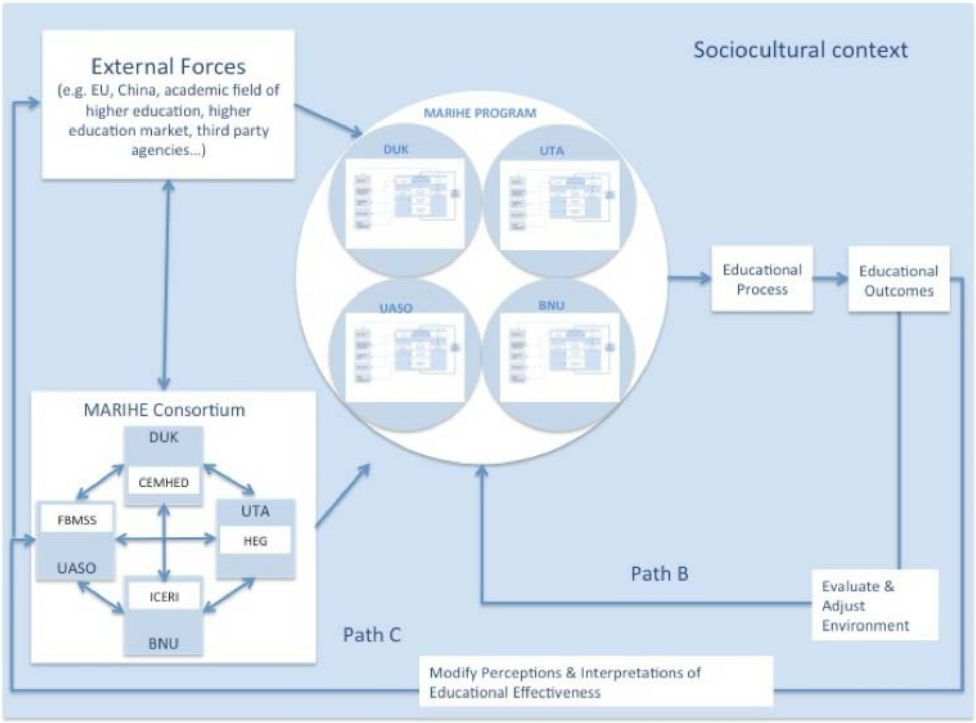
Due to the organizational structure of this EMMC, the respondents to the questionnaire and theinterviews have been segregated according to their level of involvement in the program, withtheir accompanying data collection instrument employed:

1. Program coordinator (1) – key informant interview

2. Academic directors (4) – key informant interview
3. Module designer/Lead lecturer (*x*) – online questionnaire
4. Guest/Occasional Lecturer (51-*x*) – online questionnaire

This segregation results in an overlap of respondent "identity", i.e. one faculty member can havemultiply roles. As such, the program coordinator is assumed to have three sets of data, one for each of the first three "levels", academic directors, two sets, and both types of lecturer with only one set, with prejudice to the "module designer" role in case of role multiplicity. The data collec-tion instruments have been designed following Yin's (2009) approach of following theoreticalpropositions (p. 130), wherein an established theory (in this case, a framework) is tested in aspecific case.

The instruments were designed to collect information regarding the eight elements of the acad-emic plan: Purpose, Content, Sequence, Learners, Instructional Resources, Instructional Pro-cesses, Assessment and Evaluation, and Adjustment. These elements will serve as the cate-gories in which the codes will be compared across the four embedded units, i.e. curriculum de-sign in the four constituent institutions. An analysis of the findings should reveal how curriculum is operationalized under the perspective of this particular theory. In the case of confirming/ex-tending/challenging the academic plan framework in the context of European, transnational cur-ricula, a general inductive method is proposed to investigate the proposed configuration of thetheory in this case context. Any significant findings will be presented, particularly, but not limited,to test the hypothesis regarding the Sequence category.



KEY FINDINGS

Due to the particular nature of Erasmus Mundus curricula (joint,transnational, transcul-tural, etc.) a re-concep-tualization of the Acad-emic Plan concept was proposed, to have aworking understandingof the processes thatunderlie an operationalcurriculum in a giveninstitutional context. The hypothesis thatguided the analysis was that MARIHE con-tains four discrete pro-grams academic plans encapsulated in onedegree program.

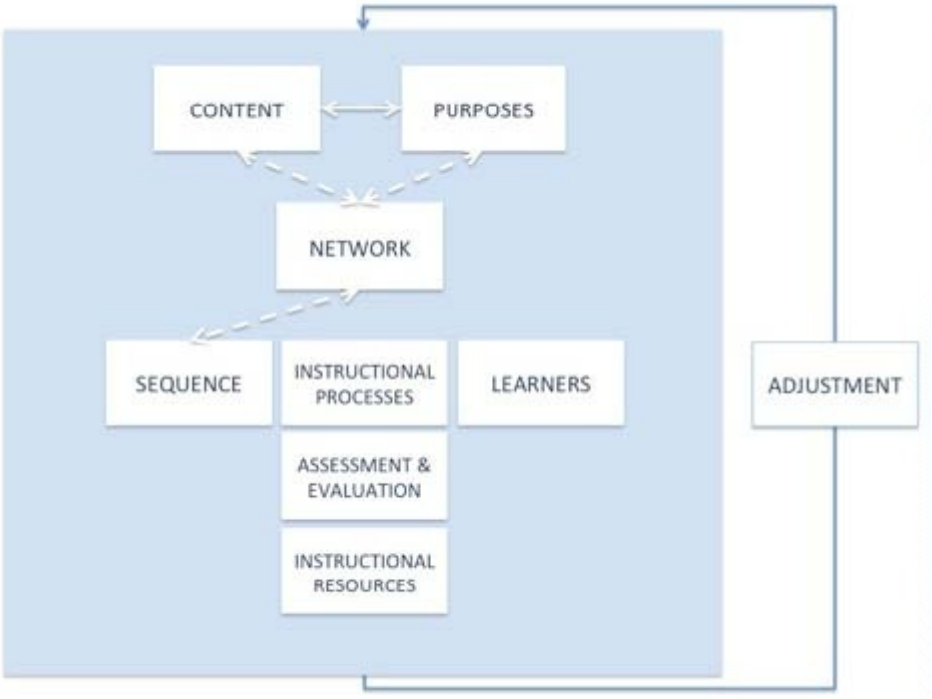
It will, of course, by no means be completely accurate, but to test this hypothetical model wouldbe to highlight that these issues are present in educational artifacts regardless of whether or notthey are explicitly stated.

PERCEPTIONS ON COURSE DESIGN

With the eight elements of the academic plan framework in tow, the four units that make up theMARIHE consortium have realized conceptions of a "curriculum". The data concedes to the hy pothesis that Purpose and Content of program and course (module) curricula supersedes any discussion on the teaching and learning arrangement. The other elements, however, vary insaliency per institution (with some corroborating data that indicate that they vary per faculty member/instructor). The data also supports the secondary hypothesis that the moderate rela-tionship between Content and Sequence was further diminished, favoring a hypothesized 'ninth'element of the academic plan in a joint-degree program such as an EMMC.

Data reveals that the collaboration between the actors of the four institutions have a consider-able impact in the content arrangement (scope and sequence). Traditionally,

"i*n any discussion about sequence, educational benefits and instructional rationales should drive discussions about subject matter arrangement, rather than the reverse.*" Sequence, in and of itself, *is not consistently mentioned by faculty instructors* (Stark and Lattuca, 2009, p. 9; emphasis the researcher's).



This traditional notion of the importance ofsequence is being challenged (Karseth,2008) because of the increasingly popular use of the modular arrangement of curriculaand instruction, especially espoused in theBologna Process, namely that sequencing ofknowledge units are more flexible and semi-structured, as compared to highly rigid struc-turing of academic requirements in the erst-while "elite" stage of higher education devel-opment (Trow, 2007, pp. 243, 254).

Although there are potentially several alter-ations between the theoretical configurationof the academic plan concept and the actual form of the MARIHE curriculum, this "network" element appears responsible for the most evidentdifference: the decoupling of content and sequence from the course design planning decisions as mutually interdependent elements, at least understood from the academic director and theprogram's perspective. In this relationship paradigm, "network" represents a collective coursedecision element that naturally relates to both content decisions of the program as well as thepurposes of the MARIHE curriculum. This "network", in turn, filters these priorities into the cur-rent sequencing of the topics and modules. That the priorities in sequencing stem from influ ences other than content is a recurring theme in all of the respondents' data.

Based from the collected interview data, this “network” element is the collective of individuals incharge of the program, and the characteristics that they bring into the planning and implementa tion of course designs. Stated otherwise, this refers to faculty/program representatives who con struct the program and whose presence is iterative *within* the course design, similar to how thecharacteristics of “learners” are theoretically embedded in the designs of curricula. Several indi cators throughout the interview data justify the primacy of “network” over the de-emphasis of se quence in discussions of design. When asked for (the most) influential elements of the program,direct statements and indirect inferences refer to the conflation of the following factors, as “net-work”:

1. Key individuals
2. With expertise and motivation
3. And share a common view

Consistently, “network” decides content sequence as they were first implemented. By virtue ofthe policy of Erasmus Mundus II, a collaborative arrangement is a requisite to avail of program funding, and is manifest in module/program academic plans. Network also appears to havesome influences in the remaining other elements, particularly in their consistency across the four institutions, e.g. Instructional Processes in countries differ, although bound by program guide-lines. Less evident is relationship of the Learners in the Purpose-Network-Content paradigm,given that in this institutional context, Learners are the constant element across four academic plans. In further detailing the quintessential, added-value nature of this ‘new’ paradigm, one di-rector states,

"*It’s not the structure, it’s the people. I do believe in it. So, of course we need structure, we need instruments, we need an implementation, no doubt about it. But, we need the right people for it […] This is the reason why we keep our cooperation within the four universities as close as pos-sible, and as long as we understand each other in the consortium and with the students, and we have a common goal, everything will be good. And if we would lose this, that would be the major obstacle for quality in this pro-gram. […] I really have the feeling that everyone in this program has the same picture for it. Of course, this picture is maybe different in the view of one or another colleague, but we have the same understanding, even if we talk different, or we use different languages, and English is not our mother tongue, but I do believe that we have the same language, the same under-standing, and the same goal. So the answer that this are we…the quality are we*.” [*Emphasis the respondent’s*]

CONCLUSIONS

It should not be surprising that a network-like element should appear as iterative in academic plan decisions, given that a joint degree program naturally embedded in a network of organiza-tions through collaboration. What the data and its analysis suggest is that this terra incognita ofcurriculum theory and practice in multi-institutional consortia arrangements offering joint degrees have implications that come with their implementation and evaluation. The “common view” as-pect is inviolate; one would be hard pressed to find any educator willing to divulge that s/he does not consider the whats and the whys of teaching. But the “with whats” and the “whos” will cer-tainly drive discussions of joint program curricula in one direction or another. At least in theory,this is what we can expect.

To answer the research question, the theoretical concepts of the plan appear to be perceived ina similar fashion to an operational Erasmus Mundus Master Course. It may be beyond the cur-rent scope to claim that the academic plan concept could be extended in a “post-Bologna” con-text, although certainly the issue of mobility and intensified, transnational cooperation in program offerings could force the issue. At least from this case study, the differences between the theory of the model and the form of how it appears in this particular European incarnation appears to becosmetic in nature. The priorities of the plan, and its supposed new element, gives pause as towhat it may entail for the operation of these kinds of programs. With the twilight of Erasmus Mundus II and the advent of Joint Master Degrees under the Erasmus+ scheme, the policy goals of either program may still outweigh these discussions of the technical minutiae of educational processes: the findings seem to lead to that direction, although it would be premature to declare outright.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Despite the ambitious trajectory that this study attempted to conduct, logistical and theoretical limitations currently structure the conduct of this research. This attempt at “reverse-engineering” the design process has been, however, a fulfilling activity on the part of the researcher, reconcil-ing concepts of curriculum along the broader political spectrum attendant to current European developments in higher education. The following recommendations apply not only to the exten-sion of the research to other elements of the selected Erasmus Mundus case, but to any joint -degree programs, particularly those that operate transnationally.

Needless to mention, a glaring exception to this study are the impacts of educational processes and educational outcomes that lie outside academic plans. Data from the outcomes of these programs are nevertheless fed into the plan through the planners’ perspectives, though a com-parative study between perceptions of faculty and students would complement the results of this study, particularly in Path B, where educational effectiveness is perceived and filtered. Of partic-ular import from the results of this study is the issue of *curricular coherence,* which is the actual and perceived interrelationship between concepts. Curricular coherence itself is a function of sequence, a major focal point of this study. Furthermore, observations of the interview data re-veal that there are outcomes from the program that are transformational to the organizational structure of the units themselves (Path C), although to which extent this is significant may re-quire more longitudinal methods than descriptive or explanatory.

Although the academic plan is *in se* operational in context, the context itself needs further elabo ration, as, by its very nature, the network structure of the MARIHE consortium (any transnational educational program, for that matter) compounds the internal influences of the HEI units on theacademic plan. In particular, preliminary observations of the interview data suggest that in terms of “illustrative profiles” (Stark and Lattuca, 2009, p. 80-101), the MARIHE program may share its characteristics with the Business fields (compared to the interpretive Social Sciences fields; al though admittedly, multidisciplinary fields may share more than one distinct and discrete profile). A comparative study of the four HEI units and their respective illustrative profiles could potential-ly complement the findings of this study, or the extent of the influence these profiles may exert on the program’s current form.

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WHAT FACTORS AFFECT GERMAN-EDUCATED CHINESE MASTER'S STUDENTS' DECISION TO WORK IN GERMANY?

Xin Deng

BACKGROUND

Globalisation pushes the internationalisation of higher education, which triggers off the thriving growth of international activities of universities in higher education sector worldwide. Needless to say, students become the main participants in this trend. The salient manifestation of this is the increase of students pursuing cross-border education. For them, employment prospects are their major concerns in this educational investment. The reality, however, is that in recent years there is an increasing number of international students returning back to their home countries upon graduation without being able to secure a job either at home or abroad. Amongst them, the number of Chinese overseas returnees is predominant. Although Chinese demand for overseas education remains strong, due to the frustrating fact that more and more Chinese students return back to China jobless, many Chinese parents and students start to reconsider the benefits of studying abroad. Some prudent strategies can be seen from this reconsideration, to name a few, tying to a national funding that can secure subsequent job opportunities, choosing those study fields aggressively demanded by the job market, or avoiding those overheated study destinations and refocusing on those countries that demonstrate strong and steady economy and favorable policies towards foreign graduates. Germany, in this context, attracts more and more Chinese students to pursue their overseas education.

There are several signs from Germany showing positive job prospects for international graduates. For example, the emphasis on retaining highly educated international students to offset a shortage in German labour market and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)'s Strategy 2020 (2014) that aims at enhancing the internationalisation of German higher education. However, for German-educated Chinese students, they are still faced with challenges when it comes to job seeking in Germany: 1) Language-wise, those who are less proficient in German are highly likely to be disadvantageous in German job market; 2) Subject-wise, those who do not study science and engineering might have less job opportunities in Germany.

The aforementioned situation facing nowadays Chinese overseas students has become increasingly intense. Trapped in the dilemma as to where to seek employment opportunities, they have to make calculated decisions based on their self-evaluation and the analysis of the external environment. Besides, as Germany itself is being short of skilled labours, it is of high importance for German higher education institutions to work out not only how to attract, but also to keep qualified Chinese students within the country.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following this context, this study attempts to explore: what factors affect German-educated Chinese Master's students' decision to work in Germany upon graduation? The consideration concerning focusing on master's students is that 1) Chinese students pursuing Bachelor's degree in Germany are fewer than those doing Master's. This is partly due to the difference of high school system in two countries and the lack of recognition mechanism regarding higher school qualifications; 2) apart from the limited number of Chinese Bachelor's students represented at German higher education institutions, the tendency of their plans upon graduation is mostly to move up to the next level to further their study. In this case, the inclusion of Chinese Bachelor's students would somehow invalidate the focus of this study, which is examining students' decision to work; 3) the exclusion of Chinese Ph.D students in Germany is mainly concerned with the fact that most of them are funded by Chinese governments, and thus there is an obligatory binding that requires them to return to China upon graduation. Since the study deals with students' intention to work in Germany, Chinese Ph.D students are not an appropriate target in this case.

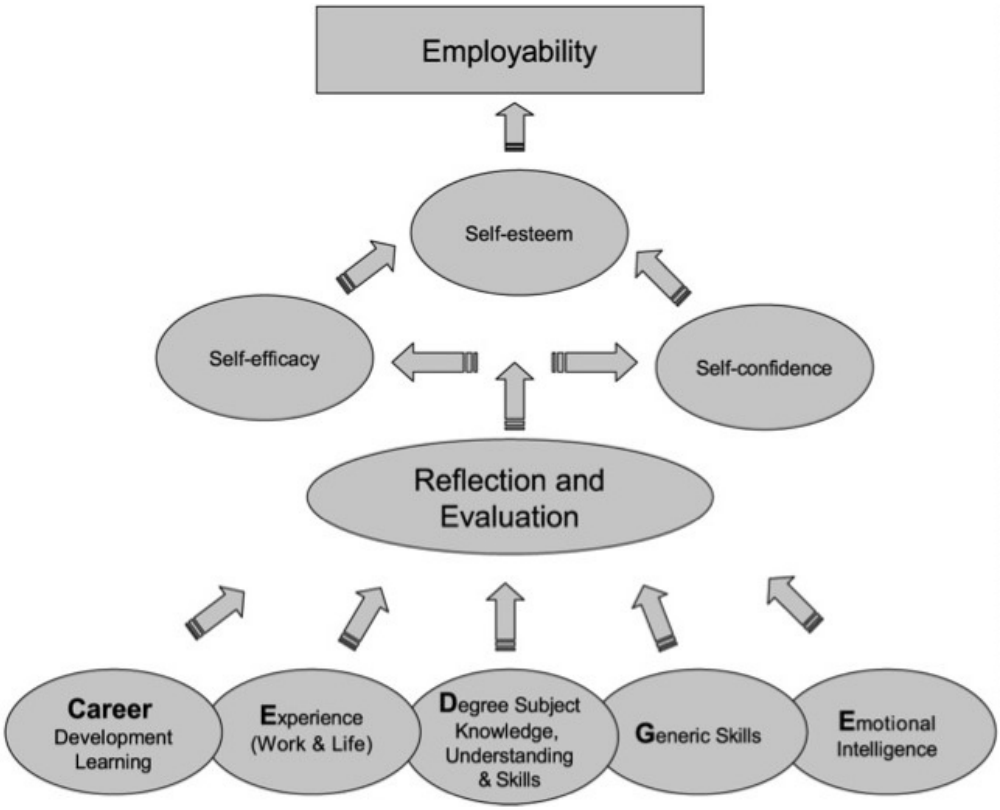
Based on the above background, the core research question can be broken down into two sub questions: 1) What internal factors and external factors affect German-educated Chinese Master's

students' decision to work in Germany upon graduation? 2) What are the implications and suggestions for policymakers in Germany and China in terms of attracting qualified German-educated Chinese graduates?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical background of this study revolves around employability. Up to date, the debate over how to define employability accurately for its own sake and how to make its definition reach a wider range of audience has not yet ceased. The dilemma has it that whether or not employability merely refers to securing a job, or it carries more complex attributes that might go beyond work scope.

Over time, several models have emerged in response to the interpretation and understanding of employability. This study, due to its specific focus, lays its theoretical foundation on the model proposed by Dacre Pool and Seswell (2007) – "The CareerEDGE model of Gradate Employability". The following diagram shows the details of this model.



As they assert, the elements included in this model are all essential. A missing of any element will result in a severe reduction in graduate's employability. In the meantime, they stress that certain degree of overlap between some elements is recognised. Therefore, a visual presentation of the model is made to reflect this overlap, as well as the interaction between the various elements (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007, p. 280).

As is shown, there are two tiers in this model. The lower tier consists of five basic elements that students can work on to approach their employability. The middle tier, which is reflection and evaluation, calls for a high level of processing on what students have already acquired so that ultimately and hopefully their self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence, resting at the high tier and closely linking to employability, can be improved.

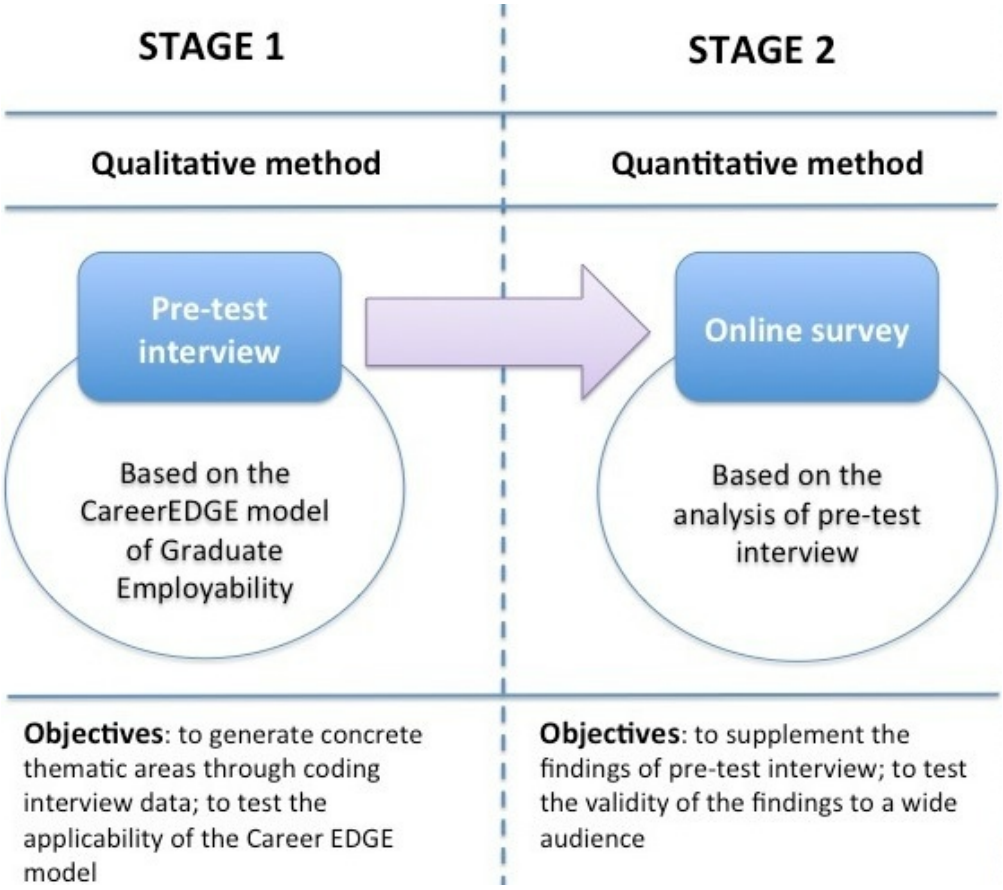
The comprehensiveness and accessibility of this model considerably increases its practicability in the field of employability research. As is explained by Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007, p. 287), "this model allows lectures, personal tutors, career advisors or anybody else involved with the promotion of employability within higher education to do so without clouding the issue in complexity".

Therefore, the study will rely on this CareerEDGE model to design the pre-test interview, which aims at collecting the first-round empirical data concerning how German-educated Chinese Master's students perceive employability. Further, this model will also be used as an instrument to structure the followup online survey.

METHODOLOGY

The choice of research methods shares a close link with the defined research question. With different research purposes, the choice can go to either a qualitative or a quantitative approach, or a mix of both (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Qualitative methods rely on articulated explanation to contextualise certain social behaviours and detect how social experiences are given meanings, while quantitative studies focus on the analysis of causal relationships between variables, and thereby generalise a certain pattern (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 13). However, today the combination of both methods is plentifully seen in many studies. The legitimacy of such mixture lies in the assertion that at operational level studies are located at different points of a continuum between qualitative and quantitative (Newman & Benz, 1998, p. xi).

Since this study is rather exploratory, it requires not only in-depth analysis to better approach the target issue, but also a reasonable generalisation to validate its results to a wider audience. Therefore, a combination of both methods, qualitative and quantitative, is adopted. Precisely speaking, qualitative method will be used for analysing the empirical data generated from the six pre-test interviews, whereas quantitative method can be seen from the statistics of the online survey results. The following figure shows the process and design of this study.



PRE-TEST INTERVIEW

The main purpose of conducting pre-test interviews is to test to what extent the chosen theory is applied to the subject of this study – German-educated Chinese Master's students. On top of it, the generation of several concretethematic areas is expected. They would serve as the basis for the second stage of data collection.

The pre-interview questions are based on Dacre Pool and Sewell's CareerEDGE model of Graduate Employability (2007). The questions are mainly designed to be open-ended, except some regarding background information of interviewees. Each question designed is corresponding to a certain element in the CareerEDGE model. Interviewees are expected to answer the questions that apply to their situation, and in the meantime, encouraged to react promptly to emerging important issues. At the end of the interview, interviewees are expected to give comments on their own or interviewer's performance over the course of the interview, as well as possible suggestions to improve the interview design.

ONLINE SURVEY

The very motivation of designing an extended online survey is to validate the findings of the interviews to a wider audience. It is hoped that by involving more German-educated Chinese Master's students to participate in this study, relatively convincing conclusions can be made and more constructive suggestions regarding employment in Germany can be provided for relevant interested parties, like students themselves and national policymakers, either from German side or Chinese side.

The platform used for designing and processing this online survey is LimeService. It is a free and open web server-based software, which enables users to develop and publish online surveys, and collect responses without doing any programming. This platform is widely used among researchers in the filed of social science.

In summary, 1) there are two stages to collect data: a. the six pre-test interviews based on the CareerEDGE model, and b. the online survey extendedly designed to validate and enrich the findings from the analysis of the six pre-test interviews. 2) A mix of qualitative methods and quantitative methods are used to process the empirical data generated from the two aforementioned stages.

KEY FINDINGS

- The main findings obtained from the analysis are summarised as follows:
- In general, German-educated Chinese Master's students are willing to stay in Germany for work if a job can be offered in line with their studyfield, compatible with their personality and possibly related to their personal interests.
- German proficiency is expected by most German employers. Moreover, it is believed that German proficiency outweighs study field when it comes to job seeking in Germany.
- For Chinese students, emotional intelligence (EI) is not influential in deciding whether or not they work in Germany, even though they admit that it can somehow improve their job performance.
- German-educated Chinese Master's students are open for job opportunities regardless of the location, as long as the opportunities are perceived to be beneficial for their future career.
- Work experience in Germany is seen as leverage for outrunning the other peers in the Chinese job market. Therefore, working abroad for a certain period of time and then going back to China to seek better job opportunities tend to be a plan amongst a majority of Chinese students.
- Universities offer a series of service to help students to enhance their employability. Career Centre in this respect plays an active role. However, Chinese students usually do not participate because of their financial burden and study pressure.
- The quality of living environment and social environment in Germany is the primary incentive for German-educated Chinese Master's students to stay and work in Germany.
- Family issue is central to the decision as to whether or not Chinese students would work in Germany. On the one hand, Chinese parents expect their children to return, and on the other hand, for those Chinese students who have spouse or relationship in Germany, they are inclined/made to stay.
- The cooperation between China and Germany is growing, which will create considerable opportunities for German-educated Chinese Master's students. Therefore, they express certain optimism towards the German job market.
- The daunting German bureaucracy manifesting itself in visa issue shuffles Chinese students back and forth, making them passive and staggering in the German job market.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Whether or not German-educated Chinese Master's students stay and work in Germany, in itself, does not necessarily bring about social significance. However, if further broadening and deepening this issue, one might realise that students' employability might have a potential impact on society as a whole. Therefore, how to enhance their employability in order for them to better cope with the job market deserves certain attention.

Based on the main findings of this study, suggestions and recommendations can be made from three levels: individual level, university level and social level. At the individual level, students themselves are the main engine to produce intended quality; at the university level, universities are defined as a facilitator to provide favourable conditions; at the social level, governments and markets are treated as a guardian to protect desirable outcomes. The following table elaborates corresponding suggestions and recommendations at the respective level.

	Individual level	University level	Social level
Finding #1	▪ Chinese students should take their study field into account when they apply for internship or part time jobs. The relevance should be carefully considered. ▪ Make a list of jobs that suit personal interests and personality, and then screen the job market, checking specific requirements for these jobs.	▪ Each faculty is suggested to produce a career manual that consists of all the possible jobs related to the offered study fields. The short cut could be an alumni book containing some stories of job seeking or work life. ▪ University clubs could organise more activities involving external potential employers. For example, a badminton club invites a referee from a local fitness centre to judge a friendship game.	▪ Policymakers should further clarify what specific jobs are officially related to what study fields, and in the meantime allow for an overlap of certain jobs in different study fields.
Finding #2	▪ Increase the amount of opportunities to use German in daily life. If possible, a continuous German course is recommended before the proficiency is achieved at a satisfactory level.	▪ The international relations office could strengthen the "buddy programme", which focuses on language tandem partner on a voluntary basis. ▪ Activities that promote the mutual understanding of Chinese culture and German culture could be organised bilingually. ▪ More mini lectures or seminars in German are encouraged to be opened for Chinese students. ▪ Managers of Studentenheim could consider a mix of Chinese students and German students when it comes to room/flatmates arrangement.	▪ German employers could offer some "on-the-job language training" to those prospective employees whose German language knowledge needs strengthening. ▪ English can be coupled with German as the working language, particularly for those companies having international profiles.
Finding #3	▪ Be alert to and reflective on own behaviour during the interaction with people at universities or workplaces. Make regular self-evaluation on what have been achieved and what have not.	▪ Through lectures or workshops, enhance students' understanding of EI, making them aware of its relation to their future career life.	▪ Employers could consider make EI test more transparent during the recruitment process, if there is one.
Finding #4			▪ German employers should specify work benefits in order to attract more highly educated and qualified Chinese graduates. ▪ Chance of promotion should be highlighted during the recruitment process.
Finding #5	▪ Work on the establishment and maintenance of local contacts in China while working in Germany. ▪ Companies/organisations, both operating in Germany and China, or to be broader, Europe and Asia, should be particularly targeted.		▪ Companies/organisations could use business trips, for example, between Germany and China, as an incentive to attract qualified Chinese graduates. ▪ Society should be more tolerant towards work mobility.
Finding #6	▪ Chinese students should improve their time management. Try to engage more in work-related trainings offered by Career Centre.	▪ Universities could provide more student jobs on campus. Incentive can be money, or credits for study. ▪ A variety of work-related activities should be sought on campus. Apart from job fairs or skill trainings, universities could invite successful alumni back to campus to share some experience with students. ▪ Considering the increasing number of Chinese students represented on campus and Chinese companies operating in Germany, universities could organise specific forums to link Chinese students with these companies.	▪ German governments should allocate more funds in the field of student jobs, making concerted efforts with universities to provide students with more opportunities to gain work experience before they officially start their career.
Finding #7			▪ More efforts can be made by German government in terms of the welfare of foreign labours.

Finding #8	▪ More communication with parents and partner is encouraged. A mutually agreed solution is suggested so that the future conflict can be minimised. ▪ A stage-oriented career plan is recommended, taking family issue into account at the mature stage of career.		▪ Employers are suggested to specify those job contents that might have an impact on family issue. For example, frequent business trips might not be favoured by some employees' partner. ▪ Regulation in terms of family visit in Germany should better address the facilitation of visa application in this regard.
Finding #9	▪ Keep an eye on those policies focusing on China-Germany cooperation. The attention should be paid to both Chinese policies and German policies.	▪ German universities could work more on the academic exchange between German scholars and Chinese scholars. ▪ Like cities, German universities could initiate establishing sister universities with Chinese universities. ▪ Promote Konfuzius-Institute on campus, inviting more students to participate in its activities. ▪ If possible, universities could consider organising study excursions to China.	▪ Chinese companies operating in Germany should be more active in sending welcome signals to German-educated Chinese graduates. ▪ Conference, seminars or forums of China-Germany cooperation held in Germany should involve more Chinese student representatives so that latest information can be better disseminated.
Finding #10	▪ Early preparation on visa issue is strongly recommended. ▪ Learn to properly explain this visa issue to prospective employers so that a certain chance of employment can be ensured.	▪ Career Centre could offer Chinese students more assistance regarding visa application, even when they have graduated.	▪ Authorities could work more on promoting the knowledge regarding the legality of foreigners working in Germany amongst employers. ▪ The process of visa application should be streamlined and applicant-friendly. ▪ Employers could adjust certain recruitment criteria, particularly those concerning visa issue, so that foreign job applicants can have more time to deal with visa application.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study elicits a number of interesting topics to work more on. For example, 1) the analysis of German-educated Chinese Master's students' generic skills from the German employers' perspectives; 2) work mobility of Germaneducated Chinese Master's students; 3) the exploration of the cooperation mode between German higher education institutions with potential Chinese employers; 4) what factors affect German-educated Chinese graduates' decision to return back to China for work; 5) readdressing the role of Career Centre at universities, particularly focusing on its activity outcomes and accountability.

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INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY IN ARGENTINEAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: THE CASE OF NUC

Acuna Lopez

BACKGROUND

The tension that exists between a university's autonomy and its responsibility to the public constitutes a persistent theme in public higher education in Argentina. Despite the fact that academic freedom has been widely defined, the concept of institutional autonomy has been less clear. Ideas of institutional autonomy, however, create the environment within which public policy decisions arise. In Argentina public universities are funded almost entirely by the state. In today's changing environment, as public resources continue to decrease, the state, being the main stakeholder, has started to demand for accountability. Although the literature addresses these conditions, less is known about how the state's influence shapes institutional autonomy.

In Argentina, the relationship between the state and the university has always been complex and problematic, and it has historically known very few moments of harmony (Griffouliere, 2008). In her book The University in the XXI Century (1995), de Sousa Santos described three crises that universities were undergoing: crisis of hegemony, crisis of legitimacy and institutional crisis. Since then, that diagnosis has become an essential element in understanding the problems universities face. From these three it was the institutional crisis that struck deep in Argentinean public universities, result of neoliberal policies that the state underwent (Mazzola, 2008).

As a result of this crisis, the institutional autonomy held as sacred by public universities underwent considerable change. The traditional passive attitude of the State towards the universities began to change rapidly towards governmental activism in a context of crisis and budget deficit. A lot of government initiatives based on the evaluation and differentiation began to change old patterns of relations between the state and universities (Serrano García & Gonzalez Villanueva 2012).

It is clear then that university autonomy is a shifting notion that has experienced re- interpretations and reformulations over time. It is conceded that total independence from government cannot be achieved, particularly so in higher education systems where universities rely on funding by the state. Accordingly, as Löscher & Dannemann express it "there is not university autonomy as such, but there are degrees of autonomy that depend on the relation between co-existing different forms of interests at a given point in time. Thus, an idea of university autonomy is challenged by the versions of university autonomy that can be achieved in reality" (Löscher & Dannemann, 2004 p.7).

Surprisingly, the issue of autonomy in the Argentinean HE system has not been studied well. The studies that exist have focused on the historical development of autonomy but no studies have been carried out to study the degree of real autonomy that universities have when contrasted to the legal standing of autonomy. Consequently, this study attempts to shed some light on the status of autonomy in Argentinean public universities. However, to make the study more feasible, only one public university, NUC, will be analyzed and taken as a point of reference.

Then, the central research questions of this thesis are:

What is the real degree of autonomy that public universities in Argentina have? Does the autonomy reflected in the laws corresponds with the real autonomy universities have or is there a gap between legal autonomy and real autonomy?

In order to answer these questions, some sub-research questions need to be answered:
- What is the relationship between the state and public universities in Argentina?
- What is the effect this relationship has on institutional autonomy?

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The research problems were addressed by applying an analytical conceptual framework based on resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). In addition to this, Estermann & Nokkala, (2009) dimensions of autonomy were used to explore the autonomy of universities. In order to do this the third and last part of this framework focused on institutional autonomy in Argentina from a legal perspective. Through these three perspectives, the emphasis of this study was on understanding and interpreting the complex interaction between the state as main provider and public universities, and by analyzing the different dimensions of autonomy it attempted to determine the real degree of autonomy they enjoy.

RESOURCE DEPENDENCY THEORY (RDT)

RDT is a well-known theory in the social sciences that helps us to understand organization-environment relations. Its main purpose is to show how organizations act strategically and make choices to manage their dependency to the parts of their environment that control important resources (Leisyte, 2007). The basic argument of resource dependence theory can be summarized as follows:

- Organizations depend on resources.
- These resources ultimately originate from an organization's environment.
- The environment, to a considerable extent, contains other organizations.
- The resources one organization needs are thus often in the hand of other organizations.
- Resources are a basis of power.
- Legally independent organizations can therefore depend on each other. (Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. 1978)

RDT characterizes the links among organizations as a set of power relations based on exchange resources. It proposes that actors lacking in essential resources will seek to establish relationships with (i.e., be dependent upon) others in order to obtain needed resources. Also, organizations endeavor to change their dependence relationships by either minimizing their own dependence or by increasing the dependence of other organizations on them. Attaining either objective is thought to affect the exchange between organizations, thereby affecting an organization’s power. Thus, organizations are seen as coalitions modifying their structure and patterns of behavior to acquire and maintain needed external resources (Davis and Cobb, 2010).

In analyzing the relationship between resources and the autonomy of universities, it can be argued that because one party is dependent on the other for the supply of resources or services, this means that such party is subordinated to the other. Likewise, Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) sustain that the party who provides resources to an organization has the capability of exerting power over it. Thus, it becomes clear that the analysis of the interaction between organizations and their environments is inextricably related to their autonomy, as this relationship has the capability of deeply affecting it. In the words of Pfeffer and Salancik, (1978, p. 257) “*organizations are involved in a constant struggle for autonomy, as they areconfronted with constraint and external contro*l”.

DIMENSIONS OF AUTONOMY

For the purpose of this work the dimensions of institutional autonomy made by Estermann & Nokkala (2009) will be described in detail. These dimensions will serve as the framework to analyze institutional autonomy in Argentinean public universities through the case of the NUC. According to Estermann & Nokkala, (2009:40) the basic dimensions of institutional autonomy in HEIs are organizational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy.

Organizational autonomy

Organizational autonomy refers to the ability universities have to decide freely on their internal organization, such as the election of executive leadership, the composition of decision-making bodies, the formation of internal academic structures and the decision of who is accountable to whom within the university. That is to say, it focuses on the universities’ capacity to define the modalities of its leadership model (Camaño Cano, 2010). However, whilst most of the time the academic and administrative structures are under university control, the state often shapes the governance structure and leadership of universities. Furthermore, another significant element related to how governing bodies are structured concerns whether they include external members and how

these members are selected. The matter of concern here is whether the selection is implemented by the universities themselves and/or by an external body or authority (Estermann & Nokkala, 2009). Another important indicator of a university's organizational autonomy is its capacity to decide on their executive leadership. More often than not the composition and competencies of these people are specified by law and not by the universities themselves. (Estermann, Nokkala & Steinel, 2011).

Financial autonomy

Another characteristic of institutional autonomy, which adds complexity and significance to the matter, is the scope of financial autonomy that universities have (Kohtamaki, 2009). This is so because it is a crucial factor in allowing HEIs to achieve strategic goals. Financial autonomy is the ability HEIs have to handle their financial affairs without outside influence. The ability to administer funds independently permits institutions to set and accomplish strategic goals. If we consider this matter from the government university relationship perspective, financial autonomy refers to the freedom of the institution to decide over its financial issues without government's interference. Estermann and Nokkala (2009:18) describe financial autonomy by referring to the following issues:

1. The extent to which they accumulate reserves and keep surplus on state funding 2. The ability of universities to set tuition fees, 3. Their ability to borrow money on the financial markets 4. Their ability to invest in financial products 5. Their ability to issue shares and bonds 6. Their ability to own the land and buildings they occupy. Another important element of financial autonomy is universities' capacity to fully control and allocate their budget within the institution. Furthermore, the manner or method in which funding is allocated also constitutes an important factor as it reflects to what degree universities are independent from the influence of political authorities.

Staffing autonomy

Staffing autonomy refers to the capacity universities have to recruit their own staff and negotiate their terms of employment (Estermann & Nokkala, 2009). However, the ability of universities to decide on these matters is inherently associated to their financial and academic autonomy. This is so because staff wages as well as their employment contracts are determined by financial agreements between the university and its funders and also by the fact that financial regulations on staffing have an impact on the ability to recruit the appropriate staff (Tremblay, et al., 2008). It is therefore necessary to analyze this dimension of autonomy in connection to the institution's academic and financial autonomy. Furthermore, the status of university employees, whether they are civil servants or not, the recruitment procedures followed for the appointment of senior academic staff and the salary levels also serve as indicators to analyze staffing autonomy. (Estermann & Nokkala, 2009:40).

Academic autonomy

Academic autonomy indicates universities' ability to determine their institutional strategy, to define their basic mission as regards their teaching and research, including all the decisions concerning the actions that are necessary to best achieve these missions (Estermann & Nokkala, 2009). It is important to highlight, that a university's ability to define its institutional strategy is not only inherent of its academic autonomy but it also involves significant elements of the other dimensions. Academic autonomy may therefore be considered as a framework for all the main activities of the university.

Other important elements of academic autonomy are the power universities have to define their academic profile, the ability to introduce or terminate degree programs and the power to decide on the structure and content of these programs. In addition to all the forgoing, the responsibilities of universities with respects to the quality control of programs and degrees, and the extent to which they can decide on student admissions are also the significant elements of academic autonomy of universities (Estermann & Nokkala, 2009).

These dimensions of autonomy (Eastermann & Nokkala, 2009) specified the kind of actions that should be possible for autonomous HEIs. However, they are not enough to analyze the degree of autonomy that public universities in Argentina really have. In order to do this, a clear perception of the legal framework that determines the autonomy of such institutions in Argentina is essential.

Organizational Autonomy	Financial Autonomy	Staffing Autonomy	Academic Autonomy
- Power to form organizational structure - External members in governing bodies - Ability to decide on the executive leadership - Role of the rector with regards the governing bodies	- Autonomy to keep surplus on state funding - Autonomy to set tuition fees - Ability to raise money on the financial market The ability to control and allocate budget internally	- Capacity of the university to recruit its staff - Capacity to set terms of employment - Recruitment procedures for academic and administrative staff - Ability to determine staff salary and working conditions	- Institutional strategy - Academic profile - Structure and content of degree programs The power to decide on student admissions

Table 1: List of Indicators for analysis of each dimension of Autonomy.

UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY IN ARGENTINA, LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

In Argentina, university autonomy is the legal and political foundation on which the relationship between the National Government and public universities is established. For the purpose of this research, university autonomy will only be considered from a legal perspective as this perspective. The importance of institutional autonomy in public universities in Argentina is clearly demonstrated by the fact that it is ensured in the national constitution. The Argentinean Constitution states in article 75 paragraph19 that it corresponds to the Congress:

"*...to ensure the principles of free and equitable public education and the autonomy and autarky of national universities*." (National Constitution). The sanction of the National Higher Education Law (HEL) of 1995 (Law No 24.521/1995) clearly states the autonomy Argentinean public universities are to enjoy.

In accordance to the research questions and analytical framework proposed for this research and in order to make it coherent and cohesive, only those articles of the LES that refer to the four dimensions of autonomy proposed by Estermann and Nokkala (2009) will be presented.

The Argentinean LES, in its 29th article states that Universities will have **academic and institutional autonomy**, which comprises the following attributes:

- To enact and amend their statute;
- To Define their governing bodies, to establish their functions, decide on their integration and choose their authorities in accordance with what is established by their statutes and required by this Act;
- To conduct their affair without the interference of political interests.
- Manage their assets and resources, according to their statutes and laws governing the matter;
- Create undergraduate and graduate programs;
- Formulate and develop their curricula, scientific research, outreach and community services including the teaching of professional ethics;
- To grant academic degrees and authorization certificates;
- Provide education for experimentation, innovative teaching or teaching practice in preuniversity;
- To establish the system of access, retention and promotion of teaching and non-teaching staff;
- Appoint and dismiss staff;
- Establish the system of admission, retention and promotion of students, as well as the system of equivalences;

Other significant articles of the HEL as regards autonomy are article 51, which determines that the admission to the university academic career will be made by public and open competitions and that teachers appointed by competition must be a percentage not less than seventy percent (70%) of the respective plants of each university institution and article 52 which refers to the organizational structure of universities by stating that the statutes of national universities shall provide their organs of government, both collegiate and unitary, as well as its composition and powers. Article 53 of the HEL is also important for its implications on institutional autonomy as it determines that the collegiate governing bodies will be composed according to what is determined by the statutes of each university; but, the statutes must ensure that the teaching faculty has the highest relative

representation, which shall not be less than fifty percent (50%) of all its members; That the representatives of the students are regular students and have completed at least thirty percent (30%) of all subjects enrolled in the career; that the non-teaching staff have representation in these bodies to the extent determined by each institution; and that graduates, should be incorporated into the collegiate bodies. Article 55 establishes that the statutes shall provide for the constitution of Social Council, in which the different sectors and interests of the local community will be represented, with the mission to cooperate with the university institution in its articulation with the environment in which it is inserted. As regards sustainability and the economicfinancial regime the law states in article 58 that the national State must ensure financial support for the maintenance of national universities, to ensure normal operation, development and fulfillment of its purposes. And that for the distribution of this contribution to the national universities in the country indicators of efficiency and equity shall be taken into account. Article 59 determines that national universities shall have economic and financial autarky, which shall be exercised within the regime of the law 24.156 of Financial Management of the National Public Sector. It also introduces that in this context it corresponds to the institutions: To manage their assets and approve their budget, remarking that resources unutilized at the end of each year are automatically transferred to the next; set the salary regime of academic and managerial personnel; make rules relating to the generation of additional contributions than those from the National Treasury, through loans, the sale of bonds, goods, products, rights or services, grants, contributions, bequests, fees or charges for services that provide resources. This article also dictates that the additional resources that may arise from contributions or fees, must be primarily intended to scholarships loans, grants or credits or other student aid and didactic support for undergraduate students and that they may not be used to finance current expenditure.

Through the careful study of the legislation it can be concluded that the institutional autonomy of universities in Argentina should be quite high. If we consider the regulations with respect to Estermann and Nokkala's dimensions, it can be inferred that-from a legal perspective-the financial, staffing and academic autonomy of universities is quite high, while organizational autonomy is at a medium level as illustrated in table 2.

	Dimension of Autonomy	High	Medium	Low
1	Organizational		X	
2	Financial	X		
3	Staffing	X		
4	Academic	X		

Table 2: Status of institutional autonomy in Argentina according to the HEL.

METHODOLOGY

In order to conduct this research, qualitative research methods were used for data collection and analysis. Qualitative research methods were preferred over quantitative research methods based on the fact that for data analysis the research depended on the perceptions, experiences and opinions of participants. By using qualitative research methods the researcher seeks "an understanding of behavior, values, beliefs, and so on in terms of the context in which the research is conducted." (Bryman, 2008, p. 394) it also enables the researcher to gain a more detailed understanding of the phenomena of interest than with quantitative research (Yin, 2010). Furthermore, qualitative research methods are also effective in explaining unusual situations that might not be identified by utilizing quantitative methods.

Within qualitative research methods, a case study methodology was employed because of its convenience in showing the existing situations in the area under study. This approach was chosen because a case study is an in-depth examination of a single instance of particular phenomena (Yin, 2010) and for this reason it is appropriate to examine a particular program, event, project or institution in detail (Merriam, 1988). One of the most significant issues in designing case studies is the designation of the unit of analysis and then confirming that this unit is compatible with the research objectives of the study (Gray, 2004:128). Another important consideration in choosing this method was the fact that case studies, unlike other research designs, do not rely on an individual method of data collection or data analysis. For this reason, it is possible to use any method of gathering data in a case study (Merriam, 1988). This means that there can be various sources of

evidence for this type of study such as various documents, archival records, interviews, field observations, participant observation etc., (Yin, 2010; Merriam, 1988).

Consequently, to validate the case study this study mainly relied on document analysis and semistructured interviews. The selection of this methodology was significant to this study as it was instrumental in answering the research questions. Besides, this method was important to clearly depict the status of autonomy in higher education in Argentina in general and in NUC in particular so as to come up with important findings.

SAMPLING

The selection of participants in qualitative research is based on their characteristics and knowledge as they relate to the research questions being investigated (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Based on this premise, two types of sampling were employed in this study, purposeful and snowball sampling. Purposeful sampling is done when information is gathered from all those people who are in the best position to provide the required information. According to Patton (1990) cited in Lodico et al. (2010), "The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research". The aim of this type of sample is to have those participants that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data, given the topic of study (Yin, 2010).

For the purpose of this study, the sample required participants from two groups: academics and administrators. For this reason the rector of the university and the deans of three faculties were selected. These people are essential as they have a dual function within NUC being academics and administrators. From the pool of academics two professors from two of the faculties were chosen and in administration the director of finance was selected. From this initial selection further participants were added through snowball sampling, as the first interviewees suggested more participants based on their knowledge of the topic. Researchers inform that sometimes snowball sampling, which is asking an informant to suggest another informant, follows purposive sampling (Yin, 2010; Gray, 2009). From the people suggested only four of them were selected for interviewing because, as Yin (2010:89) states, "selecting new data collection units as an offshoot of existing ones—can be acceptable if the snowballing is purposeful, not done out of convenience." A total of twelve interviews were done for this study, the rector of the university, three deans, one head of department, three professors and from administration: the head of finance, the head of human resources, the secretary of science and technology and the academic secretary.

Data gathering methods In order to obtain adequate information that helps to answer the research questions, a thorough documents analysis was made. This document analysis helped the researcher to compare what was said in the interview and done in practice with what was expressed in the laws both at the national level and institutional level. First, at the national level the Constitution of Argentina 1994 was analyzed only in the sections related to HE. Second, a deep analysis was made on the HE law (Law No. 24.521/1995), the financial administration law (Law No. 24.156/1992) and the educational financing law (Law No. 26.075/2005) to study their impact on university autonomy. Third, the old HE laws were explored as well, in order to investigate their significance in shaping the autonomy universities enjoy today. At the institutional level the strategy of the university as well as its statute were thoroughly studied. The second data gathering method used was semi-structured interviews, "semi-structured interview allows for probing of views and opinions where it is desirable for respondents to expand on their answers. Such probing may also allow for the diversion of the interview into new pathways that, while not originally considered as part of the interview, help towards meeting the research objectives" (Gray, 2009:217). The interviews were essential in filling the gap created by the document analysis. Besides, it was found that important piece of information from the experience of the interviewees that was not in the mind of the researcher helped much in the interpretation of the data.

KEY FINDINGS

The information provided by the interviewees together with the document analysis conducted helped determine the state of autonomy in Argentinean public universities in the four dimensions as presented by Estermann and Nokkala.

ORGANIZATIONAL AUTONOMY AT NUC

According to Estermann and Nokkala (2009), there is a strong connection between a university's governance structure and the organizational autonomy it has. Various authors highlight that high organizational autonomy is essential for HEIs to be effective and efficient. In NUC, the level of organizational autonomy can be said to be medium. It is influenced by national frameworks as the HEL provides the basic structure, but the university still retains a certain degree of autonomy in the organization of its governing bodies. As regards the leadership, in NUC the rector is an academic "primus inter pares", selected by the internal academic community among the professors of the university, chair of the university's assembly, with term and qualifications determined in the law. The same can be said of the Deans and Department heads.

In spite of the fact that the law determines their qualifications, it is the university that determines the power, duties and responsibilities of its authorities, not the state. In general, the main restrictions of organizational autonomy of NUC are, besides from the regulations introduced by the HEL, related to the composition of the governing bodies: the fact that there are no external members in the governing bodies and the influence of political interests in the government on the university. As regards the presence of external members, Estermann and Nokkala (2009) state that their inclusion forms an important part of more autonomous universities' accountability towards their stakeholders and society at large. So, this will form a crucial part of future reforms on governance, as there is "a pressing need to find the right degree of accountability by integrating external stakeholders in an efficient and appropriate way, in the light of the mission and the strategic priorities of each and every university." (Estermann and Nokkala, 2009:17)

As regards the distance between what happens in the university and what the law states, it can be mentioned that, in general the laws as regards this dimension of autonomy are followed, with some exceptions. Two aspects of the law in particular are not respected, first, the one that says that political interests shall not intervene in the workings of the university and secondly, the one that establishes that external members should be included in the governing bodies. Both of which collaborate to limit the organizational autonomy of NUC and might have a negative effect on the opportunity of the university to compete effectively and efficiently in the globalized world in general and with the national universities in particular.

FINANCIAL AUTONOMY AT NUC

Financial autonomy of public universities is a crucial factor for them to achieve their strategic goals. Additionally it is clear that this is the dimension of autonomy that has the greatest influence on the others as, if there is no autonomy for universities to act freely in their financial issues, it is highly unlikely that the other dimensions of autonomy will function effectively.

The analysis of this dimension of autonomy indicates that, in opposition to what is stated in the laws, the financial autonomy of NUC is quite low. Despite the fact that the HEL, grants financial autarky, universities do not get the totality of their annual budget in block grant form. Carlos Greco (2009:9) explains the fact that the State grants project funds separately instead of incorporating it to the recurrent budget by saying " ... the State has discovered that financial incentives are a more effective method to influence in the functioning of universities than the pure administrative intervention that was used in other times...". Therefore, the government uses this grant to indirectly steer the universities in the direction they want and grants project funds in areas they consider a priority, which may not coincide with the priorities of the universities.

In this dimension, the distance between what the law states and what is done in practice is quite noticeable. For instance, both the HEL and NUC's internal statute indicate that the university has the autonomy to keep the surplus from all the funds received by the state. However, this is only partially applied, as the income from projects has to be returned if it is not used. With respect to the topic of tuition fees, the National constitution declares that all public education should be free of charge; however, universities charge fees for graduate, postgraduate and distance programs. As regards the internal allocation of funds, the HEL states that universities shall be completely free to manage the funds received from the state; nonetheless, this is not fully applied in practice as the budget assigned for salaries a for projects cannot be shifted to other expenses. All in all, it can be said the financial autonomy is quite limited.

STAFFING AUTONOMY AT NUC

Staffing autonomy refers to the ability universities should have to recruit their staff and manage their working conditions without outside interference. The basic idea behind institutional autonomy is that HEIs operate better if they are in control of their business (Fielden, 2008). Estermann and Nokkala (2009) described that the ability of universities to decide on staff recruitment is closely related with the degree of autonomy they have on financial and academic matters. It is especially significant to notice that one of the important elements of staffing autonomy is the extent to which universities have control over the financial aspects related to their staff (Eastermann & Nokkala, 2009).

As it was indicated above, NUC functions with little financial autonomy. In addition to this and closely connected, NUC is characterized by low staffing autonomy. It is true that, NUC is free to recruit its academic staff without interference from the state. But, the same cannot be said of the administrative staff. As their working conditions are decided by agreement between the government and the trade unions and it is the trade union that controls the recruitment process.

As regards the terms of employment, NUC sets the regulations and has decision power over academics but administrative personnel conditions have to be agreed upon with the trade union. This creates inequalities between the personnel and it interferes in the university plans to create a professional, well prepared administrative structure. Respecting the ability of universities to decide on salary levels, the law grants them the right but in reality they are decided at the national level. Furthermore, the bureaucratic nature of the governance model of NUC is clearly manifested in the recruitment procedure, as it takes long steps to recruit an individual teacher.

To conclude, the low staffing autonomy that NUC possesses is the result of the confluence of many forces. The inability of the university to determine the salary of the staff and to decide on the recruitment and working conditions of administrative staff, together with the bureaucratic nature of the university are the main indicators that can be given for limited staffing autonomy. It can also be added, that it is in this dimension of autonomy where the gap between the law and what happens in reality is more pronounced as none of the regulations related to this are applied. This is caused mostly by the limited financial autonomy NUC enjoys.

ACADEMIC AUTONOMY AT NUC

The literature shows that academic autonomy is one of the most important dimensions-if not the most-of institutional autonomy. It mainly refers to institutions having autonomy to decide on their institutional strategy and academic profile, introduce and cease degree programs and decide on the admission of students. Essentially, the key issues of academic autonomy are the ability of universities to decide on their academic profiles like the areas they confer degrees in, and the ability to select students (Eastermann and Nokkala, 2009).

The analysis showed that the level of academic autonomy in NUC is not high as the law suggests but that it is at a medium level. It is interesting to note that NUC has the ability to open new degree programs. Nonetheless, despite the regulations, there seems to be a strong steering through funding by MOE, which has a definite influence in the ability of the university to do so. As regards the termination of programs there are no external restrictions though in some cases internal pressures may hinder universities' ability to do this. This reflects that the academic autonomy of NUC is closely related to the financial autonomy of universities in Argentina. In other words, the unavailability of funds is a factor that contributes to the reduction of academic autonomy of the university.

As regards the mission and vision, the law provides the universities the autonomy to decide without interference. Notwithstanding, there seems to be some similarity with the other public universities, which suggests that universities are not as free as expected in this area and shows that the state has an influence on the educational strategies of the universities. Despite this interference by the state, eleven out of twelve of the respondents feel that the university does enjoy a high degree of academic autonomy.

THE REAL STATE OF AUTONOMY IN NUC

The thorough analysis of the four dimensions of autonomy in NUC revealed that the institutional autonomy in Argentinean public universities is not as high as the HEL determines it and that indeed there exists a gap between what the laws express what happens in reality. The findings as regards the real status of autonomy in NUC are summarized in table 5.

	Dimension of Autonomy	High	Medium	Low
1	Organizational		X	
2	Financial			X
3	Staffing			X
4	Academic		X	

Table 3: Real status of institutional autonomy in Argentina.

The results shown in this table, when compared to the autonomy expressed in the law (shown in table 2) reveal that there is a big discrepancy between what is stated in the laws and what is actually happening in NUC. From the four dimensions, the only one that remained in the same position was organizational autonomy, which, in both cases, is at a medium position. In this case, although the law is not applied to the fullest extent, as previously expressed, all of the interviewees considered that the university still had a certain degree of autonomy. As regards academic autonomy, based on what the HEL states, universities should have a high degree of autonomy, but this is not shown in reality. Ten out of twelve of the interviewees agreed that the actual level of academic autonomy is medium, as, in spite of the existence of certain limitations, NUC is still autonomous in these regards.

The dimensions of autonomy where the gap is particularly significant are the financial and staffing dimensions. The HEL provides that in these matters UNCA should be very autonomous when in reality the opposite happens. In these two dimensions according to what was expressed by the participants, the level of autonomy is low.

	Dimension of Autonomy	High	Medium	Low
1	Organizational		XX	
2	Financial	X		X
3	Staffing	X		X
4	Academic	X	X	

Table 4: Gap between autonomy expressed in law and real autonomy in UNCA
- *LAW*
- *REAL*

Having determined that this gap exists, it is important now to determine the reasons behind it. As proposed by resource dependence theory universities depend on their environment for essential resources and, in order to secure them, they are many times compelled to negotiate with the providers. If organizations cannot reduce their dependence to these providers by, for instance, diversifying their resources, their autonomy is affected. In the case of Argentina, where most of the public universities depend almost exclusively on state funds for their survival, their power of negotiation is very low and, therefore, their dependence is very high and, consequently, their autonomy is reduced (Leisyte, 2007).

Reasons for the gap between legal and real In accordance to the responses provided by the interviewees, the discrepancies that exist between law and practice in public universities can be attributed to, on the one hand to economic concerns and on the other to political implications.

Nine out of ten of the interviewees stated that economic situation Argentina is undergoing directly affects the autonomy of universities. As the representative from the financial office stated: *...the current economic situation creates a lot of uncertainty and distrust. This is why, even if we can supplement our funding through loans or by investing in the financial market, we do not do it. It would be too risky* (Administrator 1).

Furthermore, the severe lack of funds that the Argentinean public university system has caused universities to be unable to fulfill many of the activities that by law they are entitled to and that are essential to their autonomy. For instance, seven of the respondents affirmed that the lack of sufficient funds prevents universities from being able to determine the salary levels of their staff and has a direct impact in the creation or not of new programs. Despite the fact the HEL determines that universities are free to determine their salary levels, their budgetary constraints force university authorities to adopt the salary scales dictated at the national level. This hinders the possibility of universities to attract highly qualified personnel. As regards the creation of new courses, in spite of the fact that universities are permitted to decide on this, new programs are introduced only if the state provides the needed funds, so in the end it is the state that decides which programs are opened and which ones are not. These are only two examples of how the scarcity of resources left universities unable to resist the interference of the state in their affairs and consequently loose their autonomy.

This can be seen, for example, in the distribution of state funds among public universities. These are supposed to come from negotiations between the universities and the state where indicators of "efficiency and equity" are used to calculate the funds each university is going to receive. However, this is not the case as those universities, which have strong ties with the government, are given much more funds than they actually need and those, which are not, are underfunded. This leaves these universities in a position where they cannot oppose the interference of the government in their affairs. Only the very few universities, which have been able to diversify their sources of income in order to avoid their dependence on state funds, can do this. However, due to the economic situation in the country, this is impossible for most universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusion drawn from this study, it is important to provide practical recommendations that will help in understanding and solving the existent problems of NUC and other public universities in Argentina.

All in all, it can be said that in order for NUC and the rest of Argentinean universities to reach their full potential and become true centers of excellence in the internal and external markets, the gap that exists between formal and real autonomy needs to be closed, or at least reduced. In order to achieve this, several changes need to be introduced. First of all, it would be important to reevaluate and reformulate the HEL to avoid ambiguities and provide regulations that will be followed. In the last decade, there have been several attempts to draft projects of law, but they have not been accomplished. Secondly, it is essential to reform the system for allocating and distributing money between the universities, introducing a system that is not based on negotiations or on vague indicators like "efficiency and equity", but on objective criteria that would ensure the fair distribution of funds among universities. Thirdly, it is critical for universities to diversify their sources of income and to actively engage in establishing connections with the industry and service sectors. Only by doing this, will they reduce their dependence to the state and increase their responsiveness to their environment, becoming more autonomous but being accountable to their stakeholders.

Furthermore, it is extremely important for the policy makers to recognize that these changes would not generate the desired results unless they are fully communicated with the people who will implement them. Therefore, it is suggested that the MOE should establish a forum with HEIs to discuss what needs to be changed and to make suggestions that are clear to all and accepted by consensus. In order for the changes to be accepted, the university community should participate not

only in the implementation but, most importantly, in the design so as to develop a sense of belonging for the type of change needed. Additionally, the executive leadership of the university should continuously inform and make the staff, students and graduates participate in any changes before starting to implement them. But, in other for change to be effective, it needs not only to provide from the state but the universities themselves.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is still a lot to be done to have a full understanding of the system. In this respect, this study would like to indicate multiple opportunities for further research. To start with, more comprehensive research at the system level- employing multiple of research methods- should be conducted to analyze deeply the dynamics of autonomy in public universities in Argentina. For instance, both quantitative and qualitative approaches could be used to obtain more substantial data. About the data gathering methods, apart from interviews, focus group discussions could be a helpful instrument to acquire more relevant information. In assessing the status autonomy and identifying the government-universities relationship, it is highly advisable to include the Ministry personnel or officials, as they would assist in providing a more complete picture on the issue in question. Furthermore, different stakeholders who are involved in the HE system should be involved to analyze it more comprehensively for example students and graduates.

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