Barbara M. Kehm and Ulrich Teichler

(eds.)

Higher Education Studies in a Global Environment

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Introduction: Higher Education Studies in a Global Environment

Barbara M. Kehm, Ulrich Teichler

Actors and experts all over the world often generalise all too quickly about the state of higher education: the conditions, the actual situation, the reform approaches, and the impact of such reforms. However, lack of knowledge is often the cause of simple generalisations, and it has to be admitted that knowledge is limited about higher education all over the world. There are claims that the challenges for higher education are quite similar worldwide – due to many elements of a universal nature in higher education and due to global pressures to compete within the same logic or ideology of the objectives of higher education, and the best possible means to reach such objectives.

How similar or how varied are the conditions? How common or how country specific are the discourses about problems and possible directions of improvement? How homogeneous or how varied are eventually the options for reform? Nobody can answer these questions comprehensively, but this publication can provide important insights to the above complexities based on an interesting social experiment.

Young open-minded persons, some of them with professional experience, came from all over the world to join a master programme specialised on higher education at a university in an economically advanced country. The teachers were versatile in comparative higher education research and able to provide information on currently dominating discourses on higher education regarding the main issues and the possible reform options worldwide. The programme offered the students the challenge of bringing together in perspective prevailing concepts in higher education research and dominating discourses surrounding realities of higher education in their own countries or in other countries they developed an interest in. Thus, the master theses which were the results of such a learning process, are a mirror of the tensions between the assumptions of worldwide pressures and worldwide valid concepts on the one hand and the experience of varied situations on the other.

This publication could be realised because a considerable number of master students had successfully embarked on such an experiment. The editors of this volume – the key teachers and supervisors in the master programme – are con-

vinced that it is worth making the students' analyses known to a broader audience. The eight chapters of this volume present highlights of the master theses written between 2007 and 2011.

In 2004, the International Master Programme "Higher Education Research and Development" (usually called "MAHE" by all persons involved) was established at the Department of Social Sciences of the University of Kassel (Germany). Scholars and administrators of the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel) developed and managed the programme, took over most of the teaching assignments, and did their best in providing manifold services and a fruitful academic and social life for about 120 master students from 40 countries over six annual cohorts.

The Master Programme – taught exclusively in English, but with the option of writing papers and the master thesis in English or German – addressed a broad spectrum of themes on higher education and society: the state of higher education research, empirical research methods, research on higher education systems, evaluation in higher education, higher education and the world of work, etc. The Programme differed from others in this thematic area by putting an emphasis also on management besides teaching and learning (some MAHE students had the opportunity of taking courses in the former area at the University of Oldenburg). The MAHE Programme aimed to prepare students for two different professional arenas: to educate and train practitioners who might be named "higher education professionals", i.e., higher education experts in management, support, or service functions in the higher education and research system (for example, in the areas of quality management, international relations, career services, student services, research management and technology transfer, etc.), and to train scholars for academic careers, notably in the area of higher education research. The MAHE Programme was not meant to train students routinely or sell recipes, but rather to encourage independent learning and critical thinking, to learn from contrasting cases, to become experts in comparative higher education studies, to confront theory and practice (also in the framework of internships), and to seek for innovative solutions from all over the world. Intensive communication as part of the Programme, both inside and outside the classroom, was important in not only enhancing knowledge and understanding of theories, methods and relevant facts, but also in strengthening intercultural competences.The MAHE Programme elicited great interest all over the world. On average about eight times as many persons applied for it than actually took up their studies. Many could not be accepted, some had to give up their plans due to financial or personal reasons, and others faced visa problems. Those eventually enrolling had previously graduated from bachelor or master programmes in various disciplines and a considerable proportion of them had been already professionally active at higher education institutions, government offices, in journalism, etc. The German Academic Exchange

Service (DAAD) supported the MAHE Programme notably through fellowships for students who were professionally experienced.

As INCHER-Kassel was no longer in the position to provide the necessary teaching capacity following change of staff, the programme was discontinued after six cohorts.

The presentation of the highlights of the best master theses (those rated at least 1.3 on a scale from 1 = very good to the pass grade of 4.0) can also be understood as a way of evaluating the results of the Master Programme. However, this was not the only way of evaluating the MAHE Programme. In 2011, a survey was undertaken in the framework of a master thesis which encouraged the current and former MAHE students at that time to report their experiences. Irrespective of the various views about the strengths and weaknesses of the MAHE Programme, students underscored the readiness of all persons in charge to invest time and energy to ensure a vivid academic and social life. It should be mentioned in this context that apart from the editors of this volume, the following persons taught parts of the Programme: Dr. W. Adamczak, Prof. M. Fremerey, Prof. M. Fuchs, Dr. K. Hahn, Dr. R. Kirsch-Auwärter, Dr. W. Krull, Dr. U. Lanzendorf, Prof. A. Neusel, H. Schomburg, Dr. M. Wesseler, and Dr. H. Winkler. Moreover, the students highly appreciated Susanne Hoeckelmann, MAHE administrator, but also fondly called "the mother of the Programme" by most students, and Carmen Mureşan, a Romanian MAHE student and active tutor for several years. For her engagement towards the well-being of her fellow international students, Carmen Mureşan was awarded the DAAD prize for intercultural engagement for international students in 2010. Another student, Robert Owino Odera from Kenya, was accepted as a member of the DAAD-supported African Good Governance Network in 2010.

This volume presents the highlights of eight master theses. A second volume will follow presenting the results of the remaining excellent theses submitted up to 2013 as well as major results of the evaluation study mentioned above.

The authors of the following chapters come from eight different countries: Austria, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Macedonia, Mexico, Poland, and Romania. The students were free to choose a topic for their Master thesis in consultation with their supervisor. The sequence of the chapters in this volume follows a particular logic related to the geographical breadth covered in the thesis. The first set of three chapters has a comparative perspective involving two or more countries in which a chosen topic is analysed by way of a comparative study. This is followed by a chapter focusing on Europe, in particular the developments pertaining to the creation of a European Higher Education Area in the framework of the Bologna Process. The subsequent set of three chapters analyses a special issue or concept of higher education reform, development, and analysis (e.g., brain drain, private higher education, etc.) using the author's own country as a case study. One chapter focuses on Kassel University as an example analysing particular practices (man-

agement of teaching quality and support services for international students). The final chapter is more a piece of conceptual work on problem-based learning and its effects on the professional careers of graduates in higher education. It uses parts of an existing data set collected at INCHER in the framework of a major international graduate survey. Thus, the presentation of the chapters acquires a global character and ensures a wide reach by beginning with international comparison, traversing Europe and the authors' home countries, and concluding with case studies of Kassel University.

All chapters have a short biographical note about the author at the end to indicate their present career status. The reader will realise two things. First, a considerable proportion of MAHE graduates continued into doctoral studies and second, many of them opted to stay in Germany and seek work and/or (often both) starting a family. This truly demonstrates that an international study programme prepares students well for international work and makes them positively curious about other countries and cultures.

The volume begins with a contribution by the Mexican *author Mario A. Martínez Cortés* who analyses higher education policies targeted at equal (or rather not so equal) opportunities for access into higher education for indigenous people in Australia, Canada, and Mexico. He discusses concepts of equity and social responsiveness and works out very well that many measures undertaken to ensure equal access for indigenous people require them to adopt the norms and values of the majority culture. This, of course, is in stark contrast to an approach of self-determination. He finds an example of this in Canada where indigenous people have successfully fought to start their own universities and have them recognised as equal to the universities of the majority culture. This means that they control their own educational processes. Despite the fact that developments in Canada are not ideal and go all the way in shifting control and administration to the indigenous boards, such an approach acknowledges the difference without seeing it as inferior. The author also works out in a convincing manner that in countries where the higher education system serves purposes of nation-building, a 'different but equal' policy is perceived as separatist and threatening to the state. In his conclusions, the author proposes to develop the concept of an ethnically sensitive university that includes cultural diversity as a matter of content and collaborates with indigenous people in their struggle for justice and recognition.

The second chapter is a contribution by the Macedonian author *Žarko Dragšić*, who analyses the phenomenon of the major growth of private higher education provisions in Central and Eastern Europe by comparing two former Yugoslavian states: Croatia and Macedonia. Theoretically framed by a structural and functional analysis of the relationship between public and private sectors of higher education, the author focuses on the formation, development and role of the private higher education sector in the two countries. Despite the fact that both countries once were part of a single state, Dragšić works out the differences in the development,

types and roles of private higher education institutions. He points out that in countries with a long-established tradition of public higher education, private higher education institutions typically have a negative image as concerns the quality of their provision. Thus, governmental policy in Croatia is characterised by a high degree of protectionism of public higher education while Macedonia has actively encouraged the emergence of a private sector in order to deal with increasing student demand. In both countries, a point of contention and increasing criticism is, however, accreditation – a process through which established and mostly public institutions of higher education establish their superiority. Again, in both countries, private higher education institutions continue to be a minority type, but with tendencies to further increase in number and student enrolment. A last part of the contribution discusses the role of private higher education institutions in terms of better or different provisions. The author concludes that the trend in both countries is the idea that private higher education caters to needs and demands that are not taken into account by the public higher education institutions and that they produce well-educated professionals for the modern labour market. However, both countries have not yet reached a stage in which private higher education is recognised as a key component of the higher education sector as a whole.

The Colombian author, *Carla Ramírez*, focuses on technical and vocational higher education and analyses the rationales behind the emergence of this particular type of higher education institution in Colombia and Mexico. Based on concepts of diversification of institutional types and growing diversity of the student body in the face of massification of higher education, the author reports the main strains of controversial international debates since the 1960s pertaining to the emergence of a non-university sector. She sketches the development of short-cycle technical and vocational higher education in Mexico and Colombia working out the differences and similarities in role and function. She emphasises the rather low social acceptance of this type of higher education provision compared to traditional universities and looks at how its graduates fare on the labour market. And while in Colombia technical and vocational higher education is following a process of academic drift by upgrading itself, Mexico has made considerable progress in improving the quality of such provisions. In both countries, the sector has served to not only fulfil policy goals of expansion and equity of access but to also meet newly emerging needs of the respective labour markets. But in both countries many social prejudices against this type of higher education continue to exist. The author concludes that technical and vocational higher education is as yet a poorly researched issue in both countries and that Colombia in particular needs more targeted policies for the role of technical and vocational education in achieving its social and economic goals

The fourth chapter in this volume is authored by the Romanian, *Adriana Claudia Sava*. It analyses the impact of globalisation on universities in the European Higher Education Area created by the reforms in the framework of the Bologna

Process. The object of her analysis is the reflections of globalisation which can be found in universities' mission statements. Based on a conceptual framework of policy-led and research-led definitions of globalisation, the author analyses the mission statements of seven European universities rated highly in the 2007 Shanghai Jia Tong Ranking of World Universities. She analyses the role of mission statements in general and develops criteria for her empirical study derived from the conceptual work with regard to globalisation. Sava concludes that those universities which consider themselves as 'global players' due to their high position on rankings, transform and broaden their mission statements in terms of more competitive ambitions, continuous change, and a diversified funding base. They tend to neglect, however, issues like ethical principles, democratic values and equity of access. Overall, the author finds that globalisation has a strong impact on universities in Europe and has changed, to some extent, at least, the course of reforms initiated in the framework of the Bologna Process.

Anna Paszkowska, the Polish author of chapter five, analyses the practice of graduate surveys in Poland and questions the manner in which the results of these surveys are utilised. She provides an overview of graduate surveys in Poland and identifies their main objectives. She goes on to develop a model for the analysis of graduate surveys based on the kind of information they provide. In a second step, Paszkowska carried out telephone interviews with Polish coordinators of graduate surveys in order to find out information about their thematic scope and about the forms and ways in which the results have been used. Despite the fact that graduate surveys are a relatively wide-spread practice in Poland, the author concludes that there is no common standard yet, that there is no institutional cooperation, and that response rates are often not satisfactory. Furthermore, there is a considerable variance in the thematic scope of these surveys. The most common form of employing the results of Polish graduate surveys is to align study programme curricula with the requirements of the labour market and the improvement of career service provisions at individual higher education institutions.

The Chinese author *Yuanyuan Yu*, in chapter six, analyses the emergence of a new type of higher education institution in China called 'independent colleges'. Next to public and private universities, independent colleges are a third institutional type emerging with rapid massification and offering study programmes up to the level of a bachelor's degree. They are different from private universities because of their affiliation to public universities (often as a form of outsourcing undergraduate education) and they stand out from public universities in the sense that they rely on private investment. The author sketches the history, including several changes of name, of independent colleges since their emergence in 2008 and compares them to a similar type of higher education institution which can be found in India –affiliated colleges. She goes on to describe the current situation of independent colleges in China in terms of tuition fee levels, types of students enrolling in them, and the range of subjects on offer. In a further part of her con-

tribution, Yu analyses the current problems independent colleges in China face; for example, issues of legitimacy, of equity and social fairness, of diversity, and of forms of isomorphism, i.e., the push for upgrading the colleges into regular (public) universities. In her conclusions, the author expects, however, that the demand for study places at independent colleges will eventually decrease due to their lack of social acceptance. Whether some colleges will manage to deal with the challenges of quality and legitimacy remains currently an open question. Alternatively, the colleges might develop into vocational education institutions or adopt the idea of the American community college.

The subsequent chapter by the Austrian author *Ernst Fritz* presents a case study of efforts to enhance the quality of teaching and learning at Kassel University. The study resulted from an extended internship – an internship of at least eight weeks' duration was an obligatory part of the MAHE Programme – and examines the potentials and limitations of improving the teaching- and learning-based profile of Kassel University. The theoretical and conceptual part of the contribution discusses institutional profile-building of German universities and what it means in terms of potentials and limitations to establish a profile based on teaching and learning rather than research, global competitiveness or a high position on ranking scales. In addition, the heterogeneous disciplinary cultures (of the University?) are taken into account. The author identifies three factors that influence the decision for a profile based on excellence in teaching and learning: resources, heterogeneity of disciplinary cultures, and level of research. The author concludes that young, middle-sized universities like Kassel are often under pressure to excel in all functions (teaching, research, services), but there being considerable limitations to do this, a careful decision is needed on the function to focus in order to establish a profile if at all.

The last chapter has been written by the Indonesian author *Bhina Patria*. During his MAHE studies, he became interested in the approach of problem-based learning (PBL) and its effectiveness in preparing students for employment. Using the existing data set of a major international graduate survey (CHEERS) about the relationships between higher education and employment, he analysed the responses of altogether 3,476 graduates in the field of medicine from ten European countries and from Japan. The original questionnaire had included a question to what extent project- and problem-based learning was emphasized in their higher education institution. It had also asked the respondents to rate their competencies at time of graduation based on altogether 36 indicators. The author used factor analysis to measure career success according to subjective/intrinsic and objective/extrinsic dimensions and related it to the experiences of problem-based learning during studies. The analysis is able to demonstrate that problem-based learning prepares students better for the world of work and that students with experiences in problem-based learning have more work or employment related competences than students who experienced traditional learning and teaching styles. The author

concludes that PBL requires a student-centred atmosphere in the classroom in order to enhance students' learning outcomes. Such a development would certainly fulfil one of the pressing demands of study reforms initiated in the context of the European Bologna Process.

2

Indigenous Peoples and Higher Education: Equity or Self-Determination?

A Comparative Review

Mario A. Martínez Cortés

1. Introduction

The topic of inequality in higher education generally refers to aspects such as access and retention. Thus, this term reveals a) failures in the composition of the student and professoriate body of higher education institutions, and b) failures occurred during the educational processes which prevent certain students more than others to complete their study programs. According to this perspective, universities will only achieve equity when their populations are more plural and retention/desertion shares do not show any group bias. However, this way of understanding equity does not necessarily meet expectations of all social groups; some reasons will be described in this chapter.

The equity issue in higher education has been constructed in a non-self-reflexive way. This has implied that systematic exclusion has been reduced into an inner problem of individual institutions and higher education systems without taking into account the broader political contexts where inequality is produced. In such a way, inequality is framed as an entrance or completion problem. Therefore, equity policies do not question higher education's premises and foundations at all, but engage in remedial measures to expand access and promote retention and completion, while they seem to ignore structural changes. In other words, equity policies tend to treat the symptoms, not the illness

Contemporary indigenous peoples' movements and their educational demands embody a contestation to such an equity perspective. At a first moment, they demand participation, not only as students, but rather as part of decision making groups with voice in the formulation of educational objectives that directly affect them. At a second moment, their participation seeks for transformations much broader than only those of the higher education field; hence they describe educational exclusion as an issue of power relations. Thus, these movements question,

firstly, the assumption that the equity policies are exclusively a conferred power of institutions and systems and, secondly, that equity understood as access and completion can satisfactorily meet their demands.

2. Equity and Higher Education

Just in the decade of 60s, due to the expansion of national systems of higher education, inequality was acknowledged as a problem when it was clear that, in spite of expanded places, the composition of student body continued coming from the most privileged backgrounds (Fulton 1992). Due to this phenomenon, such an expansion can be termed *numerical expansion*. The expansive trend was originally a consequence of several factors such as demographic growth, improved attainment of primary and secondary education and economic growth in regions and countries (UNESCO 1995), only later was it used as inclusion form. Although expansion implied the transition of elite higher education systems towards mass higher education systems, it hardly represented a means to repair the strongest inequalities within societies, since the possession of a higher education degree became a requirement to maintain a middle-class status. This phenomenon says much about the nature and depth of inequality as higher education problem: it does not start in the moment of entrance, when certain people more than others are left outside, but rather it is a consequence of a more extended pattern of relations, on which the logic and ideology of higher education rest. Therefore, what is urged to change is the set of premises and foundations that form higher education, which in summary corresponds to an economic perspective, whereby people become capital, and inequality is thought in terms of numerical participation, instead of the conditions, objectives and scope of that participation.

Since the expansion wave, an economic rationale acquired a central role in the understanding and the management of higher education. Even though a social component has been recognized in it, this one has mostly been subsidiary to the first economic rationale (Brennan and Naidoo 2007) which has consisted in defining education as an individual investment and motor of economic development for individuals, nations and regions. Accordingly, selection of the more capable students and their socialisation for professional labour market are the legitimate main functions of tertiary education. In summary, higher education is a necessary filter that allows society to do a better use of individual talent by classifying people and redirecting them to differentiated occupation fields. From that hegemonic point of view, the social dimension has been understood as a direct effect of the economic improvement brought by tertiary education. That is, as much as an economy profits from an increased educational attainment of population, members of that society are supposed to enjoy more opportunities to live with good quality (Brennan and Naidoo, op. cit.). However, equity is socially important not only because of the effects of economic growth on people's life, but also due to the political conse-

quences its lack can produce. In other words, the social rationale of equity seeks to preserve the social order: the more diverse the student body becomes the lesser the possibilities of social conflict are to occur (Fulton, op. cit.). Discourse of equity hides, therefore, a reproductive function, which makes it necessary to approach it more critically by re-thinking the social responsibility of higher education.

2.1 Social Responsiveness: Responsive to Whom?

How is social responsibility of higher education to be thought of? What conditions are necessary to promote equity beyond the numerical expansion-based solutions? A possible response must include a decentralisation of the institution of *University* as problem and solution. To conceptualize the problem of inequality as a problem of *insufficient places* in institutions and, accordingly, the solution as *expansion of the access* implies to strengthen an idealized image of higher education institutions that does not reveal the complicities of them with inequality. Then, it is suggested that higher education must not be identified in an idealistic way anymore, that is, simply as goal, but rather as a social means to achieve other goals, as part of larger projects involving justice. In that sense, the making of equity policies and equity thinking move from the how to promote equity towards the why (Cross 2004); that is, from the abstract-technical reasoning towards a contextual-political one.

The necessity of a political position about equity policies in higher education has been revealed by the consequences of inclusion of non-traditional students in university courses. Normally, such an inclusion has not sufficed to promote social changes; in fact, inclusion processes, when implemented from a technical view, serve the opposite goal: they slow structural transformations down by reducing the social tension and, at the same time, are perceived as a kind gesture of the institution or the system. A political dimension requires deconstructing the assumptions underlying the typical operation of higher education institutions in order to reveal that these traditions or agreements are not neutral at all, but they operate from a particular power pattern that negatively affects certain populations. Attempts and achievements of that deconstruction can be identified in social movements that have focused on education; be women, ethnic minorities – immigrants or national minorities –, working class, peasants, or indigenous peoples, in different moments of their struggles; and with different relevance, these movements have denounced that educational exclusion occurs even though there is no explicit restrictions against them. This is a clear indicator that exclusion is lesser a question of space than a question of asymmetrical power relations.

The literature of exclusion in higher education has showed that in different parts of the globe certain group categories are more likely among *the excluded*; they correspond, in fact, to the aforementioned categories of social movements: women, ethnic minorities, working class, peasants, afro-descendants and indige-

nous peoples; however, now older and disabled people represent visible categories of educational exclusion, too. Gender, class and ethnicity have been classic categories of exclusion and domination, they have been used in different fields of social existence as means to hierarchically classify populations; those fields are work, sexuality, authority, subjectivity, and knowledge (Quijano 2000). The latter is especially relevant for the area of education. To a great extent, the University's historical reputation has rested on the notion of knowledge as *an objective product that describes reality*, giving it an aura of political neutrality, just as knowledge has been considered to be. On their part, though, feminism, post-structuralism, post-modernism and post-colonialism have demonstrated that knowledge is never neutral and pointed out that to assume its neutrality is indeed a political position. As a consequence of that argument, it is coherent to think that knowledge production's institutions should not be taken for neutral either.

The problem with neutrality of knowledge, as critics point out, lies in its pretension of reflecting reality in a universal way in which no concrete factor, like gender, ethnicity, language or class, intervenes in the description of the world. The neutrality ideal corresponds to the Abstract Universalism, which formally since the 17th Century established the division between subject and object of knowledge; the subject became then abstract reason in comparison to the concrete objects of world and nature. Thus, concrete factors had to be controlled; actually, the control of them in the name of neutrality/objectivity has implied their effacements in favour of a very particular epistemic subject, who just ideally is abstract. As the aforementioned critical approaches propose, the abstract subject of knowledge does have a gender, is masculine; does have an ethnicity, is white; does have a geopolitical location, comes from the Western industrialized countries; does have a class, belongs to the upper middle class; does have a sexual orientation, is heterosexual. Abstract Universalism has been central for the development of higher education. It partly explains the distance between universities' tasks like research and teaching and the social problems and political controversies in society. Since these latter constitute objects of knowledge, taking a distance from them is desirable in order to preserve objectivity.

This chapter points out that nowadays, in a supposedly decentralized world, the issue of equity in higher education requires an expansion, not only numerical, but one epistemic that can break the taken-for-grantedness with which higher education acts. Such a break should include assumptions on knowledge neutrality and political distancing. Accordingly, the demands of indigenous peoples' movements seem quite useful, as they emphasize that the problem of educational exclusion responds to complex configurations of power relations situated beyond the field of education. However, they recognize as well, the relevance education and training have in a knowledge society, not only as means that enables them for professions, but also as means to change the positions they occupy in the national societies.

2.2 Equity and Social Transformation.

Up to now, it has been argued that equity, as guiding concept of education policies, must still be discussed in order to overcome a numerical version of it. Justification for that goal starts from assuming that equity should offer meaningful social changes instead of simple adaptations that harmonize with the status quo. In summary, the argument affirms that equity policies must reflect on, and subsequently, overcome its reproductive side to achieve a transformative potential. But what does it mean to be *transformative*? The framework offered by Nancy Fraser is especially useful for clarifying that point and, subsequently, to discuss some empirical cases.

Fraser proposes a model of radical democracy (1989, 1997, 1998a, 1998b) that combines the struggle for socioeconomic justice with the struggle for cultural or symbolic justice. The socioeconomic dimension of injustice can be seen in exploitation, economic marginalisation and deprivation; symbolic injustice, however, is identified in cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect. Starting from a concern about a general decoupling of the remedies of each dimension of justice, namely, redistribution and recognition, Fraser affirms that the latter seems to be displacing the former, which is dangerous in the contemporary world, where inequality still exists and increases.

Both recognition and redistribution have two kinds of remedies: affirmative remedies and transformative remedies. They are defined by Fraser as follows:

- Affirmative remedies of justice are: "remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes arrangements without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them".
- Transformative remedies of justice are: "remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework". (Fraser 1998a, p. 31)

Then, equity policies, from a transformative perspective, are those that go beyond the technical problem of "how to integrate those excluded into the higher education system" and broaden their action field in innovative ways, such as posing new forms, objectives and uses for tertiary education. The categorisation of two kinds of remedies allows to overcome the debate on which exactly the dimension of inequality is: socioeconomic or cultural, and which should be chosen in policies. Thus, radical democracy does not opt for any in particular kind of justice by dismissing the other one; it takes both at a time, with their transformative remedies. The challenge rests on achieving a more balanced interaction among them.

In order to clarify the distinction, justice through redistribution (socioeconomic justice) can offer:

- *Affirmative remedies associated with the liberal Welfare State*. They seek to redress maldistribution, while leaving intact much of the underlying political

economic structure. The best examples are social insurance programs and public assistance programs.

- *Transformative remedies* historically *associated with socialism*.

And, justice through recognition (cultural or symbolic justice) can offer:

- *Affirmative remedies associated with multiculturalism.* They aim at redressing disrespect by revaluing unjustly devalued group identities, while leaving intact both the contents of those identities and the group differentiations that underlie them.
- *Transformative remedies associated with deconstruction*. They aim at redressing disrespect by transforming the underlying cultural-valuation structure. Thus, by destabilizing existing group identities and differentiations, they would not only target on the self-esteem of members of currently disrespected groups, but also change everyone's sense of self.

Indigenous peoples and their demands for higher education represent an interesting example of how equity policies, sometimes, are far away to constitute transformative processes relevant in terms of justice and, instead of it, can be to the detriment of legitimate emancipatory claims.

3. Indigenous Peoples and Self-Determination

Generally, the major claim of indigenous peoples' movements worldwide focuses on self-determination as collective right, also termed self-government, autonomy or free-determination. This struggle aims at establishing a new political-legal framework that defines the relationship between indigenous peoples and State in a way that only the former are responsible for the decisions regarding their political organisation, their institutions, their relations with other social and political actors and the establishment of their development conditions (Wilhelmi 2006). The right to self-determination can be understood as the central, all-embracing collective right, since it is essential to exercise other rights important for these peoples, such as territorial and cultural rights. Thus, without self-determination the gain of other rights will be incomplete, precisely because they would be framed in a hierarchical relation with the State as central figure that, at best, delegates part of its power.

Then, cultural rights, when implemented through recognition (valuing) of difference, represent just one part of the indigenous struggle. Alone, affirmative remedies of the symbolic dimension reduce indigenous claims merely to a cultural difference problem. Especially, the field of education looks vulnerable before these reduction attempts; as proof of it, there is now an increasing trend to adopt a multicultural-intercultural perspective to attending the indigenous higher education demands. Discourses of multicultural and intercultural education meet the definition of affirmative remedies, as they normally do not focus on a broader

discussion about the reasons of injustice indigenous peoples undergo. They opt for a humanist approach instead, in which valuing of diversity and tolerance are coined as the major goals (Banks 2008). The multi- and intercultural argument is as follows: if valued, respected and protected, culture of each individual will positively influence her/his self-esteem (Spinner-Halev 2006); moreover, such attributes must be pursued because they also improve the creativity and identity of every single person. Such goals themselves are not wrong, but they hold a very romantic and uncritical perspective of the cultural difference, which very conceivably results in a misguiding approach for equity policies: the solution for the interethnic problems, such as exclusion, can be easily solved by the good will of every group and State. In that framework, self-determination does not show up at all.

The self-determination framework pursues a more complex set of rights than cultural recognition. It is irreplaceable for indigenous peoples, because it is this concept that bears witness to the particular domination they have been historically subjugated to. Thus, their claims necessarily refer to dismantling a regime of power imposed over them by other societies that occupied their Ancestors' territories (Allen 2006). Such a regime refers to the ethnocracies formed by national States, which disrupt their condition of peoples by trying to turn them into *abstract* national citizens. Accordingly, unlike ethnic minorities, the central point of the indigenous struggle does not reduce to bestowing rights, but rather it looks for the effective recognition of themselves as collective subject of rights, that is, the recognition of their condition as peoples. It is this aspiration to free-determination, linked to claims of re-establishment of their territories that differentiates indigenous claims from those of ethnic minorities, be national or immigrants, and that indeed makes the treatment of indigenous question in higher education more complicated. Shortly, self-determination represents a transformative potential as much as it questions the generative framework of injustice historically suffered by indigenous peoples.

4. Indigenous Peoples and Higher Education Policies

In the following sections, a short review of cases in Canada, Australia and Mexico concerning higher education policies addressed at indigenous peoples is presented. These cases are clearly different from each other and, therefore, they are useful to conduct a discussion about the complexity of this question as well as the reductive approach that may be adopted.

Starting from the categories of affirmative remedies and transformative remedies, the review of the selected countries indicates that the terrain of higher education policies tends to constitute a set of actions favourable for affirmative remedies, whereby cultural difference is praised and the dialogue between the policy making and movements' self-determination claims hardly occurs. However, this does not mean that self-determination issue is totally absent within the discussions

regarding higher education; it just reveals a strong resistance pattern to deal with such a demand. In this sense, the weight of affirmative tendency is different for each country because self-determination claims enjoy different levels of achievement and political configurations. Thus, it is possible to identify, on the one hand, a case like Mexico, where policy is absolutely cultural-difference-oriented without visible discussions about self-determination within the higher education system and, on the another hand, a case like Canada, where self-determination is an inseparable goal of every single strategy targeted by and for indigenous peoples. In order to have a more specific horizon that allows to conduct a discussion later, a very general description of the policies trends in each case is presented at first.

4.1 Canada

Even though the Canadian policy framework does not completely satisfy self-determination claims, discussions about indigenous peoples' rights regarding higher education deal with the topic of self-determination. This grants Canada the more advanced context in holding self-determination struggles. This is clearly represented by the objective of indigenous control of educational processes. The notion of control surged at the beginning of the 1970s and represents a direct political contestation to the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy* of 1969 that summarized State's intentions to eliminate the protection for reserve lands and, subsequently, dissolve the special status for indigenous peoples (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development 1969). Under those conditions the federal government would transfer its responsibility for First Nations education on reserves to the provincial governments; accordingly indigenous peoples would have become indistinguishable in law from the Canadian mainstream society (AIC 2005; Jenkins 2007; Richardson and Blanchet-Cohen 2000). Then, indigenous peoples prepared the policy statement *Indian Control of Indian Education* to demand recognition of the right of aboriginal peoples to educate their children. This statement re-affirmed the legal responsibility of Federal Government for Indian Education and established the transference of the authority and the funds for Indian education from federal government to local bands. Regarding post-secondary education, *Indian Control* proposed: 1) informative recruiting programs, 2) adjustments of entrance requirements, 3) federal financial support and, very central to the discussion here, 4) Indian representation on the governing bodies of institutions. This Statement was approved by the Canadian government in 1973.

In spite of the acceptance of *Indian Control* within the education policy framework, Canada's higher education still exhibits a discrete and reserved approach to it, because control became, in fact, simply administration. That has been demonstrated by subsequent reviews on educational conditions of indigenous peoples, such as *The Tradition and Education: towards a Vision of Our Future* (1988) and *Gathering Strengths* (1996). The restrictions for indigenous control in

higher education are especially observable with respect to indigenous higher education institutions (IHEIs), which came to more than 60 by 2007 (House of Commons Canada 2007). They are administrated by indigenous boards; however most of them are not considered indigenous-controlled. Although the funds come from the federal government, in fact the provincial and territorial governments have the constitutional right to administer all education provided in their areas, and they show a strong commitment to ensure the standardized education quality of public post-secondary institutions (Jenkins, op. cit.). Thus, many IHEIs do not have degree-grant status since that is an exclusive conferred power of the provincial governments. The effect is especially perverse when is observed that, due to an increasing pressure on federal funding brought by the increased participation of aboriginal students since the 1970s, the federal government provides with funds only those aboriginal programs with degree-grant status. Thus, although there are exceptions, like the Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) and the Institute of Indigenous Government (IIG), the possibilities of control are limited, as IHEIs must establish partnerships with recognized universities in order to receive the funding to conduct their educational projects (AIC and CRRF 2005).

4.2 Australia

In the Australian case, self-determination appears as one rationale of the first initiative addressed to aboriginal peoples at the end of 1980s. The *National Aboriginal Education Policy* (NAEP) was designed by a task force appointed by the Department of Employment, Education and Training and presented in 1989. Since one of its two main objectives was *to respond to aboriginal needs and aspirations*, NAEP was considered a means to furthering indigenous self-determination (Gale 1998). Accordingly, involvement of aboriginal peoples in educational decision-making was one of the four NAEP's action fields. However, as goal, self-determination was displaced by the second objective: *promotion of educational equity*, that is, by the numerical perspective that focused on access, participation and outcomes. That displacement, however, not only depended on the conduction of NAEP, but on the development of another policy framework that included aboriginal peoples: *A Fair Chance for All* (AFCFA), the national equity policy for higher education established in 1990. This new framework rested on a equality-of-opportunities approach, it identified six disadvantaged groups; of course, one of them were the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; and aimed at balancing the student population to reflect more closely the composition of society.

AFCFA's operation principle was market-oriented, based on incentives provided to institutions according to how well they met equity groups' needs. It established objectives, strategies and targets to be achieved by 1995. Table 1 presents what was established for aboriginal peoples.

Table 1: A Fair Chance for All. Objectives, Targets and Strategies for the Disadvantaged Group: Aboriginal Peoples

Objectives	Targets	Strategies
1) Increase of the participation of aboriginal people in higher education, especially in bachelor and higher degrees, and certain disciplines such as law, business and administration, medicine and health studies. 2) Increase in the completion rates.	1) Increase between 50% and 60% aboriginal enrolments, especially in the proportion of bachelor degrees. 2) General improvements in the graduation rates and in the number of aboriginal students.	1) Negotiation mechanisms between aboriginal people and higher education institutions 2) Special entry arrangements 3) Bridging courses linked specifically to award courses 4) Off-campus study (distance education) 5) Supplementary study units concurrent with award courses 6) Review of higher education curriculum to achieve sensitivity to the needs and circumstances of particular communities.

Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) 1990.

Through AFCFA, single institutions and Commonwealth acquired particular commitments, by which the former became more accountable regarding equity issues since developing, monitoring and reporting equity plans appeared among their commitments. As example, from 1991 onwards, all universities were required to report annually on an Equity Plan (for AFCFA) and an Aboriginal Education Strategy, both of them as part of the annual profile process (Ramsey 2004) required from the Higher Education Funding Act 1988.

Similar to Canada, some years after the establishment of the policy some reviews were conducted. In 1995, the report *Equality, Diversity and Excellence (EDE): Advancing the National Higher Education Equity Framework* pointed out that; although aboriginal peoples had achieved the greatest improvement in participation since 1990, their pass rates were much lower than the rates of other students, and that they were less likely to re-enrol in subsequent years. EDE's results allowed to support new policy directions outside the national framework, such as those proposed in 1994 by the *National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (NREA)*, whereby *implementing in a practical way the principles of self-determination and cultural affirmation* was pointed out as major objective for indigenous higher education. However, the definition of self-determination did not relate to indigenous control or collective rights, but to equity

as means of reconciliation. Thus, both NREA and later the *National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* promoted the meaning of self-determination in the same way NAEP did, that is, as involvement of aboriginal people in education decision-making structures.

In fact, those participative strategies characterize the Australian approach; that is evident, too, in the creation of *Our Universities. Backing Australia's Future*, the national framework for equity created in May 2003. Its establishment required participation of different stakeholders, which included higher education institutions, business groups, student organisations, unions and individuals in the submissions and other consultative and public debate strategies. *Our Universities* has implied a more competitive approach for equity funding since block grants were suppressed and instead all equity funding began to depend on performance criteria. In a more specific way, *Our Universities* brought concrete implications for aboriginal peoples: 1) financially, the *Commonwealth Learning Scholarships Program* exists since 2004 and covers educational and accommodation costs, is merit-based and non-repayable, 2) regarding improving participation and outcomes, the *Indigenous Support Fund* was created to fund institutions in order to meet the needs of indigenous students, for instance, by establishing indigenous Support Centres; the *Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC)* was created as advisor to the Minister and the Department of Education, Science and Training; and finally, *Indigenous Staff Scholarships Program* was open to encourage indigenous staff at Australian Universities to undertake full-time higher education studies.

4.3 Mexico

Finally, Mexico's case offers a quite different perspective. Participation of members of indigenous peoples in higher education was no discussion issue until the last decade of the 20th Century. In fact, during the history of the country it was assumed that there were no indigenous higher education students. That assumption could exist due to the imaginary of nation that considered indigenous identity just as a temporary state that would *evolve* in order to become a modern Mexican; accordingly, participation in higher education of indigenous individuals definitively indicated that they would not be indigenous anymore. There was only one big exception, Mexican education system opened since the decade of the 1970s a subsector of indigenous elementary schools; thereby, indigenous teacher education programs became the way the indigenous entered higher education without publicly abandoning their identity. Thus, in the first decade of the 21th Century the only government recognition of the presence of indigenous peoples in higher education was executed through a Scholarships Program carried out by the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenist Institute)* and the offer of degrees explicitly set

aside to indigenous populations, especially in areas such as Teacher Formation, Linguistics and Anthropology.

After the uprising of the Zapatistas in the Mexican Southeast in 1994 and the political discussions it generated, public opinion and government could not continue ignoring anymore the terrible circumstances indigenous peoples experienced, including those related to education. Thus, in the second half of 1990s it was clearer than ever that indigenous communities lacked an adequate educational provision on the primary and secondary level, which did not allow them to meet the requirements to enter into higher education. Moreover, it was recognized that the reduced group of them entering into the post-secondary level was occupying almost a handicap status (Didou Aupetit and Remedi Allione 2006).

The first action of the Mexican government, as higher education policy, including explicitly indigenous peoples came just in 2001 through the *National Education Program (NEP) 2001-2006*. Equity appeared then as the key term to approach the indigenous question in higher education. NEP recognized that conventional universities had reproduced patterns of discrimination (ibid.); moreover, it pointed at the inequalities experienced among the federal states and among the social and ethnic groups. It recognized that by 2000, where 45 percent of people between 19 and 23 years from urban families with medium and higher socioeconomic level entered into higher education, only 11 percent of youth of such age range of poor urban families and 3 percent of poor rural families did so, meanwhile the indigenous participation was expected to be even lower. NEP set out two strategies for overcoming such inequalities: the first one was expansion of supply into zones and regions little attended by higher education; this expansion has been carried out as part of diversification processes of the higher education system. Thus, new institutional kinds were created. The second strategy was the establishment of a national system of scholarships for the disadvantaged groups: PRONABES, where indigenous students fitted well.

The first strategy embraced the creation of a subsector called Intercultural Universities, which satisfies NEP's definition of innovative institutions, which must promote the broadening of higher education's coverage with equity. Accordingly, innovation implies to be able to: 1) meet the regional needs under an intercultural approach, 2) provide pertinent attention to an increasing number of students from diverse cultures and, 3) include among their objectives, the development of indigenous cultures and languages, likewise the regional and ethnic development. Intercultural Universities are administered by the federal government through the General Direction of Bilingual and Intercultural Education (DGEBI) of the Secretary of Public Education. They are located in regions that concentrate high proportions of indigenous communities and offer particular degrees such as sustainable development, language and culture, intercultural communication and alternative tourism.

5. Discussion

The review of the three cases clearly identifies in Mexico the most affirmative perspective regarding the indigenous claims for higher education. Thus, although at first sight the expansion through a ten of Intercultural Universities could seem positively impressive, the optimistic effect wears off once the reproduction of hierarchical schemes about power relations between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous State becomes evident. In this case, the salience of the affirmative remedy reveals a resistance to establish mechanisms of political participation with civil society, especially when it is about indigenous peoples. Unlike the two other cases, in Mexico, policy makers did not construct a discussion framework with them; it has been rather a unilateral decision coming from experts in education, anthropology and indigenous peoples as to what proposed a solution. The case results in a very interesting phenomenon because among the three cases analyzed here, it shows the less participative approach alongside the most cultural-difference-oriented perspective. It seems, therefore, to be clear that affirmative remedies substitute transformative attempts: scholarships to remedy socioeconomic injustice and recognition of indigenous cultures in higher education programs to remedy disrespect and discrimination. Thus, in no way the status of indigenous peoples as political subject is focused.

The situation in Australia and Canada is quite different regarding such a status. Even though the achievements in self-determination are not those expected by indigenous societies, as demonstrated by the conducted reviews, the implementation of higher education policies have been influenced directly by them. The more revealing case is that of Canada, because there indigenous peoples represent themselves through their political organisations before the government and universities in comparison to Australia, where aboriginal members enter the structure of higher institutions in order to be able to influence policies. That does indicate a relevant difference regarding self-determination nature: it does not mean to become part of the already established State, but rather to interact with State with a status of *parity of participation* (Fraser 2007), hence, the term *Indigenous Nations* is frequently used. Subsequently, the market-oriented policies in Australia could reveal the coherent construction of aboriginal peoples as higher education consumers/clients through the participation mechanisms.

In general, this review allows to reflect on the complexity self-determination represents in the State politics and in higher education systems as part of it. Nowadays even in Canada, with the oldest demand for education control and the best organized indigenous movement, it seems controversial from the policy terrain to imagine higher learning institutions controlled absolutely by indigenous peoples. Thus, concerning knowledge production and use higher education policies seemingly continue to underestimate capacities. However, from another perspective, the resistance could be depending on another appraisal of the issue, in fact, on the

opposite of underestimation: overestimation of the power-related transformation self-determination could bring. In other words, it is possible that the education policy field within national States prefers to deal with recognition-related complaints, such as those that point out that neglecting total control over education is a trait of distrust and, therefore, a remaining sign of racism, than to accept that education, specially higher education, is not so autonomous and continues operating from a nation-building perspective, rejecting self-determination under the excuse that it serves separatist goals, and being complice to the asymmetrical power pattern.

The temporal dimension is very relevant, too, for the discussion here. As mentioned, Canada shows a long struggle on educational autonomy and even today the outcomes are partial; in sharp contrast, the indigenous question in higher education in Mexico is much younger, and now policies present publicly a harmonious, conflict-free horizon. These situations can be explained precisely by the mechanisms employed to construct the equity policies; in a crude summary, where indigenous peoples actively participate, the conflict is long extended, justly because under such circumstances, the confrontation emerges sharply. On the other hand, unilateral solutions seek for constructing a romantic view of the relationships between State and higher education systems, and indigenous peoples. In that sense, the complex apparata of measures, evaluations and diagnostics documents employed by Canadian and Australian governments, proper of the numerical expansion trend, do collaborate to the struggle of the indigenous movements as indicators, which does not occur in Mexico, where up to now there are no precise data regarding the number of indigenous students. Thus, it is necessary to clarify that the critique about the numerical expansion does not rest on assuming its futility, but just incompleteness. Such a perspective is incomplete, for instance, when it constructs indigenous peoples as a disadvantaged group, because by erasing the political peculiarity of their claims it makes them an ethnic minority.

Finally, it is necessary to note that in the three cases, the indigenous Movements do not seem openly to engage in deconstructing the content of their identity, that is, to engage in transformative remedies of symbolic justice. This could be explained by a strategic use of identity: as long as the systemic-political claims are not satisfied the cultural difference in its essentialist version will be maintained as means to justify the collective nature of the struggle.

Of course, the reflections stated here can and must be proved empirically through a more systematic approach. However, in summary, it is possible to hold that in order to be responsive in a world where more actors question the taken-for-granted power structures, the new kind of expansion higher education requires is an expansion of its political frontiers to publicly acquire a social commitment with several sectors of societies, even with some who have not accessed higher education yet. Thus, a new ethnically sensitive university will not be one that includes

cultural diversity as content and more individuals coming from minorities, but one able to collaborate in different ways with their struggles for justice.

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Author's Biographical Note

Mario A. Martínez Cortés studied *Psychology* at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and holds a Master Degree in *Higher Education* of the International Center for Higher Education Research of the University of Kassel, Germany. Since 2009 he is a *Sociology* PhD Student in the Lateinamerika Institut at the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. In his research he analyses the intercultural education discourse in higher education policies of Brazil and Mexico, focusing on the political implications for Indigenous Peoples of both countries. Between 2000 and 2006 he collaborated in some Non-Governmental Organisations (Organizaciónes no gubernamental) in Mexico and in the Continuing Education Department of the Faculty of Psychology of UNAM.

3

Private Higher Education in Transition: The Curious Cases of Croatia and Macedonia

Žarko Dragšić

1. Introduction

Some of the most ardent researchers of the topic agree that the private segment of higher education has not only grown, but has become a major force in this sector (Altbach 1999; Altbach and Levy 2005; Levy 2006; Enders and Jongbloed 2007). Roughly comprising a fourth of total enrolment, private higher education has been on the rise in the best part of the last 30 years. The most developed and subsequently most researched private higher education sectors on the world's map are in East Asia and the USA (Altbach 2005a), whereas the only region still resistant to the growth of private higher education has been Western Europe (with a notable exclusion in Portugal and perhaps less notable in Belgium), while the rest of Asia, along with Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and most recently Africa, have been experiencing steady increases. The main reasons for the rapid expansion of private higher education are considered to be:

- massification of higher education (Altbach 2005a);
- changing funding patterns of higher education (Enders and Jongbloed 2007; Schwarzenberger 2008);
- marketisation of higher education (Duczmal 2006; Jongbloed 2003; Slantcheva and Levy 2007).

All of the mentioned regions have felt the effects of the increasing demand for access to higher education, and as their latitude and longitude varies, so have their responses to the phenomenon of massification. The altered funding patterns of higher education have been further related to the maintenance of the "publicness" of higher education as a historical paradigm, an issue that is nowadays being challenged on a number of levels, tailed by marketisation of higher education, epitomized in the processes of privatisation of state-owned assets and stimulation of private initiatives. These developments have challenged the nature of the academic degree from being "socially beneficial" to "individually valuable" (Slantcheva and

Levy 2007). These developments have been considered as some of the reasons for the appearance of new managerial approaches to higher education which have broken up the traditionally change-resistant image of the higher education community.

In Europe, the developed economies of the West have managed to limit the surge of the private higher education sector, and have dealt with the challenges in a variety of ways: the public systems have been encouraged to search for alternative sources, which has led to an increased role being played by the corporate world as financial supporters of a variety of HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONs, thereby giving higher education a contemporary and dynamic dimension (Altbach 2005b, 2005c). Also, seeking for alternative sources of funding has led to the introduction of tuition fees in almost all countries – a feature normally associated with the private sector, and in many cases, used to delineate between the issues of "publicness" and "privateness" of higher education. Although these paradigm shifts can comprehensively be observed on a global level, the expansion of private higher education in each of the major regions previously mentioned has carried an individual niche. This is elucidated in a number of publications (Levy 2006; Geiger 1986; Altbach 2005a) that reveal numerous examples of the individualities of private higher education sectors: they vary from the mentioned funding patterns questioning the public/private "character" of an institution as in the cases of India, Belgium and the Netherlands, to playing the role of the main carrier of higher education as in Japan and the Philippines (Geiger 1986), to being the completely the opposite, i.e. a marginal entity on the periphery of the higher education system as in Sweden and France (ibid.).

Through the examples of Croatia and Macedonia, this article gives a glimpse of the situation of the private higher education on the other side of the geographical and formerly geopolitical borders of Europe, where a number of Central, Eastern and South Eastern European countries went through a more complex and intense conundrum. Massification aside, the societal settings in these countries and the recent rise of private higher education are quite unique and matchless compared to others around the globe that also experienced a major increase in the private higher education sector. The subsequent incapacities of the national governments to financially respond to the increasing demand for higher education was a major factor contributing to the rise of the private sector. Another influence to the rapid increase that might be underrated has been the varying length of the transitional process and its quality: some of these countries went, or are going through this transition in relatively composed conditions with a more or less defined transitional agenda (e.g. Poland, Slovenia), others went through peaceful separations (e.g. Czechoslovakia, Serbia and Montenegro), while there are examples of those that unfortunately had to follow a rather volatile path (Romania, Croatia, Bosnia). Secondly, some of the occurrences that have followed most, if not all of these countries, were the high inflation rates and increasing unemployment numbers which

individual countries fought, and some still fight in their own way (Duczmal 2006; Slantcheva and Levy 2007). Further contributors to the manner of development of the private higher education sector can be identified within the former structures of the higher education systems – usually characterised by high centralisation, public monopoly, and in some cases, the use of the numerus clausus. Finally, despite the fact that the privatisation and marketisation of higher education have had rather global patterns, research has shown that these processes have reached high-scale proportions in ex-communist countries (Slantcheva and Levy 2007) due to the "fertility" of the region in this respect. The impressive rise of private higher education in ex-communist countries, largely associated with the transition period of these countries, has also been characterised by a legal vacuum that enabled individuals, social, cultural and religious groups to establish their private higher education institutions (private higher education institutions) that were, more often than not, of poor quality and standards, created for making a quick profit, like in the case of Romania. This image of being for-profit, dubious-quality, degree-mills still haunts almost all private higher education institutions in all of the ex-communist countries, and their struggle for legitimacy and changing of their image continues even today (ibid.).

2. Research Focus and Analytical Framework

The purpose of this article is, through a structural and functional analysis of the relationship between the public and private sectors, to present findings related to the formation, development and role of the private higher education sector and its impact on the development of the respective higher education systems of two countries of former Yugoslavia: the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Macedonia. The peculiarity of the cases of Croatia and Macedonia lies in the late and different development of the private higher education sectors in the two countries, and the differences between the types of private higher education institutions and the roles that they play in both countries considering their higher education policies, social and economic profiles, and higher education traditions. The common grounds for analysis of Croatia and Macedonia lie in the notion that the two countries, not so long ago, belonged to the same exclusively public higher education system, which, although developed by communist authorities of the former Yugoslav federation, did not carry the same characteristics as its counterparts in the countries of the former Soviet bloc (Giles 1979; Vukasović 2009). Therefore, an investigation into the historical development of higher education and the higher education tradition in the two countries was undertaken, seeking more explanations to why the respective systems might have developed in their specific directions. Further comparability of their private higher education is possible, as they are in their relatively early stages of development, compared to the rest of Central,

East and Southeast Europe and countries around the globe that nurture a richer history of private higher education.

In order to identify the public-private divide in the higher education systems, structural and functional classifications of the private sectors made by Roger L. Geiger (1986) and Daniel C. Levy (1986) were used. Based on statistics from the state statistical offices from both countries, official publications, and the information available on the web-pages of the respective ministries of education and other governmental agencies during the period of 2009, major features of the development of the private higher education sectors in Macedonia and Croatia were developed.

Table 1: Structural Classification According to Geiger (1986)

Type	Main characteristics	Example countries
Mass private sectors	private higher education sector acts as the main provider of higher education	The Philippines, Brazil, Japan
Parallel private & public sectors	Public and private higher education institutions have equal status and functions	Belgium, Holland
Peripheral private sectors	Dominating public sector, private higher education institutions have marginal roles	France, Sweden, Norway

The structural framework follows two different paths: the first according to Geiger (1986), where three distinct types of sectors are distinguished (see Table 1), and the second based on Levy (1986), that offers a broader spectrum for analysis of individual higher education systems in terms of the public-private divide. Namely, Levy refers to "single" and "dual" higher education systems i.e. the (non-)existence of more than one sector in the higher education system ("dual" representing a private and public sector). The subdivision of both, "single" and "dual" higher education systems is based on funding arrangements: within "single" higher education systems, "statists" are those fully and exclusively funded by the state, whereas "public – autonomous" are additionally subsidised by the private sector. If, in the "dual" systems both public and private higher education institutions have a similar pattern of financial support, then the system is "homogenised", while the opposite means that there is a "distinctive" higher education system. Levy uses the 50 percent enrolment rate of the private sector as a threshold for discrimination between "majority private" and "minority private". The functional distinction used

is closely related to Geiger's three types of systems (Table 1) and it includes three so-called "pure" functions:

a) Provision of *more* higher education (when the public sector is incapable of absorbing the demand so the private higher education institutions fill in the gaps);
b) Provision of *different* higher education (institutions that are usually established or backed by various religious, ethnic or cultural groups unable to promote their interests through the public system) in the *parallel* higher education systems;
c) Provision of *"better"* higher education (includes the multifaceted term "quality" of higher education which in this case, entails institutions that offer innovative teaching methods, better teaching and studying conditions, facilities and equipment, represent leaders in teaching and research, and are difficult and/or expensive to get into).

Within the description of the various classifications of the private sectors, one of the oldest questions in the debate on private higher education in general appeared in several instances: what makes the private higher education institutions truly "private"? There are higher education systems with parallel public and private sectors where the government is the main source of funding for both, and in certain cases, the only one, and others like the mass private sectors where government-funded programs exist to assist private higher education (e.g. Philippines). It has been stressed that it is impossible to develop a consistent categorisation which would be sufficient for the analysis of public-private discourses, and related policy-making, since this issue goes beyond the higher education framework of educational policy and relates to secondary and primary education as well (Levy 1986). The ambiguities in the functions, operation, organisation, support, and the decision-making process within private and public higher education institutions are many. In spite of this, it is helpful to isolate the criteria that can be used to appropriately distinguish between the two sectors. Apart from the official legal status of an institution within a specific national higher education system, most commonly accepted criteria for differentiation of private from public are funding (where does the money come from?) and control (who makes the decisions?). Further helpful criteria are the institution's mission and ownership (Enders and Jongbloed 2007). These were the issues covered in interviews conducted with the leaders of private higher education institutions in Croatia or Macedonia during the investigation of the private sectors in both countries.

With regards to Croatia and Macedonia, it is clear that the ambiguities associated with the public-private distinction exist in both countries. However, it is also clear that the fuzziness between the sectors or their mode of operation does not stem from the private sector. The level of *privateness* of private higher education institutions according to mentioned criteria is to a large extent fulfilled. Legally,

they are all private. The same can be said for the control/governance aspect. There are very few, if any, that have financial arrangements with the respective governments, although there are cases where some of the institutions have applied for government support or have an arrangement for some sort of financial support of their students. In terms of finances, despite the existing possibilities to apply for government funding established by the respective higher education laws, most of the private higher education institutions in both countries are financed by own sources, mainly tuition fees, and in some cases donations and grants from third parties.

3. Croatia and Macedonia – a Brief Introduction

The two countries from the Balkan Peninsula ceased their ties with the socialist regime in the early 1990s after breaking away and proclaiming their independence from the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), a country that consisted of six Socialist Republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and two autonomous provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina).

Although sharing an equal legal status as constituents in the former Federation, Croatia and Macedonia had very different levels of economic development. Croatia was one of the most prosperous regions according to per capita GDP, while Macedonia was only ahead of the province of Kosovo. Statistics show that Croatia's GDP was one-third above the average of the SFRY, while Macedonia's GDP was one-third of the most developed region, the Republic of Slovenia (OECD 2003, p. 270). This discrepancy was always going to influence the further development of the countries, especially after the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the vanquishing of the shared "federal" markets. Upon their proclamation of independence, both countries were to face grave difficulties: Croatia was flung into a 4-year war for independence (1992-1995), which caused severe damages to the economy and further indebting of the country, while the already economically fragile Macedonia faced an economic embargo imposed by one of its neighbours due to a bilateral dispute that goes on to this very day.

From the point of view of the higher education systems, both countries draw upon a shared past. Their common higher education past is particular and also very important for the individual development of the systems since their respective independences. Although developing within a communist system, the Yugoslav higher education cannot be mentioned in the same breath as that of Poland, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia or Romania. Namely, during the reforms of higher education in the mid-1960s, the government of SFRY introduced a model of so-called "self-government" in all higher education institutions which ultimately resulted in a steady waning of the party control (Giles 1979; Šoljan 1991) over this sector. This is not to say that the higher education system in general, was not

held under the auspices, as it was still dependent on the government's finances, but even this facet changed with another wave of reforms approximately a decade later. A new form of conceptual change came into place with all higher education institution staff becoming members and earning the right to vote within a unique body named "workers assembly" (Vukasović 2009, p. 17), which opened the door to a number of individual entrepreneurial initiatives of higher education institutions that were unheard of in such political settings. These were not the only changes that had left a mark. During the same period, the government initiated a program of opening different types of higher education institutions (universities, faculties, polytechnics, advanced vocational colleges) in provincial towns around the country, a measure that fell far short of its intended goals: the increase of the percentage of people with higher education degrees, expanding opportunities for those living in the provincial parts, and relieving the pressure for higher education expansion on the main cities. The overwhelming result of these reforms was a sharp decrease in quality of delivered higher education, too many graduates in certain fields, and the closing down of several unsustainable higher education institutions during the early 1970s. Similar developments have been noted recently in both countries, but for different reasons.

This period of higher education development is important in some aspects: these events played a major role in the establishment of the advanced vocational colleges and the whole non-university sector in general, as the most successful types of higher education institutions within the higher education systems of the Yugoslav republics (Giles 1979). Just like the development of the higher education sectors, the established tradition of non-university higher education had a very different future in independent Croatia and Macedonia. Today, Croatia boasts of a very developed sector of advanced vocational higher education, while Macedonia has virtually none. It can be assumed that the state policy towards the development of public and private higher education has had a direct impact in the developments of the two higher education systems and the contrasting outcomes.

4. Empirical Work

This part presents an overview of the procedures required for the establishment of private higher education institutions in both countries and the potential obstacles that exist in this process. Furthermore, locations of the private higher education institutions and their degree and program offers are shown. The categorisation of the offered programs in the private higher education institutions in both Croatia and Macedonia is based on the field of studies that the individual faculties cover. For the purpose of simplicity they have been narrowed down to 8 general categories: economy, law, humanities (includes arts), theology, natural sciences, applied sciences, IT/communication and other (includes journalism, tourism, gastronomy, security, etc.)

The development of the private higher education sectors in the two countries has been analysed by using existing and self-acquired statistical data, and through consideration of the legislative acts and governmental policies of the two countries. Official publications and information available on the web sites of the respective ministries of education and other governmental agencies have also been used for this purpose. OECD and UNESCO country reports were used to identify additional factors influencing the development of private higher education sectors, while a survey and additional interviews with the leaders of the private higher education institutions were done in order to get their perspective on the same issues.

It is worthy to note that there were several issues in the data acquisition process caused by various inconsistencies, discrepancies and deficiencies, and the extent of data availability in both countries. With assistance from the private higher education institutions and other relevant institutions, these were overcome.

4.1 Establishment of Private Higher Education Institutions

The establishment of higher education institutions in the two countries is regulated by the Law on Higher Education in Macedonia, and the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, the Regulation on measures and criteria for establishment of higher education institutions, and the Act on institutions in Croatia, respectively. The establishment procedure is relatively similar in both countries. The founder of the institution has to fulfil the following criteria: submit a founding act, provide a description of offered study programs and a confirmation of the necessary number of academic personnel, appropriate facilities and necessary equipment in the form of a legal proof of ownership or lease over specific space and equipment, and finally, bank statements proving financial capacity for fulfilment of the study programs. There are slight differences in the application process: in Macedonia, the so–called project for establishment of a higher education institution is submitted to the Accreditation Board (AB), while in Croatia the request is submitted directly to the Minister of Science, Education and Sport (MSES), who then passes it on the to the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE). For establishment of private universities, in both countries it is required that the institutions within its structure include faculties, departments, art academies and other units which are in accordance with the law. In Macedonia there is a minimum number of five accredited "units" out of which at least three have to be faculties, while in Croatia there is no mention of a specific number.

In Macedonia, the establishment continues with the tasking of the AB with accrediting the institution within 60 days of the submission of the founder's project that contains the necessary information. In the meantime, a "home commission" of the institution itself is formed which (upon the accreditation) initiates the preparatory activities for commencing work (hiring of academic and administrative staff,

etc.). The AB submits its decision to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), which makes a formal inspection of the completed preparatory activities. If everything is in accordance with the regulations, the Minister issues the permit for commencing operations, followed by the entry of the institution in the Register of higher education institutions. This is followed by the election of the organs of the newly formed higher education institution, after which the higher education institution is entered in the Court Register. All private and legal persons, domestic and foreign have the right to establish a higher education institution in accordance with this Law.

In Croatia, the founders of the higher education institution submit their request to the Minister who then passes the request on to the NCHE for evaluation. Within three months, the NCHE returns it with a recommendation to the Minister who can accept the recommendation and issue a permit or reject it. Upon rejection, the NCHE repeats the procedure, and if the Minister's decision is negative again, the founder has no right to complain on the decision, but has the right to initiate a lawsuit. An additional condition required according to the Croatian legislation is that the newly founded higher education institution should provide quality higher education "in accordance with the standards of the EU". There is no mention of what these standards are exactly. The institutions may commence work when they receive the permit, and are entered in the Register of higher education institutions and in the Commercial Court Register.

From the procedures and requirements, one can observe that Macedonia's legislation seems to provide no obstacles for establishing new higher education institutions, especially since there is no one person who can pull the plug on a project, while in Croatia, although the procedures are somewhat similar in terms of the required fulfilment of certain criteria, the final decision lies in the hands of the Minister, which in certain situations can be considered as an obstacle. Furthermore, the Croatian condition of providing quality higher education in accordance with the standards of the EU is vague and unspecific, and is open to interpretation. There is no indication whether this means fulfilment of the conditions of the Bologna Declaration or any other standards, although in general, the Bologna Declaration itself has little to do with general EU standards in higher education. This concern is also in compliance with some of the observations coming from the interviewed persons from Croatian private higher education institutions, who stated that those in the state institutions are "unskilled or hostile towards the private institutions" or "slow, unfair, disrespectable towards existing regulations and favouring certain institutions over others". A further assumption is that it is exactly because of such relatively strict and centralized decision-making at the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport (MSES) that there has been neither a rapid expansion of the private sector nor any successful initiatives for establishment of a private university. Finally, the explicit efforts of the relevant state institutions that higher education should stay a "public good" and therefore, in the

dominant provision by the public sector, explains why there are some rigid mechanisms in place (OECD, 2008). The opinion of the leadership of the private higher education institutions on the accreditation bodies and procedures in Croatia varies. Some believe the public administration treats them differently to the public institutions, while others are neutral claiming they are in "continuous contact with them..., working on the quality of Croatian higher education". The position of their Macedonian peers is similar. On the one hand, there are those who advocate support to the public bodies and find the regulations and their application appropriate, while on the other hand, there are those who believe that the accreditation process is "too long and not transparent enough", thus leaving space for favouritism.

4.2 Funding of Private Higher Education Institutions

The financial requirements for those who decide to establish private higher education institutions are vast, and therefore in some cases have been considered as obstacles. The immensity of the financial burden is reflected not only in the requirement for a financial guarantee, but also in the provision of facilities, equipment, necessary staff, etc., all of which are part of the establishment process. The risk of undertaking such project without any other external support is great, and there have already been examples of private higher education institutions being downsized, split, or in some cases, closed. The effect that these kinds of developments can have on the whole private higher education sector is very damaging: considering the economic situation in both countries and the region in general, even for the most prosperous founders behind the establishment of a new private higher education institution, this can be a very risky venture, and not just for them: the closing of an institution for financial reasons deteriorates the already fragile legitimacy and reputation of the private higher education sector in the public eye. Despite all the existing security mechanisms that are in place, prospective students would have to seriously consider whether to invest their time and money in an unstable institution or sector. Yet, in spite of all these risks, private higher education institutions are expanding and as the official statistics[1] show, they are taking in more students every year.

In both Croatia and Macedonia, the private higher education institutions are funded by tuition fees. This was reiterated by the respondents from the private higher education institutions. Additionally, some of them mentioned "private donations" and "projects funded by developmental programs (from EU and USA)" as alternative sources. The higher education laws in both countries provide oppor-

1 According to the State Statistical Office of R. Macedonia, the number of enrolled students in private higher education institutions since 2004/05 has almost tripled. Croatia does not keep official statistics on private higher education institutions enrollments, but according to the private higher education institutions themselves, there have been incremental increases over the last 5-10 years.

tunities for private higher education institutions to be funded by the state budget dedicated for the support and development of higher education. Namely, the criteria for eligibility for state funds are virtually the same in both countries' legislations.

In order to receive state funds, a private higher education institution in Macedonia has to be considered by the Council for Higher Education Activity as an institution which is of special interest to the Republic of Macedonia, or that its educational programs can satisfy specific needs which are of public interest. The Council for Higher Education Activity is a 15-member body formed by the MoES for the realisation of activities and programs in higher education. Currently, there are no private higher education institutions which receive state support. Upon an inquiry at the MoES' Department for Higher Education on this issue, it was said that this year, there has been one private institution that has applied for state funding, but no specifics were given as to which institution and on what basis it had applied. However, the state has enabled excellent students from private higher education institutions to apply for state scholarships on par with their colleagues who study at public institutions.

In Croatia, private higher education institutions can be financed from the state budget based on a previously agreed contract and if similar conditions to those in Macedonia are fulfilled: if the private higher education institution performs a higher education activity which the existing public higher education institutions cannot completely fulfil, or when its higher education activities are of special interest to Republic of Croatia. Moreover, they are to fulfil the criteria and priorities determined by the NCHE .

Taking into account the fact that government support for public higher education institutions has been in decline in both countries, it is difficult to understand how private higher education institutions can realistically expect financial support coming from the state in the foreseeable future.

4.3 Location of Private Higher Education Institutions

The capitals Skopje (Macedonia) and Zagreb (Croatia) are by far, the most popular locations where private founders have decided to establish higher education institutions. A total of 12 out of confirmed 18[2] are situated in Skopje and 13 out of 20 in Zagreb. The rest are unevenly spread out throughout the two countries in question. The reasons for such a distribution lie in the countries' demographics and the capital cities as major location of the demand for higher education. Namely, Macedonia has a population of approximately 2 million inhabitants, out of which unofficially more than one third live in Skopje. Considering the fact that the

2 Numbers from the MoES and the numbers given by the State statistical office were different from each other.

major public university is also located in Skopje, it is perhaps understandable why private higher education institution are also situated predominantly over there. In this context, the recent reforms and the establishment of new public universities in the eastern part of Macedonia make sense as it might contribute to relieving the pressure on the capital in terms of higher education provision.

The situation is similar in Croatia. There is a heavy concentration of higher education institutions in Zagreb and its close surroundings, both public and private, which over the years have created an unwelcome imbalance. According to information from the Croatian Chamber of Economy, approximately 25 percent of the Croatian population lives in Zagreb. Therefore, the effort of the Croatian government in opening up more polytechnics and universities in the other regions of Croatia is considered a positive step (OECD 2008). However, due to the modest growth of the private higher education sector, it is not expected that it will contribute to the balancing of the higher education offer mainly because the higher education market forces will continue to drive them to the country's capital (ibid.). Facts show that even those private schools of vocational education that are considered to be outside of Zagreb, still gravitate towards the city. Such is the case with the schools in Krapina, Velika Gorica, and Zaprešić, all of which are which are all within 50 km radius of Zagreb.

4.4 Types of Private Higher Education Institutions

This segment of the analysis on Macedonia's private higher education institutions is based on the list of the institutions supplied by the Macedonian MoES. Macedonia's private higher education milieu consists of a variety of institutions which differ by size, offered programs and degrees, facilities, etc.

The largest institutions are the private universities, of which there are nine at the moment, eight of them located in the capital. Information on the majority of them is readily available on their internet websites. The names of the institutions usually carry a geographic or orthographic part: New York University, American College, South East European University, International Balkan University, 1st European University, etc. This kind of nomenclature of institutions is nothing new in the private higher education sector, as names are often used to further market or promote the institution and to attract attention of the potential "customers" by emphasizing their "international" character and/or backing. Information on the other types of private higher education institutions in Macedonia is not easily accessible. Most of the vocational institutions have websites, however due to the inconsistent number (21 according to the State statistical office and 9 according to MoES), they are rather difficult to locate. Most of these institutions are specialised schools of professional education providing higher education in a few specified fields. The names of the institutions are different and include the terms "Faculty", "Institute", "Academy", "School" or "Institution".

Generally speaking, private higher education institutions in Macedonia have all embraced the postulates of the Bologna Declaration. The use of ECTS is a standard implemented across all institutions, even at those who have modelled their institution on American higher education institutions. Modularized courses and promotion of interdisciplinarity are also standard features across all the faculties and departments, while the diploma supplement is provided in at least two of the private universities. The degree structure in the private higher education institutions in Macedonia is based on the BA/MA model, and most of the institutions have set up both undergraduate and graduate programs according to the 3+2 or 4+1 scheme. Only a few of the institutions do not provide graduate studies, or if they are doing so, there is no information on it. The offer of undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies is not only a feature of the larger private higher education institutions, but also of the smaller ones. For example, the Integrated Business Faculty provides in addition to Bachelor and Master Degrees opportunities for PhD studies too.

In Croatia, in terms of the types of programs offered, there is a fine balance in the program offerings between the fields of economy, law and humanities. Applied sciences and IT studies are fairly common too, with eight out of the nine private institutions offering one or the other type of program. According to the MSES website, the private higher education sector in Croatia boasts three private Polytechnics[3]. Two of them, one in Zagreb and the other in Velika Gorica, are the largest private institutions in Croatia in terms of number of programs offered and students enrolled. They offer 5 different undergraduate programs in different fields. Only the institution in Zagreb offers graduate programs as well. The structure of the undergraduate and graduate programs in this institution is usually 3+2 years, but there is also an offer of one-year MBA program available.

As in the case of the majority of Macedonian private higher education institutions, the Croatian institutions are also dedicated to implementing the postulates of the Bologna Agreement, more specifically ECTS and modularisation of programs. The rest of the private higher education sector in Croatia is made up of 25 different schools of professional education which are usually labelled as "School", "College", or "Faculty". Their program offer is more modest than that of the Polytechnics and in most cases, focused on only one field of study, the most common ones being economy, applied sciences and IT. The number of the programs varies between one and three, and a large number of the schools offer graduate level programs that last one or two years, again following the 3+2 or 4+1 structure. The situation with regards to application of ECTS and modularisation is the same as in the Polytechnics. Both types of institutions (Polytechnics and Schools of professional education) are market-oriented institutions offering their students a variety

3 Since the study was done, the first private university was opened in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

of study modes. Despite the regular undergraduate and graduate programmes, some institutions have enriched their offer with two other types of studies: studies for employed persons and a lifelong learning program.

The only major similarity in the program offerings between Croatia and Macedonia can be observed with the "popularity" of programs in the field of economy. The rest of the Croatian private higher education institutions have taken a different approach to success by offering programs in the fields of applied sciences and IT. There are no private institutions that offer programs in the humanities or natural sciences; however, unique cases are two institutions that provide theology programs.

5. Discussion

5.1 Factors for the Development of Private Higher Education Sectors

During their relatively short life-span, the private higher education sectors and their development in both countries have been under the influence of a number of factors. The most common one is massification of higher education. According to official statistics, the demand for a higher education degree in the last couple of decades has grown and enrolment rates at all educational levels have increased. Both countries have approached this with similar strategies, such as the enlarging of the state quota and allowing individual public faculties to accept fee-paying students beyond their regular capacities. In order to support the continuous increase of students and bolster their budgets in a situation where funds from the governments have been exponentially reduced over the years, the institutions have introduced linear tuition fees for those in state quota, and full tuition fees for those who are willing to pay for their studies. Another common measure for tackling massification has been the opening of new public higher education institutions in specific regions. These changes, complemented by privatisation of some of the functions and structural units of the higher education institutions, can be perceived as a step forward towards strengthening the autonomy of the state universities due to their lesser reliance on government funds. On the other hand, despite the common idea that private higher education institutions could and actually do take off some of the pressure on the public higher education institutions in terms of satisfying the demand for higher education on the national level, the two countries differ in facets such as the key mechanisms for establishment of private higher education institutions. The favouring of the public higher education institutions, especially in terms of such a complex and comprehensive issue as quality, also stems from the historical tradition of higher education practice. The socialist background and the existing higher education traditions in Macedonia and Croatia seem to have created an environment which has given legitimacy and credibility to not just the already established public institutions, but also on that account to all of the newly

formed (public) ones. In the meantime, any appearance of new but private higher education providers has been perceived with a large dose of scepticism and distrust in the public eye. Unfortunately, no significant investigation has been made to support this common idea. Not even the major critics of the private higher education institutions and their work, like some sections of the media, the representatives of the public institutions or a number of independent, non-governmental organisations dealing with issues in higher education, have tried to confirm their claims with relevant research. Thus, this largely negative image of the private higher education institutions can easily be interpreted as a simple lack of information that has the purpose of weakening the development of credibility of the private competitors in a field which for a while now, just like the societies they exist in, has been in transition.

Nevertheless, the transition of being a public good to that of a procurable service even at the public higher education institutions has slightly changed the equilibrium in the higher education setting. This crisis of identity of the tertiary education degree has been on-going ever since the decisions for introduction of fees were implemented at public institutions. It has given the private providers a new drive to seize the higher education markets in a rather aggressive manner. This development has also been used by private higher education institutions to strengthen their efforts for legitimacy. After all, in this newly created market environment, it seems that it is all about investment and its returns. Very often, and in almost all countries with young private higher education sectors, one can detect similar claims that private higher education institutions are out there looking a for a quick profit and providing an easy ride for those belonging to the wealthier classes, and that behind all the flashiness and modern look, there is actually a poor level of instruction and evaluation. There are further assertions that graduates from the private higher education institutions struggle on the job markets and that those with degrees from the public higher education institutions are favoured. On the one hand, this kind of criticism is surely not unsubstantiated, but on the other hand, there is no hard evidence to back these claims. Even if they all were degree mills, the questions that should be asked are how did these institutions appear, and now that they have, what next? One thing needs to be kept in perspective, and that is that private higher education institutions did not just appear out of nowhere. They were inspected, evaluated and accredited in accordance with the same regulations that apply for newly formed public higher education institutions, performed by strictly governmental bodies or institutions. Unless a relevant study into what kind of quality higher education is being delivered at all higher education institutions is made, with clear guidelines as to what constitutes quality higher education, or a new evaluation of all institutions is drawn, these allegations and stereotyping can find its purpose only in the promotion campaigns of the private and public camps.

This discussion puts in focus the second major factor for the shaping of the private sectors in the two countries: the government policy. The major aspects of the government policy considered here have been the process of establishment of higher education institutions in the two countries, and the process of accreditation as its constituent part, and the funding of higher education. In Croatia, this issue has been characterized by a relatively high degree of protectionism towards the public providers epitomized in the centralized system of decision-making. Certainly there are pros for having such an accreditation process, e.g. the maintenance and improvement of the quality in higher education through accreditation of new institutions that can enrich the higher education offered in a comprehensive manner. Macedonia has shown a more liberal approach, evident in the major increases of private higher education institutions and the number of enrolled students in them. However, there seem to be two new developments in Macedonia's higher education setting. Firstly, due to the sharp increase in the number of institutions, there is a negative feeling even among the representatives of some private higher education institutions, who believe that there is "an erosion of the criteria" in the accreditation process. Secondly, there seems to be a degree of abandonment of the government policy towards private higher education evidenced by the establishment of new state universities in certain regions of the country which have a large number of faculties within their structure, followed by the recent decision of the government to fully finance the majority of the set quota of first-year students in 2009. This would not be mentioned if that quota did not actually exceed the year's total number of graduates from secondary education. This can be interpreted as direct competition to the private higher education institutions and their recruitment activities. Further rationalisation of such measures are that the expected enrolments in the newly formed public faculties have been way below the figures expected; therefore, the government has decided to up the ante, and give high-school graduates further incentives, i.e. cheap (not free) higher education, in order for them to enrol in these public higher education institutions. Criticism of the accreditation process is common among the private higher education providers. At least half of them mentioned that the process is slow and complicated. Other descriptions include, "non-transparent", "hostile towards private faculties", and that it is "a difficult procedure". A few of the respondents chose more diplomatic answers i.e. not actually responding to the question but stating that they "support the work of the Accreditation Board" or that "they (Accreditation Board) are improving every year, but a lot of work needs to be done". All of the above-mentioned considerations together with the ever-present criticism of the way new and old public higher education institutions get accredited and re-accredited, point to the need of opening a debate on how to improve the overall process of establishment and accreditation of new higher education institutions in both countries. This debate should include representatives from all parties – both public and private – who will consider possible improvements in the existing legal provisions.

The last major factor in the development of the private sectors in the two countries is the competition between the higher education sectors and within them. The competition in this contribution is based on the parameters of both private and public sectors that deal with the locations, the number and types of programs offered, and student fees. The conscious decisions of the two states to allow the establishment of private institutions created a higher education market, and gradually shaped the development policies of higher education institutions (in the state quota) in both sectors. Initially, the private sector was not and basically could not have been a threat to the public sector; not only due to its small size and unknown profile, but also due to the fact that students at public higher education institutions were still not paying anything for their studies. However, as the conditions changed, so did the strategies and policies in both sectors. The public higher education institutions introduced fees, while the private higher education institutions adapted their policies to the changed conditions. The persistent criticism of certain aspects of the public higher education institutions was quickly turned into an advantage by the private providers. The latter focused on providing their students with what they have been missing most in the public system: small classes, new and modern facilities, up-to-date equipment, international curricula and staff always at the disposition of the student. Their profiles were later improved with self-supplied information on the shorter average study completion time that was far superior to that of the public institutions. Obviously, the private sectors are still a long way from being a major threat to the public ones, but in the case of Macedonia, they are gradually becoming such a threat. The competition between the private higher education institutions themselves has been increasing too, especially amongst institutions located in the same cities or towns, and those that offer similar programs and study conditions. In this respect, every institution has stepped up their marketing promotion and tried to add zing to their offer. Some have lowered the prices, some have expanded facilities and others have enriched their program offerings. Other measures for increasing competitiveness could be their relocation away from the major cities where all the private universities are, and attempting to attract students living in a certain region.

5.2 Types of Private Higher Education Sectors

Using the criteria from the theoretical overview, the higher education systems and their private constituents in Croatia and Macedonia most closely resemble “peripheral” or “minority private” sectors. The number of institutions and enrolled students is still low, but with a continuously increasing tendency. Although no official state records for that exist in Croatia, the information on the enrolments in institutions and some scattered data on the internet confirm that private higher education institutions are not only becoming more interesting for high-school graduates, but also to those who have decided to continue their education. Despite

their small size, there is a variety of institutions that differ on many accounts. The presented information gives a clearer picture what types of institutions exist, and according to what criteria they can be classified. This process of horizontal and vertical diversification and development is by no means finished. The most significant influence for the evolution of private higher education sectors will again be the government higher education policy, since the means for the stimulation and de-stimulation of the private sectors remain firmly in their hands. Whether their policy continues in the direction of promotion of competition within the higher education sector is a big question mark.

The program offers are most likely to be influenced by the competition between the institutions and the needs of the job market. It seems that the privates have shown a greater sense for the latter factor by focusing their offer on what is "needed" and establishing contacts and cooperation with some private companies, while their decision-making autonomy allows them to further develop departments that are in demand and freeze those that are not. A fallacy of the public system is that the majority of the decisions on increased enrolments and establishment of new institutions have been made strictly by the government without any consultation with the representatives from the public higher education institutions.

5.3 Functions of Private Higher Education Sectors

The private higher education institutions in the two countries to a certain extent fulfil all of the three functions described by Geiger: more, better and different provisions. The fulfilment of the functions is principally determined by the type of the institution and subsequently its study offers, which reinforces the link between the structure of a higher education system and the functions that its higher education institutions perform, more specifically the private higher education institutions. Relevant to this study, the larger the private higher education institution by size and number of study programs is, greater is the possibility for it to fulfil more roles. The same relation can be extrapolated in terms of the private higher education sector – the larger the sector, greater the possibility to fulfil more functions. In Croatia, however, nominal fulfilment of the function of more education is not considered, mainly because the whole private higher education sector does not absorb more than three percent of the higher education demand, which is considered to be a "precondition" for fulfilment of this function. In Macedonia, the private universities and the smaller institutions perform all three functions to different extents. The function of providing more higher education is the one least fulfilled despite numbers being close to one-fifth of the student body being enrolled at private higher education institutions. They cover the demand in study programs that have burdened the public sector: Economics, Law, and Humanities. Whether this number will change (and how) in the light of the latest government steps remains to be seen. With regards to the function of providing different higher education, only a

few of the Macedonian private higher education institutions offer something that the public higher education institutions do not. They have focused on those study programs that are "popular", and despite the broad spectrum of study programs, they have failed to offer something different. The emergence of institutions and their contribution to resolving other important societal issues such as higher education provisions for ethnic minorities in Macedonia, or religious minorities in Croatia, is one of the most significant contributions in the development of the private higher education in both countries.

Whether the private higher education institutions in the two countries provide better higher education is a question which is extremely debatable. This issue is as subjective as it gets: firstly, from the point of view of what the definition of quality higher education is, and secondly, from the point of view of representatives of the two sectors; Within the questionnaires, as expected, the representatives of the private higher education institutions have reiterated the high quality of higher education that they deliver, emphasized by adopting the high standards of higher education institutions from the Western world, their curricula, methods, and new facilities and equipment. Better higher education is commonly associated with elite higher education institutions, but any institution in Macedonia, regardless of its legal status (private or public), would find it difficult to live up to that tag. At the same time, this also adds weight to the requirement of an independent evaluation and accreditation system i along with independent bodies performing the tasks for both public and private higher education institutions. Until this happens, it will be an issue that will continue to divide not only the official representatives of the institutions in the two sectors and their students in both countries, but the overall public opinion as well.

Despite the lesser extent of the fulfilment of the higher education functions, private higher education institutions in both countries have undertaken specific roles in various aspects. The institutions have taken up societal, economic and higher education roles. From a societal point of view, some institutions carry out parts of public and social missions, as put in words by their presidents; for example, "…raising the level of education of the population". Others believe to promote "equality, fair treatment and inclusivity" for all students by taking into account their "ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity" which could be interpreted as promotion of values of civil society, pluralism and democracy. Some institutions take up similar tasks by establishing and developing relationships with "the private sector and the NGO community" serving them as an educational and training resource. Finally, some institutions claim to "produce needed skills" in their society.

Their role in the economy and their job market service is also respectable. Private higher education institutions in Macedonia and Croatia have created links and partnerships with private companies in a bid to attract new students and improve the education of current ones by providing internships, which later become employment opportunities for some students. In Macedonia, there are examples of

private higher education institutions working closely with some government institutions too, which also provide opportunities for internships and employment. As for graduates and their preparedness for the world of work, all of the respondents from the private higher education institutions are proud of their study programs, which according to some produce "highly educated professionals" who will "meet the challenges of the modern (business) world". Comparing the conditions of students at public and private universities, one can conclude that the privates are ahead in specific areas: they all conduct their classes in small groups using interactive teaching methods and contemporary equipment. Additionally, all claim that the examination systems that are in place are rigorous and fair. The facilities that are at the disposal of the students are either new or freshly refurbished, which more often than not, has been one of the major criticisms addressed to the public institutions. However, the conditions in the smaller private higher education institutions are unknown, mainly because of lack of information about them.

The issue of the character of public policy towards the private sector in Croatia is quite clear. The government has explicitly pledged to keep higher education predominantly as its responsibility and with that has, in a way, sent the private institutions to the periphery of the higher education sector. In fact, if Geiger ever needed another example to confirm all of the characteristics of the peripheral private higher education sectors, he would have to look no further than Croatia today. No university-level private institutions, no financial support and scarce support in any other form from the government, a legislation that can be easily used as an obstacle in establishment, funding, and evaluation of private higher education institutions are just some of the current facets and issues facing the Croatian private higher education sector. The rather uniform types of private higher education institutions that exist in Croatia, some sponsored by cultural or religious groups that are less influential than the dominant one, the low enrolment rates and their program offers dominated by applied sciences and economics, add to the relatively poor standing of the private higher education institutions. It is not surprising that the existing underestimation of the private higher education and its potential probably stems from the lack of information about it rather than anything else. Instead of marginalizing it, the government of Croatia should perhaps look at the private higher education sector as its potential partner in realisation of some common national goals, and be proactive about it.

In Macedonia, the latest increase of private higher education institutions in the country was a result of two major facets of the government policy towards higher education: the promotion of competition between the higher education providers, and a strategy of "privatisation of higher education" via two main measures: the emergence of the private sector and the privatisation of certain aspects of public institutions. However, it has been shown that recent decisions indicate a possible detour from that strategy, which would be no surprise due to the history of changes and re-initiations of education reform projects and strategies in Macedonia.

Such inconsistency influences both sectors – the private and the public. And while some possible negative consequences for the private higher education sector were mentioned, what should also be considered are some potentially negative effects on the public sector from this policy. Namely, the emergence of the private higher education institutions forced their public "peers" to initiate some changes in the way they operate. This especially concerns the study conditions at the public institutions, the teaching methods and practices of their academic staff but also the methods and practices of those working in their administration, all of which have been under severe criticism during the years of the monopoly on higher education by the public institutions. Weakening or marginalizing the private sector might bring some of the old habits back. Finally, it is obvious that the reticence of the government in Croatia and the unpredictability of the higher education policy in Macedonia have alleviated the creation of a general climate of resistance in both of the countries, characterized by various degrees of negativity and lack of understanding for a process of natural development of higher education sectors in which the private higher education should be recognised as one of their key components.

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Author's biographical note

Žarko Dragšić is a Research Assistant and doctoral candidate at INCHER-Kassel. His current research topics include: university governance in European universities and the role of private higher education in higher education systems.

4

Technical/Vocational Higher Education in Colombia and Mexico: An Overview

Carla Ramírez

1. Introduction

Since the mid 1950s, higher education systems around the world have experienced several transformations, not only in quantitative but also in qualitative terms. In fact, during the 1970s, most industrialized countries experienced an expansion of higher education through the promotion of technical/vocational programs and the establishment of new types of higher education institutions (higher education institutions).

The expansion and diversification have not occurred exclusively in industrialized countries, but have also taken place in most higher education systems all over the world under particular circumstances and at different time periods. In this context, Colombia and Mexico experienced great expansion and diversification, especially in the 1980s and the 1990s. During those decades, technical/vocational higher education was supported by the creation of a subsystem of Technological Universities (UTs) in Mexico, and the promotion of technical/vocational programs in Colombia, mainly taught at professional technical institutes (ITPs).

Furthermore, technical/vocational higher education has gained importance in both countries recently. In Colombia as well as in Mexico, different programs to consolidate this type of higher education have been developed. Furthermore, they are considered as an instrument to achieve specific national economic and social goals.

Bearing in mind the above mentioned situation, the Master research project *Technical/vocational Higher education: The case of Colombia and Mexico*, aimed to: establish the rationales behind the emergence of the technical/vocational subsector of higher education in Colombia and Mexico, to analyse its development, and to define the sector situation for the year 2008.

This article presents, in brief, the main aspects and findings of the cited investigation (for further details see Ramírez 2008). It is composed of three parts. In the first part, the most relevant literature and concepts are presented; the second part

deals with the technical/vocational higher education subsector in Colombia and Mexico; and the third and last part presents, in brief, the main conclusions of the investigation.

2. Diversification and Diversity in Higher Education

2.1 Diversification and its Rationales

The diversification of higher education and the appearance of new types of higher education institutions and new types of study programs took place in most industrialized countries during the 1970s. In fact, in 1973, the OECD document *Short Cycle Higher Education: A Search of Identity* affirmed: "[…] traditional universities will have to undergo major changes, and equally important, new types of higher education will have to be developed to deal with increasing numbers, a more diversified student body and the rapidly changing manpower needs of highly industrialized societies"(p.13).

Several authors have analysed the arguments underlying the diversification of higher education systems in the post war period. Gellert (1991, p.13) affirms that the initiatives for diversification were based on the manpower approach, which was particularly oriented to the enhancement of countries' competitiveness; and on the social demand approach, which was founded on the ideas that post-compulsory education was a general civil right, and that the educational system with its high selectivity, was only serving a small section of societal elites. Apart from the economic and social factors, Wasser (1999) stated that the financial aspect was also a decisive factor in the diversification of higher education systems.

Besides, Geuna (1996) mentions four driving forces behind the expansion and diversification of higher education: 1) the reconfiguration of fields of research developed new sub-disciplines of research and increased reliance on instrumentation, 2) the successful use of scientific discoveries made during World War II set in a definitive way the belief of a direct applicability of scientific findings, 3) the shift in demand for level and range of skills by the industry and the government, together with social pressures to democratize higher education, 4) the economic growth and demographic boom of the post war period.

Birnbaum (1983) affirms that serving the political needs of interest groups and competition were other factors that supported diversification.

As mentioned before, the expansion and diversification have not occurred exclusively in industrialized economies. Countries all over the world have undergone these processes, although in different times and under other circumstances.

In Latin America, most higher education systems have experienced an unstoppable growth and subsequent diversification since the 1960s. Indeed, the number of enrolled students in higher education has increased from 270 thousand to more than 18 million between 1950 and 2008 (Cambio 2008).

Schwartzmann (1991) and Landinelli (2008) agree that the over dimensioned higher education expansion, during the 1960s and 1970s, was in response to; higher number of students completing secondary school ; growing feminisation of higher education, and an increased need for qualified manpower. In addition, Landinelli identified a first stage of horizontal expansion, which was supported by the creation of private universities, and a second stage that was characterized by the creation of non-university institutions offering short–lasting programs at low costs. Furthermore, Baena (1999) pointed out that the increasing importance of higher education within the countries development programs was another factor that influenced the system's expansion.

After a decade of relatively little changes in the higher education systems in the 1980s, the 1990s was characterized by the increasing interest in the diversification of higher education in several Latin American countries. Moreover, diversification was widely promoted and recommended by supranational organisations as a means to decentralise the provision of tertiary education, to enhance access, to reduce unemployment, among others (See World Bank 1994; ECLAC 1992; UNESCO 1994).

In short, the 1960s represented a period of changes for most higher education systems all over the world. For instance, the development of non-university institutions (NUIs) and new types of study programs, particularly vocational oriented and of shorter duration, contributed to the transition from elite to mass higher education in developed countries. In Latin America, the expansion also started in the late 1960s and early 1970s, though it did not reach the same dimension as in Europe. During this period, some new types of NUIs were created as well. However, the highest expansion has taken place in the last decade. In many countries, this expansion has been based on the promotion of higher education diversification, especially through the creation of new types of NUIs offering technical/vocational study programs of shorter duration. These types of institutions and their study programs are seen not only as means to expand the coverage of the system, but also as means to increase equity and employability, and to promote the decentralisation of resources, which is one of the main issues in these countries.

2.2 Diversity in Higher Education: Controversial Issues on the Existence of Non-University Institutions (NUIs)

Diversification as a process of change is inevitable in all systems. It is even a mechanism to survive and guarantee the permanence in the overall system. Through the diversification of higher education in mid-20th century, the composition of the system changed, other types of institutions different from universities emerged, and the diversity of higher education institutions grew.

Since the expansion and the following diversification of higher education systems in most industrialized countries in the early 1960s, there have been contro-

versies regarding whether higher education ought to be divided according to the quality of institutions and programs, or whether these differences should be blurred (Teichler 1998).

Many scholars agree with the expansion of the non-university sector. They asseverate that the creation of NUIs will protect universities and academic oriented higher education institutions from the increasing education demand. Thus, universities can safeguard their high quality, which is supposed to be needed for the generation of new knowledge. Furthermore, the NUIs offer a great variety of work opportunities for a vast segment of the students, and contribute to the effective democratisation of access for certain social sectors that cannot or do not want to enter into existing universities (Gómez 1995).

However, there are also arguments against the existence of different types of institutions, especially about differences between academic and technical oriented institutions. They are claimed to increase the social and economic gap within the society. The contradictors affirm: "the expansion of the non university sector has not implied changes in the traditional socioeconomic and cultural selectivity taking place in universities. The elitism is strengthened through the demand reorientation to another higher education sector of relatively lower quality" (Gómez 1996, p. 14). These arguments cover special importance in countries with high social and economic stratification where the higher education system is poorly integrated, which is the case of many Latin American countries.

Other scholars affirm that the existence of technical and vocational higher education institutions goes against the core mission of higher education. They argued that the existence of technical and vocational institutions within the higher education system is "an apologist for anti-intellectualism, the erosion of academic freedom and as proposing that higher education should be about training graduates for jobs rather than improving their minds". In contrast, other academics affirm that the existence of technical and vocational institutions does not downgrade higher education to training. On the contrary, it supports the main objective of higher education, "to transform students by enhancing their knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities while simultaneously empowering them as lifelong critical, reflective learners" (Harvey 2000, p.3).

Other debates on diversity are based on the "drift theories". According to them, different types of institutions, Universities and NUIs, are not necessarily eager to serve a variety of needs. Rather, institutions aim to stabilize themselves and to increase their status by getting closer to the most successful ones. In this framework, it is then possible to observe the *academic drift*, noted among NUIs, and the vocational drift that recently emerged under conditions of tight labour markets and general pressures for a growing practical relevance of higher education (Neave 1996; Williams 1985, cited by Teichler 2006). In short, this debate refers to the possibility of blurring the differences between Universities and NUIs, between

academic higher education institutions and technical/vocational higher education institutions.

To conclude, there are many controversies about the existence of different types of higher education institutions, especially between Universities (academic oriented) and NUIs (technical/vocational oriented). Some of these debates are more concentrated in the question of whether higher education ought to be divided according to the quality of institutions and programs, or whether these differences should be blurred; while other debates are focused on the dynamics of these two types of institutions within the higher education system.

3. Technical/Vocational Higher Education in Colombia and Mexico

As we could observe, diversification is an inevitable change in the development of any higher education system. It has been the result of a mixture of common events and externalities that along with the characteristics of each country's system, have determined a unique process of diversification and development of very particular systems all over the world.

3.1 Diversification and Emergence of ITPs and UTs

In Colombia as in Mexico, economic and social rationales were common in the diversification process. On the one hand, during the 1960s and the 1970s, both countries made great improvements in increasing high school enrolments, generating a higher number of potential students to enter into tertiary education; therefore, the need to create new forms to satisfy the growing social demand for higher education. Furthermore, both countries are characterized for being socially and economically stratified. Thus, diversification was seen as a means to satisfy the increasing demand for higher education, especially for segments of society with financial constraints to access the higher education system. Diversification in both countries was initially led by the expansion of the private sector, during the 1980s, and later by the creation and promotion of technical/vocational higher education institutions.

On the other hand, in the early 1990s, both countries were in the middle of some economic transformations. Colombia was opening its markets, thereby creating the need for manpower in certain areas like informatics, communications, international trade, and other fields considered important to increase their competitiveness. In Mexico, instead, most economic difficulties were related to the high rates of unemployment, particularly in the regions. In this context, technical/vocational higher education was seen as an instrument to support competitiveness policies and to decrease the high rates of unemployment by training people in highly demanded fields required by local industries. In Colombia, the ITPs were ratified through law 30/1992, and in Mexico new types of higher education

institutions and UTs were created to cope with the social and economic changes the country was experiencing.

The particular characteristics of each country caused both types of institutions to develop differently.

The 1940s marked the starting point of the technical/vocational education in Colombia, although the level of the newly created programs was not clearly defined. It was only in the 1980s that the existence of technical/vocational higher education programs and institutions became discernable. One of the principal characteristics of the programs offered by ITPs was that they were mainly study-ending programs, and they were at the bottom of the higher education ladder, whereas universities were at the top. This situation has persisted through the years, and it is only recently with the introduction of the propedeutic cycles that these kinds of programs are now presented as a possible first step in the higher education path.

In Mexico this situation is more complex. The creation of the Instituto Politécnico Nacional (National Polytechnic Institute) was the recognition of technical/vocational education in the higher education system. However, it is to point out that this institution was not only offering higher education programs, but also secondary education programs. Most higher education programs in technical fields were long lasting programs, such as: civil engineering, mechanic engineering, etc. It was only in the 1990s, as a result of the modernisation plan, that a new type of institution – the UTs – was created.

The ITPs and the UTs were conceived very differently. The ITPs came up to support the restructuring of the higher education sector in the 1980s. In the previous decades, rules for the creation of higher education institutions were unclear, but more importantly, there was no certainty about their educational aims and role within the system. Thus, ITPs were considered those institutions that offered programs oriented into the learning of a practical activity, with marginal scientific and humanistic content. The emergence of ITPs was more linked to the legal reorganisation of the higher education system, than to the fulfilment or the leading of specific social goals.

Conversely, the creation of UTs in Mexico was based on an analysis of the higher education sector, in which the creation of a new type of institution with technical/vocational emphasis was recommended as a mechanism to support the economic and social goals of the country. The context in which the two types of institutions were created was different, and it has had effects in their development process.

3.2 Development of ITPs and UTs

The development of ITPs and UTs, though differing in both countries, presents some similar aspects. Between 1980 and 1992, Colombian technical higher educa-

tion did not show considerable changes, neither in its organisation, nor in its role within the higher education system. In 1992, the higher education system was reorganized and the existent types of higher education institutions were reaffirmed. Only a few superficial changes and clarifications to improve the system were made, especially in topics related to the quality, the supervision and the control mechanisms of the higher education system.

It is important to mention that Law 30/1992 confirmed the existence of universities and NUIs (ITPs, Escuelas Tecnológicas and Instituciones Universitarias). Furthermore, this law made two remarks that had effects in technical/vocational and overall higher education system: 1) Art. 20: As soon as this law comes into force the Minister of Education can recognize as Universities, those "Instituciones Universitarias" and "Escuelas Tecnológicas" that have the favourable concept of the National Council of Higher Education and have demonstrated high-level research experience, […] during the accreditation process. 2) Art. 21: stated the possibility for Instituciones tecnológicas and Instituciones Universitarias, to open doctoral programs, under the fulfilment of certain conditions.

The previous statements have implications not only for higher education as a whole, but also for technical/higher education. On the one hand, it promotes the upgrading of higher education institutions, for instance, from ITPs to Escuelas Tecnológicas/Instituciones Universitarias, or Escuelas Tecnológicas/Instituciones Universitarias to Universidades. In addition, it has given the possibility to offer doctoral programs to the Escuelas Tecnológicas/Instituciones Universitarias. This situation can be interpreted as a changing pattern that will have an effect on the system's future development. The law is implicitly presenting the education offered at universities as they *should be* of programs and institutions, which could lead the system to become more homogeneous. This situation also denotes the poor identity of technical/vocational higher education within the system. It is still not very clear the role they play in the system or in the society and that could be the reason of the latent wish of different types of higher education institutions to upgrade themselves.

In Mexico, to some extent UTs were created to complement social and economic national policies. Therefore, since its creation, they have had very specific objectives, such as: to increase the employability of Mexicans, to expand tertiary education, especially in the regions, as well as enhancing the access for certain segments of the population, particularly for those students coming from low income families. In this framework, the education policies have supported their development and have been essential in the consolidation of that subsystem.

Furthermore, through different policies, the national government has promoted this type of education. But, most importantly it has strived to give the UTs, their programs, and graduates, a place within the system and society. They have developed policies promoting this type of education as well as mechanisms to improve their quality and guarantee the pertinence and relevance of their programs. In

Colombia, instead, education policies have marginally touched this type of education and the institutions that provide it. It was only recently that in the education development plan (2002-2006), that this type of education gained importance and special programs were developed to support its expansion. This sudden importance within the system was to support the national competitiveness and productivity policies.

Taking into account the education policies and the role they have played in the development of the technical/vocational education, is to emphasize that in both countries most of their education policies are directed to the enrolment expansion, quality improvement, and equitable access. However, in Colombia technical/vocational higher education is widely seen as a form to support the policies related to expansion and equitable access. Regarding quality policies, the government has developed certain mechanisms like: Registro Calificado which is compulsory for all study programs; accreditation, which is a voluntary process, not widely chosen by ITPs; more recently the graduate tracer studies have been promoted within institutions. However, there has been low participation from ITPs. Conversely, in Mexico, the participation of UTs in the achievement of the national education policies is clear, especially those concerning access, coverage expansion and quality.

3.3 Current Issues on ITPs and UTs

In both countries, technical/vocational higher education has been promoted as means to enlarge the scope of higher education, allowing people with different interests, skills, socio-economic backgrounds to access the system. Moreover, higher education diversity is expected to broaden employment and social opportunities to people from marginal sectors of society, and to supply the industry with qualified human capital in different fields and levels of expertise. That will not only have positive effects in the country's economic performance, but will also be reflected on the improvement of the quality of life in both countries. These were some of the motivations they had to promote technical/vocational higher education and support the expansion of this sector by creating ITPs and UTs.

Opponents argue that different types of higher education institutions and programs could increase the social and economic stratification of society and in countries with high socioeconomic disparities like Colombia and Mexico, this statement is not completely odd. Indeed, in Colombia and Mexico, there have been many debates about the benefits of technical higher education.

Until now, in both countries, universities and long-lasting theoretical programs have predominated over NUIs and short-lasting practical ones. Therefore, it is not strange that these types of higher education institutions and their programs are at times, considered a special type of higher education created for people who cannot afford to enter a university, or for people with lower intellectual abilities, unable

to pursue a professional degree. The low social acceptance of technical/vocational higher education is in many cases aggravated when the industry offers UTs and ITPs graduates positions not related with their competences and their economic expectations. The latter situation can arise due to different reasons: For example: 1) the industry does not trust the technical/vocational higher education system, so it offers ITPs and UTs graduates positions where higher education was not necessary required; 2) the industry does not need people prepared in technical/vocational fields, because the national industry does not possess the infrastructure where this type of formation is required; 3) industries lack information about the skills and competences of ITPs and UTs graduates; therefore they cannot offer them positions that match their competencies; 4) technical/vocational higher education institutions, e.g. ITPs and UTs, do not offer pertinent and relevant study programs to fulfil the requirements of the industry and society.

In addition, the lack of information students and industry have about the potentials of technical/vocational higher education and the poor coordination within higher education institutions can frustrate personal academic goals, and also the socioeconomic goals of the particular society. In fact, the increasing tendency of higher education institutions to upgrade themselves and the terminal character of many of the programs taught at ITPs has not helped in the consolidation of this type of education and its institutions in Colombia.

The latter situation brings us to the "drift debates", which refer to the fact that institutions aim to stabilize them and to better their status by getting closer to the most successful ones. Indeed, Colombian NUIs undertake the upgrading process very frequently, as the law gives them the possibility to do it. This situation is more evident in Colombia than in Mexico, where the UTs subsystem was created with specific objectives and its role within the education system and the society was clearly defined. On the contrary, these aspects are relatively ambiguous in Colombia.

In short, it can be said that technical/vocational higher education has occupied a special role in the development policies of both countries in the last fifteen years. They have been seen as an instrument to support the socioeconomic development of their countries, and as means to improve their competitiveness, which could lead to their quick insertion into the rapidly growing world market. Through the development and promotion of technical/vocational higher education, both governments have attempted to achieve three important goals: expansion of the system, quality improvement and the enhancement of equity in the higher education system. Some of these goals have been achieved to a greater extent than others. In Colombia, technical/vocational higher education has supported the expansion and equity objectives, but r there is still much work to do to improve the quality of ITPs and their programs. In contrast, Mexico has had significant progress in the quality improvement of these types of education, as well as the goals related to the improvement and enhancement of equity within the higher education

system. However, it has not achieved its goals related to the expansion of the UTs subsystem. The two countries have shown clear advancements in some aspects, and some weaknesses in others. Therefore, future higher education policies are more likely to be directed towards the consolidation of technical/vocational higher education, due to the importance it represents for the fulfilment of their social, economic and financial goals. With regards to the controversies about the existence of technical/vocational higher education, it will be in the arena for a longer period of time; both countries call for structural social and economic changes to reinforce the role technical/vocational higher education has in the society.

4. Conclusions

Diversification is a common process experienced by most higher education systems. During the process, different types of higher education institutions and study programs are launched. Their purpose is to respond to a very diverse array of objectives, which include personal, societal and national goals. In this context, a great number of NUIs, such as ITPs and UTs have arisen in Colombia and Mexico respectively. These institutions are characterized by offering technical/vocational training in fields of high demand in the labour market.

This paper has presented, in brief, the most prominent aspects of the diversification process, in which technical/vocational education was established in the Colombian and Mexican higher education systems. The following paragraphs show the main conclusions of this investigation:

- Many of the recent social and economic policies of both countries have pointed out the importance technical/vocational higher education has in the achievement of their goals. However, there are still many social prejudices about this type of education in Colombia as well as in Mexico.
- Both higher education systems show weaknesses in the articulation of their courses. While propedeutic cycles in Colombia have been promoted, many UTs have signed agreements with other higher education institutions to facilitate the transition between programs and institutions in Mexico. Nevertheless, many of the current programs are characterized by their ending character.
- In both countries there is a need for comprehensive studies on technical/vocational higher education, and the role of ITPs and UTs in the diffusion of this type of education, as well as their relevance and pertinence for the social and economic development. Hitherto, most of the research on Colombia's higher education has analyzed only the traditional form of education, which is mainly taught at universities, whereas technical/vocational higher education and NUIs have been barely studied. Most research in this field (technical/vocational higher education and ITPs) has been made in the framework of the analysis of technological education and institutions offering these programs. In Mexico too, there are only a few studies about this type of education

and the UTs. Most available studies are about very particular cases of UTs, whereas the subsystems of UTs, their performance, relevance and development have been hardly analyzed.

Finally, it can be stated that technical/vocational higher education has gained importance in the last fifteen years in both countries. Since the establishment and development of UTs in Mexico, it has had very precise objectives within the system, which have been partially achieved. One of those issues in which more work is required is the consolidation of the system. This aspect is certainly important to achieve those goals related to the expansion and the enhancement of equity of the overall higher education system. In contrast, Colombia, has directed its efforts into the expansion of this sector only since 2002. It is important to carry out more research in this topic to determine the role technical/ vocational higher education and the ITPs have in the system and the country's development process. Once this is defined, it would be easier to design more accurate policies to achieve the country's social and economic goals.

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Author's biographical note

Carla Ramírez Torrado holds a Bachelor Degree in Economics from the Universidad del Norte (Colombia), and a Master Degree in Higher Education from the University of Kassel. She is currently a doctoral candidate at INCHER-Kassel and her dissertation topic is on Non-University Higher Education and Work in Colombia.

5

Impact of Globalisation on Universities in the European Higher Education Area

An Analysis of Institutions' Mission Statements

Adriana Claudia Sava

"What is at stake now in the age of globalisation is the survival of the University as a recognisable institution." (P. Scott, 2000)

1. Introduction: Why is Globalisation a Main Issue in Higher Education?

The impact of globalisation on universities represents a reason for debate and reflection that is not limited to the European area. However, Europe offers an even more interesting terrain for research and debate, due to the particular European manner of approaching the topic, based on initiatives from the European Union (EU) policy makers. In Europe, it is almost impossible to tackle an issue of higher education, regardless of its nature, without dealing with tangential issues, which go far beyond the perimeter of the higher education institution themselves, and far beyond their country borders, such as: specific policies at European level, relationships with European funding programmes or audit agencies and so on. When a certain topic of public debate or policy making in Europe is related to the field of higher education, inevitably come into discussion matters related to the Bologna Process, to the European Higher Education Area, to the European Research Area, all being integrated in long-term strategies for the future of Europe in its whole, as a cultural, social, political and economical entity. In March 2000, at Lisbon, the EU member states acknowledged that "the European Union is confronted with a quantum shift resulting from globalisation and the challenges of a new knowledge-driven economy" (European Council 2000, p. 1). Therefore, they set up a strategic goal for the Union as a whole, which should be accomplished until 2010: "*to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and

greater social cohesion" (ibid). Everything started from primarily economical and social declared issues, but it has become by now a totally comprehensive European enterprise; every single aspect of the EU area is concerned – economy, society, industry, and finally but not least, education and research.

2. Conceptual Framework

It is difficult to discuss about globalisation without sharing a common meaning of the concept with your discussion partner. Given that the topic of the master thesis centres on effects of globalisation on universities in Europe, the understanding of the notion of globalisation in higher education is a necessary prerequisite. The first chapter delivers interpretations of this concept in higher education, by considering two approaches: research led definitions (from the research literature: Altbach 2004, p. 3; 2001, p. 2-4; Robinson 2005, not numbered; Scott 2000, p 1; Teichler 2004, pp. 6-7; Vaira 2004, pp. 487-488; Yang 2003, p. 276, p. 282) and interest led definitions (policy papers delivered by European stakeholders in higher education: Aninat 2004, p. 71; Bernheim and Souza Chaui 2003, p. 14; European Commission 2003, pp. 9-10; ESIB 2002, p. 3; Marginson and van der Wende 2007, p. 7; World Bank 2000, p. 43.). Instead of trying to deliver a single commonly agreed definition for globalisation in higher education, the thesis emphasises the multifaceted nature of the concept, giving the start for reflection and polemic, and thus introducing the core purpose of the paper: finding pertinent explanations for the current transforming nature of European universities as an effect of globalisation trends.

Subsequently, the next chapter of the master thesis discusses a variety of effects of globalisation pressures on European universities. Without claiming to have identified all possible effects, this chapter tackles a number of issues which have received a lot of attention in research literature on the topic, and which represent some of the most palpable consequences of globalisation on the European university by and large. These effects are: the shifting relationships between universities and the state/society along time; universities acting as competitiveness instruments for European countries; the enclosure of educational services in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS[)]; last but not least, the emergence of global university rankings as effect of globalisation.

After delivering a solid theoretical background for the discussion, the thesis continues with an empirical approach. Hence, the next part presents and examines a selected list of European universities' mission statements, with the purpose of identifying concrete changes due to globalisation trends in Europe. The general tendency of establishing long-term strategic plans in these European universities is also analysed. This trend became in recent years, a common practice, particularly for universities that aim for worldwide value recognition. It is noticeable that some universities do not even publish on their official web pages the mission

statements as we know them in their traditional format, namely an enumeration of generic goals, but instead many universities put forward and elaborate long, detailed, comprehensive plans of development for a specific period (until 2015, even until 2020). The universities selected for the empirical analysis are representative for the overall purpose of the master thesis. Given that international rankings reflect the enhanced competitiveness between universities worldwide (side effect of globalisation), the European universities chosen for this study are selected among the best ones according to the very well known ranking made by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Before drawing the final conclusions, and on the basis of the theoretical and empirical findings from previous chapters, the thesis focuses on the answer–or the different possible answers–to the central research question of the whole paper*:* Are there brand-new missions for European higher education institutions in the new century, in the context of the globalisation and of the European higher education area?

3. Major Theme and Findings

3.1 Universities as Competitiveness Instruments for Europe

Higher education started to be one of the major tools used by European leaders in their struggle for reaching high competitive advantage in a more and more globalised world. To give just an example, in a Communication from 2003, titled "Investing efficiently in education in training: an imperative for Europe", the EC talks about globalisation as being a facet of a world-wide competition, and it defines it in relation with higher education as follows: "Globalisation affects education and training systems and institutions in various ways, both directly (e.g. the growth in the funding of research and development activities and of universities in the USA and other knowledge-based powers in the word increases the need for more investment in these areas in Europe) and indirectly, through the need to equip citizens with the skills and competencies they need to take up jobs, and more crucially to keep those jobs in a rapidly changing technological and economic environment" (European Commission 2003, pp. 9-10). But how does this trend affect European universities as institutions, apart from the EU policymaking? How are they acting at regional and national level? How do they respond to the changes affecting society by and large? How did they reformulate their missions during the last years, due to globalisation pressures? How do they respond today to European ambitions formulated at the top EU level, triggered by the challenge of globalisation?

Possible answers to the above formulated questions are delivered by the analysis of the mission statements of seven European universities, which were well

placed on the international university ranking in the Shanghai Jiao Tong ranking of 2007.

3.2 Global University Rankings and European Responses

At present, there are two global university rankings which are well-known worldwide: the Academic Ranking of World Universities from Shanghai's Jiao Tong University Institute of Higher Education (SJTUIHE), first published in 2003, and the World University Ranking from the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) of Britain, first published in 2004. More than bringing additional attention to quality and excellence issues in higher education, these rankings exert an even bigger impact on the ever-increasing competition in higher education at the global level. And despite the fact that they are often subjects of controversy due to their methodology and their purposes, they continue to be considered seriously by countless stakeholders in higher education worldwide. Both of these global rankings "were intuitively plausible because they confirmed the reputations of the leading American and British universities" (Marginson and van der Wende 2006, p. 2) a good reason for which they were, and continue to be very influential in higher education circles.

Taking the results of the SJTUIHE Ranking into consideration, the EU ambitions related to its higher education policy, seem to be seriously jeopardized: "the latest ranking from Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the most widely cited but not undisputed ranking of universities, finds that Europe may have boasted world-class universities before America even appeared on European maps but today it is running behind in the quality of the graduates it produces" (Schleicher 2006, p. 8). Nevertheless, the position of European universities in such rankings is not completely discouraging. On the contrary, it acts like a driving force for stronger action, and the policies at the EU and the governmental level are testimony to this fact: "This rankings performance is often cited in public proposals for greater investment in the European higher education and research area, and proposals for future concentration of funding in networks and centres of excellence" (Marginson and van der Wende 2006, p 11). Interestingly, a paper of the European Commission on higher education from 2007 (*Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and Benchmarks*) makes direct reference to the latest edition of global university rankings. Regarding the SJTUIHE Ranking, this policy paper starts with the positive picture: "In 2007, according to the ARWU, EU-27 had 197 of the top 500 universities, while 166 were in the United States and 32 in Japan (…). Europe has a solid base of medium to good quality universities and a higher share of its 4 000 higher education institutions (which include around 560 universities) in the top 500 than the USA (in 2005 the USA had 4 387 higher education institutions, of which 413 awarded doctorates)" (European Commission 2007, p. 142). On the other side, if only the top 100 universities are

considered, "the performance of the European higher education system lags behind the United States. Out of the top 100 universities, 54 are located in the United States and only 29 in the EU" (ibid).

So, the global university rankings are on the political agenda of the EU. The repetitive calls and policy measures for achieving worldwide reference in excellence by constructing the European Higher Education Area (in the framework of the intergovernmental initiative known as the Bologna Process) and the European Research Area (an initiative of the European Commission) prove that the EU aspires to become a strong global player in the competition for knowledge production. This ambition can be carried out through so-called "world-class" universities, and higher education institutions in Europe already realised during the last years that enhancing competitiveness strategies have to become the rule in organising their activities. This aspect will be further sought after in the mission statements of seven European universities, which managed to acquire high positions in the 2007 edition of the SJTUIHE ranking, both at European and global levels.

3.3 Analysis of Mission Statements

3.3.1 What are missions for universities?

Starting from the premise that globalisation is transforming universities into competitors on a global market for knowledge and reputation by contributing to the welfare of the rising knowledge societies and economies in the world, the question could be reformulated as follows: what is the mission of a more competitive university? Commonly speaking, the mission is defining the core activities, it is accompanied by visions for the future (where the university aims to arrive and what to achieve, and eventually in what concrete period of time), by values that underlie the actions, by strategies that formulate the concrete steps of action, and ultimately by plans that deliver implementation measures for the strategy.

In 2005, the Report made by the Forum on University-based Research, working closely with the Directorate-General for Research of the European Commission, delivered a definition of what the mission, the strategy as well as the action plan should be for each European university in order to be competitive: "A more competitive University should have a *mission* (More or less emphasis on teaching versus research? Which sciences are served? What kinds of graduates are produced? Which populations are served?), a *strategy* that embodies that mission (including policies that enhance research excellence, the definition of core curricula, study programs and admissions policies, and the setting of well functioning academic and administrative structures), and a *plan* to execute that strategy" (European Commission 2005, p. 38). A challenge in the study of mission statements for the selected universities is represented by the variety of conception modes with regards to universities' missions and strategic goals, made known to the large

public on their official web pages. However, “all universities have missions, explicit or implicit, to be found in various locations (mission statement, policy papers, presidential reports, prospectuses, etc)” (Davies 1995, p. 6).

It is interesting to notice that the formal aspect of the mission statements differs from institution to institution. Some of them are comprehensive; others are short, by and large formulated, but accompanied by the so-called "strategic plans". Most often, the missions are quite shortly formulated in the framework of general presentations of the university, but further completed by a whole range of other related documents.

3.3.2 Criteria for the analysis

In order to reflect the goals and actions closely connected to the effects of globalisation in higher education, and particularly the competitiveness-oriented practices, the following characteristics will be sought after:

Emphasis on excellence and competitiveness in all activity areas
- aspiration towards maintaining or reaching leading positions within top European and worldwide universities (the pride of holding highest position at national level and high positions in global rankings),
- attracting the best and brightest students and academic staff,
- acquiring the certainty of having high level of competitiveness at global level.

The importance of research policy
- great emphasis put on research activities, which are urged to contribute to the creation of continuously innovative knowledge,
- special focus on investments in research,
- emphasis on interdisciplinarity, on the contribution to the knowledge society.

The international policy
- international partnerships (participation in international study/research programmes, primarily with universities of same calibre/high reputation),
- emphasis on international mobility of students and academic staff (exchange schemes with well-known universities in the world are favoured),
- participation in the EU mobility schemes (attracting talents from abroad; the ambition of becoming more attractive for foreign students and, particularly, for students from outside Europe).

Adoption of business-like strategies
- long term strategic plan for development (including financing strategies),
- development of relationships with economical agents; for-profit orientation, knowledge transfer strategies.

The action priorities mentioned above used as criteria are contributing to a new idea of university in the 21st century. The frequency with which such issues are mentioned in the mission statements/policy declarations/strategic plans of the selected universities for this study also reflects the fact that European universities are committed to the harmonising of their own policies with the policies developed at the European Union level in this respect. And, it should not be forgotten, the key policy actions undertaken at EU level with regards to higher education are to enable universities to play their full role in the Lisbon Strategy, namely to contribute to the making of Europe as "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world".

3.3.4 Selected universities

The selection of the European universities, which made their way in the ranking published by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, was not made at random. I selected seven European universities, being ranked among the top 100 European universities in the last edition from 2007 of the Shanghai Jiao Tong ranking. Accordingly, the best European university is the Cambridge University from the UK, being on the fourth position in the world ranking, surpassed by three American universities (Harvard, Stanford and California-Berkeley). The other universities are chosen more or less systematically, namely I wanted to pick them from diverse European Union member countries, in order to be able to give a really European-wide image to my study. That is why I have chosen the universities taking into account the country of provenience and the highest position acquired in the ranking by every country. The following EU countries host some of the best universities in Europe: UK (with four universities on the very leading positions), France (sixth position in Europe with University of Paris 6), Netherlands (seventh position with University of Utrecht), Denmark (eighth position with the University of Copenhagen), Sweden (eleventh position with Karolinska Institute Stockholm), Germany (fourteenth position with the Technical University Munich). From the UK, I selected two universities: the leading one, the University of Cambridge, as well as the ninth ranked one, the University of Manchester. Choosing a second British university, the Manchester one, makes an exception for the selection criteria (one institution for each country), being justified by the particular way in which the Manchester University was constituted and through its way of approaching the policy on strategic future goals.

3.3.5 Findings

The seven European universities analysed are all different one compared to another for various reasons: they submit to specific national regulations in higher education; they share different values related to their individual history; they offer quite a diverse panel of areas of study and research (we have technical-oriented universities, a medicine university, a science and medicine university, as well as comprehensive universities). But there is no major discrepancy in the perception that they have defined themselves as "places of excellence" with regards to their behaviours and strategies for the future.

The most obvious common feature to all of the selected universities is the claim of being "the best", "the leader" in their national and regional environment, a trend that is legitimised by global rankings like the SJTUIHE one. Each of them mentions their "excellent" results in global university rankings (in the SJTUIHE one, in the THES one, or in both!). Each of them is involved in developing stratagems to trade their image, in both national and international contexts. Almost each one of them mentions explicitly in its mission the phenomenon of globalisation in higher education, as fostering competitiveness on a worldwide market for best brains and best knowledge. Every university disposes of specific instruments of fostering business plans in research, and pays particular attention to commercialisation issues in higher education (patents and licences, for instance). Partnerships – whether in education or in research, or both at the same time – are envisaged primarily with institutions of the same calibre or even higher. Almost every selected university, regardless of the language of its country, enables the access of a large public to all-inclusive information in English on its official web page. The exception is made by the French university: compared to the other universities, the UPMC distinguishes itself by being first and foremost, nationally oriented in its missions, and secondly by its, so to say, eurocentricity (the mission "to contribute to the flourishing of Europe and to the training of staff in the emerging countries" – translated from French by the author). I would even say that the scarce availability of information in English on its official web page reflect is an attribute of self-reliance. Except the French UPMC and the British universities (which enjoy the benefit of English as mother tongue) all the other universities selected for this study are make available impressive amounts of information in English, including internal documents such as organisational schemes or financial reports to a large public on the internet.

Going beyond the specificities, all the universities are setting long-term stratagems meant to facilitate the fulfilment of their mission, and which would assure them comfortable positions in the volatile environment triggered by globalisation at large. The big majority of these universities have published on their official web pages very complex all-inclusive plans of development, to be achieved in a specific period of time. Sometimes, by reading these plans, there is a feeling of losing

the main mission of the university. One cannot explicitly notice where the teaching- and learning issues begin, and where they end; and where the connection between the mission of education and the mission of conducting research is really placed. In most cases, the extra emphasis put on research activities seems to overshadow the importance of the academic profession in teaching, as well as the issues related to learning facilities, which are crucial for students. Some goals are declared as *central* or *essential,* for instance education and research as services for society; but by reading the long strategic plans, it is also noticeable that the services for society are notably neglected. Just to give an illustrative example for this kind of contradiction, it is worth mentioning that the University of Cambridge has a mission statement that puts forward *the contribution to society*: "The mission of the University of Cambridge is *to contribute to society* through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence". But still, the strategies for action, namely those action lines that are meant to achieve the above-mentioned mission are formulated in such a way, that the "contribution to society" becomes nothing else but one among many other goals to be reached– goals designed to preserve the internationally recognised value of the University, in the framework of a global competition for excellence in education and research. Besides, by enumerating its strategic lines for action more prominently, the University of Cambridge mentions the "contribution to society" almost as in passing. Much more emphasised are actions like "Leading the way", "Global partnership", "Brightest and best", "Reaching out", "Investments", "Research horizons"…

Furthermore, in analysing missions and strategies of the selected universities, it is noteworthy that they are aware of the challenge of putting together the striving for international recognition in a growingly competitive environment for higher education, and on the other side, the preservation of traditional values, namely more socially as well as academically-oriented attributes (equality of access, academic diversity and autonomy, etc.).

4. Conclusions and Policy Implications

It is quite challenging to arrive at a single all-inclusive conclusion with regards to the transforming and broadening nature of the missions of European universities. This issue is very multifaceted, as the analysis of the seven selected universities shows. There are differences and controversies in the EU approaches, and the approaches of other stakeholders in higher education regarding how the universities' generic mission is to be renewed in order to respond to new realities and challenges triggered by globalisation. There are researchers who give a worrying alarm, namely that the heart and soul of higher education in European is jeopardised by the competitive ambitions that globalisation brings with it. As the Motto chosen for this study, voices claim that "What is at stake now in the age of globalisation is the survival of the University as a recognisable institution". I would say

that the broadening mission of today's European universities do not threaten the university's institution as such, but it pressurises it towards embracing continuous change, and this can be troublesome when the right *managers* and visionaries are missing. Surely, funding issues play their role within these difficulties, at times where the State withdraws progressively its financial support; in fact, this is one of the reasons for which universities need managers nowadays. Additionally, globalised competition enhances the creation and the perpetuation of an elite class in higher education, and thus puts under scrutiny, ethical principles, democratic values, and access equity.

Distancing oneself from more or less partisan views, on every side of the intellectual and public debate, it is clear that the overall mission of today's university is not totally different from the past despite the fact that so many voices warn that universities are losing their spirit. It is just that their mission has been transformed by the broadening of its goals, because of the diversification of functions within higher education, and also because the institution of the university has lost its monopolistic position in creating new knowledge.

On the basis of the various theoretical and empirical facts and findings presented in this study, the following very generic conclusion could be drawn: yes, globalisation trends in higher education have been strongly impacting universities in Europe, especially since the initiation of the Lisbon strategy by the EU leaders in 2000, and have changed to an extent the course of reforms for specific higher education institutions, particularly since the acquisition of top positions in global rankings like the SJTUIHE. The rankings themselves have started to be perceived as an entrance ticket to a growing global market of higher education services, where recognized excellence and worldwide reputation play a central role for success.

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Author's biographical note

Adriana Claudia Sava, born in Vaslui (Romania) on January 24, 1978 graduated in Political Science in French language (Bachelor) and in European Law (Master) at the University of Bucharest before she decided to pursue the international Master Program in Higher Education at the University of Kassel, Germany. Meanwhile she also worked as student assistant at the INCHER-Kassel. She graduated successfully the Master Program in Mai 2008, having written her master thesis on the topic "Impact of Globalisation on the Universities in the European Higher Education Area". Today Adriana Claudia Sava works at the University of Applied Sciences Alice Salomon Berlin.

6

Graduate Surveys at Polish Higher Education Institutions: Methodology, Thematic Scope and Utilisation of Results

Anna Paszkowska

1. Introduction

In the face of the growing demand for accountability for outcomes of higher education, research on relationships between higher education and the world of work is becoming increasingly relevant. Although a number of different approaches to collection of data about various aspects of this relationship exist, one particular approach seems to currently experience its renaissance, namely graduate surveys.

The practice of gathering data about performance of higher education institutions (higher education institutions) with the help of graduate surveys has had a long tradition in the United States, and has to an ever greater extent been applied in a number of European countries. Graduate surveys have the capacity to cover a broader range of themes and to gather data about individuals' motivations, satisfaction, and perceptions concerning their studies and employment (Janson and Teichler 2007, p. 5), which combined with their potential to be utilised for a number of purposes on different policy and decision-making levels (cf. Hochschulrektorenkonferenz 2007; Janson 2008), explains their growing popularity.

There is evidence that also in Poland, higher education institutions or individual university departments have been gathering information about their graduates with the help of graduate surveys (e.g. Żyra, 2007; Żyra and Kruszelnicki, 2007; Minkiewicz and Błędowski, 2008). However, it is not known how widespread the application of graduate surveys is among Polish higher education institutions, and what their methodological characteristics as well as thematic scope are. The aim of this study is, therefore, to systematically assess the level of know-how in the area of graduate follow-up surveys which has developed so far at Polish higher education institutions.

The stated research problem seems particularly topical in view of the fact that Polish national higher education authorities have just recognised the necessity to monitor professional performance of higher education graduates. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education have recently delegated the responsibility for conduction of graduate follow-up studies to individual higher education institutions, leaving them nearly no guidelines with respect to the methods of data collection and analysis and thematic scope of inquiry (Ministry of Science and Higher Education 2011). The results of the study at hand can, therefore, turn out useful in assessing whether Polish higher education institutions have developed expertise necessary for the conduction of sound graduate surveys, which can indeed be utilised for purposes anticipated by the Ministry.

Moreover, as the experiences with conducting nation-wide follow-up studies in a number of European countries (Germany, Austria, Romania) indicate, graduate surveys seem to be particularly successful and efficient when they are administered decentrally through bottom-up approach using synergy effects of collaboration of higher education institutions (Janson 2009). Thus, another objective of this study is to determine the existing potential at Polish education institutions in terms of expertise and financial resources for initiating a nation-wide decentrally administered graduate survey.

2. Overview of Graduate Research in Poland

The history of research into career paths of Polish higher education graduates can be traced as far back as the times of the People's Republic of Poland. Although no country-wide system of monitoring graduates' careers had been developed in the timeframe marked by the end of the Second World War and the collapse of the communist regime, Ludkiewicz's (1980) compilation of findings of studies about graduates' careers, serves as evidence that there was a high interest in the graduate research before 1989. These follow-up studies constituted, however, a mix of various methodological approaches that were characterised by diverse scopes and objectives, and therefore presented only a very limited capacity of drawing any reasonable conclusions about the higher education system as a whole.

Two surveys conducted in 1994 and 1997 by the Polish Central Statistical Office, which covered the population of individuals who finished their education in years 1989-1997, can be considered as the first nation-wide career tracer studies in post-communist Poland. It should be noted that the survey population covered not only university graduates, but also those who had successfully finished their basic or secondary education. From the organisational and methodological point of view, both surveys were carried out as an addition to the standard labour force surveys in the respective years. The thematic scope was relatively broad and the issues covered could be divided into three main areas: educational path, transition from education to employment, and career path (Kowalska 2001). Apart from

their purely merits-related significance, the surveys of 1994 and 1997 laid methodological fundamentals for the subsequent graduate surveys, namely the survey commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in 2006, and the 2009 survey of entry of young people into the labour market. The main objective of the former was to identify the major problems of young people entering the labour market in the new socio-economic reality (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy 2008), while the latter was initiated by the European Commission, in its decision from October 6, 2006, as a part of data gathering for monitoring of the progress of realisation of the European Employment Strategy (Central Statistical Office 2010, p. 17).

All in all, there are three main policy areas, which may benefit from the aforementioned nation-wide surveys of higher education graduates: social (socio-educational), higher education and labour market. The organisational framework of the presented studies (labour force surveys, surveys commissioned by the Ministry of Labour) provides evidence that surveys were designed with the objective to be utilised in the labour market policy, and not so much towards its higher education ends. Further, it can be observed that higher education graduates are mostly perceived as a component of a larger group, namely young people leaving education (irrespective of its level) and entering the labour market. This way of perception is reflected in how research population is defined in these studies, as well as in the analysis of the data. Also, no separate large-scale surveys targeted at higher education graduates exclusively have been conducted so far. Finally, the presented initiatives are of ad hoc, irregular character; nonetheless the continuity is somehow preserved, thanks to the methodological and thematic coherence.

All of the above mentioned centrally applied, nation-wide surveys provided valuable information about the employment situation of higher education graduates, which could be made use of on the systemic level and contribute to the labour market policy. However, due to the aggregate nature of the gathered data, the possibilities of its application on the level of individual higher education institutions, i.e. as a feedback on educational provisions and services, are very limited. In this context institutional or departmental graduate surveys for obvious reasons show a much greater potential for utilisation by faculty or department leaders.

One of the problems, around which this study revolves, is that there is very little knowledge about how widespread graduate surveys on institutional level are in Poland. The main reason why it is difficult to assess how common application of graduate surveys by individual institutions is in Poland, is that the results of such studies are rarely published. The cases of the surveys of graduates of the Cracow University of Technology (Żyra 2007) and the Warsaw Schools of Economics (Minkiewicz and Błędowski 2008) constitute prominent exceptions. It can be stated with caution that institutional graduate surveys, reported either in a book form or on the Internet are merely the tip of an iceberg.

Although so far there has been no study which would in a comprehensive way examine the current prevalence of graduate surveys at Polish higher education institutions, at least one attempt has been made to sound out this issue. In mid-2000s, a project team responsible for graduate surveys at the Cracow University of Technology polled forty-six (46) higher education institutions in order to find out whether they have carried out surveys of this type. Twelve (12) institutions stated to have surveyed their graduates, however, merely three (3) of them had done so in a systematic manner. The vast majority of the remaining institutions expressed a need for conduction of graduate surveys, and planned to embark on them in the future. The results of the poll indicate that; although majority of higher education institutions are indeed aware of the benefits of graduate research, the actual performance does not match to their aspirations. As far as the preferred way of organisation of such research is concerned, most of the surveyed institutions, thirty-two (32) favoured surveys conducted by each university separately. Merely three (3) institutions would have preferred a standardised instrument applied nation-wide (Ibid.). The potential benefits of cooperation in the area of conduction of graduate surveys are, therefore, underestimated or at least not known among institutional leadership.

3. Conceptual Framework

Graduate surveys can be conducted with various objectives in mind, and therefore no single model exists which could be followed while designing and conducting such a study. Nonetheless several issues which determine its validity can be distinguished:

(1) The issue of r*epresentativeness* is of particular importance for validity of any survey's results. The most straightforward way to obtain representative data is to survey the whole population. Large populations pose, however, monetary and organisational challenges, in which case a sampling procedure is commonly employed. It is not easy to determine what constitutes a minimal sample volume. Generally, the smaller the population, the more advisable it is to select larger samples or resign from sampling entirely. If, however, the survey is administered to a sample, then a high response rate should be ensured, since in case the response rate is low, one runs the risk of yielding too small a number of cases to draw inferences about individual subgroups of the population (e.g. graduates of certain study programmes) (GRADUA2 Network and Columbus Association 2006, pp. 30-31).

(2) *Longitudinal studies*, that is studies where an individual is surveyed at several points in time (e.g. one year and five years after graduation), have a clear advantage over studies administered to graduates only once in their lifetime. Namely, complete career paths of individual graduates can be reconstructed, and therefore such studies yield a more integral picture of employment pro-

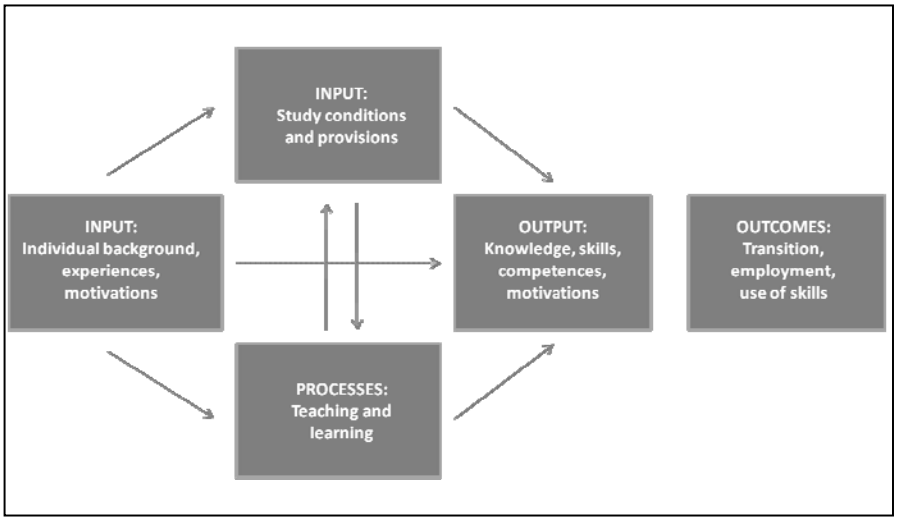
cess. In this sense longitudinal studies render data related not only to the transition process, but provide also information regarding the impact and the outcomes of higher education in the long run.

(3) Data gathering should occur at *regular intervals*. Such a practice ensures the continuity of data, and thus allows for identification of trends over time.

(4) *Thematic scope* of graduate surveys is naturally dictated by its objectives. However, it can be assumed with some generalisation that institutional graduate studies aim at improving the broadly understood institutional effectiveness and outcomes. Taken this assumption into account, data collection instrument should include all variables which can be used for explanation of these outcomes.

Aspects of studies and professional life of graduates touched upon in most prominent European graduate surveys can be grouped in four major clusters which correspond to the elements composing the model for analysis of graduate surveys developed by Schomburg (2003, as cited in Janson and Teichler, 2007, p. 6) and illustrated by Figure 1.

Figure 1
Model for Analysis of Graduate Surveys



Source: Schomburg (2003) as cited in Janson and Teichler (2007, p. 6)

The four distinguished clusters and corresponding themes are as follows:
- 1st cluster – *input* factors related to individual socio-economic background of graduates, their pre-university experiences and personal motivations with which they enter higher education,
- 2nd cluster – *input* factors related to individual choice made by graduates during studies and directly after, which might have implications for future job placement and can be to some extent influenced by a higher education institution, such as international and professional experiences and social engagement during studies, further education after graduation,
- 3rd cluster – *input* and *processes* related to studies, such as teaching methods, university resources and infrastructure, organisation of studies and other provisions,
- 4th cluster – *output* and *outcomes* understood as knowledge, skills and competences upon graduation and job placement process and its characteristics: use/adequacy of skills and knowledge acquired during studies, employers' requirements related to skills and knowledge job search, characteristics of current job, horizontal and vertical (mis)match, job satisfaction.

Based on the adopted framework, it can be inferred that graduates surveys which concentrate only on the indicators of outcomes of higher education cannot be used for causal explanations of professional success or failure of graduates, and therefore do not present the potential to contribute to improvement of institutional effectiveness. And conversely, if a graduate survey is meant to provide something more than straightforward information about the professional situation of graduates, it ought to take into account various input measures, preferably both those which are dependent on individual background and choices made by graduates, and those which are influenced by a higher education institution.

4. Methods, Data and Assessment Framework

The data collection in the study at hand involved administration of a survey. The target population consisted of Polish higher education institutions with at least 1500 students enrolled in the year 2009. The process of primary data collection was split in two phases. During the first phase, between the end of April and beginning of May 2011, structured telephone interviews were conducted with the purpose of sounding out which of the fifty-four (54) sampled higher education institutions have carried out graduate surveys in the recent past. In nine (9) cases it was unable to establish contact, and therefore the response rate at the end of this phase amounted to 83.3 percent. In the second phase of data collection, an online-based questionnaire was administered to twenty-four (24) institutions which claimed to have conducted graduate studies. The second phase of data collection resulted in eighteen (18) cases.

The obtained data was analysed in two steps: First, methods of descriptive statistics (frequencies and arithmetic means) were employed to represent data concerning the general characteristics of graduate surveys. Second, in order to determine the level of methodological expertise developed at individual higher education institutions, the author used an assessment method developed specifically for the sake of this study. The assessment instrument was generated with the purpose to systematically gauge the level of proficiency in conduction of graduate surveys on the basis of the following indicators: data representativeness, longitudinality, regularity and thematic scope of a survey. In this sense, the high level of proficiency is characterised by regularity of data collection, high representativeness of the obtained data, comprehensiveness of themes included in a survey instrument as well as incorporation of both input and output/outcome measures in the mentioned instrument and longitudinal character of the survey.

For each of the listed indicators grading scales were developed (see Table 1). With respect to representativeness of collected data higher education institutions could score a maximum of two (2) points when response rates amounted to a minimum of forty percent. In case of lower response rates and very small samples, one (1) or none points were allocated. Regular application of a graduate survey and its longitudinal character added one (1) point each to the score. Lastly, graduate surveys which covered a broad range of themes received the highest scores in the category of thematic comprehensiveness. It should be noted that not only the amount of themes was taken into consideration, but also the coverage of the major theme clusters. Accordingly, graduate surveys, which incorporated at least fifteen (15) out of nineteen (19) predetermined themes, and thus anticipated a wide array of possible determinants of outcomes, received the maximal score of three (3) points. In case when a survey touched upon ten to fourteen (10-14) themes and simultaneously, next to output/outcome related themes, included also topics grouped in at least two different input-related clusters (1^{st}, 2^{nd} or 3^{rd}) two (2) points were awarded. When a survey included only a narrow range of input-related topics, and when input-related themes were left out entirely and in instances when themes covered seemed very random, one (1) point and no points were awarded, respectively.

Table 1
Grading Scales for Measures of Proficiency

Measure of proficiency	Scores			
Representativeness	0 = response rate lower than 20%	1= response rate of 20-39%	2= response rate of 40 % or more	
Regularity	0 = data collected irregularly or continuously	1 = data collected regularly once a year or more often		
Longitudinality	0 = non-long-itudinal study	1 = longitudinal study		
Comprehensiveness	0 = no input indi-cators included or narrow selection of random themes	1 = selected input indicators grouped in one thematic cluster	2 = input indi-cators grouped in at least two thematic clusters and 10-14 themes covered	3 = at least 15 themes covered

* when no sampling procedure applied
Source: Own elaboration

5. Results and Findings

5.1 Prevalence

Out of representatives of forty-five (45) higher education institutions, with whom telephone contact was successfully established, twenty-four (24) declared that in the course of the last five years graduate surveys had been conducted at their institutions at one point or another. Thus, more than half of the respondent institutions have monitored careers of their graduates with help of follow-up studies.

Among the reasons for the lack of graduate research most institutions indicated lack of qualified staff and resources. Private higher education institutions and higher professional schools, which all have been established relatively recently, explained the absence of graduate follow-up studies with the fact that the institution is still in its formative phase and therefore does not have well-developed structures which could undertake such studies. Few institutions which have been established in the course of the last couple of years stated to not have had any graduates yet.

5.2 Organisational Aspects

The following subsection and the rest of Section 5 focus on the results of the second phase of the survey, i.e. the online-based questionnaire and therefore take into consideration data from eighteen valid cases obtained during this phase. The

organisational aspects of graduate surveys explored in the study and corresponding findings are as follows:

(1) The *initiative* for conduction of the surveys in most of the cases (nine out of twelve; six institutions did not answer the question) originated from the central administration of institutions. In three remaining cases the initiative came from the unit or team responsible for coordination of surveys: career offices (2 cases) and non-institutionalised inter-departmental research team (1 case). In none of the cases was monitoring of graduates' careers initiated by an extra-institutional actor (e.g. an accreditation agency, local authorities).

(2) The responsibility for *coordination and conduction* of graduate follow-up studies lies principally with career offices. Most often career offices are the sole units within an institution engaged in graduate surveys, whereas in some instances they cooperate with departments of sociology (2 cases) or with central administration units (department of promotion – 1 case, educational planning department – 1 case). At two higher education institutions graduate surveys were carried out by non-institutionalised research teams which consisted of researchers from various departments of a university. At two other institutions conduction of graduate surveys was an exclusive domain of research institutes specialised in sociological and educational studies. Finally, in two individual cases graduate follow-up studies were administered by an institutional strategy development unit and an alumni association respectively (see Table 2).

Table 2
Units Responsible for Conduction of Graduate Surveys

Units responsible for graduate surveys		Number of higher education institutions
career office		12
- alone	8	
- in cooperation with other unit/ individuals within the institution	4	
non-institutionalised research team		2
research institute		2
strategy development unit		1
alumni association		1
Total		18

Source: own elaboration

(3) Polish higher education institutions do not engage in *inter-institutional cooperation* when it comes to monitoring of graduates' employment situation. Merely one surveyed institution stated to have collaborated with other institutions in the

region in this respect. All remaining respondent institutions have developed their own survey instruments and applied them individually.

5.3 Methodological Aspects

The following methodological aspects of institutional graduate surveys were explored in this very study:

(1) *Regularity*. Most commonly Polish higher education institutions carry out graduate surveys once a year. It is a good sign that only in isolated cases the collection of data occurs irregularly. Interestingly enough, in some instances surveys are conducted continuously throughout the whole year. Such a result can be attributed to the fact that some institutions make their survey questionnaires publicly accessible from their websites, so that they can be filled at any time by anybody. While such a strategy of data collection may result in higher response rates, it also poses the question whether actual respondents belong to the survey population.

(2) *Longitudinality.* Conduction of longitudinal graduate studies constitutes an organisational and financial challenge which is not easily negotiable for individual higher education institutions, especially when these are not proficient in conduction of graduate surveys. That might be the reason why only seven (7) higher education institutions participating in the study stated to conduct panel graduate studies. Notably enough, five institutions in this group constituted public universities.

(3) *Survey population*. All surveyed institutions indicated that the target populations of the graduate surveys conducted by them include graduates of all fields of study. A clear majority of respondent institutions administered their surveys to individuals graduating from both Bachelor and Master study programmes or equivalent. Two higher professional schools surveyed only Bachelor graduates, which can be easily explained by the fact that this type of higher education institutions offers exclusively courses on this level. Merely one institution stated to have included doctoral graduates in the target population of its graduate follow-up study.

(4) *Sampling and response rates*. A clear majority of respondent institutions did not apply sampling procedures and survey the whole population: representative of only two (2) institutions out of eighteen (18) stated to have administered their graduate surveys to a sample. The sizes of the samples amounted to forty (40) and ten (10) per cent, respectively. Both mentioned institutions belong to the private sector of higher education. Response rates reported by the respondent institutions varied greatly. In one case the information regarding the response rate was missing, which was later explained by the fact that the graduate survey in question was applied for the first time and was still in its data collection phase. The arithmetic mean of the response rates in the remaining cases amounted to thirty-seven per cent (37%). In the two cases where surveys were administered to

sampled graduates, the response rates turned out quite high: ninety per cent (90%) for the forty per cent (40%) sample and seventy per cent (70%) for the smaller sample. From among the remaining institutions six (6) obtained response rates of forty per cent (40%) and more and two (2) response rates lower than twenty per cent (20%).

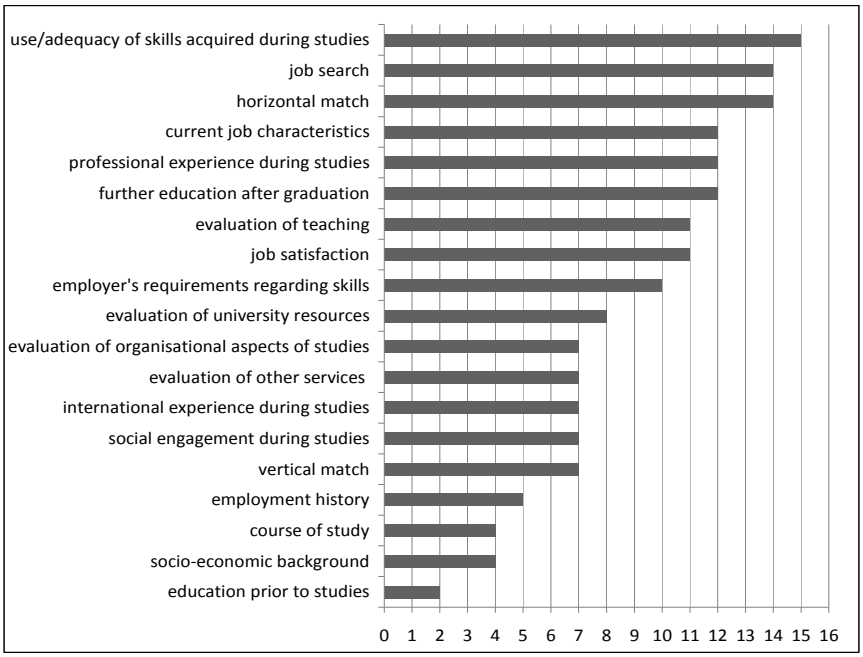
5.4 Thematic Scope

The representatives of higher education institutions who participated in the questionnaire survey were asked to indicate which topics were covered in the graduate surveys administered at their institutions. The respondents were asked in a closed-ended, multiple choice question to indicate relevant themes, choosing from nineteen (19) options. The list of themes included in the question at hand does not exhaust all the possible topics which can appear in graduate follow-up studies, rather it incorporates the most common ones which emerge in the most prominent large scale graduate studies carried out in a number of Western European countries, thereby serving as a frame of reference for this study.

As Figure 2 demonstrates, higher education institutions ask their graduates most commonly about the extent to which skills and knowledge acquired during studies are used by them in performing their job tasks. Other topics, which are of high interest to Polish higher education institutions, include various aspects of job search and job placement process, the issue of match between the studied disciplines and field of work (horizontal match), details related to current employment situation of graduates and characteristics of current job, professional experiences made by graduates in the course of their studies, as well as continuation of education after graduating. At the other end, general employment history, details concerning the course of study, socio-economic background of graduates and their educational background prior to higher education studies belong to the themes which are least often touched upon in graduate surveys.

In terms of comprehensiveness of the thematic scope a great variation in the numbers of themes covered in individual surveys can be observed. While some graduate surveys seem very broad in scope and include themes across most of the thematic clusters, other cover only selected and seemingly random themes.

Figure 2
Themes Covered in Graduate Surveys (frequencies, N=18)



5.5 Utilisation and Dissemination of Results

The issue of utilisation of results of graduate surveys was explored with help of a single closed-ended, multiple-choice question with nine (9) predetermined answers. As is indicated in Figure 5, data obtained with aid of graduate surveys is most often utilised for adjusting study programme curriculum to the needs of the labour market and improvement of services offered by university career offices. Significantly surveys' results are used less frequently for other purposes, such as marketing, informing public about the performance of the institutions and communicating students about potential career possibilities after graduation. Little use is made of results of graduate surveys when it comes to development of didactic skills of academic staff and improvement of other university provisions. Merely three (3) institutions responded to have utilised results of their graduate follow-up studies as an asset in the context of accreditation procedures.

Dissemination of results of any institutional research enhances transparency of institutional activities and improves accountability of higher education institutions. Furthermore, publication of findings and methodological reports from graduate surveys contributes to circulation of knowledge about the situation of recent higher education graduates in the labour market and facilitates exchange of know-how in the area of designing and conduction of graduate surveys. Unfortunately in half of the cases examined in this study, results of graduate surveys were not published. Five (5) institutions stated to publish their survey results online, while two others do so in paper form. One higher education institution uses both types of media for dissemination of results of the graduate follow-up study.

5.6 Level of Expertise in Conduction of Graduate Surveys at Polish Higher Education Institutions

The total scores generated with help of the adopted assessment framework and based on the obtained data reveal that the levels of proficiency in design and conduction of graduate surveys developed by Polish higher education institutions differ substantially (see Table 3).

A group of six (6) forerunners, which on aggregate scored five (5) points and more, can be distinguished (marked grey in Table 3). With regard to the institution type, these represent public university-type institutions and private higher education institutions. In terms of institutional size, the most proficient institutions cut across all categories, ranging from small institutions, through medium ones, to the large university.

Same applies to the institutions which obtained the lowest scores. Among the institutions, which are least proficient in conduction and design of graduate surveys, are both large public universities and small private institutions. Notably, both of the higher professional schools examined in this study presented poor records.

Little can be inferred in terms of the relationship between the unit responsible for conduction of graduate surveys and the proficiency scores. On average the best graduate survey designs were developed where a research institute assumes the task. What may come as a surprise, no positive synergy effects from cooperation between career office and other units/individuals within an institution were observed. Taken into consideration the small number of cases, these results should be, however, taken with caution.

Table 3
Total Proficiency Scores

Institution type	Case number	Size	Represent-ativeness	Longitudi-nality	Regularity	Comprehen-siveness	Total score
University-Type							
	1	32700	0	0	1	2	3
	2	31900	2	1	1	1	5
	3	28900	0	0	1	0	1
	4	22800	1	0	0	0	1
	5	14300	2	0	1	0	3
	6	11700	n.a.	1	1	2	3*
	7	9800	2	1	0	3	6
	8	8500	2	1	1	3	7
Higher Professional Schools							
	9	3700	1	0	0	0	1
	10	3100	1	0	0	1	2
Private higher education institutions							
	11	10000	2	0	1	2	5
	12	8200	1	0	1	0	2
	13	6700	1	0	1	0	2
	14	4100	1	0	1	2	4
	15	3800	2	0	1	3	6
	16	3000	2	0	1	2	5
	17	3000	1	0	0	2	3
	18	1600	1	0	0	1	2

* Incomplete scores, since data collection still in progress
Source: own elaboration

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Discussion

The empirical findings indicate that in Poland monitoring careers of graduates with aid of graduate follow-up studies is a relatively widespread practice but still does not constitute a standard in itself. In the light of the fact that in the nearest future all higher education institutions in Poland will be obliged by law to conduct graduate surveys, this implies that shortly many institutions will soon have to develop appropriate frameworks and mechanisms and allocate necessary resources.

The graduate surveys examined in this study show that Polish higher education institutions adopt diverse approaches to organisation of such studies. Units or departments responsible for designing and conduction of surveys vary among the investigated institutions. Most commonly it is career offices which assume this responsibility, which can be attributed to the fact that these units maintain close contact with graduates and therefore are in the best position to approach them. Predominantly the initiative to undertake graduate follow-up studies originates from central administration of an institution, which could serve as evidence that institutional leadership notices the potential benefits of graduate surveys in the context of improvement of institutional effectiveness. Yet, what still remains largely unappreciated by Polish higher education institutions, are potentially positive synergy effects of inter-institutional cooperation in the area of design and conduction of graduate surveys.

Considering the key methodological features of the graduate surveys conducted at the institutional level, certain trends can be distinguished. Surveys are administered in most of the cases regularly once a year and to graduates of all study fields. Further, sampling is employed only in rare cases, while most institutions administer graduate surveys to whole target populations. The reported response rates are often insufficient, which narrows the opportunities to draw conclusions relevant for subgroups in the population and calls into question actual utility of some of the examined graduate surveys.

With regard to comprehensiveness of thematic scope of graduate surveys, substantial variability can be observed. While some higher education institutions include in their surveys a very broad range of issues related both to input measures (individual background, motivations, choices, study conditions and provisions) and indicators of output/outcome of higher education, others tend to apply surveys which are narrow in scope. In the latter case questions related to input measures are either entirely left out or covered only in a rudimentary fashion, which again limits significance of obtained data and renders causal explanations infeasible.

Regardless of the mentioned shortcomings nearly all surveyed higher education institutions claim to utilise the results obtained with help of graduate surveys for one or more purposes. The most often indicated ways of utilisation of surveys' results include aligning study programme curricula with the requirements of the labour market and improvement of career services offered by the institution.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the results of this study it can be estimated that nearly a half of Polish higher education institutions have had no experience in monitoring careers of their graduates, and many of those that have already carried out graduate follow-up studies show rather a low level of competence in this respect. Nevertheless, application of graduate follow-up studies will soon be expected of all higher education

institutions in Poland. Taking into consideration the findings of this study, it can be anticipated that many of them will not live up to the task and carry out studies characterised by very poor validity and relevance.

In this context it might be advisable for higher education institutions and other stakeholders to cooperate in developing a common framework for adoption and conduction of graduate surveys which can be applied nation-wide. Those institutions which have accumulated a high level of expertise in the field of graduate research could play an instrumental role or even assume leadership in that process. As experiences of other countries show, adoption of such an approach could result in enhanced efficiency in development and conduction of graduate follow-up studies and increased comparability of the obtained data across the whole system.

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Author's Biographical Note

Anna Paszkowska completed the Master Programme in Higher Education Research and Development (MAHE) at the University of Kassel in 2011. In the period 2004-2009 Anna studied Scandinavian Studies at the University of Gdansk and graduated with a thesis on "The Satisfaction of the Erasmus Programme Students with Their Stay at the University of Turku, Finland". During her studies in the MAHE Programme she was involved in the German graduate tracer study (Kooperationsprojekt Absolventenstudien) coordinated by INCHER-Kassel.

7

Current Situation and Future Perspectives of Independent Colleges in China

Yuanyuan Yu

1. Introduction

Since the expansion of higher education enrolment in 1999 in China, the rate of enrolment has reached 42 percent. This trend of expansion has lasted until now, and the newly enrolled student number has increased from 1.08 million in 1999 to 5.67 million in 2007. The policy of enrolment expansion is broadly welcomed in China by students and parents, but the rapidly growing student number has put significant pressure on university management and funding. Lack of funding and the growing faculty-student rate has become a threat to the quality of higher education. Against this background, private investment has been introduced to cooperate with public higher education institutions, and the first independent college was established in 1999 in Zhejiang Province. Independent colleges offer bachelor level education, and are the third type of higher education institution after public- and private universities. The reason that independent colleges are different from private universities is that they are actually dependent on public universities while still relying on private investment. This nature, to a certain extent, solved the problem triggered by the enrolment expansion. However there are also many problems facing the future development of independent colleges such as quality assurance, the relationship with the cooperating public university, the conflict between for-profit initiation and higher education as public good, the acceptance of the public, and the career of their graduates, etc.

As a new type of higher education institution in China, it is worthy to study the background and environment that fostered the establishment of independent colleges, and it is also important to analyze the rationale behind these experimental institutions and their potential influences on the Chinese higher education system. Thus this thesis aims to: First, introduce the background of the establishment of independent colleges and their characteristics as well as current situation and problems facing independent colleges in different aspects; second, to compare independent colleges in China to affiliated colleges in India, discussing some

major similarities and differences; third, to discuss the possible future development of independent colleges, as well as some crucial factors for the development of independent colleges and private higher education institution in general.

The result from these analyses is that independent colleges will eventually become truly independent from the public higher education institutions. However, without support from the government, it is a big challenge for independent colleges as well as other private higher education institutions to survive the severe competition against famous universities, since reputation is an important concern dictating students' choice of higher education institutions.

From the government's perspective, it is important to realize that the higher education system in China will gradually transform from a private-peripheral pattern into a private-complementary pattern. In order to achieve the healthy development of private sectors and make the best use of private resources to contribute to the development of Chinese higher education, government plays a crucial role. The current policies and regulations have not created a fair and transparent environment and open market for different education suppliers; thus, the competition between different institutions has not functioned as an incentive for improving education quality and accountability of universities and colleges. Facing the challenge of expanding student number and decreasing public expenditure on higher education, there are many lessons to be learned from the experiences of other countries. Private higher education sectors should be granted more autonomy and freedom to play a more important role in the larger education system and at various levels of society.

2. Background

2.1 Development of Higher Education Since the Late 1970s

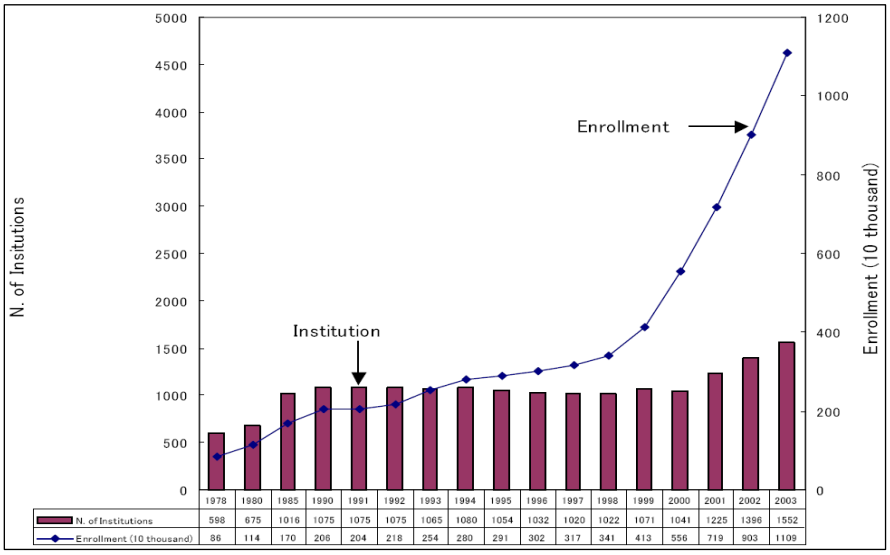
Since the social and economic situation have changed dramatically due to the policy of reform and open-up in the late 1970s, the Chinese higher education system, which previously had adopted the model of former U.S.S.R (as a result of previous reform since the establishment of P.R. China in the 1949), did not appear adequate anymore neither for offering technological and scientific support to further social development, nor for the training of highly qualified people to adopt new technological advancements. Faced with many problems within higher education institutions such as the low enrolment rate, low quality of education, and weak administration structures, a decision for a new round of higher education reform was made by the central government of China in the late 1990s. Since then, many changes have taken place, for instance, decentralization of governance, enrolment expansion, promotion of non-state higher education, the introduction of tuition fees and creating world-class universities. It is worthy to highlight three of these changes in the higher education system, which directly created the precondi-

tion of the establishment of independent colleges in China: 1. Higher education expansion in China, 2. Reform in financing of higher education institutions, and 3. Promotion of non-state higher education

2.2 Higher Education Expansion in China

Since the birth of the People's Republic of China in 1949, higher education in China has expanded three-fold. The current expansion leading towards mass higher education in China started in 1999. The two major purposes of this expansion were; first, to alleviate the pressure of competition for higher education, and second, to stimulate the growth of the domestic economy. Due to the expansion, the gross enrolment rate of higher education in China has increased to about 17 percent in 2003 (Ji 1999). And the number of growing students enrolled as well as the growing number of higher education institutions (see below) show that from 1978 to 2003, the number of students enrolled into higher education institutions increased almost 13 times, while in the same period, the number of higher education institutions increased only 2.5 times.

Figure 1: Number of Institutions and Size of Enrolment (in 10 thousand) in Higher Education in China 1980 to 2003



	1978	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
N. of Institutions	598	675	1016	1075	1075	1075	1065	1080	1054	1032	1020	1022	1071	1041	1225	1396	1552
Enrollment (10 thousand)	86	114	170	206	204	218	254	280	291	302	317	341	413	556	719	903	1109

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

Such a pattern of increase was described as an "internal expansion – not by establishing new colleges, rather by increasing the economic scale size of every existing university from the average of below 2,000 in 1990 per school to over 6,000 in 2001" (Chen 2004, p. 2). Thus the drastic expansion within existing institutions has put great financial pressures on higher education institutions. Consequently, the restructuring of the funding system of higher education in China has been necessitated in order to cope with the problems brought about by the large scale enlargement of higher education.

2.3 Reform in Financing of Higher Education

The aggravating insufficiency of funding for higher education and growing costs have forced the restructuring of funding system of higher education in China. Traditionally, education especially higher education in China, did not enjoy a prestigious position for budget allocation. Funding and public revenue are directed rather towards production industry than education – which used to be considered more as "welfare department" (Shen and Du 2000, p. 70). Despite the central government making the decision in 1998 to increase education expenditure by one percent each year, it can still hardly measure up to the rapid rate of expansion. Many institutions suffered from excessive pressure when they had to sustain an increasing work load with inadequate resources. The severe shortage of teaching staff and physical facilities has been criticized. It has been remarked that "overloaded teachers have less time for their own professional development, leading to anxiety about instruction quality" (Chen 2004, p. 26). Against the background of these problems, several aspects of the funding system of Chinese higher education have been changed: first, there has been a decentralisation to a pluralistic system of higher education financing; Second, many institutions have started to rely on self-generated revenues; Third, institutions have started to charge tuition fees. The increasing dependence on self-generated revenues and tuitions fees has changed the traditional structure of financing in higher education institutions in China. A cost-sharing system between state, institutions and students has been gradually set up in China.

2.4 The Promotion of Non-State Higher Education

The development of non-state higher education institutions follows a policy of the promotion of such type of institutions by the government of China. In 2002, the Chinese central government promulgated the "Law of Promoting Non-governmental Education", (which intended to encourage the establishment of private-run education at all levels. And later in 2008, the Ministry of Education adopted the "Measures for the Establishment and Administration of Independent Colleges" at their executive meetings. The endeavour to promote different types of higher education institutions rather than the existing traditional state-run institutions

shows the tendency toward a more diversified higher education system in the process of higher education expansion. By doing so, not only would the key universities, especially those research-intensive institutions, be released from overloaded teaching tasks, but also "a growth of diversity of backgrounds, talents and motives of job expectations among the rising number of students would be accommodated by heterogeneous higher education providers" (Teichler et al. 2007, p. 2). However, even as the government tries to encourage private investment in higher education, there are still many considerable limitations of the regulations regarding private higher education. The government still has excessive control over the development of private sectors; sometimes, the control is not through direct restriction but unequal regulations. The preferential policy and endeavour to promote independent colleges in order to suppress other private institutions from upgrading to degree-level education is one such example of unfair treatment from the government.

3. Introduction of Independent Colleges

3.1 Definition of Independent Colleges in China

According to the "Measures for the Establishment and Administration of Independent Colleges" promulgated in 2008 by the Ministry of Education, "Independent College" refers to institutions that are established corporately by regular public higher education institutions which offer study programs leading to bachelor's degree or above, and non-state social organizations or individuals. Independent colleges are self-financed and receive no state allocation of funds. Independent colleges are considered to be an important composition of non-state higher education in China, and serve the public interests (The Central People's Government of the P. R. China 2008).

3.2 Characteristics of Independent Colleges

Independent colleges share characteristics of both public and private universities. However, they are also distinguished from these two types of higher education institutions; they are actually the mixture of public and private universities in China. The reason that they are named as "Independent Colleges" is because of the following features in comparison with regular public universities:

First, the characteristics of autonomy: According to the "Measures for the Establishment and Administration of Independent Colleges", independent colleges are organizations with independent legal personality (The Central People's Government of the P. R. China 2008). This granted independent colleges separate rights and obligations with legal effects. Independent colleges have their own campus and facilities and the organization and management are different from their public university partners. Independent colleges also have their own enrol-

ment plans, admission standards, financial accounting systems; they design and organize study programmes themselves according to the local demand.

Second, the characteristics of dependency: However, even though independent colleges have all the features of an independent organization, without partnership with regular public universities, they are still not in the category of "Independent College". This precondition defined in the policy has ensured that the essential characteristics of independent colleges are actually dependent on regular public universities. Thus the characteristics of autonomy of only represent the structure of property and basic operation; it does not represent the form of existence of independent colleges. When other private institutions are considered, independent colleges actually are distinguished from them due to their dependency on their public partners.

4. A Comparison Between Independent Colleges in China and the Affiliated Colleges in India

Taking the international higher education system into account, similar public-private cooperation of establishing higher education institutions also exists in India. Despite the geographic and demographic similarities between India and China, and the effects of globalization on both countries, the Indian higher education system has experienced a similar process of development in the past decades with a similar background for the privatization of higher education, and the development of public-private cooperation in establishing higher education institutions. These processes include, first, the higher education expansion: as in the case of China, initially, the responsibility to cope with the fast growing higher education system in India was taken mainly by the government, and the private sector did not make notable contributions. (Tilak 1999, p. 115); Second, declining government expenditure on higher education: due to the fast enlargement as well as the structural adjustment of Indian higher education system, there was a drastic cut in public expenditure on higher education(which has been considered as a danger for the quantity, quality and equity of higher education in India), and naturally, privatization of higher education assumed importance; third, privatization of higher education: similar to China, privatization of education was initially considered inappropriate in India for decades, however due to decline of public expenditure, in 1990, the Indian government adopted structural adjustment reforms, which fostered the "gradual withdrawal of state patronage for higher education and a coterminous privatization of that sphere" (Jayaram 2009, p. 95).

In India, affiliated colleges refer to both "private aided" institutions, which are given financial assistance by the state, and "self-financing institutions", which rely only on private financing. Both in regards of the number of private colleges and the percentage of student enrolment among all the students in higher education, India's affiliated private colleges have outnumbered private colleges in all these

aspects. While in China, the private sector, even the fast growing independent colleges' influence still can not be compared to their public counterpart in the higher education system.

Several comparisons have been made in the following aspects: first, the relationship with their alma mater public universities. It is noted that both affiliated colleges in India and independent colleges in China have to rely on public universities to exist. Independent colleges in China have more autonomy regarding governance and administration. In India, it is determined by law that affiliated colleges are "under the jurisdiction of a university", and "all academic matters [of] private colleges and institutions are governed by the university" (Jayaram 2009, p. 96, p. 105). While the relationship between independent colleges and their alma mater public universities are more like partners who cooperate in the investment and share profit, and where the private investor takes the legal responsibilities independently.

Second, financing: The "private aided institutions" in India receive substantial financial assistance from the state, and are allowed to collect fees from students to balance the cost. However, alongside, "self-financing institutions" were also promoted and encouraged to establish. "Self-financing institutions" in India thus share more similarities with the independent colleges in China; they are both considered as an effective way of optimizing social resources in order to finance higher education.

Third, teaching and learning: In India, the recruitment and admission to private institutions were regulated by the government. Compared to independent colleges in China, teachers in affiliated colleges have very limited autonomy and flexibility on what to teach. Teaching and learning are directed only toward examinations conducted by the university. Both affiliated colleges in India and independent colleges in China tend to offer more market-oriented programmes which seem to have better job prospects for the graduates and cost less than other traditional and basic programs. The same phenomenon has however changed the subject structures of these two countries in different ways. In India, affiliated colleges alike independent colleges in China, offer undergraduate programmes, but the alma mater universities in India normally offer only postgraduate programmes, which means the subject structure of affiliated colleges, to a large extent, decides the general structure of undergraduate education as a whole. Independent colleges in China only take up a small proportion of undergraduate education; the alma mater universities still take the majority of undergraduate students. Thus the subject structure of the whole undergraduate education is more balanced, because public universities' conventional programs play an important role when related to public revenue allocation from the government and the potential talents for research, which is closely linked to the reputation of a university. Thus, public universities still pay much attention and put emphasis on traditional basic subjects such as science, geography, physics, etc.

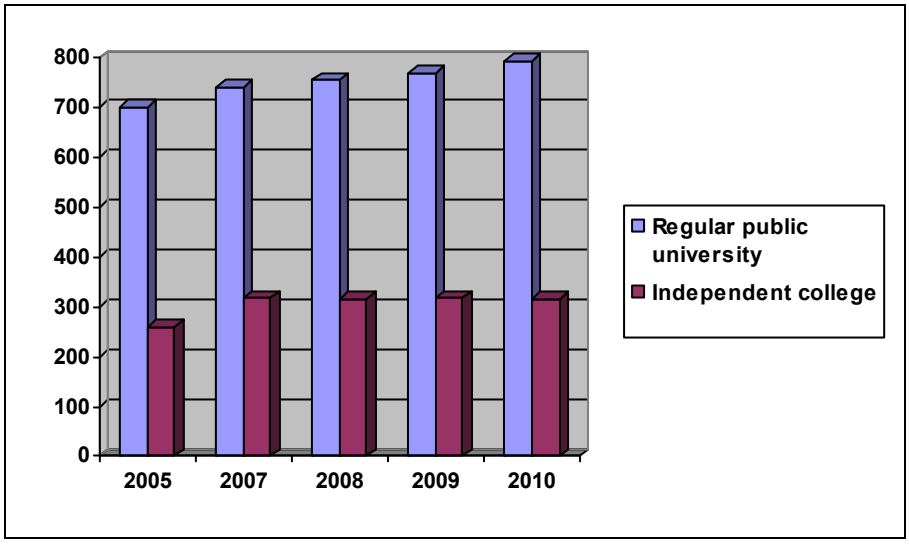
Fourth, tuition fees and social equity: For the "self-financing institutions", likewise the independent colleges in China, student fees are the most important source of revenues, and the income from tuition and fees has to be able to cover all the costs of operation. In both countries, despite governmental norms and regulations on the fees that can be collected in private institutions, the "price" of education in these colleges is still very high, and this has caused heated debate on social equity. In India, even though the establishment of "self-financing institutions" has released the financial burden of the government, it has alongside increased inequalities among students and the community at large. Students from rural areas and needy families are be excluded from higher education regardless their abilities. However in China, the for-profit motive is to some extent accepted, because the remarkable differences of occupational achievements and earnings between employees with different levels of education create a huge market for degree-level higher education. Profit from independent colleges is also considered as reasonable motivation for social funds to be allocated in higher education; the increased opportunity for higher education is supposed to benefit students the most and the social welfare at large. It does not mean that China does not realize the danger, as Tilak (1999, p. 123) notes that, "higher education, now a public or quasi public good, will become a luxury good, and middle and even upper-middle income classes may not be able to afford it. It will turn into a monopoly of the rich," and which will be in a long-run the cost of the whole society.

From the brief comparison one can note that there are many similarities of key characteristics between "self-financing institutions" among the affiliated colleges in India, and independent colleges in China. However, there are only about 300 independent colleges in China, and public universities still dominate the higher education system, compared to about 300 universities, but more than 10,000 affiliated colleges in India; the situation and problems as well as development perspectives of these two types of institutions in both countries are notably different. Against similar historical background and social environment, both countries have chosen privatization of higher education as one of the strategies, likewise in many other countries (e.g. former communist countries in Eastern Europe), to develop the higher education system. Against this, Tilak (1999) also criticized that for countries like India and China, where the Vedic values and Confucian tradition "assigned high esteem to knowledge for its own sake, as knowledge was considered wealth", the motives of "personal development as well as for adding to human capital by improving the skills of graduates" have been replaced by "financial motives"; thus "there is a danger that the myopic might view privatization, a strategy (not necessarily a desirable strategy) of development of higher education as the sole objective itself"(p. 132).

5. Current Situation of Independent Colleges

5.1 Development of Institutions

Figure 2: Number of Higher Education Institutions Qualified for Degree Education in China



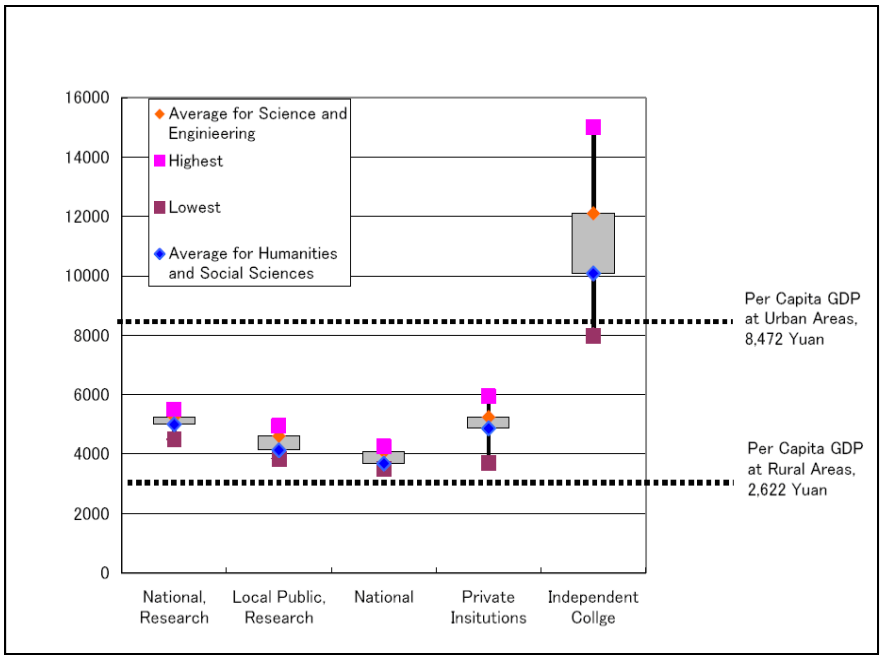
Source: Ministry of Education of P. R. China, Number of Qualified Higher Education Institutions for Degree Education, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010.

Till 2010, the number of independent colleges in China is about half of that of regular public universities; however, both the number of new entrants and number of students in independent colleges are only about one-fifth of those in regular public universities. The number of students in bachelor programmes in both regular public universities and independent colleges shows the same pattern of proportion – the number of bachelor students in independent colleges is more than one-fifth of that in regular public universities. This also shows that many independent colleges offer short-cycle programmes, which in principle, according to regulations, is not allowed. The speed of establishing new independent colleges has become much slower. In some years the number of qualified independent colleges even declined; because of strict governmental regulations, where if some independent colleges could not meet the requirement, the government either controlled the scale of new enrolment, or even restricted them from enrolling new students. However, it is difficult to have exact statistic data about independent colleges, not

only because of inadequate information, but also because some statistics include independent colleges as regular higher education institutions, and others categorize them as private higher education institutions.

5.2 Tuition Fees of Independent Colleges

Figure 3: Tuition Levels (2004) and Per Capita GDP in China (2003)



Source: Yuan, n.d., pp13

The tuition fees of independent colleges are becoming more diversified. In 2006/07, the average tuitions fees nationwide for natural science programs was 12,217 RMB (1,827 USD) per year per student, and the one for humanities and social science was 12,034 RMB (1,799 USD) per year per student (China University Alumni Association 2008) which is much higher than the tuition fees in regular public universities; some are almost twice as high as the fees in regular public universities, where the average tuition fee nationwide is not higher than 5,000 RMB (748 USD) regardless the subject (Zhang 2005). There are notable differences between the tuition levels in different regions and for different programs. The level of tuition fees is largely influenced by several factors; for example, the location of independent colleges, the size of the city where they are located and

the status of their alma mater public universities. In China, there are also some private institutions that offer bachelor level education. However the tuition fees they charge are lower than those of independent colleges. Thus for the same level of education, the tuition fees of independent colleges are the highest, and that of regular public universities are the lowest.

Compared to the average disposable income in China, a student would need one person's whole year disposable income to afford one year's study in an independent college, and for people from rural areas, the relatively low tuition fees in regular public university is already not affordable; the average tuition fees mentioned above do not include the living cost the students need to pay, which is also a huge burden for students' families. Since the majority of increased numbers of students were absorbed by independent colleges, it only means the expansion of higher education in China actually benefits mostly the students who can afford the high price and not students from low-income families.

5.3 Students in Independent Colleges

There are several factors that influence the student enrolment into independent colleges in China. First, the high cost of independent colleges is one of the most important factors that influence the enrolment of student. Because the tuition of independent colleges is the highest among all other types of higher education institutions, it is more difficult for independent colleges to enrol an adequate number of students. Also the difference of tuition fees in independent colleges can influence their enrolment statistics. Independent colleges with lower tuition receive more applicants than those with higher tuition in the same region. Second, the local government and authorities still control the plan of enrolment of independent colleges. Students would consider that they have better chance to be enrolled into those institutions that offer more study positions. When there are not enough applicants for some independent colleges, some colleges lower the admission standard even without the approval from the authorities. Third, like the impact of regular public universities' reputation on the tuition fees of independent colleges, their enrolment of students is also determined by the regular public universities' reputation. So far, the public's acknowledgement of independent colleges is still based on their acknowledgement of the regular public universities. It is difficult for applicants to gain information about the quality of education of different independent colleges, thus the public universities they cooperate with become the criterion for students' choice. Independent colleges affiliated to universities with longer tradition, better reputation, or within the "211 Project" or "985 Project" are more popular among applicants.

Independent colleges belong to the third type of undergraduate enrolments; students with best performance in the entrance examination can go to the top universities. The second type of enrolment allows students with lower scores to go to

universities under control of local government and authorities. Universities that belong to both the first and second types of enrolment are the first choice of most students. Students who do not want to go neither to private universities nor independent colleges choose to study one more year, and take part in the entrance examination again. Thus, students who enter independent colleges are mostly on the lowest level of performance, and are unable to go to regular public universities. The *2008 Evaluation Report of Non-State Higher Education Institutions in China* (China University Alumni Association 2008) shows that the average number of enrolled students in independent colleges in 2007 was 2,057 students for undergraduate programs. The scale of enrolment of independent colleges depends on several factors: First, the scale of enrolment of regular public universities in the same region. When regular public universities absorb a large number of applicants, there would be a limited space for independent colleges. Second, the local economic situation also influences the enrolment of local independent colleges, many students who can not afford the high tuition fees would choose to study for one more year in order to have better scores in the entrance examination and apply for regular public university the next year. Third is the support from local government and authorities.

5.4 Subject Settings in Independent Colleges

There are 13 fields of study on the bachelor level in the category determined by the Ministry of Education of China. The *2007 Evaluation Report of Non-State Higher Education Institutions in China* (China University Alumni Association 2007) shows that independent colleges in 2007 have covered 11 of the 13 fields of study named by the Ministry of Education. These fields of study include more than 5,570 subjects in about 300 independent colleges nationwide. There are several remarkable characteristics of the distribution of programmes among independent colleges. First, the number of programmes in individual independent colleges differs notably. There is a general phenomenon that independent colleges in the eastern part of China outnumber those in western China regarding both the total number of programmes as well as the number of fields of study. The second common phenomenon is the duplication of programmes with the regular public universities they cooperate with. Third is that the duplication of programmes also exists between independent colleges. They prefer to offer programmes which are in great demand in the labour market in order to meet the demand of economic development as well as to fit within local industry structures.

6. Current Problems and Important Issues

6.1 Issue of Legitimacy of Independent Colleges in China

Since regular public universities in China started to charge tuition and to set up second-level colleges with higher "price" of study programs, higher education is not a welfare any more; its operation has to abide by the rules of market, like many other sectors of society in modern China. The public has gradually started to accept the privatization of many public services, but the privatization of higher education still faces many difficulties in the search of legitimacy. Approval and acknowledgement of the government, and even preferential policies can not guarantee the legitimacy of private higher education. As noted by Slantcheva and Levy (Slantcheva and Levy 2007, p. 4), "the notion of legitimacy refers broadly to the legal and social acceptability of an institution in society. Legitimacy is not secured simply and solely through the authority of law; it is also rooted in social norms and values." Thus, when the legitimacy of independent colleges is considered, it is important to take different sources of legitimacy into account and examine the factors that influence their future developments.

Source of Legitimacy

Research has identified three major types of goals of private institutions responding to the demand for *better* (elite types), *different* (mostly Catholic Christian), and *more* (demand-absorbing) education (Pachuashvili 2007, p. 81) respectively. In the process of enrolment expansion of higher education in China, independent colleges instead of other private institutions function as the demand-absorbing higher education institutions. Even though there are already many private higher education institutions in China, only a few offer the education that the growing number of students is looking for. The enlarged demand for higher education is actually the enlarged demand for degrees, because credentialism still plays a remarkable role in China's society; degrees besides social contacts are the priority of employers' employment consideration. Generally, independent colleges in China are able to gain legitimacy from the following aspects: first, expansion of access to higher education; second, cooperation with regular public universities; third, other sources of legitimacy such as labour market and less competition between independent colleges and regular public universities.

Problems in Gaining Legitimacy

First, it is more difficult to gain social acceptance than other sources of legitimacy such as legal recognitions. As Pachuashvili stated, "too rapid and easy expansion can itself undermine organizational legitimacy" (2007, p. 77). The rapidly growing number of students enrolled into independent colleges is not the result of

growing social acceptance; on the contrary, they were viewed with suspicion regarding their for-profit orientation and low admission standard. The factors that cause the mistrust and lack of social acceptance are rooted in the culture and traditions of China. In China, where its long history and highly valued traditions still play an important role, the quality of teaching and reputation of higher education institutions are considered impossible to be achieved in a short time, or by means of only increasing the spending. Second, the for-profit initiative of investors of independent colleges has put suspicion on the means of private players in achieving education goals; it is considered that investors only care how to make maximum profit from minimum input, and overlook teaching quality as long as there is ample demand. Third, the potential intersectional competition among institutions can also have negative influence on the pursuit for legitimacy of private higher education institution, including independent colleges. There are many variables influencing the sources of legitimacy of independent colleges in China. In the future some of the sources of legitimacy may become less important or even diminish, while new sources might also appear.

6.2 The Issues of Equity and Social Fairness

The establishment of independent colleges undeniably contributed to offer opportunities for students, who previously could not have access to higher education. However, when a deeper investigation into the composition of students in independent colleges is conducted, the question whether independent colleges really improve the social fairness with regards to access to higher education crops up. The issue of equity is not only relevant when unprivileged or disadvantaged groups are considered, other groups or organizations can also been negatively affected by the existence of independent colleges and the preferential treatment they receive.

Before the establishment of independent colleges, second-level colleges actually put students enrolled into regular public universities to disadvantage, because they had to have better scores in order to enter these public universities than those students, who were enrolled in second-level colleges, but received the same education and credentials. Thus, the introduction of independent colleges as well as the strict regulation of credentials are welcomed by students in regular public universities. Also, it is easier for the labour market to differentiate the diploma from regular universities and the one from independent colleges.

High tuitions of independent colleges cause unfairness for needy families. Even though they became the major “demand-absorber” due to enlargement, they catered only to the affluent class in urban areas, which negatively affected the opportunity for students from needy families. “Since for the majority of the farmers the cost of college education far surpasses their annual income, the increased cost has created an absolute barrier for entrance into higher education. Moreover,

the government policy to limit the supply of four-year higher education, while allowing the creation of Independent Colleges may induce. In effect, that implies that limited opportunity can be purchased by money rather than through strict selection based on academic merit. This may induce a strong sense of unfairness in the society." (Yuan, n.d., p. 14)

There are also disadvantages for other types of higher education institutions. The most negatively affected higher education institutions by the establishment of independent colleges are the private universities. Private higher education institutions in China, like independent colleges, not only face public mistrust, but are also more disadvantaged due to unfair treatment of the authorities. The authorities use independent colleges as an excuse to suppress the demands of other private institutions who wish to upgrade themselves to offer bachelor degrees; the government claims that independent colleges are able to meet the growing demand for degree education, and that the diversity of higher education system can be balanced better when the majority of private institutions stay at the lower layer of the system. The other problem caused by the unfair treatment toward different types of higher education institutions is that the unbalanced development between independent colleges and other private institutions foster an unbalanced development between degree education and vocational education.

6.3 The Issue of Diversity

The process of massification and privatization did not bring much diversity to the higher education system in China. "One cannot assume organizational diversity as an inevitable outcome in all places that are part of the extraordinary privatization occurring in contemporary international higher education" (Levy 1999, p. 17). The establishment of independent colleges has increased private representation at undergraduate level of higher education in China. However as "demand-absorbing" institutions, independent colleges have to imitate regular public universities to gain social acceptance and legitimacy. The private means of funding is the only notable distinctiveness between independent colleges and regular public universities. It is not applicable anymore to distinguish different institutions at the level of undergraduate education by the means of additional access through the charging of fees, since tuition has been introduced in almost all the regular public universities.

"New or less prestigious organizations seeking to legitimize themselves and minimize the risks of uncertainty emulate the well-established and – at least in that sense – successful organizations" (Levy 1999, p. 20). These approaches are categorized by Levy (1999) as noncoercive isomorphism, which includes the "mimetic isomorphism" and "normative isomorphism" from DiMaggio and Powell's (1983, pp. 150-156) formulation of isomorphism. Based on Levy's theories, one can notice from the case of independent colleges in China that the lack or limited

distinctiveness of private higher education institutions from the public sector or other private institutions in the whole higher education system is caused by forces from both the environment as well as from private institutions themselves. Independent colleges in China, however, show the tendency to be more isomorphic both in coercive and noncoercive ways toward public universities, and at the same time, also try to distinguish themselves from other (also even earlier established) private institutions.

Coercive Isomorphism

Coercive forces of isomorphism in the case of independent colleges in China significantly come from both the state and public universities. Establishment of independent colleges was initially the endeavour from both the state and regular public universities to solve the problem of unproven legal standing of second-level colleges, ensuring simultaneously that the attractiveness of independent colleges was still closely related to regular public universities. Thus, from the very beginning, distinctiveness was not a consideration, and governmental regulations on the subject only tried to further minimize it. Besides the common interests that regular public universities, state, and independent colleges share, the "coercive forces for conformity" (Levy 1999, p. 24) also play an important role in the isomorphism of independent colleges, where the "alternative to public monopoly (no private sector) can be a situation in which corporatism is sufficient to hold any pluralism based on privatization to a subordinate force." (Levy 1999, p. 24) This kind of coercive isomorphism can also be seen in the aforementioned cases of affiliated colleges in India.

Noncoercive Isomorphism

"Noncoercive isomorphism can be seen when these new higher education institutions, which lack venerability and claims to high status, emulate where they can in their quest for quick legitimacy" (Levy 1999, p. 30). As in many cases of privatization of higher education in the world, independent colleges in China actually have high aspirations to be indistinctive from their public counterparts, even when they have ample autonomy and strength to develop distinctiveness. This aspiration is driven not only by their pursuit for legitimacy, but also by their for-profit initiation as well as the need to gain social acceptance. Besides the initiatives of state and regular public universities in China, non-coercive isomorphism is essential for independent colleges as private investments to survive, as this kind of coercism pulls them toward the mainstream of higher education suppliers who attract students from the overwhelmingly huge target group of demand.

Public policies and initiatives of independent colleges have themselves fostered both coercive and non-coercive isomorphism, which to a high extent limits the degree of distinctiveness between public and private higher education institutions

in China. Consequently, even as private higher education institutions, independent colleges have created the image that is more isomorphic to public institutions rather than private institutions. Their level of education and setting of programmes are largely cloning those of public universities, and their contribution to the increase of diversity of higher education system in China in any profound way, is highly limited.

7. Future Perspectives

As a relatively new type of higher education institution, independent colleges are the product of a fast growing Chinese economy and increasing demand for higher education as well as the restricted public expenditure on higher education. The societal and economic environment has fostered the fast development of independent colleges all round China; however, the conditions that cultured the possibility of the establishment and development of independent colleges are not permanent. Any change of the factors that influence independent colleges, in addition to the problems independent colleges have within the institutions, will decide the direction of future development of independent colleges.

External Factors: Several external factors may decide the future of independent colleges: first, government's policies and regulations regarding independent colleges as well as other private higher education institution. According to the policies and their conditions, some independent colleges may have to close down, or merge into the regular public universities, and some may become independent, and transform themselves into private higher education institutions; second, the change of economic patterns will change the emphasis on training and research, and the demand on the labour market. Thus the fever of degree education will gradually change into a more rational and proper proportion among different degrees, both within degree education and vocational education; third, the demand for higher education is changing. Due to the "one-child" policy, the proportion of the total youth population shows a decreasing trend. If independent colleges do not build up their characteristics and improve the quality of education, they could face severe challenges of enrolling enough students.

Concerns for Future Development of Independent Colleges: Regardless of the different situations that independent colleges will face, their independence from public universities is an unavoidable trend, and again, regardless of the direction their development takes, the following issues are among the crucial factors that will decide the destiny of independent colleges as well as private higher education institutions at large:

Quality has been the most concerned issue against the background of massification of higher education. The rapid growth of private sector has put quality control of education offered by different higher education institutions, especially private institutions, under the spotlight of public attention. However, the quality

assurance mechanisms applied in China so far, only focus on the input of education and the results of the evaluation are used for adjusting school management and teaching staff's treatment. However, "quality assurance is not solely about serving the needs of the university administration, but also about meeting the needs of the students and the communities". (OECD 2003, p. 48) China needs a systematic measurement of the situation of graduates, regarding their employment as one of the outcomes of the education. And using the accreditation mechanisms for regular public universities to evaluate the education offered by independent colleges or private institutions would ill represent the actual situation of these institutions, and would unavoidably force these institutions to imitate regular public universities.

Diversity and Government's Role: The government of China has played an excessive role in the higher education system. Strict regulations have forced most institutions to concentrate on degree education, and ensured that some institutions at the bottom offer lower level and non-degree programmes. However, not acknowledging the actual ability and characteristics of different institutions, or simply dividing them as private or public, and suppressing some at the lower level while supporting the other can not build a healthy structure of higher education system in China, or achieve diversity in higher education. Thus the government has to replace current controlling mechanisms with supportive and incentive mechanisms in order to create a healthy competition in higher education.

Social Acceptance: The social acceptance for private, for-profit as well as vocational education has forced most higher education institutions to concentrate on degree education. Private institutions and vocational education have been traditionally considered a lower level of education, and are the second choice of students. This problem can not be solved until the importance of diversification of education and qualification has been realized. This is beyond the capability of higher education institutions or the whole higher education system even. The discrimination against non-degree education and vocational-degree personnel can only be changed by improving the social status and incomes of the workforce without university degrees. The social welfare system has to be improved to ensure that employees with different levels of education and qualification can enjoy relatively fair treatments and welfares. The contribution of people with vocational and professional education should be fully recognized and appreciated.

Started as demand-absorbing institutions, independent colleges will gradually lose the living space due to the demographic and economic changes in China's society in the future. As complementary degree education suppliers, the decrease of demand will be detrimental to their survival.

8. Conclusion

From the discussion in the previous sections of this thesis, one can notice that it is a necessary and rational choice for the Chinese government and regular public universities to initiate the establishment of independent colleges in the form of public-private cooperation against the background of higher education expansion. Taking the culture and tradition of China into account, the privatization of higher education did not take the form of simply establishing new private higher education institutions, rather the process started within public universities themselves, and later turned to the form of public-private cooperation. However, several questions can be raised regarding this experimental approach: First, if the initiative from government and public universities will work, and finally contribute to the development of Chinese higher education; Second, what the consequence or influence of this approach on independent colleges, public universities and more importantly, on students and the society will be; Third, what the future perspective of these independent colleges will be.

Admittedly, independent colleges have made remarkable contributions to the fast development of Chinese higher education and the process toward mass higher education without increasing the burden of public financing. However, one should not overlook the problems within these institutions, or their negative impacts on the higher education system and the society as a whole. The analysis of these problems has proved that independent colleges, despite them having admitted a large number of students in the process of expansion, have, however, not improved the social fairness regarding opportunities for higher education because the high tuition fees have excluded many students from needy families and rural areas. Additionally, many claims that the support from public universities such as teaching staff and management personnel remain only in name, and do not have real function on supervising the teaching and learning activities in independent colleges, and duplication of programmes and subjects between independent colleges and public universities, have resulted in an excess number of graduates clustered in several subjects.

Moreover, it is assumed that the growing private sector of higher education would bring more diversity to the higher education system; however the theory of isomorphism, both coercive and non-coercive, has shown the factors that force private institutions to imitate public sectors, and build an image that is closer to the public rather than the private sector. The phenomenon of isomorphism demonstrates that independent colleges' contribution to a more vertically and horizontally diversified higher education system is very limited.

Given the societal, economical and demographical changes in China, it is foreseeable that the environment and conditions that cultured the establishment and development of independent colleges will change, and some essential factors might even diminish. It is believed that real independency will be the destination

of independent colleges; however, the possibility of transformation from independent colleges into different levels of vocational education institutions or community colleges has not received enough attention from the public. There are no ready patterns that China can adapt to develop its private higher education, but independent colleges' contribution should be acknowledged and current problems should be addressed. Many other issues, including some beyond the spectrum of higher education, have to be considered and improved in order to create a more supportive environment for private higher education to make greater contribution to the whole society.

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Author's biographical note

Yuanyuan Yu holds a Bachelor Degree of Tourism Management from Yunnan University in China and a Master Degree of Higher Education Research and Development from University of Kassel in Germany. Today, Yuanyuan Yu is working as foreign language coordinator for Continental Reifen Deutschland GmbH.

8

The Enhancement of a Teaching- and Learning-Based Profile at Young, Middle-Sized Universities in Germany

A Case Study at the University of Kassel (Germany)

Ernst Fritz

1. Introduction

This article examines the potentials and limitations of enhancing a teaching- and learning-based profile at a young, middle-sized university in Germany. The current development of the German higher education system points towards an increasing separation of the teaching function and the research function at universities. This separation might lead to a steady decline of the importance of teaching and learning. In a growing national and international competition for reputation and resources, universities seem to focus primarily on their research function today. Given this situation, the author wants to contribute to answer the question, how a better balance between a university's teaching function and its research function can be achieved. He assumes that it is necessary and useful to enhance a university's teaching- and learning-based profile in this regard.

The article aims to explore under what conditions and in which way young, middle-sized universities can establish and enhance a teaching- and learning-based profile. This question should be answered with a qualitative study at University Kassel. University Kassel represents the case of young, middle-sized universities in Germany, with little chances to succeed in the competition for research "excellence", and no ambition to become a pure "teaching institution". The empirical study was conducted according to the principles of the Grounded Theory. The data for the study was collected with seven expert interviews with representatives from the university's faculties and the university management, mainly administration, respectively. The method of Theoretical Sampling was used to select the experts, the data was collected according to the principle of Theoretical Saturation, and it was analysed with a five-step coding process.

The results of the study show that three factors dominate the discourse on the potentials and limitations of enhancing the university's teaching- and learning-based profile: resources (notably staff resources), the heterogeneity of the faculty cultures of a multi-disciplinary university, and the big shadow of the research function. The author claims that the third factor (research) is the most restricting one for universities without an outstanding research reputation, as far as teaching- and learning-based profiles are concerned. Neither the scarce resources for teaching and learning nor the heterogeneous faculty cultures do derive a solely limiting influence on the enhancement of the profile. In contrast, the growing pressure on universities to meet high standards in research seems difficult to overcome. A higher involvement in teaching and learning does not offer the opportunity to enhance a university's reputation significantly, and it is difficult to communicate and measure. Moreover, the possibility of being labelled as a "teaching institution" is high.

2. Institutional Profiles at German Universities

The aim of this chapter is to define the possible role, the opportunities and the barriers against the enhancement of institutional profiles and, in particular, of teaching- and learning-based profiles at German universities.

2.1 Developing Institutional Profiles at German Universities

The discourse on the development of institutional profiles at universities is well known in Germany. Already in the 1960s and 1970s, newly founded universities tried to establish institutional profiles, for instance in Bochum, Konstanz, Bielefeld and Bremen (Teichler 2005). But from the very beginning, the German higher education system made it difficult for universities to focus on their unique characteristics. The diversity of the higher education system is traditionally low, compared to other countries. A high equality of the quality of universities had been the aim for a long time (Teichler 1999). Thus, many universities dismissed their plans for specific institutional profiles, due to the "pressure to conform" (Teichler 2005, p. 16).

Developing an institutional profile seems to be strongly determined by the prevailing zeitgeist. Today, German universities face a debate about diversification that is determined by "vertical standards". Although vertical diversity between German universities is still relatively low, "quality", "excellence" and "competition" have become popular buzzwords for them (Teichler 2005). This makes it difficult to foster horizontal diversity. As Teichler (1999) claims, any attempt to promote the development of institutional profiles needs to overcome immense barriers in Germany:

Horizontal diversity versus vertical diversity: The debate about diversification seems to be gridlocked in the German higher education system. It is "vertically" distorted. Diversity almost always means vertical diversity, whereas horizontal diversity is often ignored. A high level of stratification is commonly assumed to be the best way to increase the quality, relevance and efficiency of the entire higher education system (Teichler 2008). Higher stratification is achieved by rankings, for instance. With rankings, hierarchical lists can be established, and once such a list of the "best" universities is created, it can hardly be changed in Germany (Teichler 2008). Further, the German Initiative for Excellence contributes to more stratification. The initiative "certifies" high quality and reputation in research for some universities. According to Teichler (1999, p. 251), both rankings and the Initiative for Excellence might foster the development of a "vertical crust" in the German higher education system, which is hard to break through. For some universities, that can mean: "Once at the top, always at the top".

Horizontal diversity versus marketing: Horizontal diversification can go the wrong way, if it is primarily used as a marketing tool, to present certain features of a university's research and teaching function to the public. When developing institutional profiles, universities should pay more attention on their actual performance than on creating crisp slogans for their public relations (Teichler 1999).

Horizontal diversity versus institutional heterogeneity: Most universities have heterogeneous and fragmented institutional structures. Teichler (1999, p. 255) claims that a university can be referred to as an "organised anarchy". He continues that the "forces of coordination" are weaker at universities than at any other organisation. The decision-making processes are often cumbersome and can be withdrawn quickly at the same time (Teichler 1999). Hence, it can be difficult to develop an institutional profile that represents the whole or at least large parts of a university.

From the three described challenges above, we can see that particularly the "power of verticality" (Teichler 1999, p. 256) can significantly inhibit the enhancement of horizontal characteristics at German universities. The vertical dimension receives much more attention than horizontal variety. Universities are prompted to strive for "excellence". They are meant to imitate the universities with the strongest reputation, in a national as well as international competition. Thus, German universities are generally not encouraged to develop and enhance their institutional profiles (Teichler 2005).

Nonetheless, Teichler (1999) states that the development of institutional profiles in Germany could be facilitated, if a greater balance between vertical diversity and horizontal diversity could be achieved. The development of an institutional profile does not necessarily go hand in hand with a shift away from vertical diversity. But it is important to prevent a *vertical crust*, as Teichler (1999) claims, because it may trigger a "destructive competition for success" (Teichler 1999, p. 251) between universities, in which "successful" universities are imitated while

horizontal characteristics are neglected. So it remains to be seen, whether the development of institutional profiles remains a "cosmetic objective" (Teichler 1999, p. 257) in Germany, or whether a lively, horizontally differentiated higher education landscape can be reached. In any case, universities should be encouraged to search for compelling institutional profiles, and to engage with their strengths and weaknesses in this process (Teichler 1994).

2.2 Teaching- and Learning-Based Profiles

A university's institutional profile is composed of horizontal characteristics that reflect the performance capability of at least large parts of the institution. The characteristics must be representative for a university, i.e., visible and relevant. They also need to be connected with a university's ability to perform well. The public must conceive a university's institutional profile in relation to its capabilities (Teichler 1999). The author assumes that a university's institutional profile can be split in at least two "sub-profiles": a research profile and a teaching- and learning-based profile. The teaching- and learning-based profile stands for the teaching and learning function in the overall institutional profile. According to the definition above, it can be defined as the horizontal characteristics of at least large parts of a university that have a substantial impact on a university's performance in teaching and learning.

The teaching- and learning-based profile of a university can be enhanced on different levels: The *range of courses* can be a decisive characteristic for a university in teaching and learning. A university can distinguish itself through innovative study programs; for instance, in socially relevant fields. To contribute to a comprehensive teaching- and learning-based profile, the range of courses should establish a "thematic entity", and the different study programs should allow for connections. Further, the profile can be enhanced through a *specific course of study*. This is about the development of meaningful didactic models for a university's subjects (Hering 2008). A specific feature may be practice-oriented study programs. As for the range of courses, mentioned above, a specific course of study must also apply to at least large parts of an institution. To contribute to a university's teaching- and learning based profile, it would not be enough, if only some study programs had a practice-oriented focus. A *low teacher/student ratio*, *good equipment for teaching and learning*, and a *good support and service structure* can be further measures. These apply to the environment a university can create for its students, so that they can study successfully.

The current situation in higher education in Germany is challenging for the enhancement of a teaching- and learning-based profile due to:

Rising student numbers: In the last four decades, the student numbers have been rising in Germany. German universities have continuously changed from sites of elite education to institutions of mass education (Weiss 2000). Today,

more than a third of an age cohort goes into higher education (Lange 2006). Due to the rising student numbers, universities face personnel as well as infrastructural "bottlenecks". Instead of fostering a strategic orientation in teaching and learning, they increasingly have to focus on measures to deal with the high student numbers. They are busy with so-called "emergency measures". Nonetheless, since it is predictable that student numbers will drop in the following decades, due to the demographic development – Nickel and Leusing (2009) claim, for instance, that a lack of 13.000 students might be reality in the year 2020 already –, we can assume that the strategic orientation in teaching and learning will become more and more important. A strategic enhancement of a university's teaching- and learning-based profile might become an advantage in the rising competition between German universities for students.

Bologna Process: In the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998, the goal was set to develop a European higher education area that contributes to the transparency of study programs, mobility of students and to a higher employability of higher education graduates (Teichler 2005). In general, the Bologna Process fosters the enhancement of teaching- and learning-based profiles. As Hering (2008) claims, we can see a certain pressure on universities, for example, to develop more innovative bachelor and master programs. However, the particular goal to facilitate the mobility of students might not be fully compatible with that. We can already see that the mobility of students can be hampered, because the profiles of certain study programs differ between countries (Teichler 2009). There is a limited structural convergence of teaching and learning in different European countries. If universities thus focus on the development of specialised bachelor and master programs, in the course of enhancing their teaching- and learning-based profiles, that might further hamper the students' mobility within Europe as well as in Germany. Nevertheless, the enhancement of a teaching- and learning-based profile can focus on other aspects relevant to the Bologna Process, like a stronger connection between teaching and learning with the job market, for instance (Siebenhaar 2008). Universities can use the objectives of the reform to their benefit.

Output orientation: The importance of quantitative measures rises at German universities. Output criteria, like the number of graduates, are ever more used to determine the teaching performance of universities, and thereby the funding of teaching and learning. Universities, though, can hardly influence their "input variables" (Weiss 2000, p. 8); i.e., the incoming students. Tarazona (2006) claims that a variety of empirical studies show that universities do not have the instruments to identify potentially successful students. They are limited in choosing students who supposedly fit their teaching- and learning-based profiles. And even if they could choose, it would be difficult to measure the impact of their teaching performance on the output of successful graduates. However, in the growing competition for students, as mentioned above, a good teaching- and learning-based profile may increase the chances of universities to attract the "right" students; i.e., students

who fit them best, and who might thus have the best chances to finish their studies successfully.

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, it has been shown that enhancing a university's teaching- and learning-based profile might hold benefits, as a consequence of the Bologna Process and of the growing competition between universities for the "right" students.

The enhancement of a university's teaching- and learning-based profile does not mean to push other areas to the side, like research and development, the promotion and training of young scientists, or other functions (Lange 2006). Rather, it should contribute to a higher balance between the teaching function and other functions. It is not about a reduction of the research function, but about a valorisation of the teaching function in comparison to research (Dohmen 2006).

3. Methodology of the Case Study at University Kassel

The qualitative empirical study is based on the principles of the *Grounded Theory*. This method offers the advantage to examine concepts and ideas about a research topic that has been rarely discussed in the literature, as it is the case for the enhancement of a teaching- and learning-based profile. The study was carried out at University Kassel. University Kassel represents the type of a young, middle-sized university which is located outside the political and economic metropolises, is marked by a rather broad subject spectrum, and has a more or less heterogeneous research reputation (Kehm et al. 2008). The case of University Kassel should reveal the factors that influence the enhancement of teaching- and learning-based profiles at young, middle-sized universities in Germany.

Expert interviews were used for data collection. The focus was set on the operational knowledge of the experts, i.e., on their "fields of action" (Meuser and Nagel 1989, p. 5). Their activities and cooperation with each other was in the interest of the interviews. The use of expert interviews required modification of the principles of the Grounded Theory in some places. For instance, the selection of the interviewees was guided by preliminary thoughts about the topic, to be able to choose the relevant experts for the study. Such theoretical presuppositions are normally secondary in the first phase of data collection when using Grounded Theory. In addition, the design of the interview guidelines was guided by theoretical considerations.

Due to the small sample size of seven experts, it was important to pay attention to the significance of every interview. The experts were thus selected with the method of *Theoretical Sampling*. According to Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr (2008), this method relies on minimising and maximising differences in the sampling process. On the one hand, the minimisation of differences implies to select only experts who are relevant for the study. Accordingly, experts were chosen whose position at university enables them to influence the enhancement of the

teaching- and learning-based profile. This should ensure that the results of the study can be verified with the empirical data (interview transcripts). On the other hand, the maximisation of differences implies that the function of the experts should be different. Hence, experts from the faculties and the university management/administration were selected for the interviews. This allowed for certain diversity in the results. In this regard, Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr (2008) state that the systematic search for contrasts and the reasons for these contrasts is a main principle of Theoretical Sampling. Two deans for students, two heads of administrative institutions for the enhancement of teaching and learning, two members of the Department for the Development of Teaching and Research and one member of the Presiding Committee constituted the sample of the study.

The interview process was guided by the principle of *Theoretical Saturation*. Theoretical Saturation is reached, when the data collection does not reveal new information for the study. Data collection was thus oriented on the development, testing and completion of the information needed to answer the research question (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2008). New information from one interview was used and tested in the next interview, and so forth. Further, it was important to exclude individual stand points from the results, to secure the results empirically. Only the information was used for the results that were repeated in independent interviews, as Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr (2008) suggest.

A five-step coding process was used to analyse the expert interviews: First, the interview transcripts were paraphrased in a sequential order. Second, the core messages of the paraphrased interviews were summarised. They were ordered according to their themes (*Open Coding*), which established the preliminary concepts of the study. Third, the preliminary concepts were categorised according to their themes. Fourth, the found categories were further concentrated (*Axial Coding*), to establish the key categories of the study. And last, the interview paraphrases were revised in regard to the found key categories (*Selective Coding*), to ensure that no relevant information got lost.

4. Potentials and Limitations of a Teaching- and Learning-Based Profile

The result of the qualitative study at University Kassel is that three key factors impact the potentials and limitations of the enhancement of a teaching- and learning-based profile at University Kassel: the available resources for teaching and learning (notably staff resources), the heterogeneity of the faculty cultures of a multi-disciplinary university, and the rising pressure on the university to achieve "excellent" results in research.

4.1 Available Resources for Teaching and Learning

The enhancement of the university's teaching- and learning-based profile requires advanced forms of teaching, like student-oriented or research-oriented teaching. These forms require *more* teaching; a lower teacher/student ratio and, accordingly, more teaching staff. This is one side of the story shown in the interviews: the basic problem is the shortage of teaching staff in many faculties. On the other side, the university increasingly needs to focus on *who* is teaching. The recruitment of lecturers is deemed to be one of the most important measures to improve teacher/student ratio in the faculties, in particular for mandatory courses offered each semester or entry level courses. Nonetheless, lecturers cannot offer research-oriented teaching in most cases. Some interviewees thus point to the importance of a "smart appointment strategy". Lecturers should be offered full positions, so that they are also able to work in research projects or to pursue doctoral degrees. The interviewees stress, though, that lecturers cannot replace the teaching of research-experienced professors. Only professors are able to awaken the "scientific curiosity" of students, already at an early level of their studies. Therefore, as for the lecturers, a "smart appointment strategy" is considered equally crucial for the appointment of the "right" professors at university. The "right" professors should be able to offer broad, socially relevant, and research-oriented teaching in their subjects as well as from an interdisciplinary point of view. Appointed professors should be able to cooperate with already existing subjects at university. However, the appointment process is limited by the available resources of the university. The university might be missing certain subjects to enhance the attractiveness of its teaching- and learning-based profile, because the funding of certain subjects cannot be provided. In this regard, cooperation with other institutions is viewed to be a possibility to extend the available resources of the university and finance "costly" subjects.

It is claimed in the interviews, that professors should be protected from the everyday problems of everyday business. Their motivation and time must be guarded to tackle the ever-growing demand of their teaching-related activities. The support through more qualified administrative staff is considered crucial in this regard. On the one hand, the faculties want more support from the university administration, for instance, to carry out evaluation measures in teaching and learning, or for the enhancement of their eLearning activities. On the other hand, the faculties would like to expand their *own* administrative staff, so that they can respond to various challenges in teaching and learning, independently from university administration. Hence, university management is required to moderate between the interests of the faculties and the interests of the whole university. In the allocation process of resources for teaching and learning, university management must avoid to create the impression that some faculties or professors are favoured. They must strive for a balanced situation while seeing the "whole pic-

ture". In the interviews, this is referred to as "management of scarceness". It requires a negotiation process with the faculties and professors to establish awareness for the situation of the whole institution; concerning teaching and learning, this means creating an understanding for the teaching- and learning-based profile of the university.

4.2 Heterogeneity of Faculty Cultures

The faculties are responsible for the enhancement of the university's teaching- and learning-based profile to a high extent. Contents as well as quality of teaching are defined there. However, the interviewees state that the enhancement of the university's teaching- and learning-based profile might be hampered by its various faculty cultures. Every faculty culture has a different perception of concepts and terms in teaching and learning, like the possibility to combine teaching and research, or how to offer a practical teaching approach. It might thus be difficult to coordinate the faculties' efforts with the strategic orientation of the university in teaching and learning. The university management stresses the responsibility of the faculties in this regard. On the one hand, the faculties must highlight their academic cultures; for example, in the development of new study programs, when they decide about the allocation of subject areas in bachelor and master courses. On the other hand, it is necessary to pay attention to aspects of the university's teaching- and learning-based profile. Although research-orientation, for instance, does not play the same important role in every discipline, faculties should foster the implementation of research-oriented teaching and learning in their study programs. The responsibility of the faculties to contribute to the university's strategic orientation in teaching and learning is frequently put to test.

At a multi-disciplinary university, support of the faculties by the university's institutions concerned with teaching and learning must be subject-specific. The interviews show that this is mostly about *trust*. The academic background of the staff in the Department for the Development of Teaching and Research matches the faculties they are responsible for, for example. The interviewees claim that this should ensure the acceptance of support in teaching and learning in the faculties. Moreover, it is claimed that only a subject-specific approach enables the university management to identify problems in teaching and learning at the subject level; because in many cases, the subjects do not express their problems directly. Nonetheless, the faculties criticise the support by institutions like the Service Centre for Teaching (SCL), which is one of the institutions that support the teaching and learning function at university, to be not sufficiently subject-specific. With respect to higher education didactics, the faculties demand more offers that focus on specific didactics for certain subjects. University management stresses that the SCL should particularly foster the exchange of know-how and experiences between professors. The aim is to build "bridges" between the different faculty cultures.

The university's multidisciplinary context, with all its different approaches in teaching and learning, should thereby be used as an advantage to shape and enhance an attractive teaching- and learning-based profile at the university.

4.3 Pressure of the Research Function

The interviews show that the intrinsic motivation of professors for teaching is highly important for the enhancement of the university's teaching- and learning-based profile. It is claimed that the intrinsic motivation could be improved through a better balance between the importance of research performance and teaching performance. The faculties would wish for a notable expansion of incentives for teaching in this respect. The commitment of professors in teaching and learning should be rewarded to a higher extend, particularly with monetary incentives. They should not get the feeling that they need to focus all their energy on research. Further, teaching performance should be of higher importance in appointment negotiations. Due to the increasing diversity of disciplines, it becomes more and more difficult to assess teaching quality in appointment negotiations though, as pointed out in the interviews. It seems difficult in teaching to reach a clear assessment of teaching performance, because there are less quantitative indicators available as there are in research, like the amount of third-party funding or the number of publications in reputable journals. Thus, the impression of university management about the teaching performance of professors might be too selective and random in some points. This might affect the professors' 5-year evaluations, for instance, which are seen to be too research-oriented by some faculty members. The interviewees state that particularly in negotiations between university management and professors, it would be necessary to pay more attention on treating research and teaching equally, because the outcome of such negotiations often decides about the professors' equipment and benefits. The prospect of better equipment for their field is deemed one of the greatest incentives for many professors to engage in teaching and learning to a higher extent.

Another factor is the "communication culture" about teaching at university, which can determine the perception of the importance of achievements in teaching. According to faculty members, this starts with the communication about the results of course evaluations. Since results of course evaluations are often viewed with scepticism by professors, they should better not be overrated in the assessment of teaching performance. Accordingly, it is considered to be necessary to involve a broader set of evaluation measures in the assessment of teaching performance. A one-sided perspective on this complex field should be avoided at any cost. Moreover, "public communication" about teaching at university should be fostered, for example in the committees concerned with quality issues of teaching and learning. On the one hand, the teaching performance in different subjects should be made visible there, for instance through presentations of best practice

models. On the other hand, the university's institutions should get information about challenges different faculties face in teaching and learning. In this regard, internally organised competitions are also considered valuable to "spread the word" about good teaching at university. Furthermore, these competitions intend to promote teaching and learning at the whole university. They can contribute to the enhancement of the university's teaching- and learning-based profile.

4.4 Interpretation of the Three Factors

The three described factors have been discussed in the literature in respect to the enhancement of the teaching and learning function at German universities.

Resources: For the enhancement of a university's teaching- and learning-based profile, it is crucial to develop and follow a strategic orientation. But many universities are forced to focus on "absolute necessities" (Teichler 1994, p. 242) instead, and like to ensure their core areas of well-established study programs. We can see a rising gap between the increasing requirements and the available resources at German universities (Zechlin 2008). More and more universities have to "manage a scarceness of resources", as mentioned in the interviews, and the resource situation is often not predictable enough to plan in a long-term perspective (Scharff 2008; Berthold 2001). In this regard, competitions have become important to improve the resources for teaching and learning at universities. Teichler (1999) claims that already in the 1980s, the idea spread in many European countries that universities need to engage in competition to a large extent in order to secure their resources. Accordingly, the faculties need to be more proactive, and take the initiative to acquire resources. This seems to be a major condition to achieve a basis of secure resources for the enhancement of teaching and learning in the current higher education landscape. Furthermore, collaborations with other universities, the business/industrial sector, and other external institutions are suggested to handle the rising need for resources in teaching and learning. Hering (2008) argues, for example, that a university should not limit its internal subject diversity to focus on some promising, marketable perspectives in teaching. Rather, she continues, they should look for strategic alliances, and keep their subject diversity. And Zechlin (2008) stresses that cooperation and alliances can be seen as an opportunity for young, middle-sized universities to meet the diverse needs and challenges of a broad, high-quality education, despite decreasing resources.

Heterogeneity: Most young, middle-sized universities are multi-disciplinary institutions with heterogeneous faculty cultures. The establishment of a comprehensive teaching- and learning-based profile thus requires to "manage heterogeneity" (Kehm 2008a, p. 260) at the faculty level. The viewpoint must be subject-specific, because the professors in the faculties determine the performance of a university in teaching, as Bülow-Schramm (2001) notes. The enhancement of a university's teaching profile strongly relies on the professors. The individual interests of the

professors need to be balanced with the interests of the institution as a whole. The professors need to be convinced of the institution's strategic orientation in teaching and learning, because, as Teichler (1999) claims, no other profession is more virtuosic when it comes to the subversion or evasion of requirements that the state, society, the university or the market imposes on them, if they regard such requirements as incompatible with their own value systems. They expect the greatest possible academic autonomy, and are usually more concerned with their work and immediate working environment than with strategic objectives of the university (Escher 2001). Hence, a top-down management approach does not work and might not be needed. We can certainly assume that professors feel responsible to offer the best possible teaching and learning experience for their students. They are willing to contribute to the enhancement of a university's teaching- and learning based profile, and to bring their subject-specific knowledge to the table in this process. Moreover, it is certainly clear to professors that the various requirements and challenges in teaching and learning can be handled more effectively by the whole institution than by many "lone warriors" (Berthold 2001, p. 434). And this is where the "organisational anarchy" (Teichler 1999, p. 255) of a university can have very positive effects, due to the different know-how and strategies that different disciplines can provide when dealing with challenges in teaching and learning.

Research: German universities are more than ever pressured to pursue "excellence" in research today. Due to the growing vertical diversification of the higher education system, achievements in other areas than research barely get any attention (Kehm 2008b). But a strong research performance does not have benefits for the teaching and learning function in most cases. Scharff (2008) claims that the promotion of cutting-edge research does not change the situation of a chronic under funding of teaching, staff cuts, crowded classrooms and poorly equipped laboratories. More incentives for teaching would be necessary to achieve a greater balance between the teaching function and the research function at German universities. Dohmen (2006) claims that teaching needs to become more attractive. It might be necessary, he continues, that teaching quality as well as teaching quantity is reflected in the funding of higher education institutions, but also in a performance-related payment of professors and lecturers. The difficulty to measure teaching quality is often claimed to be one reason why the funding of teaching is low, compared to research. However, as Kehm (2008a) mentions, it should be asked if the funding for teaching is low, because achievements in teaching are difficult to measure, or if achievements in teaching are measured not sufficiently enough, because they do not play a role big enough for the current higher education policy. For young, middle-sized universities it might be problematic to focus on teaching and learning. The enhancement of a teaching- and learning-based profile holds the risk to be marked as a "teaching university" in the given research-oriented higher education landscape. Rollinger (2008) thus claims that

factors like research programs that focus on large alliances only, restrictions on the possibilities to establish master programs and to train young scientists, as well as intentions to establish "teaching professorships" and thereby reduce research capacities, might press middle-sized universities towards becoming pure "teaching institutions".

5. Conclusion

This article aimed to explore under what conditions and in which way young, middle-sized universities can establish and enhance a teaching- and learning-based profile. The results of the qualitative study at University Kassel show that the opportunities and limitations in the process of enhancing a teaching- and learning-based profile are influenced by three factors: the available resources for teaching and learning (notably staff resources), the heterogeneous faculty cultures of multi-disciplinary universities, and the ever-increasing importance of research performance in comparison to teaching performance. The third factor (research performance) is claimed to be the most decisive one, particularly for young, middle-sized universities without an outstanding research reputation. Several opportunities for universities can be seen, when dealing with both scarce resources and heterogeneous faculty cultures. As the results show, universities can plan their resource allocation strategically, for instance, as described as the "management of scarceness". Further, heterogeneous faculty cultures can be an advantage, because the enhancement of a university's teaching and learning function can benefit from the input from various disciplines. Neither the scarceness of resources nor the described heterogeneity must thus have a negative influence on the ambition to enhance a teaching- and learning-based profile. In contrast, in the competition for research reputation, a strong focus on the teaching and learning function presumably has negative consequences. The reputation of universities is increasingly determined by their research performance. Accordingly, a greater involvement in teaching and learning offers few opportunities to gain status and reputation, and it is likely that a better performance in teaching and learning cannot be shown as such, due to the difficult measurability of teaching quality. However, the danger of being considered a "teaching university" is large, particularly for young, middle-sized universities.

The aim of the case study at University Kassel was to identify and describe factors that are applicable to other young, middle-sized universities. In reference to the relevant literature (sub-chapter 4.4.), the author aimed to show that the three found factors represent opportunities and limitations common to universities with similar requisites as are valid for University Kassel. Nevertheless, due to the limitation of the study to one university, a generalisation of the results must be made with caution. The influence of the three factors and the strategies to cope with them are likely to vary at other universities. And it must be noted that only very

soft activities have been undertaken at University Kassel to strengthen its teaching- and learning-based profile. It might be interesting to look at other cases, where stronger policies in favour of the enhancement of institutional profiles are opted for.

The results of the study highlight the often-described excessive demands for young, middle-sized universities to excel in all their functions. Although it seems possible for universities to develop their institutional profiles in two respects – a profile based primarily on their research function and a profile based primarily on their teaching and learning function –, the results demonstrate that the "decision" for the teaching and learning function might come with limitations which are difficult to overcome in today's higher education landscape. It is possible but certainly idealistic for universities to shape and enhance their teaching- and learning-based profile today.

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Author's biographical note

Ernst Fritz is a member of the scientific staff of the Department for Strategic Planning at the University of Kassel (Germany), and a PhD candidate at the Department of Educational Science. During his studies in the International Master Programme "Higher Education Research and Development" (MaHE), he worked as a student assistant in the International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel (INCHER-Kassel), and in several projects at the Department for Strategic Planning at University Kassel. Ernst Fritz holds a Bachelor's degree in sociology from Karl-Franzens-University Graz (Austria), and a Master of Arts in Higher Education from the University of Kassel.

9

Problem-Based Learning, Graduates' Competencies and Career Success

Bhina Patria

1. Introduction

The discussion of the effectiveness of Problem-based Learning (PBL) in preparing students for employment has been one of the main topics in PBL research. The issue has been generating a lot of interest, debate and controversy (Albanese 2000; Albanese and Mitchell 1993; Berkson 1993; Colliver 2000; Newman 2003; Sanson-Fisher and Lynagh 2005; Vernon and Blake 1993; Wolf 1993). Despite several studies on PBL, only a few have investigated the direct outcome of PBL in the world of work. Limited studies on the implication of PBL in employment have usually related to graduates' preference for certain types of work (Mennin et al. 1996), or performance of graduates' interpersonal skills in the world of work (Peters et al. 2000).

The empirical evidence from prior research highlighted the advantage of PBL compared to conventional lecture-based curriculum. A PBL approach has been argued to provide a learning process with a cognitive psychology and educational theory base (Gijselaers 1996; Norman and Schmidt 1992). Therefore, PBL provides a better learning environment for students, which is then assumed to have an impact on educational outcome. Students in PBL curriculum reported to be more satisfied with their curriculum (Busari, Scherpbier, and Boshuizen 1996; Norman and Schmidt 2000). Students and graduates from PBL curricula not only achieved higher score in clinical competencies (Distlehorst, Dawson, Robbs, and Barrows 2005; Hoffman et al. 2006), but also rated themselves higher on general competencies (Cohen-Schotanus et al. 2008; Prince et al. 2005; Schmidt, Vermeulen, and van der Molen 2006).

Even though there are several studies of PBL that have focussed on the impact on graduates' competencies (Cohen-Schotanus et al., 2008; Prince et al. 2005; Schmidt, Vermeulen, and van der Molen 2006), the direct impact of the implementation of PBL on graduates' career success remains unexplored. Therefore, the

focus of this study on the long-term effect of the implementation of PBL to graduates' career success will certainly enrich research in PBL.

This study seeks to address the following question: do graduates from PBL curriculum have different competencies and career success compared to their colleagues from conventional curriculum? It is expected that PBL graduates have higher career success compared to non-PBL graduates. This expectation is based on the fact that the learning environment in PBL curriculum enables students to gain higher work competencies than students from conventional curriculum. These work-related competencies are manifested in the workplace, with the result that PBL graduates gain more career success, in terms of income and work satisfaction.

2. Method

2.1 Subject

The analysis in this paper was based on the data collected in CHEERS. CHEERS, "Careers after Higher Education: a European Research Study", was a research project conducted from 1998 to 2000. Graduates were surveyed about four years after graduation. The study was focused on the relationship between higher education and employment. Several variables were investigated in the survey, such as: socio-biographic background, study paths, transition from higher education to employment, early career, links between study and employment, job satisfaction, and perspectives of the graduates on higher education. This survey covered more than 36,000 graduates from nine countries in the European Region (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom), one EFTA country (Norway), one of the Central and Eastern European countries in transition (the Czech Republic) and one economically advanced country outside Europe (Japan).

The analyses of this paper were based on graduates from the field of medicine. Graduates from France were excluded from the data set because they were underrepresented in the data set (only 6 graduates). After excluding the non-medicine field and graduates from France, the data set consisted of 3,476 graduates. Female graduates dominate the dataset with 66 percent while only 34 percent of the respondents were male (see Table 1 for detail by country). The average age of participants at the time of the survey was 30.4 years old (SD = 5.19, Mdn = 29). From the total data set there were 40 percent graduates with short duration study degree (equal to bachelor degree) and 60 percent graduates with long duration study degree (equal to master degree).

Table 1: Gender by Country (percent)

	Country*											
	IT	ES	AT	DE	NL	UK	FI	SE	NO	CZ	JP	Total
Male	48	31	42	53	25	44	34	31	16	41	52	34
Female	52	69	58	47	75	56	66	69	84	59	48	66
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Count (n)	(350)	(309)	(298)	(238)	(283)	(304)	(198)	(275)	(872)	(197)	(152)	(3476)

* IT: Italy, ES: Spain, AT: Austria, DE: Germany, NL: the Netherlands, UK: United Kingdom, FI: Finland, SE: Sweden, NO: Norway, CZ: Czech Republic, JP: Japan.

2.2 Instrument and Procedure

In the CHEERS study, graduates were asked to what extent project and problem-based learning were emphasised by their institution of higher education and their teachers. The rating scale of answer was from 1 = "Not at all" to 5 = "To a very high extent". Graduates' responses were recoded to a dichotomous response. Response 4 and 5 were recoded to "high PBL" and response 1 and 2 were recoded to "low PBL". Response 3 was not included in the dichotomy and classified as missing value. Two groups were formed; group 1 was the group of graduates who studied in higher education institutions which have high emphasis on problem-based learning, and group 2 was graduates who studied in higher education institutions which put less emphasis on problem-based learning.

Graduates' competencies at the time of graduation were measured with question E1a in CHEERS questionnaire. Graduates were asked to rate their competencies at time of graduation with respect to 36 indicators of competencies. The rating scale of the answer ranged from 1 = "Not at all" to 5 = "To a very high extent". Factor analysis was used to find out the underlying factor in graduates' competencies.

Factor analysis revealed seven factors of graduates' competencies: (1) *leadership* factor including items such as: leadership, initiative, assertiveness, decisiveness, persistence, creativity, problem-solving ability, taking responsibilities, and decision-making; (2) *personal working skills* such as: accuracy and attention to detail, time management, power of concentration, working under pressure, working independently, and fitness for work; (3) *organisational skills* such as: economic reasoning, applying rules and regulations, planning, co-ordinating and organising, understanding complex social, organisational, and technical systems, and documenting ideas and information; (4) *interpersonal skills* such as: loyalty, integrity, tolerance, appreciating different points of view, adaptability, working in a

team, and getting personally involved; (5) *field-related knowledge* such as: field-specific theoretical knowledge, field-specific knowledge of methods, and analytical competencies; (6) *basic communication skills* such as: broad general knowledge, cross-disciplinary thinking/knowledge, written communication skill, oral communication skill, and critical thinking; (7) *special skills* such as: computer skills, and foreign language proficiency. New factor variables were then computed from the factor analysis result. Each factor variable was formed by summing graduates' responses on items representing the factors.

Prior study suggested that career success should be measured by two dimensions: objective/extrinsic career success and subjective/intrinsic career success (Rumberger and Thomas 1993; Seibert and Kraimer 2001; Vermeulen 2006). In this study, the objective indicator of career success was represented by graduates' annual income and the subjective indicator was represented by graduates' general work satisfaction. Graduates' annual income was measured from three variables: graduates' annual gross income from current major job (including overtime and extra payments); from overtime and extra payments in graduates' major job; and from other job. Graduates' work satisfaction was measured by question G1: "Altogether, to what extent are you satisfied with your current work?" The scale ranged from 1 = "Very dissatisfied" to 5 = "Very satisfied".

2.3 Data Analysis

Differences between the two groups in competencies and indicators of career success were tested using independent samples t-test. The effect of gender was studied by conducting the analysis separately on male and female groups. Using a similar procedure, the effect of types of degree (bachelor and master) was studied as well. This step is necessary because the level of education (Dolton and Makepeace 1990; Perna 2003) and gender (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, and Feldman 2005) have been found to be strong predictors of career success.

3. Results

The results of independent-samples t test analysis indicate that there were significant differences in competencies between graduates who studied in higher education institutions with high emphasis on PBL (group 1) and graduates who studied in higher education institutions with less emphasize on PBL (group 2). At the time of graduation, graduates who studied in higher education institutions with high emphasis on PBL had higher competencies in leadership $t(2113) = 11.06$, $p < .01$; personal working skills $t\ (2031) = 4.71$, $p < .01$; organisational skills $t(2078) = 17.09$, $p < .05$, interpersonal skills $t(2190) = 9.47$, $p < .01$; field-related knowledge $t(2036) = 8.25$, $p < .01$; and basic communication skill $t(2137) = 10.95$, $p = .01$.

Conversely, graduates from group 2 reported to have higher competencies in special skills t (1845) = -2.37, p = .01.

In the indicator of career success, graduates from group 1 reported to have higher satisfaction with current work than did group 2, t(1982) = 6.24, p < .01. No differences were found in annual gross income, t(1773) = 1.48, p > .05.

3.1 Results by Gender

The results of the analysis on graduates' competencies by gender reported similar finding with the analysis on global data, except for special skills. Male graduates in groups 1 and 2 reported no difference in special skills (t(902) = -,46, p > .05) and personal working skills (t(882) = 1.57, p > .05). Female graduates in group 2 reported to have higher special skills (M = 4.94, SD = 1.58) than female graduates in group 1 (M = 4.80, SD= 1.75), t(1439) = -1.71, p < .05.

Analysis on graduates' annual income found that male graduates in group 1 have higher annual income (M = 37.06, SD = 31.88) than male graduates in group 2 (M = 30.50, SD = 20.99), t(747) = 3.30, p < .05. Female graduates in group 1 and 2 reported to have no difference in annual income, t(1177) = .97, p > .05.

On the analysis of satisfaction with current work, male graduates in group 1 reported to have higher degree of satisfaction (M = 3.86, SD = .93) than male graduates in group 2 (M = 3.61, SD = .96), t(820) = 3.43, p < .01. Female graduates in group 1 reported to have higher satisfaction with current work (M = 3.97, SD = .89) than female graduates in group 2 (M = 3.76, SD = .96), t(1468) = 4.42, p < .01.

3.2 Results by Type of Degree

The analysis by type of degree revealed slightly different findings from the analysis on global data. Graduates with bachelor degree in group 1 reported to have a higher annual gross income (M = 28.72, SD = 19.25) than graduates in group 2 (M = 23.57, SD = 11.69), t(928) = 3.97, p < .01. No differences in annual gross income were found in graduates with master degree, t(243) = -.305, p > .05.

Graduates with master degree in group 1 reported to have a higher satisfaction with current work (M = 3.82, SD = .942) than graduates in group 2 (M = 3.65, SD = .961), t(1336) = 2.21, p < .05. No differences in satisfaction with current work were found in graduates with bachelor degree (t(992) = 1.36, p > .05).

4. Discussion

This study documented the impact of PBL implementation on graduates' competencies and career success. Generally, graduates from PBL higher education institutions consider themselves to have higher competencies. This study confirms the effectiveness of PBL curriculum in preparing students for the world of work.

There are some variations in the results when the analysis was conducted by gender and by types of degree. The variations of the result might be related to some unavoidable shortcomings of the study.

The findings in this study support prior studies on PBL and its impact on graduates' competencies (Cohen-Schotanus et al. 2008; Schmidt, Vermeulen, and van der Molen 2006), which reported that PBL curriculum enabled students to have higher competencies such as: problem solving, self-directed learning, interpersonal skills, organisational skills and field-related knowledge.

This study, which was based on survey data, has several shortcomings compared to other studies with better methodology, i.e., true experimental design. First, one should be aware that this study was based on graduates' rating of PBL implementation and indicators of career success. Thus, it suffers from limitations of biased responses and social desirability. Nevertheless, the utilization of survey data in this study also has several advantages compared to experimental design, namely, more generalizability and the possibility of international comparison of PBL practices. It should also be noted that PBL measurement of graduates was based on the retrospective response of graduates. Graduates rated their responses on competencies and on PBL implementation about four years after graduation. The accuracy in rating their responses might have weakened over this time span.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the validity of the measurement. The measurement of the implementation of PBL in graduates' prior higher education was based on a single item rating. Even though the practise of using a single variable is common and reliable for measuring job satisfaction (Scarpello and Campbell 1983), its application to PBL measurement still needs further research. Nevertheless, the division of two curriculum types (PBL and non-PBL) in this study could be the solution to prior studies' limitations. Prior study (Schmidt, Dauphinee, and Patel 1987) recognized the difficulty in international comparison of PBL study, namely, that the dissemination of PBL leads to a variety of its implementation in higher education institutions. To compare the implementation of PBL, one should first set the same standard of measurement of PBL. Students' or graduates' ratings on the implementation of PBL in their higher education institution could be the solution for measuring PBL implementation across different universities and disciplines. An instrument which is based on the criteria for analysing PBL and based on student or graduates' ratings would enable multi-discipline and international comparison of PBL study.

The characteristics of PBL, i.e., learning in a student-centred atmosphere, small group discussion, teacher as facilitator, and using real problems as the stimulus for the learning process (Barrows 1996) have several advantages for students. The aspects of cognitive psychology in PBL curriculum (e.g., the activation of prior knowledge, elaboration of knowledge at the time of learning, and matching context between the learning process and retrieval) enhance students' learning outcome (Norman and Schmidt 1992). PBL characteristics, such as the ones men-

tioned above, match with Kember's (2004) criteria for curriculum, which motivates students to work hard toward high-quality learning outcomes. Higher competencies acquired by graduates from PBL curricula manifest as higher performance in the workplace. Employers appraise these competencies and compensate them with higher remuneration. With higher competencies, graduates from PBL curriculum will have more opportunities to have meaningful work that boosts their feeling of achievement, increased responsibility and more opportunities for advancement and growth. All these conditions, according to Herzberg's theory of job satisfaction, will increase the level of job satisfaction (Robbins 2003).

Future study should include more mediator variables involved in the relation of PBL and graduates' career success. Those variables might be from the formal elements of employment such as: employment status, employment conditions, economic sectors and occupation or position. It could also come from the higher education aspects such as: level of degree, types of programmes, types of specialization, and reputation of the institution. Individual differences such as: personality trait and motivation could also contribute to the relationship.

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Author's biographical note

Bhina Patria is an academic staff at the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. Right now he is writing his dissertation on curriculum evaluation in the University of Kassel.

There are claims that the challenges for higher education are quite similar worldwide–but looking closely at it, how similar or how varied are the conditions for higher education institutions? How country specific are discourses about problems and possible resolutions? How homogeneous or how varied are eventually the options for reform?
Although, these questions cannot be answered comprehensively for higher education institutions worldwide, this publication attempts to provide insights into the complex questions described above based on an interesting setting. This volume presents a first set of highlights of the best master theses from a master programme specialised on higher education at the University of Kassel, Germany, which was attended by young open-minded persons from all over the world. The programme offered the students the challenge of bringing together in perspective prevailing concepts in higher education research and dominating discourses surrounding realities of higher education in their own countries or in other countries they developed an interest in. Thus, the master theses are the results of such a learning process and they convincingly mirror the tensions between the assumptions of worldwide pressures and worldwide valid concepts on the one hand and the experience of varied situations on the other.

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