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UNIVERSITIES AND THE PRODUCTION OF ELITES

DISCOURSES, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES OF EXCELLENCE AND STRATIFICATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Palgrave Studies in Global Higher Education

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Universities and the Production of Elites

Discourses, Policies, and Strategies of Excellence and Stratification in Higher Education

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Universities and the Production of Elites

Roland Bloch, Alexander Mitterle, Catherine Paradeise and Tobias Peter

Universities have become central crossing points in modern society. They coproduce the narratives of our time, ranging from politics over neurogenetics to climate change. Universities educate students for diverse roles in society: nurses, musicians, lawyers, physicists, managers, neuroscientists, and philosophers have all been credentialized by higher education systems. In recent decades, there has been a consistent increase in the number of participants in higher education. The move from elite to mass education, as described by Martin Trow (1970), has

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led to the emergence of an expansive, self-enforcing dynamic, which cannot be contained by governments and educational administrations (Lutz 1983, p. 238f; Meyer et al. 2007; Palfreyman and Tapper 2009). In fact, only authoritarian regimes so far have been able to temporarily reverse this trend (Baker et al. 2007).

Mass education implies that higher education has become crucial to securing access to labor markets, especially to positions with higher social status (Meyer 1977; Collins 1979; Bourdieu 1998). Over the decades, scholars have confirmed that educational credentials are often door openers, which legitimate exclusive access to high-status professions and lead to occupational attainment (cf. Collins 1987; Abbott 1981, 2005). With the expansion of higher education, a growing differentiation, professionalization, and stratification within higher education systems can be perceived (Teichler 2008; Vaira 2009; Neave 2006). Surprisingly, there has been less attention paid to how exactly the organization and (vertical) structure of higher education impacts on social structures and occupational attainment.[1] Beyond acknowledging the role of higher education in constructing elites, there has been a serious lack of research on the link between higher education and high-status positions. Zald and Lounsbury (2010, p. 964) see this as a result of the separation of research streams that were connected in the past:

> [S]tudents of occupations and professions, organizations, and social stratification barely talk to each other today, whereas in earlier periods the linkages were more visible and apparent to many scholars.

Organizational approaches that address stratification concentrate on the system or field[2] of higher education. They either study differences along the lines of research stratification (e.g. "world-class universities," see next section) or specific aspects of teaching, without considering the effects on social stratification. Numerous pieces of research have outlined institutional hierarchies – or resistance to such hierarchies – established through national regulation (Trow 1984; Neave 2006). Such research has, for instance, contrasted the decentralized and stratified American system with the non-stratified systems that prevailed in continental Europe until at least the 2000s. It has explored differentiation in the tertiary sector between universities and institutions with a more professional or technical orientation, and observed the differential impacts of neo-managerialism and the commodification of higher education on

such institutions (Paradeise et al. 2009). Organizational patterns spread among universities not only through competition but also through various forms of isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Here, stratification evolves between organizations that imitate others and those that are imitated (Meyer 1994). In such approaches, social stratification and class theory – if only for analytical reasons – are superseded by a perspective on society as functionally differentiated; higher education is analyzed as an entity of its own. The relationship between organizational ordering in the field and its effects on the labor market are seldom explored (Zald and Lounsbury 2010).

The study of elites, on the other hand, predominantly takes a reproductionist view, which sidelines ordering processes immanent to higher education in order to expose higher education as a central distributor of inequality (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Bourdieu 1998). Such processes can be seen as directed toward the legitimation of power structures; they imply a homology between organizations or specific higher education sectors and social stratification. From this perspective, top universities maintain societal inequality by overwhelmingly enrolling high-income and elite social groups (Brown et al. 2010). Their credentials legitimate the reproduction of social stratification (Kieserling 2008). Changes in the positions of certain educational organizations and/or organizational arrangements result from conflicts among elite groups (Bourdieu 1998; Brown 2001; Karabel 2005).

In a third group of theories, stratification in higher education is understood as a functional response to the societal need for skills and talent (Davis 1942; Davis and Moore 1945). The most prominent approach is human capital theory, which assumes that education is an individual investment of time (and money) that increases productivity and signals competence (Arrow 1973). A position with higher status and income is a legitimate return on such an investment (Becker 1983). From this perspective, stratification is determined through the objective demands of society and individual esteem. Similar to the reproductionist perspective, but for different reasons, national and organizational specificities and differences in higher education can ultimately only be explained by reasons outside their (sub)field or system (cf. Hölscher 2016, p. 19).

To bring together these various perspectives, we have to loosen up some of their fundamental premises (separated and autonomous systems or fields, power homology, functional inequality, and methodological individualism) and to anticipate and follow the empirical work

that has so far been done on organizational pathways from education to work and academia.

The differences among (higher) education systems and how they impact on occupational attainment have been investigated in comparative studies of factories in the UK, France, and Germany during the 1970s. In similar studies by Lutz (1976) and Maurice et al. (1980), employment positions and career options were shown to relate to their respective educational systems. Hierarchical structures within companies thus vary in relation to the hierarchical structures in education (Lutz 1983). DiPrete et al. (2016) expand this view by testing the strength of the linkage between education and occupations in France, Germany, and the United States. Their study shows that the strength of linkage not only varies between countries but also between disciplines. They also confirm results from the sociology of professions that a high linkage strength supports higher wage income; however, they also argue for a more granular perspective that addresses linkages individually. In fact, the linkage logic within professions differs considerably from pathways to bureaucratic and free market positions (Brown 2001; Strathdee 2009). Klein (2016) argues for the German case that educational expansion has been accompanied by an increase in free market jobs, which has led to a wider heterogeneity of pathways from education to the labor market. A specific organizational and educational setting that builds linkages and career pathways thus demands more scrutiny (cf. Schwinn 1998, p. 14f). This fits with a strand of new institutionalist approaches, which emphasize the cultural and cognitive role of education but which have, to a large degree, been less interested in social stratification (Stevens 2008; Meyer 1969, 1977; Meyer et al. 2007; Baker 2009, 2011).[3] In addition to sharing the reproductionist perspective on the increasing role of credentials, these approaches also ascribe a transformative power on society to higher education, an aspect that is absent from most elite-centered approaches. Both as an education provider and a research institution, the university "forms basic ideologies and creates academic degrees and expertise around these ideologies" (Baker 2014, p. 84). As a "sieve", "incubator" or "hub" of society (Stevens et al. 2008), it both co-constructs and legitimizes "new classes of personnel with new types of authoritative knowledge" (Meyer 1977, p. 56; cf. Armstrong and Masse 2014, p. 808).

Although the educational and occupational worlds each follow their own logics, with the increasing role of credentials, they become structurally coupled in a wide range of job positions. Vertical changes in

both worlds impact on graduates' pathways to the (high-status) labor market and, hence, also to elite employment positions (cf. Wakeling and Savage 2015). This allows for a wider perspective on the production of elites, which traces how pathways of occupational attainment are reconfigured by the concrete ways in which universities as organizations build and distribute expertise and status. Rather than highlighting the reproductive function of higher education with regard to class structure, we emphasize the productive role higher education plays in structuring occupational and elite pathways (Stock 2016). Increasingly, researchers from various backgrounds have started to investigate the relationship between education and high-status positions (for an overview, see Stevens 2008; Stevens et al. 2008; Zald and Lounsbury 2010; Armstrong and Masse 2014); however, the dynamics that cause, perpetuate, and change this relationship remain to a large degree unclear (Kupfer 2011, p. 186).

The aim of this book is to highlight the relationship between higher education institutions and the production of elites by focusing on how organizational change and increasing stratification in higher education impact on – or try to adjust to – the production of new elites for labor markets, including academia. Its purpose is to provide new empirical and theoretical perspectives on this relationship and it focuses on the role of the university, rather than the labor market. The contributions originate from a small, intense workshop held at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in September 2015. The workshop brought together scholars from Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States to explore these issues.[4] While the discussions were very vivid, it became clear that this endeavor was much more complex than originally envisioned. Various theoretical perspectives (such as discourse analysis, organizational theory, institutional habitus approaches, or visibility theory) can help us to investigate this relationship and the multiple levels on which this reordering takes place (such as programs, organizational units, universities, global business school fields, and nation states).

In this introduction, we will place the various approaches in an analytical frame that will help the reader to navigate the book. We first consider some of the discursive rationales that underlie recent policy changes toward increasing stratification in higher education and that emphasize individual actorhood, responsiveness, and competition. We then examine how governments take up these rationales – in response to massification and internationalization in higher education – when formulating policy

changes. Examples from Finland, France, Germany, and Ireland describe how such policy changes impact on and reshape the structure of higher education systems. Policy devices that exemplify verticality in programs and institutions are key to implementing and sustaining these changes in higher education. We show how policy devices – as objective status distributors – make hierarchies visible along specific indicators and how such devices impact on universities. Universities respond to these policy changes by adjusting to status demands. Common indicators play an important role in comparative positioning but local organizational arrangements are very heterogeneous. With regard to educational pathways, we draw on case studies from China, the United States, and Germany to show how universities and their schools seek to employ international faculty, visualize elite architectures, or build privileged pathways to job positions. In the last section, we discuss the role of specific logics of elite production. Examples from the United States and France each show that even if internationalization strategies are in place and although universities are global institutions, they still largely follow national production logics in the way that they educate and socialize their students. We conclude with an outlook and desiderata for further research in this vein.

Discourses, Policies, and Strategies of Excellence and Stratification in Higher Education

Setting Up Narratives and Rationales

In sharp contrast to established discourses on quality and equality, the eruption of the term "excellence" in the 2000s is a striking feature of current narratives of higher education (Bröckling and Peter 2016; Paradeise and Thoenig 2015).

Both governmentality studies and critical discourse analyses have shown how much current debates on higher education policy are shaped by the globally pervasive imperative to subject individuals and organizations to the "constant economic tribunal of the market" (Foucault 2008, p. 342). Under the auspices of neoliberal governmentality (Barry et al. 1996; Dean 1999; Liesner 2007), creating and increasing the competition in higher education is closely connected to its economization (Masschelein and Simons 2005; Masschelein et al. 2006), which changes the relationship between public authorities, the market, and universities. In the so-called

knowledge-based society, national wealth is thought to arise from capacities for innovation, and hence from research and higher education potential. The changing relationship between the state, the market, and the university implies a new role allocation. Accordingly, the state delegates decisions. Management resources and responsibilities are devolved to individual universities, which are attributed actor status (cf. Meier 2009). Analyses of policy narratives show how much universities are subjected to a new performance regime (for instance Jessop et al. 2008). As organizations, universities have to achieve excellence in comparison to other universities; they thus expand their traditional functions of research and teaching. While the quality of higher education was for a long time assumed to result from the collegial self-regulation of the academic profession within its various disciplines, universities now respond to the comparative measures and abstract metrics that are connected to the attribution of organizational actorhood.

Higher education institutions take part in producing human resources not just for the labor market but also to create new types of academic subjectivities for leadership positions using neoliberal "technologies of the self" (see Cannizzo 2015). The contemporary governmentality of higher education connects with the economic semantics of optimization (Bröckling and Peter 2016). As a competitive orientation, optimization legitimizes both efficiency goals and benchmarking strategies. Universities are seen as individual producers of human capital, constantly monitoring their production processes as well as their competitors. They are envisioned as self-managed learning systems (Maasen 2012, p. 150f) and are geared toward developing potentials that can be identified through performance charts and rankings.

The discursive formation and practical effects of this rationality in contemporary higher education relate to specific concepts and rules of justification at the strategic level of institutions that entail organizational differentiation in terms of excellence and elite formation. Reconstructing the discursive events and breaks that have reconfigured higher education in terms of excellence in the market, *Tobias Peter* takes a genealogical perspective in his chapter. Under the pressure of international competition for talent, elite education and increased vertical differentiation between higher education institutions have become legitimate goals. *Jens Maesse* presents an empirical example of these discursive logics at play. He concentrates on the discipline of economics to show how institutional technologies and discursive practices build

an "elitism dispositif," which maintains the exclusive position and excellence of a few top programs and universities within the discipline (Foucault 1980; Maesse and Hamann 2016). Taking graduate schools in economics as an example, Maesse reconstructs organizational and disciplinary technologies that turn doctoral students into prospective economic experts able to take on leading roles in academia or advisory functions in politics and the media.

Disruptive Policies since the 1990s and the Stratification of Higher Education Systems

Since the 1990s, the shape of higher education worldwide has been changing rapidly. While the discourses and narratives discussed above legitimated change, it were mainly state governments that drafted new policies and initiated reforms. The regulative framework of the late 1960s, which accommodated higher education expansion by differentiating institutions according to defined sectors and functions[5] (universities vs. polytechnics), was successively superseded by policies that increased competition and stratification among universities in higher education systems that were more or less unified. With Anglo-Saxon countries at the forefront, post-scholastic self-governed universities were transformed into partially functioning organizations (Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades 2009). Growth in student numbers and higher education expenditure has led to a surge in public organization reforms in national higher education systems around the world since the beginning of the 2000s. These so-called new public management (NPM) reforms have sought to strengthen both the internal and external steering of universities. They have pushed forward the ideal of a rationalized university for which success is a matter of organization and management. Furthermore, such reforms have required universities, like other economic organizations, to define goals, to act strategically in order to achieve those goals, and to be accountable for outcomes (Brunsson and Sahlin-Anderson 2000; Krücken and Meier 2006; Paradeise 2012; Ramirez 2010). Using both assessment and competitive funding devices, governments have created incentives to increase value for money by transforming public funding from input-based to output-based; the extent of these changes varies between countries. While strengthening the autonomy of universities, such reforms have also tightened the grip of public authorities on universities' performance by steering them from a distance (Paradeise et al. 2009).

Parallel to this development, in the mid-1980s, the decline and eventual end of the Cold War led to the expansion of higher education around the globe and brought about a rapid increase in global student mobility. Governments supported these developments for various reasons; while the European Community's European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) program, or the US green card policy for Chinese students following the Tiananmen Square protests were driven by political values, in the 1990s, the focus on student mobility shifted to opportunities for developed countries to broaden their base of highly skilled workers or to increase universites' income sources (Bloch et al. 2016; Marginson and Considine 2000; Altbach and Knight 2007). Between 2000 and 2010, global student flows doubled, leading to the diffusion of internationalization strategies in universities and nation states (OECD 2016; Knight 2011a).

This policy shift from functionally differentiated educational sectors to universities as organizational actors, along with a growing global interconnectedness, led to a reshaping of higher education systems in order to provide a more comprehensive framework for cross-border cooperation and degree recognition. The best known of such policy initiatives is the Bologna process which aimed at implementing a single curricular design of a two-tiered study system, a comprehensive credit point system, the modularization of studies, and quality assurance procedures across Europe and neighboring countries. It thereby reinforced the "de-diversification" (Teichler 2008) of higher education systems and diminished differences between institutional types or sectors within a common degree structure. It has enforced academic drift in the non-university sector by abolishing sector-specific degrees (Witte et al. 2008). Notwithstanding this trend toward convergence at a system level, scholars have observed a growing diversity at the level of individual universities, disciplines, and departments (Huisman 2009, p. 250; Enders and Westerheijden 2011, p. 474). In addition to national reforms, the Bologna process is seen as pushing "towards a unified system and organizationally stratified and differentiated institutions" (Vaira 2009, p. 136).

Reform policies have thus shifted from national or sector-specific regulation to the promotion of "world standards of excellence" (Ramirez 2010, p. 55), which universities should adapt to. At the same time, universities use such standards to position themselves. These world standards are decontextualized and employ rankings, accreditation, assessment, and competitive funding schemes to compare universities along

global imaginaries (Marginson 2008; cf. Bloch and Mitterle 2017). Policies promote such predefined metrics to make universities visible and comparable. As these metrics remain abstract, teaching and research are meshed together. Both sides are selectively combined as proxies for status judgments to legitimize the unequal distribution of resources based on ranking hierarchies. The national higher education policies of the 2000s reflected the perceived constraints of global competition; it pushed them to turn stratification by sector or prestige into stratification by rank.

The development to stronger stratification puts particular pressure on egalitarian and highly regulated higher education systems, most notably those in northern and continental European welfare states. Between and within countries, objectives assigned to higher education institutions and their funding impact on their ability to differentiate vertically. Public universities are confronted with conflicting political demands, such as providing higher education to an ever-increasing number of students at all levels while at the same time enhancing their global competitiveness. Private universities can opt for more restrictive access and can concentrate on a wider range of objectives from which to select; they are, however, more vulnerable to market dynamics. Beyond the regulation of national higher education sectors, the scope of flexibility and reactivity attributed to universities depends on national historical trajectories; these must be taken into account in order to understand the dynamics initiated through policy initiatives that are global in outlook (Marginson 2016). As Stevens et al. (2008, p. 141) put it, "the expansion of higher education and its consequences for stratification are truly global, even while their expressions tend to remain nationally peculiar."

From this perspective, the structures of national higher education systems built on past reform policies matter. It makes a difference whether governmental policies established a binary structure to cope with mass higher education in the 1960s and 1970s (as in the Netherlands and Germany), whether they later abolished such structures (as in the United Kingdom), or whether they refrained from introducing them (as in the United States). The consequences of these policies differ and they are the point of departure for current political efforts aimed at stratification by rank. While the binary structure proved to be stable in both the Netherlands and Germany, it was only successful in the former in terms on student enrollment. Polytechnics in the UK experienced a strong academic drift (Neave 1979) and in 1992, the binary structure was abolished again in favor of a unitary, vertically differentiated university sector.

In contrast to these binary systems, from the very beginning, the US higher education landscape has been characterized by a high institutional diversity and a strong stratification; this allowed it to accommodate increasing student numbers without changing its basic structure (Morphew 2009) or challenging the status of its top tier.

Other countries were affected by higher education expansion at later stages. Asian countries, in particular, experienced rapid expansion beginning in the 1990s and have employed different strategies to shape the quality of higher education. Affluent newcomer countries in higher education have attempted to build up so-called education hubs, in which local and global actors join forces to provide higher education on a transnational level (Knight 2011b). They hire prestigious international faculty in order to build world-class universities[6] (Powell 2012). Countries with established higher education systems, such as Finland or Denmark, merged universities on a large scale to build the critical mass needed to achieve global visibility (Aula and Tienari 2011; for an overview see Curaj et al. 2015; Pinheiro et al. 2015).

The authors in this section take the multiple layers of rather egalitarian higher education systems into account. They show how national structures in Finland, France, Germany, and Ireland have changed due to policy reforms and how this has impacted on the educational pathways of students and graduates.

In her chapter, *Ulpukka Isopahkala-Bouret* analyzes how Finnish policies of inclusion have contributed to the stratification of a formerly egalitarian system. In Finland, the introduction of a new Master's degree specific to universities of applied sciences allowed traditional research universities to distinguish themselves and, by claiming a higher quality of their programs, to cast their degrees as superior. Other countries have used strong incentives to push forward both the integration of divided higher education and research institutions into large comprehensive unitary institutions called "universities," and to re-stratify them in relation to performance. *Catherine Paradeise*'s chapter discusses reforms in France aimed at both reuniting and re-stratifying the national system. Such policies refrain from direct substantive intervention and aim at inducing stratification by procedural interventions that foster competition between universities. By promoting consortia and mergers between higher education institutions - universities, *grandes écoles* – and research organizations, France intends to foster both the creation of a "critical mass" and a vertically structured system in view of global competition. The specificities

of career pathways and organizational resistance, however, have hindered a totally successful realization of this strategy. *Aline Courtois* explores how Irish universities try to position themselves through internationalization. While they seek to establish income-generating and/or status-enhancing partnerships, they are constrained by funding and market forces, as well as by their own organizational features and positions in the field. Historical hierarchies between Irish universities are thus reinforced, while internally, status distinctions emerge between the various types of partnerships and student exchange programs. *Manfred Stock* discusses the emergence of new vertical differentiations in the German higher education system. In Germany, higher education expansion in the second half of the twentieth century was to a large extent accommodated within traditional research universities, without creating exclusive routes internally or triggering a dynamic of vertical differentiation. Over the past decades, however, the stagnation of public funding severely constrained universities in upholding the Humboldtian model of research-based education. This led to the implementation of efficiency-based policies, which extended competition between universities and legitimized emerging vertical differentiation. Together, these contributions show that attributing actorhood to universities and political efforts aimed at stratification by rank have not only changed the way stakeholders perceive national higher education sectors, but have also situated universities in a global topography through which students navigate.

Organizing Competition through Incentives: New Policy Devices

The third section analyzes specific performance-based policy devices that contribute to redesigning the higher education system in a given country. Devices[7] are third-party perspectives that provide orientation through horizontal and vertical ordering in increasingly complex higher education systems (cf. Wedlin 2011; Bloch and Mitterle 2017). Rankings are the most prominent of these devices. They are compiled by selecting and filtering information about specific units in higher education (academics, programs, faculties, college sport teams, universities, nation states, etc.) to allow for a concise navigation in these "new landscape[s] of higher education" (Kehm and Stensacker 2009). Rankings have been investigated from a variety of different perspectives ranging from testing their credibility (Billaut et al. 2010; Bookstein et al. 2010) and the overlap of indicators (Dill and Soo 2005; Aguillo et al. 2010) to the effects they have on status perceptions

from a sociological perspective. Independent of the question whether rankings actually measure educational quality, the evidence shows that they have a considerable effect on student choice, and thereby on career pathways (Espeland and Sauder 2007; Hazelkorn 2011; Marginson and Van Der Wende 2007; Sauder 2008; Bowman and Bastedo 2009; Weis et al. 2015). Rankings, however, are only the most visible device with regard to status perceptions. Research has concentrated less on the impact of other higher education devices on educational pathways, both into academic and non-academic labor markets. The German Excellence Initiative, the British Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and its successor, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), or the French *Programme des Investissements d'Avenir* (PIA), and new allocation tools such as the French SYMPA formulae are specific socio-technical arrangements that also produce "new landscapes" in higher education. Governments use these devices to push forward incentive-driven policies and foster competition in the field of higher education. Because these devices are applied to generate ranking orders and to legitimate allocation schemes, they provide status judgments that are independent of government decisions. They imply comparability among the units they assess and select specific indicators to distribute funding. While these indicators involve academic peer assessment and are thus less transparent than metrics-based rankings, they also contribute to "recomposing universities" (see Paradeise in this volume). Contrary to the actual effects on education (such as the withdrawal of principal investigators from teaching), connecting the distribution of research funds with an official terminology of excellence has an impact on students' perceptions and choice of university, and consequently also impacts on career pathways (see Winkler 2014 for effects related to the German Excellence Initiative). These devices also co-shape the status perceptions and funding chances of early career researchers and introduce external comparability measures into disciplines.

In his chapter, *Julian Hamann* focuses on unintended stratification effects through the production of research elites by the British RAE/REF. Building on data from the three most recent research assessments, he shows that the unequal distribution of symbolic, social, and economic resources in the discipline of history correlates with RAE/REF rank groups and translates into stratifications in the field. The positioning of history departments is thus not (solely) based on "excellence," but on previous allocations of resources.

Devices also have direct effects on internal processes of organizational ordering. In a case study of Humboldt University of Berlin, *Rachelle*

Esterhazy discusses the effects on the university of its initial exclusion from the new landscape set up by the German Excellence Initiative. University stakeholders rallied together and engaged in constructing an institutional identity in order to compensate for the university's unsuccessful application in the first round of the Excellence Initiative and to strengthen its position in the second round of the application process. This involved empowering the university and faculty leadership, and developing common research centers in a way that had a "long-lasting effect on the research profile", to quote one observer. Esterhazy sheds light on the way policy instruments drive elite formation and stratification within the higher education system by putting pressure on universities to compete for excellence and to maintain their reputation and legitimacy. Taking a neo-institutional and resource dependency perspective, the chapter questions the extent to which organizational changes are strategically triggered by the university leadership in response to environmental pressures.

While these two contributions can only provide a glimpse at how devices impact on higher education and elite production, the changes imposed by such devices have severe implications for students' university choice and for the "rules of the game" for aspiring researchers. We still know very little about the collateral effects of devices that aim at vertically framing specific issues in academia, not least with regard to formative pathways in higher education.

University Strategies for Redesigning Higher Education as Stratified Systems

Universities do not just passively react but actively respond to global and national policy frames, as well as rankings and policy devices. However, due to the increasing number of devices that produce status judgments and the high number of stakeholders to which they respond, the fields in which universities are situated are becoming ever more complex. While the pressure on universities to position themselves has increased, it has also allowed them to proactively participate in building different forms of stratification. Universities and their programs transcend their national sector and are stratified within higher education fields that span across countries. These fields are less stable and follow other rules than highly regulated national sectors (Bloch and Mitterle 2017; Soulas in this volume). They are structured by common accreditation schemes (business schools and engineering) or rankings, and they change their form and

criteria on a regular basis. They also include a wide variety of university types, such as private universities, which are more responsive to marketing and branding issues, and which compete for international students. Indeed so-called world-class universities have become benchmarks for most universities. However, the individual strategies of subunits (such as professional schools, graduate schools, or research clusters) are helping to redesign particular parts of the higher education landscape.

Although universities engage in a global competition for status, they relate to different stakeholders and different concepts of "status." They seek to attract "talent" and "top scientists" worldwide, and to provide both "top-notch" education and "cutting-edge" research. They try to build singular identities based on specific organizational attributes (e.g. an international faculty and student body, highly selective admission policies, placement in top positions on the labor market, etc.) (Drori et al. 2014). But beyond these market terms, precise meaning can only be established by looking closely at the activities of individual universities, programs, and schools. They couple metrics and marketing strategies with organizational arrangements in specific ways that impact on and structure educational pathways, and which influence the occupational attainment of graduates, whether as potential future leaders or as excellent scientists in academia.

This line of research has mostly concentrated on discipline-specific pathways. While the study of professions has generally treated educational knowledge as a form of closure, management degrees evade this logic. As one of the most successful graduate degrees in Anglo-Saxon-countries, the Master of Business Administration (MBA) is an important credential for access to top positions. However, it has not yet achieved a professional exclusivity equivalent to that of medicine or law in relation to the positions it prepares students for (cf. Moon 2002; Khurana 2007). Detached from individual national frames, business schools are particularly successful in building up a common governance and content frame that makes their graduates comparable on a global scale (Hedmo et al. 2005; Sahlin-Andersson and Engwall 2002). In his chapter, *Tupac Soulas* refers to this competitive scheme of accreditations, rankings, common structures, and indicators as the "global business school model." He traces how the movement toward this model has impacted on one of the fastest growing regions in the world for management education: the People's Republic of China. In the last decade, some of the most prestigious Chinese schools have sought to enter the international strategic field of business schools,

which is dominated by North American and European institutions. Drawing on the theory of strategic action fields (Fligstein and McAdam 2015) and case studies of three schools of management based in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, the chapter analyzes how these schools adapt to the criteria and characteristics of this model – namely international faculty – and at the same time reinterpret them to adjust to local restraints and demands. He thus shows how, by allowing sufficient leeway for regional demands, standardization spans a prestigious field – a field in which students across the globe flock to participate.

By contrast, the business schools at the center of the global model have less trouble defining their position. They not only respond to the model's criteria but also materialize their position through the architecture of the university: different buildings reflect different politics and display them in different forms. Based on extensive website analyses of two of the most prestigious American business schools, *Jan Nespor* explores their visibility strategies, which not only shape how others see these schools but also teach students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds how to recognize one another as potential members of shared elite projects. Using the digital traces left by these visibility strategies, Nespor reconstructs how these two schools cast themselves as excludable sites and extend their visibility in time and space by constantly refining their brand.

How schools that signal elite status organize their graduates' transition to the labor market has remained unclear. In their study of education to work transitions in France, Germany, and the United States, DiPrete et al. (2016) show that the linkage between the university and specific occupational positions is strongest for those who have recently entered the labor market. This space of coupling between education and the labor market has only recently become a point of scrutiny. While Tholen et al. (2013) emphasize the role of social networks, Schleef (2006), Rivera (2015), Nespor (2014), and Davis and Binder (2016) discuss specific organizational arrangements between universities and large companies to build exclusive pathways into prestigious positions (for a similar perspective on less prestigious pathway building, see Herberg 2016).

Investigating the situation in Germany, *Alexander Mitterle* provides insights into the transformative development of organizational arrangements for selective pathways in an egalitarian system. He discusses the

specific role of higher education for the labor market and shows how specific reforms in higher education have opened up the field for establishing organizational settings that foster the building of such pathways. In drawing on a case study from a prestigious private business school, Mitterle provides an example of how stronger linkages are built through the university.

Roland Bloch focuses on the production of academic elite pathways through graduate schools in Germany. Both vertical differentiations and graduate schools as programs for the education of doctoral researchers are new phenomena in German higher education. The chapter first reconstructs the emergence of a new field of doctoral education. Based on longitudinal data on doctoral programs at German universities, Bloch explores whether this development is the outcome of isomorphic change and how it is connected to new vertical differentiations. He then analyzes how rank differences between graduate schools are established by focusing on the connections between institutional prestige and academic elite career pathways. Drawing on organizational case studies of two graduate schools that are funded by the Excellence Initiative, the chapter investigates whether and how these schools relate to their graduates in order to construct academic elite career pathways.

Producing New Elites?

The fifth and final section of this book discusses the organizational production of elites in individual universities. While the previous section focused on wider organizational arrangements used by departments, business schools, and graduate schools to influence their standing and the career pathways of their students, this section looks at the impact of changes – as discussed in the first two sections of this book – on the production of specific elites. The contributions in this chapter thus advance research into what Binder and Wood (2013) call "organizational styles." Even though global student flows and the high career mobility of academics has consolidated global higher education, specific organizational and environmental settings still foster differences in contexts which seem comparable and which are compared based on metrics. The specific educational space matters for the production of distinct elites (van Maanen 1983; Poehls 2009; Schleef 2006; Mertz 2007; see also Nespor 1994).

This is what *Jonathan Friedman* argues with regard to specific cultural patterns among graduates in the United States and the UK. Based on case studies in both countries, he shows how elite universities continue to predominantly admit their own national citizens, and operate according to different logics of academic excellence. Personnel at these universities praise their own national higher education systems and criticize others, but they also react to pressures to produce "global citizens" in different ways. Inasmuch as these institutions may be envisioned as mechanisms of the cultural production of elites, they are best understood as incubators of high-status dispositions that derive their power from their specific national fields. While these institutions may bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds in a spirit of cosmopolitanism, their logics of valuation are strongly tethered to the national contexts in which they are situated, producing somewhat competing — rather than consensual — visions of what it means to be elite. This strong tethering of the elite university to its national field largely impedes the forces of globalization – if a truly global elite is emerging, it is not likely to happen through socialization processes in the corridors of these hallowed educational organizations.

Anne Schippling, *Johannes Zimmermann*, and *Maria Schmidt* explore the impact of one of the most prominent convergence patterns – the internationalization of degree programs – on two distinguished elite schools in France. The so-called *grandes écoles* are deeply rooted in French national culture and are therefore particularly affected by the internationalization processes pushed forward as part of the current transformation processes in the French higher education system. Based on interviews with professors and lecturers, the authors focus on how academic identities are constructed at these elite schools and they explore whether these identities are reconfigured through current internationalization efforts.

Outlook

This book addresses stratification in higher education as a sector- and field-immanent development. This development, however, is coupled to the production of elites in academia and the world of work. In this sense, elites are co-constructed and coproduced by higher education rather than clearly defined classes or status groups in society. As higher

education is changing rapidly in most of the countries discussed in this volume, the study of universities as coproducers of elites is caught in a circular motion.

Stratification in higher education is induced by economic and political institutions, but it also creates and shapes the knowledge and expertise that is used by graduates to legitimate these changes. The scope of this perspective is wide – too wide for one book. If considered individually, these contributions might appear fragmented and detached from a larger frame. However, what connects issues such as the struggle for internationalization in a French *grande école*, the sector differentiation between Finnish polytechnics and universities, or the discursive technologies that constitute graduate schools in economics, is the way in which they mobilize and change the pathways into status positions on the grounds of an ordering within higher education. Although the ways of organizing and comparing universities follow similar patterns worldwide, they also meet very different national higher education trajectories. There are differences in the way sectors, universities, and disciplines respond; for example, economics graduate schools engage and magnify these ideas, building clear elite pathways. In Finland, sector cleavages become visible and there is differentiation between university and polytechnic graduates. While the *grandes écoles* maintain their selectivity and exclusivity as French institutions, international students are able to access these schools although they enjoy fewer privileges. Specific organizational arrangements, such as elite visibility or career centers, and a wide range of ranking and policy devices make these differences visible and help to manifest them by shaping the universities and programs that build the field.

Connecting the various empirical studies in this book opens up a new perspective for future research on the nexus between higher education and labor markets. It focuses on the construction of elite and career pathways from within universities, rather than treating universities as a legitimizing reproduction device, either through credentials or via a cultural habitus of upper class "generalists" (Brown et al. 2010). The changes experienced in higher education differ according to country, university, and discipline. However, expanding mass education and growing stratification have had a major impact; these vertical differences and the way that they rebuild higher education matter, and they matter particularly for educational pathways leading to high-status positions.

Notes

1. Shavit et al. (2007) are an exception; they provide a quantitative cross-country study of the relationship between higher education and social stratification.
2. Bourdieu's work on French academia (1988) seems to lie between organizational and reproductive approaches. It assumes that research is a field of its own but concentrates more on positional habitus practices rather than the distinct organizational arrangements.
3. Kamens (1977), who discusses the formation of charters for both the research and the labor market track, is an exception.
4. The workshop was organized by two research groups: the German DFG-Research Unit "Mechanisms of Elite Formation in the German educational system" and the French ANR project research team "PrestEnce – from Prestige to Excellence."
5. This applied to both Western and Eastern European countries; the United States was a striking exception.
6. In the 2016 Times Higher Education Ranking, Qatar University takes the top position among the world's 200 most international universities, based on the proportion of international staff, international students, and research papers published with at least one co-author from another country (https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/200-most-international-universities-world-2016 [Accessed 8 May 2017]).
7. We draw the term "device" from the sociology of markets. According to this perspective, devices are socio-technical arrangements that coproduce and stabilize the market (territory) to which they contribute. They themselves carry a form of agency (Callon et al. 2007).

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PART I

Setting Up Narratives and Rationales

CHAPTER 2

Excellence: On the Genealogical Reconstruction of a Rationality

Tobias Peter

Introduction

Originality and top performance seem to be the order of the day. Excellence long ago became a central term of mobilization and optimization (see Nassehi 2012), one that has extended far beyond science policy debates and gained a foothold in almost all areas of society. While using the phrase 'your Excellency' to address nobles and diplomats has been considered antiquated and questionable for some time, striving for excellence appears to be unquestionably modern. The rhetoric of excellence is universal: not only universities and researchers should be excellent but also clinics and sportspeople, public administrations, and entire regions.

From the perspective of the academic observer, the proliferation of the discourse on excellence initially manifests itself within the context of universities. Here, a distinction must be made between two types of text associated with excellence: firstly, the political and institutional texts that explicate a 'governing by excellence'; and secondly, the texts that observe or critically reflect on the emergence of excellence. Research on excellence

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within the social sciences in the German-speaking world refers almost exclusively to the Excellence Initiative, a research-oriented funding programme of the German federal government (Hornbostel et al. 2008; Leibfried 2010; Bloch et al. 2008). Only recently there have been new investigations into the effects of the excellence discourse, independent of the term 'elite', on subjectification and truth (Ricken 2009; Bröckling 2009). Moreover, the first indications of a genealogical reconstruction of excellence can be found here.

The observation has been made that excellence is a special semantic for scientific quality control, which is accompanied by a redefinition of the relationship between science and society (see Maasen 2008, p. 24f.). Yet this analysis threatens to fall short if it limits the phenomenon of excellence to the scientific system alone. The notion that the semantic of excellence can be found in all areas of society is key to explaining its effectiveness also and particularly at universities and in science.

Following a Foucauldian genealogy, the current study turns to discourse analysis in order to reconstruct the pathway of this central term. From which contexts are the semantics of excellence and equality in science and university imported? What are the contexts from which the semantics of excellence and equality are imported into science and university life/universities? Which transitions do the practices associated with it go through during their application?

Based on Michel Foucault, genealogy attempts to render visible the conversions and recoding of excellence and reveal the construction mechanisms and logics of order that are associated with them (see Bevir 2008). It concentrates the analysis on a term and at the same time decisively expands the problem. In contrast to an etymological analysis, orientation toward the term excellence aims at its origin for "the discovery, under the unique aspect of a trait or a concept, of the myriad events through which – thanks to which, against which – they were formed" (Foucault 1984, p. 81). Accordingly, the point is to pursue discontinuities, to pinpoint where the breaks occur and track down the discursive events where "the reversal of a relationship of forces [occurs], the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it . . . " (Foucault 1984, p. 88). Genealogy describes the process of producing manifold strategies and references that grow around the term. Genealogy does not confine itself to rhetorical analysis but also includes the diverse practices of producing excellence.

Analyses of excellence face a persistent proliferation of discourse. This means that the key texts from the German and international discourses

since the 1950s must be considered, including scientific literature, strategic political texts, management literature and the self-descriptions of excellence institutions. The first step in this process was to explore the corpus with a lexical search in literary databases that made it possible to determine the broadness, depth and temporal extent of the discourse. The second was to identify the relevant key texts for the individual discourse levels and discourse threads while sifting through the material. Criteria used for selection were the time of occurrence and the originality of content and the effectiveness of the texts. In the third step they were subjected to a detailed analysis.

The aim here is not to depict the whole range of excellence discourse but rather to surgically extract the decisive applications that have ignited or turned the discourse in universities and science. The genealogy focuses on the excellence discourse from the perspective of the German-speaking world. This paper does not claim to examine discourses of excellence in a global perspective, but it does include texts from beyond the German discourse in cases where the semantic roots, especially in the US, suggest it is appropriate to do so. This contribution confines itself to the analysis of four breaks in the development of modern excellence that I have reconstructed from the text corpus. These *defining moments* changed the discourse and have left their mark on the contemporary understanding of scientific excellence. They are: the introduction of excellence as the programmatic term of a meritocratic conception of society; the neoliberal loading of the concept of excellence; its rise as the key concept of a research policy that is globally and competitively oriented; and, ultimately, its establishment as a concept of university policy to promote elites and excellence.

The Pursuit of Excellence

Up until the 1950s, the term excellence had solely been used by the diplomatic service or as a measure of quality for products, services or top artistic performance. Its rise as a programmatic term begins in the egalitarian social climate of the Cold War. Here, an almost overwhelming rhetoric of the majority translates conformism into propriety and puritanism and disapproves of anything that deviates from the norm. Change is not understood as the improvement of individual performance but as the approximation of a normalized conception of the "organization man" (Whyte 1956). The normalism of modernity does not force the individual

into top performance but configures him/her for an expected and thus governable mediocrity of sameness. In modern mass society there is space for neither individual deviations nor demonstrative elites, unless the latter understand themselves to be representative of the masses. At the height of industrial modernity, welfare state societies celebrated unprecedented success in terms of material equality, which became manifest in mass consumption and social security. Until then, America had "firmly believed that to live 'correctly' also meant to live 'successfully'. 'Sputnik' and 'Lunik' startled them out of this certainty" (von Hentig 1960, p. 1).

The atomic threat associated with the Soviet Union's technological progress not only made the launch of Sputnik a pressing issue but also fundamentally altered the discourse on the social importance of knowledge. It was the pressure that resulted from the dynamics of technological development within the confrontation of the Cold War that provided the decisive incentive for comprehensive educational and scientific policy reforms (see Rockefeller 1958, p. 19; Bell 2008; Drucker 1993). It is the life-threatening military dimension, connected to ideas of technological advancement, which finally unfolds the force of the Sputnik crisis and prompts a broad debate on the performance of American society. Within the friend-foe logic of the Cold War, it is not enough to merely be good – only the ultimate advancement of the best, only excellence, can secure survival:

> A rocket can still explode on its launch base because the constructor was incompetent or the mechanic who installed the last valve was incompetent. The same applies to everything else in our society. We need excellent physicists and excellent mechanics. We need excellent ministers and excellent primary school teachers. Every fibre of our society depends on the ubiquitous and continuous pursuit of proficiency. (Gardner 1962, p. 132)

According to this view, there is no place for mediocrity, be it out of negligence or a lack of confidence and unwillingness to take responsibility. With President Johnson's "Great Society," the pursuit of excellence unfolds in a societal model that is almost entirely free from economic modes of argumentation but already develops strategies for mobilization and optimization. The core of this understanding of excellence is a meritocratic conception of society according to which differences are permissible if they are accompanied by adequate performance (see Graubard 1961; Peyre 1962; Young 1958). Hence, in principle, an increasingly

meritocratic choice of leadership positions has a social balancing effect, "as, in key institutions, technical competence becomes the overriding consideration" (Bell 2008, p. 426). If managerism defeats family dynasties, if old social elites are mixed up ethnically, and if technical professions play a more important role in social decisions, it is no longer origin that matters, it is performance. The moderate egalitarianism of equal opportunities allows for physical or intellectual differences in order to enable top performance.Those who want to be excellent have to overcome barriers. This corresponds to a pluralist, broad-based understanding of excellence along the lines of "everyone can do it," a horizontally applied conception of excellence based on the plurality of excellent abilities and talents (see Gardner 1962, p. 132).

The German debate on the *Bildungskatastrophe* ("educational disaster") (Georg Picht) refers to the debate on the equality of opportunities in the US (Picht 1965; von Hentig 1960). But the German debate is about increasing capacities to open access to education on a broader scale, not about excellence. Meanwhile, the meritocratic approach in the US is closely linked to the former theories of a knowledge society. The combination of being grounded in knowledge and being oriented on performance accomplishes "the codification of a new social order based, in principle, on the priority of educated talent" (Bell 2008, p. 426). Thus, social reproduction is increasingly based on academic findings, and social advancement is closely linked to qualification by education (Bell 2008; Drucker 1993; Steinbicker 2010). The growing importance of science and technology not only demands an academization of knowledge on a broad scale, it also steers the focus toward the few talented individuals who could drive scientific progress. For Robert K. Merton, the need for, as well as the value of, excellent scientists is beyond doubt. Charismatic scientists are required in order to encourage excellent performance: "They not only strive for excellence, they have the ability to awaken excellence in others." (Merton 1973a, p. 452) Excellence is not an end in itself for those who possess it but rather benefits everyone qua mobilization effects. Building on the questions surrounding the selection of outstanding talent, in *Recognition and Excellence* Merton formulated a concept of scientific recognition that has formed the meritocratic basis of understanding excellence since then and is still significant today (see Merton 1973b). In this way, the question relating to the promotion of hidden talents has shifted into sociological debate. His idea that excellence is 'self-fertilized' by pre-existing excellence will be just as formative for a modern semantics of

excellence as the identification of differences in performance as a requirement of excellence in vertical thinking. As such, a debate is initiated in the sociology of science on the cause of and conditions for the success of scientific excellence, the focus of which ultimately broadens from individuals to groups and social contexts (see Jackson and Rushton 1987). Scientific excellence thus requires functioning research teams as well as ideal circumstances. Only in "evocative environments" do institutes that are excellent themselves allow excellent researchers to emerge (Zuckerman 1977). Accordingly, the question of how structures of excellence permit themselves to be organized becomes central. As such, the sociology of science debate provides numerous focal points for policy making. Excellence clusters and networks of excellenceemerge as concrete instruments for science policy that are based on the debates of the sociology of science.

The Excellence of the Market

The attempt to mobilize and optimize untapped potential in all areas of society characterizes the modern discourse on excellence from this point on. At the same time, Western industrial societies were experiencing a cultural push toward individualization, which manifested itself in the global movement of 1968. The egalitarian values of the normalized majority were gradually suspended, hitherto desired conformance strategies discarded, and deviations, creativity and originality increasingly revalued. Following the meritocratic conception of society as a knowledge society, the rhetoric of potential was translated into human capital theory (Becker 1993). According to this theory, institutions are regarded as businesses and the individual as the entrepreneur of his or her own self, "being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings" (Foucault 2008, p. 226). Thus, the social authority of coordination is not the state but the market.

This critical standpoint infiltrates not only politics but also, and in particular, the economy. Striving for excellence is thus by no means obsolete, but its focus has shifted to smaller units and it has been unmistakably shaped by a semantics of neo-liberalism, a style which is well represented in the management classic *In Search of Excellence* by Peters and Waterman (2007). They identify the lack of individual engagement of employees as the reason for the all too common mediocrity that is ultimately traceable to the decrepit and impersonal structures of organized

irresponsibility. The 'iron cage' of rationalization (Max Weber) is no longer the solution, because the actual problem worldwide is the inertia induced by bureaucratization (see Peters and Waterman 2007, p. 26). Rigid hierarchies seem to have driven the entrepreneurial traits out of companies. Peters and Waterman recommend a paradigm shift after which not only the owner of the company but also each employee must become an entrepreneur. The cultural turn brought about by the book in management literature not only shapes the modern understanding of management but also changes and broadens the semantic space of the term 'excellence.' Specialization in and concentration on core competencies, flexibility, simplicity and identity have become central catchphrases of the discourse on excellence and stretch beyond the economic sphere. The neoliberal discourse on excellence adopts the belief in the potential of individual development, but it suspends social references. The entrepreneur becomes a central character for individuals and organizations alike, and the market becomes the sole authority of coordination. The gauge of excellence according to *In Search of Excellence* is not performance but success. Excellence is described not in terms of a technological avant-garde, ecological standards or a service industry that satisfies all needs but rather in terms of defining the best possible customer focus.

With the neoliberal turn, not only individuals and organizations but also entire states are subject to a "permanent economic tribunal" (Foucault 2008, p. 247) that critically examines all government activities for their economic consequences. As a result, government and political action anticipates this economic evaluation and subordinates its programmes to economics. Investment in human capital is central to the new growth policy (ibid., p. 232). Hence the educational system develops from a marginal condition of economy to the foundation of growth. This semantic transformation was brought to the level of education policy in the 1980s by the *National Commission on Excellence in Education*. Their report *A Nation at Risk* formulates the drama of the US as a nation whose former dominance in economics, industry and technological innovation has dwindled in the face of numerous competitors. Starting from the hypothesis of a knowledge-based economy, the performance of the education system becomes the ultimate question:

> If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system for the benefit of all. Learning is the indispensable

> investment required for success in the "information age" we are entering. (NCEE 1983, p. 10)

Since falling profits, the central problem of capitalism, can only be prevented by new technologies, forms of production or markets, targeted investments in human capital are necessary as a basis for innovation. The educational reform dedicated to excellence that was introduced by the NCEE aims at the mobilization of all untapped potential, independent of background, age or income. Thus the report responds to complaints, which have been increasing since the late 1970s, about the waste of talent (see Burroughs 1977) and addresses an economic understanding of learning as an investment that is informed by human capital theory. If the optimization of all potential during the Cold War was justified by the question of survival through military advantage, in today's knowledge-based societies, excellence comes to the fore because scarce and fragile competitive advantages are decisive.

A focus on excellence also always implies the mobilization of the uneducated. From this to the contemporary rhetoric of 'no child left behind,' the pursuit of excellence attempts to reconcile struggle and competition with social demands (see US Department of Education 2004).

The increased focus on excellence in the USA is not only understood as the answer to deficits in the education system, however, but also to financial problems. This is particularly true of higher education financing, which is associated with significant structural changes toward greater differentiation, applied research, interdisciplinarity and centralized research within universities (see Barrow 1996). Out of the dilemma of increasing demands on education and science within a context of global competition and simultaneously declining public grants, the neoliberal policies of excellence are legitimized not only in the USA but also globally.

Useful Knowledge

Within the context of global competition, which is where the semantics of excellence in US education policy unfold, ideas and terms are often observed and adopted. The focus of science policy on American structures can be explained by the achievements of US research after World War II, which were better than European research results and were rooted in those very structures (see Herbst 2007). The term and

idea of excellence have traveled into the vocabulary of education policy on the EU level, probably not least due to their linguistic proximity (see Ricken 2009, p. 199). Accordingly, Euratom research funding was already implementing 'networks of excellence' at the beginning of the 1990s. Just like the Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development, it compels European research policy – which is traditionally linked to industry and focused on innovation, and which looks at the funding of science and technology mainly under the banner of competition – to be excellent (see Gaul and Uwe 2009).

The strategic objective of excellence is driven by the political objective of making the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. In the Lisbon Strategy the EU sees itself "confronted with a quantum leap that has resulted from globalisation and the challenges of a new knowledge-based economy" (European Council 2000, p. 1), which, besides improvements in IT infrastructure, requires better integration and coordination in terms of research activities "in order to efficiently and innovatively structure and ensure that Europe can offer attractive perspectives for its best minds" (ibid., p. 5). While the EU takes an egalitarian approach in setting out its strategic objectives, in turn creating wide access to information technologies and comprehensive minimum skills of all EU citizens in the education sector, its research policy is clearly based on excellence. The aim of encouraging "top research and development in all member states" in order to support an "increase in top performance" (European Council 2000, p. 5f.) is connected to a comprehensive economic system of control that focuses on using available resources more intensively and efficiently and at the same time realizing an increase in human capital that is aim-oriented and equipped with clear benchmarks (European Council 2000, p. 6).

The EU strategies unmistakably articulate the global dimension of the struggle for excellent science. For the USA in the 1960s, the decisive debates were related to significant advancements in the global struggle for military dominance. This position has now been adopted by the EU; the struggle for scientific and technological excellence can now be understood as a battle for dominance on the world market. The Lisbon Strategy follows the logic of excellence in order to promote "cutting-edge research and development in all member states" and hence "the dissemination of excellence" (European Council 2000, p. 5f.). Similar to the military confrontation of the Cold War, what mattered was not merely a material

battle but instead victory through decisive knowledge advancements generated by the best minds.

In the Sixth Framework Programme (Framework 6 2002–2007), US American research funding strategies were adapted together with the Centers of Excellence and Networks of Excellence to focus on "building research centres and scientific locations that are recognised and have equivalent standards worldwide through a concentration of initiatives, resources and people" (Ricken 2009, p. 199). "Networks of Excellence are designed to strengthen scientific and technological excellence on a particular research topic by integrating at European level the critical mass of resources and expertise needed to provide European leadership and to be a world force in that topic" (European Commission 2003, p. 1). The European strategy for excellence strives neither for a continuous, broad improvement in performance nor a scientific peak performance in basic research that is distant from the market. The scientific and technological excellence that is put forward aims at innovative leadership, which ultimately translates into market leadership.Similar to the success and market focus of excellent business, the notion of 'relevance' is adopted in neoliberal semantics as the gauge of excellence in science (see Maasen 2008, p. 25). Societal relevance becomes a characteristic of a 'new knowledge production' which, under the term 'Mode 2' (Gibbons et al. 1996), is not only controversially discussed within the sociology of science, it also and in particular shapes the philosophy of European research funding. "Real science is excellent science" – with this Helga Nowotny as a prominent representative of the Mode 2 philosophy gets directly to the heart of the connection between post-academic science, Mode 2, and the European Research Council (ERC) (see Nowotny 2006):

> By challenging Europe's brightest minds, the ERC expects that its grants will help to bring about new and unpredictable scientific and technological discoveries - the kind that can form the basis of new industries, markets, and broader social innovations of the future. (ERC 2016)

In research policy, societal relevance is ultimately reflected in the economically motivated choice of research priorities and questions. Thus a product-oriented logic enters the science system. While the gauge of excellent entrepreneurial products is the market, and excellence in sport is measured in terms of competition, the gauge of scientific excellence becomes less certain in the increasingly transdisciplinary field of science.

If the discipline-oriented process of peer review fails in the face of interdisciplinary research collaborations, it needs an external scale on which to measure quality assurance. That scale is societal relevance.

It is the research policy decisions on the EU level which semantically as well as conceptually paved the way for the focus on excellence in German science policy. The neoliberal semantics of excellence that have existed on a European level since the 1990s turn universities into agents of a knowledge-based economic development. Since the economic competitive advancement of a knowledge-based society is only possible on the foundation of education and research, the focus on excellence becomes an imperative of European science policy, which straddles the national discourses on the management of higher education.

The Battle for the Best Minds

While the expansion of educational opportunities in the USA was pushed forward in connection with equality and excellence, German education policy had adopted an anti-elite stance by around the time of educational reform in the 1960s at the latest. Although the German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat) dismissed recommendations to support highly gifted students early on (Wissenschaftsrat 1981), political statements that support elite education or even elite universities appear only as minor conservative positions within a critical assessment of mass universities (see Kaltefleiter 1981; Altner 2004). It was not until the political turning points of 1989/90 that a stronger focus on excellence and elites returned, namely as part of the transition from an industrial society to a post-industrial knowledge-based society and within the globalization debate. The question being asked in Germany now concerned the decisive advancements in global competition attributable to elites and excellence, a question that had been discussed since the 1980s within the US American excellence discourse. In this proposed transition into a knowledge-based economy, managers who can easily move within a global context and make system-wide decisions become increasingly sought after (Nassehi 2004). This new form of elite semantic not only manages to distinguish itself from an etatist as well as a nationally defined meaning of elite, it also makes plausible the importance of highly qualified top leaders as new global performance elites.

Alongside the necessity of having to compete for highly qualified managers, science and higher education are expected to compete with

these 'high potential individuals' on the one hand and to produce them on the other. The brain drain of the best minds, the demand for excellent research institutes, and the concern about recruiting emerging scientists come together in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In a similar manner and at a similar time to the USA, early application of the excellence concept to emerging scientists finds its justification in an atmosphere that supports selection in promoting upcoming talent in Germany. With resources and jobs limited on the one hand, and international competition increasingly problematized on the other, in the eyes of management and politics of science the focus on excellence is obvious. The few outstanding talented individuals must be supported if efficiency and effectiveness are to be connected. Structurally imbedded, demands on selectivity, for instance in third-party funding or postdoctoral funding, are thus reinterpreted as individual marks of quality, and financial and potentially short-term support is seen as proof of performance.

The discourse on a stronger differentiation among elite people/institutions challenges the structure of the higher education system that has existed up until now. Programmes like 'excellent teaching' by the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft (Association for the Promotion of German Sciences and Humanities) (see Krull et. al. 2010) and private universities with exclusive, 'elite-oriented' offerings (see Mitterle and Stock 2013) show that this has implications for teaching in particular. They are as much an expression of this development as excellence-oriented course options at public universities, which are organized differently in each federal state. In the case of the Elite Network of Bavaria, the debate on the education of societal and scientific elites ultimately takes on a political strategy and an institutional form (see Gebhard 2005; Goppel 2004): the courses and schools started by the Elite Network of Bavaria "deal with forward-looking issues and themes of great interest to society. They are located in the areas where classical disciplines intersect because this is where research is most exciting and innovative" (BSWBK 2006, p. 4). In apparent contrast to the egalitarian basic understanding of excellence in the United States, the German debate on promoting elites does not focus on the best support for talented individuals at all levels, but rather selectively supports exclusive top performers. In courses offered as part of the Elite Network of Bavaria as well as in private universities such as the Zeppelin University, the semantic of globalization and knowledge-based leaders, as intercultural and cross-system translators, informs the understanding of the elite as "courageous decision makers and

creative minds," pioneer-like "founders and explorers in difficult and often inaccessible terrains" (Zeppelin University 2013). The pursuit of elite education, however, highlights a contrast to the US American conception of education that was allegedly adopted here. Where the American understanding of excellence relies on broad higher education for the entire population, the German discourses on elite education re-renew an etatist, differentiated understanding of talent under the conditions of globalization and the knowledge society. The dual training and mass education of Bachelor's programmes are therefore geared towards the specific requirements of students with limited potential and with a clear technical workforce profile. At the same time, higher education as found in Master's programmes, and especially the small number of elite programmes among them, is reserved for a few gifted students only (see Lenhardt and Stock 2009).

The global competition for the best minds and the discourse on brain drain and elite training puts an end to the egalitarian consensus of the German educational and scientific system. Universities now find themselves targeted in the same way that Peters and Waterman (2007) targeted big corporations. While the latter were accused of being outdated as a result of extreme diversification and inflexibility, the former are criticized for their excessive size as well as for the institutional erosion that stems from a lack of coherence between their individual parts. The aim instead is for a "quality-rich inequality," to be achieved "via a self-differentiating higher education and more precisely, a university system, [and] via the production of different profiles and priorities" (Mittelstraß 1996, p. 15). Mittelstraß's concept of excellence adjusts the American idea of excellence to the German science system by conceptualizing it as a complex structure and thus denying the idea of wholly elite universities. Excellence as a concept for research, not for teaching, on a university level, and for individual areas of a highly differentiated science system – in this way limits are set and lines are predetermined early on that are to define the German debate on excellence.

The subsequent discourse on the vertical differentiation of higher education eventually connects to the demand for elite universities in 2003/2004. Since leadership in the market for promising technologies was seen as directly connected to few, yet significantly innovative, research areas in top fields, the planned competition "Brain up! Deutschland sucht seine Spitzenuniversitäten" ("Brain up! Germany searches for its top universities") appears a logical consequence. The years of discussion about

support for top performers in the field of science culminated in the research-focused Excellence Initiative:

> The federal and state governments are obliged to continue their mutual efforts in funding research in order to permanently strengthen Germany's scientific position, improve its international competitiveness and to make top performers in universities and the field of science more visible. Thus the federal and state governments want to set a widespread performance spiral in motion which is dedicated to training top performers and increasing the quality of Germany as a location for higher education and science. (ExV 2005)

The political aim of the Excellence Initiative is to produce a critical mass in the German system of higher education that is visible in global competition. In working toward this goal, it was competition combined with the power of distinction, the belief in the power of innovation of a few top performers, and the radiating effects of excellence on the overall system, as well as the push towards proliferation, concentration and permanent improvement that implemented considerable elements of the modern focus on excellence in the German science system.

After much criticism, especially in the early days of the Excellence Initiative, the programme itself now appears to be successful and without alternative in the mainstream of science and politics. In the face of tight resources and an increasing specialization of the scientific system, only the excellence of a few units of sufficient size can be promoted. However, the aggregate effect of the larger total utility for the scientific system is hardly called into question. It has been confirmed, not only by the awarding science organizations (DFG/WR 2008) but also by the most recent evaluation of the international commission of experts, that the Excellence Initiative has triggered an incontrovertible mobilization thrust: "The Excellence Initiative has made the German university system more dynamic and has become a tangible symbol for the will to improve the international competitiveness of German universities." (IEKE 2016, p. 6). The competition has thus helped to implement crucial elements of the modern orientation toward excellence in the German science system through the honor attached to its title, the belief it shows in the power of innovation, the visibility of a few outstanding figures, the spillover of excellence into the entire system, and the efforts toward making a mark, concentration and constant improvement it represents.

Beyond Excellence

Excellence can be described as originating in a history of the present which aims for a permanent optimization of individuals, collectives and institutions. Rooted in the US discourse, the concept of excellence was imported and frequently translated into the European and, ultimately, the German context. The orientation on excellence in German universities is still focused on research and established elite education particularly, but not as an inherent part of the higher education system as a whole. Where strategies and programmes of excellence in education policy and in educational institutions figure in, they describe vertical differentiation in terms of both results and objectives. In this way, the meritocratic argument of elite education for permanent competition ignores the lack of equal points of departure for those within this competitive environment. Since everyone should be excellent but not everyone can be excellent, narratives on excellence do not dispense with the illusion of equal chances (Bourdieu) but rather renew them.

The excellence discourse is as efficacious as it is fragile. Although there might be much truth in the various critical positions toward excellence, the rationality of excellence continues to win over or disprove its critics. The conservative, egalitarian and functionalist criticisms each fails to address a powerful alternative. The uncertainty as to what is the proper order, quality or matter itself has been created by conservatives, egalitarians and functionalists, and it is this uncertainty that has brought the orientation toward excellence to the fore. It has long been unclear which goods and services we really do or do not need, which athletic or artistic achievements should be valued and which not; binding quality standards have been lost and a societal idea of a good life, too. Excellence thus indicates, for instance with regard to truth or untruth, that both the content of scientific quality and the defining power of science over it need to be addressed (see Maasen 2008, p. 25). Excellence only emerges as an indicator of superiority over others because of an uncertainty as to what the right order, quality or excellence itself is meant to be. The increased complexity of the functional systems, and the uncertainty toward the societal authority of norms, values and knowledge, requires a rationality which nonetheless allows for a classification of the quality of products, services, artistic production and scientific results.

However, it remains undecided whether elite programmes are to be enforced temporarily and based on regional conditions, or whether

thereshould be organizational distinctions for the future. Even more it is questionable whether the elite programmes or excellent course options prove to be tools for the innovation and transformation of university education as a whole. These questions, which I have only touched upon here, provide enough potential for the analysis of further discourses in the education system. Especially in the field of university teaching, this also includes discourses beyond those relating to the elite. If elite education is understood as only one of many forms of higher education, the question can be raised as to how egalitarian perspectives may be enforced. One of the pioneers of excellence demands "not only mercy in terms of averageness and mediocrity, but also a contented dissatisfaction with those concepts" (Mittelstraß 2000, p. 25). In the philosophy of excellence, of course, such tolerance of mediocrity disappears entirely, since the term 'excellence' would be reduced to absurdity without its counterpart.

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CHAPTER 3

Opening the Black Box of the Elitism Dispositif: Graduate Schools in Economics

Jens Maesse

Introduction

Graduate schools[1] are important institutions in the development of universities. As a part of neoliberal higher education reform policies, graduate schools are expected to 'improve' quality and serve discourses of 'excellence.' Against this background, graduate schools are part of power structures that aim at the formation of academic elites. But what is meant by academic elites? How are these elites produced, how do they relate to wider society and how do graduate schools contribute to these processes?

Elite formation processes cannot be generalized across all academic disciplines and they are not identical in all higher education systems. They take a specific form in each national and disciplinary context. This chapter takes a discourse theoretical perspective by applying the term 'elitism dispositif' (Maesse 2016b) in order to flag up the multiple dimensions that influence elite formation processes in economics. The term 'elitism' hereby reflects the constructionist character of elite formation processes as opposed to a hierarchical perspective that centers on economists as a specific elite group. While similar processes can be observed in

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economics departments in many countries (Colander 2007; Fourcade 2009; Lebaron 2014; Dezalay and Garth 2009), this analysis applies to Germany and UK, and takes into consideration transformations in European economics (Maesse 2016b).

This chapter analyzes the formation of doctoral students in specific economics graduate schools based on an in-depth analysis of the discipline in Germany and the UK. However, instead of regarding their formation as a distinct production of an autonomous ruling class – as is common in elite sociology – I will argue that these students should be understood as 'publication cadres' and only as part of a wider discursive setting in the trans-epistemic field of economics. As the product of such graduate schools, the elite economist is in fact a discursively constructed power/knowledge device produced for non-academic purposes and embedded in a complex political-economic context which I have termed the elitism dispositif.[2] This dispositif stretches beyond the academic world into media, business, and politics. It manifests how and which economic knowledge can be transported as scientific truth, expertise, and advice. Therefore, graduate schools in economics cannot be understood as isolated phenomena that are detached from other fields and discourses in the political economy. They are embedded in wider political, social, and academic contexts.

The graduate school is an integral part of institutional-discursive technologies. It provides necessary resources for doctoral students to develop particular skills and specific social relations in order to publish in top journals regularly. Such schools serve as an ecology for the construction of discourses of academic excellence and should be understood as a phenomenon related to discourses of power.

The chapter is structured as follows: I will first explain the meaning of the term 'elitism dispositif' and outline the theoretical and methodological foundations of this concept. I use a Foucauldian power analysis complemented with approaches from Bourdieuian field theory and a sociology of (e)valuation. In order to understand the specific role of graduate schools in this dispositif, I will then outline the five institutional-discursive technologies that are manifest in graduate schools, namely (1) the academization of political legitimacy, (2) the implementation and application of evaluation tools as classifications through research rankings, (3) the magnification of the field of economics through the creation of large departments, (4) the concentration of academic capital, such as funds, professorships, and researcher positions, as well as positions on editorial

boards in large economics institutes, and (5) the departmentalization of academic life in economics through the replacement of the institute as a model of academic organization.[3] I will then describe the formation processes within the graduate school in more detail and explain how they are connected to the other technologies and the broader dispositif. I thereby draw on narrative-biographical interviews with postdoctoral researchers in economics who have studied in graduate schools. They describe how (a) academic actors in economics undergo technical training, (b) find a supervisor, (c) enter the economic laboratory, (d) learn to publish in A or B journals, and (e) obtain credentials. I will conclude with a discourse theoretical reflection on elite formation processes.

What Is a Dispositif?

Dispositif Analysis between Power and Discourse

This chapter adopts a dispositif analytical perspective. I understand a dispositif as a complex discursive formation that constitutes social relations as power relations and structures the perception of inequality (Foucault 1980; Maesse and Hamann 2016). A dispositif includes inequality and exclusion, but it cannot be reduced to a fixed hierarchical structure; accordingly, a dispositif is not identical to an epistemic culture. It is structurally embedded and based on institutional scarcities. From a dispositif analytical viewpoint, social structures of inequality are not simply reproduced by social practices; they change through discursive re-articulations. Epistemic cultures and discourses should not be understood as self-sufficient micro-practices. Rather, they are embedded in dynamic hierarchies and floating inequalities.

The analysis thus emphasizes the role of language, specific practices, and technologies in the construction of academic disciplines (Foucault 1972, 1990). It critically draws on the sociology of (e)valuation (Lamont 2009) and Bourdieu's capital theory (1989) but differs from these approaches in two distinct ways. The former allows for investigation into the active micro-sociological formations and transformations of distinct hierarchies and social relations (e.g. Sauder and Espeland 2009; Hamann 2016) but abstains from constituting a wider analytical perspective on power relations. The latter provides a strong power-related perspective by introducing capital and field formation processes but assumes a certain hierarchical fixity of elites and power. The dispositif analytical approach

insists on the social-constructivist nature of elites and is skeptical about (often implicit and sometimes explicit) hierarchical determinism. Thus, the term 'elitism,' which I apply in this chapter for the dispositif in German and UK economics, does not refer to fixed positions and institutionalized social groups. On the contrary, it relates to the way in which power is based on specific technologies and produces specific behavior, which manifests structural inequalities and exclusions through capital accumulation and concentration processes in an academic discipline (Maesse 2015a).

The Elitism Dispositif in Economics and the Trans-epistemic Field

The formation and education of researchers in economics cannot be disconnected from the wider political economy, the political system and the economy, or from media discourses and policy debates (Maesse 2015b; Jessop 2004; Lebaron 2006). In contrast to other academic disciplines, economics transcends academia and creates a trans-epistemic field that connects markets, politics, and the media as sub-fields in a specific way (see Dezalay and Garth 2009; Desrosières 1998; Lebaron 2014; Fourcade 2009; Hall 1989; Morgan 2003; Callon 1998) (see Figure 3.1).

Each sub-field represents a social context in which economists are involved in discursive positioning practices as media experts, advisers,

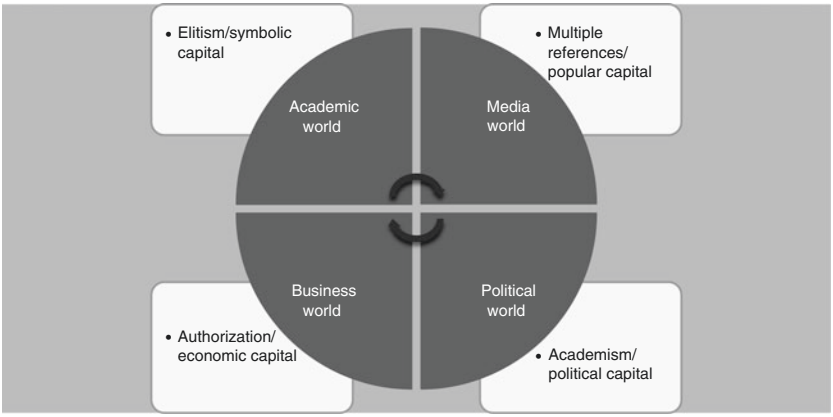

Figure 3.1 Trans-epistemic field of economics (Maesse 2015b, p.290)

researchers, consultants, and so forth. In order to fulfill this discursive role, economists follow particular positioning rules (elitism, multiple reference, academism, or authorization[4]) and produce a particular sort of capital (symbolic, popular, political, or economic) (Maesse 2015b; Fitzgerald and O'Rourke 2016). To ensure their role as experts in their respective sub-fields, economists have to rely on and translate different sorts of capital from other contexts. Symbolic capital generated by academia is particularly important in ensuring legitimacy in the other sub-fields. Established economic experts benefit from this symbolic capital and are regarded as legitimate political advisers. Through their exposition, they then can act as media experts on TV shows and in newspaper articles, thereby reinforcing their position in the other sub-fields. In this way, economic experts never act within single sub-fields but move across the interface of the trans-epistemic field (represented by the divisions between the sub-fields). Hence, they also ensure the intensive, discursive circulation of economic knowledge (Maesse 2015b).

Graduate schools in economics departments in Germany and the UK are at the core of these complex processes. They must be understood within this wider realm of economic knowledge diffusion and circulation, and specifically through the way in which the academic sub-field is structured. Economics does not only differ from other disciplines due to its strong societal diffusion and influence but also in the rigidity with which it ensures the formation of elite economists as the producers of symbolic capital. Graduate schools are in fact only a part of five discursive technologies that structure economic knowledge production in the academic field and for the trans-epistemic field. They can only be understood in relation to these other discursive technologies. Economics graduates are dependent on a specific academization of political legitimacy with which (1) they can transcend their epistemic field as experts, (2) their legitimacy is maintained through success in the specific evaluation practices of their research, (3) they have to establish visibility as part of larger academic structures, and (4) thereby ensure the concentration of academic capital within these structures. Finally, (5) these academic structures need to adopt a departmental structure that fosters teamwork and builds strong academic networks to assure that these technologies remain in place.

I have referred to the interconnection between the five technologies and their discursive hegemony within the discipline of economics as an elitism dispositif (see Figure 3.2). Based on my previous research on economics (Maesse 2015a,b, 2016a,b), I will outline each of the

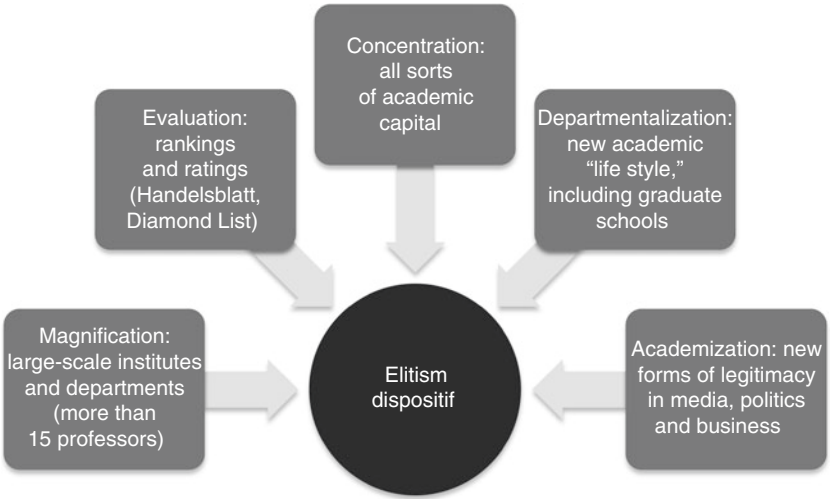

Figure 3.2 Constitution of the elitism dispositif in economics

technologies to present the environment in which graduate schools must be understood.

Elements of the Elitism Dispositif and the Role of Graduate Schools

Academization of Political Legitimacy

Since the end of the nineteenth century, both the modern nation-state and the economy have increasingly been influenced by the economics professions, university-based knowledge, and economic concepts (Desrosières 1998; Morgan 2003; Coats 1993). The first half of the twentieth century was characterized by the foundation of economics institutions (i.e. statistical bureaus, ministries, central banks, think-tanks, and research institutes), the formation of economic management knowledge (i.e. Keynesian macro-economic theory, expectation utility theory, new Keynesianism and game theory), and the constitution of classification instruments (i.e. statistics, econometrics, and gross domestic product (GDP)). The period after 1970 until today, on the other hand, has

progressively been shaped by the systematic construction of symbolic capital (reputation and legitimacy) especially through Nobel Prize awards, the prominent roles of economists from elite departments in the media, central banks, governments, international organizations, and financial markets, as well as an orientation toward excellence in economics research (MacKenzie 2006; Dezalay and Garth 2009; Hirschman and Popp Berman 2014; Lebaron 2014; Fitzgerald and O'Rourke 2016). However, 'excellence' has no inherent quality; discourses of excellence in research are understood as symbolic capital as they construct reputations and prepare the ground for a certain form of academic authority that connects the dispositif to the political economy. As a particular form of power, the dispositif responds to certain legitimation requirements in the media, politics, and the economy (Langenohl 2011; Leins 2013; Wansleben 2013). This external link defines the framework in which discourses of excellence take place and are meaningful. Symbolic capital (i.e. academic reputation) supplements and replaces instrumental capital (scientific capital as technical skills) as a source and a medium for power struggles within the political economy. Accordingly, the term 'academization' refers to a change in legitimation patterns in society (Lebaron 2006). The academic reputation of particular economic experts influences their perceived credibility and authority in the media, in political debates and as advisers, as well as in business and administration consulting (Maesse 2016a). This has led to a growing societal demand for academic credentials and professional authority (Maesse 2015b).

Evaluation of Research Practice

In the 1970s, in response to growing demands for economic expertise in financial markets, businesses, politics, and the media, the academic discipline of economics increasingly began to distinguish between 'top research' and 'standard research.' Beginning in the United States, a new hierarchical elite logic was introduced, according to which the

> professional establishment is said to control directly or indirectly the selection of officers of the American Economic Association's publications and other leading professional journals, the winners of the principal honors and awards, and the allocation of major research funds through the peer review system employed by the National Science Foundation and the principal private grant-giving agencies. (Coats 1993, p. 408)

This development was expanded to the UK in the 1980s (Lee et al. 2013) and to other European countries, such as Germany, in the 1990s (Maesse 2015a). The introduction of rankings and the replacement of the traditional publication system in the humanities (monographs) with the journal system (papers) (Laband and Piette 1994) pushed forward this elite and the orientation toward excellence. Today, symbolic hierarchies are constituted by discourses of classification, which are determined by rankings of journals and publications (Diamond List in the UK, Handelsblatt ranking in Germany), in combination with discourses of excellence, which use a particular style of academic communication (papers and presentations) aimed at 'top publications' and 'quality research.' This contrasts with the typically uncoordinated and anarchistic way in which papers, contributions, and monographs are published and presentations are given in many social sciences and humanities departments (Lamont 2009, pp. 53–106).

The Magnification of Institutes and Departments

In order to translate the symbolic classes constructed by rankings and ratings into material hierarchies of social inequality, large institutes and departments are founded or taken over for the production of discourses of excellence. Different strategies of magnification can be detected using a study on practices in Germany and a comparative study on the UK (Maesse 2015a, pp. 75–114; Maesse 2016a). In Germany, universities such as Mannheim, Frankfurt, Bonn, and Munich already had large economics institutes with more than 20 professors before their transformation toward the elitism dispositif. At these centers, magnification refers to the management and further development of the departments through particular recruitment strategies, the foundation of new units (such as the House of Finance in Frankfurt), and particular joint ventures with existing research institutes (such as in Munich and Mannheim).

In the UK, magnification took a different pathway. For instance, in Oxford, the old college system was replaced by a department system. As one interviewee explained, this was achieved through a large-scale appointment and investment strategy, which began in 2000 with the recruitment of several professors from Warwick and London. Thus, in a nutshell, magnification in the UK and Germany led to the formation of four to six institutions in each country that are competitive enough to enter into what I refer to as academic elitism. Even if small economics

institutes imitate and reproduce the practices of these larger centers at the top of the hierarchy, their chance of success will be limited unless they adapt to the rules of the dispositif.

Concentration of Academic Capital

The construction, maintenance, and further development of large economics institutes and departments with around 15 or more professorships lead to concentration and departmentalization processes. Today, all kinds of valuable academic resources (such as funds, competitive research, academic positions, and awards) are funneled into a handful of large departments and institutes. In the UK, for instance, almost all funds distributed by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and its successor, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), are allocated to a small number of departments. Of the 35 economics departments that participated in the RAE in 2008, only seven received more than £700,000 in 2006–07: Essex, London School of Economics (LSE), and Oxford each received more than two million pounds, UCL received around one million pounds while Warwick, Bristol and Cambridge each received over £700,000. York, Nottingham, and East Anglia received more than £500,000 each, a further 12 departments received more than £100,000, and the rest of the participating departments each received less than £100,000.[5] For a variety of reasons, the hierarchies between 'elite' and 'non-elite' departments in Germany are more or less flat. Nevertheless, large departments have more funds and appoint professors with higher academic positions and higher publication rates in high-scoring journals (Maesse 2015a, p.90ff.). Large institutes and departments now attract a particular type of internationally visible researcher; these researchers are well connected within networks of economists and have held positions in other elite departments globally. As a result, large departments are at a competitive advantage in terms of collecting and concentrating the forms of academic capital required for participation in discourses of excellence.

Departmentalization of Institutes and Colleges

Today, large departments with vast amounts of academic capital are the perfect setting for cultural change in academia. The old national academic traditions of the German humanist professor and the culturally elite British intellectual, which are represented respectively by the professor-

dominated 'institute' and the lecturer at a British 'college,' have been replaced by a new type of team-oriented researcher. The lingua franca is now American English; research is published in journals, papers are presented and discussed in standardized sequences at seminars, workshops, and conferences, the economic 'model' is the cognitive frame of economic thinking, and the social-work unit is a supervisor-led network of collaborating professors, who meet in the department to work together on papers and prepare the ground for connecting with the right researchers. Within dense academic networks, 'departments' have become places of team collaboration, social interaction, and scholarly graduation. The department is the place where a particular type of academic from a kind of academic upper class can engage in academic exchange with peers.

This is the environment in which economics graduate schools can develop as the institutional backbone of teaching and training in a post-individualistic academic organization. Professors and researchers are no longer isolated specialists in their area of expertise, who generally only meet colleagues at other institutes, universities, workshops, conferences, or via email. Rather, departments have become places where academic collaboration and discussion are kept within a single geographical location. Here, diverse forms of interaction and exchange are encouraged through regular team meetings, brown-bag seminars, and other forms of social interaction. In these settings, it is important to know what is going on in editorial boards, to meet reviewers and project collaborators, to discuss special methods, and to keep up to date with the latest 'research frontier.' Departments have therefore become sites to found and build graduate schools as institutions for the education and training of 'publication cadres.'

Economics Graduate Schools

Academization, evaluation, magnification, departmentalization, and concentration constitute an environment that fosters the construction of graduate schools and assigns them a particular social role for the maintenance of the elitism dispositif in economics. Graduate schools function as a technology and a gateway; they provide economists with all the resources, expectations, constraints, and opportunities necessary to enter into discourses of excellence. When I refer to graduate schools in the elitism dispositif, I mean those that manifest and integrate the technologies explained above. In Germany, such schools can be found in

Mannheim, Munich, Bonn, and Frankfurt. In recent decades, graduate schools in Europe have developed in different institutional and disciplinary contexts (Bosbach 2009). They have changed their roles, meanings, and social structures according to the context in which they are embedded (Bloch and Mitterle 2017). Such schools have also been established in small and middle-sized departments at the periphery of the dispositif, mostly in cooperation with other institutes and/or economic research institutes of a similar size. However, these smaller graduate schools have not reached a position, size, or magnitude to compete with those schools which are central to the functioning of the dispositif. They have not yet become exclusive sites for the formation of publication cadres in economics.

The graduate schools at the center of the elitism dispositif have a very formalized and rigid structure, which leads PhD candidates along a particular path. It can start at different levels (post-bachelor's or post-Master's) and adjust to local and national circumstances. However, this path follows a common formal structure, which fosters professionalization and the formation of academic biographies across the dispositif. Over a period of three to five years, PhD economists progress through graduate school by following different technologies that transform them step by step into academic actors who are then able to participate in discourses of excellence. A progression through graduate school implies a transformation of non-academic individuals (BA or MA economists) into academic actors through specific institutional technologies. Students are socialized into the complex setting of the dispositif through technical training (first year), finding a supervisor (second year), entering the economic laboratory (second and third years), publishing (third and fourth years), and valuation through credentialization (fifth year). Within this structure, the supervisors and the entire group observe and monitor whether and how young economists are progressing. Once PhD candidates have been accepted at a graduate school, it is in the interests of that school to ensure that the candidates graduate and do so at a level that enables them to become members of a prestigious group. Consequently, commitment is high and the dropout rates are very low.

In order to account for the specific connection between the social practices in graduate schools and the elitism dispositif, I have drawn on an analysis of postdoctoral researchers' accounts of how they experienced their education in graduate school. I conducted 24 interviews[6] with economists working at German universities with graduates schools,

which were founded after the year 2000. Because economists in the elitism dispositif are based at different departments in different countries during their careers, most of my interviewees completed their PhDs in the UK, the United States, France, Germany, or Italy, and later moved to a new economics department with a similar structure (including a graduate school). Therefore, the conversations not only addressed how to study in a graduate school (in the narrow sense) but also how to become an economist in an academic context that is characterized by elitization processes (Colander 2007). I have focused on those economists who chose an academic career, even though not all graduates from these schools have stayed in academia. The interviews focused on the postdoctoral researchers' experiences in graduate schools, as well as on the functioning of newly founded graduate schools in Germany. These interviews were supplemented by interviews with doctoral students appointed at German graduate schools. The interviews presented below were conducted with postdocs. Each interviewee was asked to narrate a story about the different stages of their academic career, starting with the moment they decided to apply for a scholarship in a graduate school and ending with their current situation. The interviews were analyzed with a sequence analytical methodology adjusted to a Foucauldian perspective on technologies of power. This means that the sequence analysis concentrated less on professional biographies and more on reconstructing the institutionalized technologies of power (Foucault 1980, 1991) that made these biographies possible.

First Stage: Technical Training

The first step in the career of a PhD student in economics is technical training. Figure 3.3 illustrates the formal structure of Mannheim Graduate School, which is similar to other graduate schools of leading economic departments in Germany and the UK.

The courses in the first year aim at bringing all entrants to the same level. They are standardized and assume a linearity that parallels the progression of students in the school. As one interviewee recalls:

> In graduate school, we usually take courses in the first year. We are, in fact, a group of 20 people doing a PhD, who are in the first year, basically. We do all the courses in micro, macro, econometrics (the basics) again in order to know in detail about what is happening in these fields. After that, in second

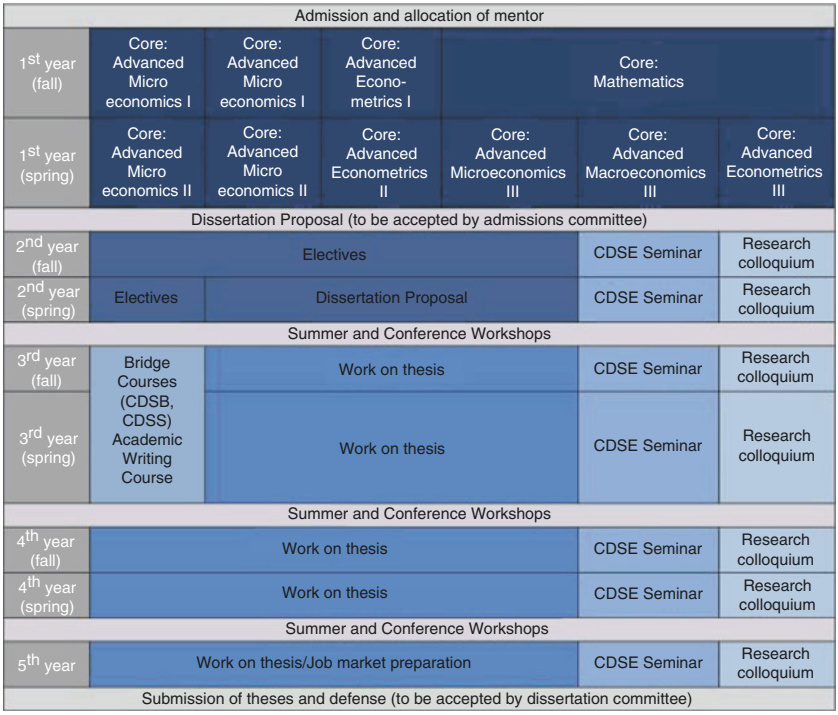

Figure 3.3 Formal structure of the graduate school at the University of Mannheim

> year, we have field crosses, i.e. electives, possibly doing more advanced courses, such as game theory, applied micro, experimental or behavioral economics. Only in second year, we have an orientation in which we reflect on what is being done in various fields. At this point, you have, I believe, the opportunity to address specific research questions that are really relevant.[7] (economist E)[8]

Technical training for all students, regardless of their individual knowledge level, was universally established in the field of economics in Germany after the 1990s (Colander 2007; Lenger and Taaffe 2014) and usually comprises macro- and micro-economics, statistics, mathematics, and/or econometrics. This ensures a common knowledge base among

economists and establishes a paradigmatic fixity. By completing these courses, students become entitled to do practical research but also to identify relevance within the field. As the interviewee explains, in their second year, students can reflect on what is done in various fields and what they wish to specialize in. In 'field crosses,' PhD students look at different research areas, such as monetary policy, financial economics, environmental economics, industrial economics, and so forth. Students receive a general introduction to different research topics, methods, and field related problems. At this stage, economists are not yet members of a particular research field. Rather, students are looking for a potential future pathway in economics research. The PhD program thus functions as a bridge between the study program (BA and MA) and a student's acceptance into the academic community of researchers (starting with the postdoctoral period). The young economists are entering a complex field of economic knowledge that will lead them through the particular expectations of the academic world of economics. The general function of this career phase in the socialization process can be expressed as a 'flagging up' of knowledge areas, as well as an introduction to and manifestation of the fundamental symbolic classifications that characterize the discipline.

In addition to disciplinary aspects, students also become members of a postgraduate class. They meet potential colleagues and friends and lay foundations for a highly selective network. This is the first step toward making a 'membership claim' in economics. It provides individuals with a collective identity as part of a group, or as Bourdieu would have put it, an *esprit de corps*.

Second Stage: Finding a Supervisor

As they go through the introductory stages, economists have to decide with whom and in which area(s) of research they want to work for the next few years. This is one of the most important decisions because the choice of supervisor(s) influences many aspects of their further studies. Opting for a particular supervisor is closely connected to choosing a particular field of research and vice versa, as the following quote illustrates:

> Then, it was clear to me: I must stay in empirical economics. I have oriented my research to what my supervisor has as research priorities. (economist D)

It is important to note that economists in graduate schools have to choose one or two supervisors – from of a pool of professors appointed by the department – with whom they can build a professional, team-oriented relationship over a number of years. The department must have a critical mass of at least 15 professors if it is to encompass a full or at least a wide range of research topics in economics. Additionally, conceptual, methodological, and personal issues are settled together with the supervisor, who helps PhD students (and postdocs) to keep up to date with the 'research frontier' in order to develop an appropriate research question. Access to this sort of information is crucial as it offers students an insight into how to get papers published in top journals. The supervisor can advise the student on what type of research question is most likely to be of interest to such journals. Economist E described the student–supervisor relationship as follows:

> We get some advice from experienced people, e.g. Max Miller [name changed], my colleague is my mentor. He is a full professor, I am an associate professor, and on such questions I can ask my mentor for advice and just see: where can I send the paper, and how could I go about this? (economist E)

For many young economists, the supervisor functions as a nodal point in the evolving network of social relations with other PhDs and postdocs. The supervisor also provides a link to other important external contacts (e.g. members of editorial boards and reviewers of journal submissions). A PhD student can turn to their supervisor with any kind of question or problem, ranging from professional advice to personal or emotional issues. Economist A describes the relationship as follows:

> One also gets feedback from the professor on how to proceed and so on, and especially gets the motivation to keep going. (economist A)

The supervisor is no longer comparable to a humanistically minded professor but rather acts as a career consultant who helps on various issues providing standard advice, contact with editorial boards, and even emotional support to some extent. When economists successfully pass through this second technology of graduate school, it means that many further decisions have already been made. Having chosen a supervisor, the economist's next career step is the path to their first journal paper.

Third Stage: Entering the Economic Laboratory

After leaving the 'field crosses,' PhD students enter a phase which I call the 'economic laboratory'; this involves a process of establishing exactly they want to work on. The thorough study of papers that tackle concrete research processes during their first two years of study means that PhD students have learned to identify and apply a viable research question, an appropriate method and data, and a realistic time frame for conducting research and developing a paper. At this point, students develop a serious research question and the transformation from graduate student to researcher begins as individual students become specialists on their research agendas. In the laboratory phase, PhD candidates enter a special research field (i.e. research on a special model class under specific assumptions or comparing particular data sets in development economics and so forth) in order to find a research question that has the potential for a paper, and which could be published in an A or B class journal. This is the point at which PhD students usually begin their own research projects. Economist G described this process as follows:

> Optional courses [field crosses] are offered to introduce specific issues in more detail. Many of these optional courses are based on the research interests of the professors. This helps us to become familiar with or assess possible research interests and topics. The professor does research on this or that topic, and I could choose him/her as a supervisor. And it just happened that way. I found two courses with a similar orientation, two professors who then, ultimately, became my supervisor and my second supervisor. (economist G)

This technology is probably the most complex in the process, and it can be long and difficult because a PhD student has to manage several issues at this stage. They learn how to classify research outcomes vis-à-vis journal ratings in order to understand how to carry out research that is considered valuable enough to be published in an A journal. They also learn how to read papers and to understand very specialized mathematical argumentation. They must distinguish between relevant and non-relevant models and find their own contributions to a highly specialized debate and contributions with enough potential to stand out and get published in an A journal. As the next interview quote shows, economists develop a feeling for their potential position in a research field when they reach the 'research frontier':

> And so it was for me, I basically listened to an advanced lecture on experimental economics and I could see what issues people have worked on in the

> past five years. So I reached the 'research frontier' and this was the moment when my personal interest developed, and I started to go into the literature to read more about it. This was experimental economics literature on strategic thinking, and, step by step, my experimental design gradually developed. (economist E)

The 'research frontier' is more than just a gateway to new research; it is the point at which PhD students can position themselves as economists and start their work on a model with new assumptions, or contribute to a special research field with new data. Reading, understanding, experimenting, and proceeding through complex issues lead up to this point. All the skills and knowledge that PhD students have developed so far help these young researchers to find academic identities by defining their academic projects. In this third stage of academic socialization, the 'supervisor' technology and 'laboratory' technology interact and support each other, as the quote above from economist G illustrates. It often takes one or two years to progress through this stage, and then the publishing process begins.

Fourth Stage: Publishing

The publishing process relies upon particular skills and social networks that PhD economists have built up in earlier stages. It is also a technology that leads young academics through the processes of 'trial and error' and 're-submit' step by step. In order to publish a paper in a top journal, PhD students need to understand the rules of the journal system. They have to know how to apply the respective selected quotations practice, as well as how to develop and adjust publication and argumentation strategies to the journal they are targeting. The other papers in a specific set of journals define what will be considered a relevant research question. It is not the value a researcher places on a research question that makes it relevant but rather the potential position of such research in the journal system. This requires extensive knowledge of the status and relevance of journals in the field, as illustrated by a quote from my interview with economist L:

> In economics, there are five journals that are considered 'general interest journals'. There is actually a very strong consensus. This list is virtually set in stone. Below this list, there are still 'second general interest journals', i.e. journals that are also very important and good, but which are slightly below

> the top five. Then there are all kinds of 'field journals', which cover certain sub-fields. And, in conclusion, there is a list of 20–30 journals which are still important. This list should really be known well. Because then you always know what is happening. And somewhere in these journals, there are also, typically, the most important articles in the literature lists. And at least some of the important papers are quoted there. This is perhaps not a good indicator, but it is a practical one for selecting relevant papers. But when you realize: okay, I found nothing about this particular subject in the journal, then you have not really found the right starting point. Any literature that is somehow important to the community, or has an impact on it, has made its way into the major journals. (economist L)

As this quote shows, young economists go through a preparation process of positioning and classifying other economists' research. In order to become a relevant member of the academic community, economists must find a 'starting point' for their research projects in the journal system. 'Good research' is defined by the status of the journal in which the paper is published. Only literature that is worthy of being cited by others is published in top class journals; the argument and thesis developed in a paper must match other papers of the same class.

In graduate schools, PhD students are trained to find their way into the 'major journals.' To publish articles in such journals indicates their membership in a particular social class of academics. The path to the 'right' journal is synonymous with the path PhD students must follow to reach future positions in the 'upper class' of the economist community.

There is a general discussion, evaluation, and presentation process that can take up to three (or more) years before a first paper is published. The very long and intense process of submitting and re-submitting a paper, known as 'revise and resubmit,' can require months or years of intense reworking of the paper, which involves long comments from and deep discussions with the reviewer. In the words of economist C,

> [t]he publication process in economics is very slow: you have written a working paper, you have presented it at various seminars and conferences, you have incorporated comments and ideas. And now you say: this paper is finished now, I can submit it to a journal. And it may well take a year until you get the first answer. Then you get the 'referee reports'. That is, other experts in the field write a report of what they like, what they want you to change. Then, it is either rejected or you just

> get 'revise–resubmit'. It then often takes two or three years until the paper is finally published. (economist C)

The process of publishing involves different steps and stages even before the first submission to a journal. The first draft is usually presented at a brown-bag seminar in which scholars from the department participate and help to improve the paper. Here, again, a critical mass of economists in a position to qualify a paper as a 'good paper' with a 'top class perspective' is necessary to institutionalize such discourses of excellence. This discussion is often very direct, 'efficient' and goal-oriented because the social setting of a department seminar is understood as a kind of internal area for 'raw' and 'honest' comments.

At the next stage of this process, PhD students go on tour, from workshop to workshop and from conference to conference, in order to present and improve the paper and get in touch with colleagues and potential reviewers while preparing the paper for a first submission to a journal. This journey takes young scholars who are marked with the promise of elitism through the dispositif since they are usually invited to meet particular people in particular institutes in top level economics departments. Because it is not deemed possible to have 'good research' at every level of economics, exposure to economists in other 'top level' departments confers a particular degree of 'quality' on a young economist. Thus, 'publishing a paper' implies much more than just writing an article. It is a complex, preconditional process that requires language and writing skills on the one hand, and access to particular people, information and support on the other. The graduate schools provide the necessary resources (contacts, funding, and reputation) for initiating and advancing the publication process.

The elitism dispositif contributes to shrinking the big world of economics, which includes thousands of people around the world publishing in the same journals, to a small 'club' to which access is strictly limited. Graduate schools play an important role in these selection, limitation, and exclusion processes. Quantitative research on different disciplines in the United States comes up with similar results. By aligning recruitment patterns of academic departments with reputational consistency among research and teaching rankings, Shin-Kap Han (2003) shows that among a variety of disciplines, economics stands out: it is the discipline that shows the highest closure among subcultures with low social mobility between different classes of departments while at the same time also showing a high

level of hierarchy within the discipline. This means that PhD students from elite departments will be appointed as postdocs in other elite departments, whereas PhD students from non-elite departments will not achieve such appointments.

Therefore, PhD students, as well as postdocs and professors in 'departmentalized' faculties, have access to all of the economic and social resources they need to ritualize a 'discourse of excellence.' But from our critical-constructionist perspective, this discourse is not about 'excellence,' either as an 'elite position' or as an 'evaluative culture.' Instead, the discourse aims to produce symbolic capital that is submitted to, and required by, the trans-epistemic field; it is transformed into discursive power by economic experts in the media, in political discourse, in the financial world, and in companies and business consultancies (see Maesse 2015b, 2016a,b). As a result, the entire cult of elitism, which is embedded in and enabled by the dispositif, cannot be understood adequately without fully recognizing the context of the trans-epistemic field and the symbolic economy that is constituted by it (see Figure 3.1).

Fifth Stage: Valuation through Credentialization

'Good research,' and even 'excellent research,' could not exist without the formal act of valuation acquired through credentials (Collins 1979; Reitz 2016). When PhD students have moved through and are socialized by all of the technologies outlined above, they obtain a set of formal credentials.

The first credential for PhD students is the formal permission from the department to apply with their 'job market paper' for a postdoc position. The application process takes place via a particular American Economic Association web page, the JOE (Job Openings for Economists[9]) network, in which most elitist economics departments in Europe participate. This formal procedure occurs between January and May each year and may result in various meetings, interviews, and presentations, and ultimately, a work contract with another department, or another institution, such as a central bank. With the 'signature' of the institution, PhD economists try to apply for a position in a department that is on a similar level to the department they are graduating from. Studying on a PhD program at a university such as LSE, Warwick, Mannheim, or Bonn already symbolizes some form of valuation even before a candidate has successfully defended his PhD.

The second credentialization process takes place when the first paper is published in a high-ranking journal. This achievement is crucial because it proves that the economist is capable of publishing at a particular level. It deems them worthy of inclusion in the dispositif. This usually happens after a postdoctoral appointment and, for many economists, it serves as an official initiation into the elite class. Following this consecration, the economist will first aim for further publications and soon after for a professorship. The publication of an economist's second, third, and subsequent papers, and their appointment as a professor in a prestigious department signal the completion of the simple reproduction cycle of the 'discourse of excellence.'

The young professors are now strongly embedded in specific elite networks. They obtain positions on particular editorial boards and accumulate all the other academic capital that is a prerequisite for being listed in particular rankings and ratings. In Germany, it is important to be named in the *Handelsblatt* ranking; in the UK, a good score in the REF is essential. Positive listings in these two national ranking systems lead to further applications for better positions and for larger and tighter networks, which allow professors to get in touch with PhD students and postdoctoral researchers with whom they can co-author future papers. This system of co-authoring is of particular importance for elite economists to continue publishing extensively in top journals, and it greatly increases publishing potential beyond the limits of the individual academic. Thus, the constitution of valuable co-author 'publication networks' in graduate schools as suppliers of talent becomes a precondition for reaching the top levels of discourses of excellence; this can in turn be credentialized by high positions in politics, banking and consulting, or even the receipt of a Nobel Prize.

Conclusion

This chapter opened the black box of the elitism dispositif, revealing it as a material myth and a power apparatus. It is certainly a power/knowledge device because knowledge about excellence, research, writing, reading, lecturing, and publishing is produced to gain access to power relations within academia and beyond. Graduate schools are important institutions because they educate and train a small group of carefully selected PhD students, who are in an extraordinary position compared to other young economists. The remarkable character of the discursive position of this

class of academics is indicated by their later success in publishing regularly – not only occasionally – in highly rated academic journals. Through this regular practice, elite economists are able to respond with discourses of excellence.

This class of elite economists is both a cause and an effect of power relations. Therefore, it can be understood neither as 'excellent' nor as an 'academic elite' in a purely structural sense. These academics have a very particular position and role within the dispositif, which allows for the production of an elite myth that can be re-appropriated as reputation in the media, politics, and the business world (Maesse 2016a). In contrast to classical elite theory, elite economists do not entirely dominate the field because their practices are produced and controlled by the dispositif itself. Elite economists can be understood as a special form of academic 'workers.' They are 'contracted' by the dispositif to produce symbolic capital, 'exploited' by society through the delivery of symbolic capital, and 'expropriated' by both the dispositif and society through a far-reaching heteronomy and social control over their academic work. Discourses of excellence support heteronomy over academics – even on the winning side of academic competition – and restrict realms of academic freedom and self-determination to small areas beyond the world of official categories of academic evaluation.

Graduate schools do not single-handedly make an economist since economics – as a form of expertise and knowledge production – consists of many cultures, professions, and knowledge producers (Maesse 2015b). Economics is not a singular and homogeneous academic culture but a complex system of power and discourse embedded in the trans-epistemic field. Graduate schools contribute to this field because they are important institutions for the production of an excellence myth. Discourses of excellence, however, do not produce 'good' or 'better' research, nor do they exercise crude power against other actors and cultures. They construct academic reputations as symbolic capital, which is a form of soft power. Symbolic capital will circulate through the trans-epistemic field and can be re-appropriated in media contexts, in policy advice, and in banking consulting (Maesse 2015b). Without this possibility of re-appropriation, the entire elite myth, including the institutions and ritualized discourses that enact it, would immediately collapse. To understand why graduate schools in economics departments have spread, a more in-depth examination of the entire logic of the dispositif is required.

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Yet, the inner lives of these schools, on which this article has attempted to shed light, evolve as a particular kind of academic culture. This culture directs economists towards a hierarchy of journals to which they must match their academic aspirations. The individual researcher is no longer autonomous in deciding about the relevance and quality of research. As Bräuninger et al. (2011) have shown, journal ratings and rankings are not mere 'facades'; they are considered to determine relevance and reputation. Therefore, academic creativity is directed toward achieving high-ranking scores and not toward a fascination with 'discovery' or 'theory,' as Bourdieu's idea of academic 'illusio' would suggest (Bourdieu 1988). Academic work has become more rationalized, business-like, and professionalized since the goals, methods, and time frames of work are quite clear to those within the system. Academic work also seems to be very socially and team oriented, and power within academia is less arbitrarily connected to particular people, at least within the department (respective graduate school). Thus, the elitism dispositif refers to the construction of a new, globally oriented kind of academic culture that is embedded in and enabled through transformations in the legitimacy patterns of the political economy.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Julian Hamann, Alexander Lenger and Alexander Mitterle for their ideas, critical comments and discussions.
2. The analysis in this article refers to a certain type of graduate school, namely graduate schools in elitist European economics departments (Maesse 2016b). Graduate schools at small economics departments (which tend to copy the model of the elitist departments) and graduate school in other disciplines might be similar in structure and outlook, however, the social context of these schools is different, as I will elaborate below. For this reason, even if different graduate schools in different disciplinary and power contexts look similar in their formal structure, these graduate schools differ in terms of their academic output, political-economic embeddedness, everyday life, social composition, career options, amount and composition of capital, and in many other respects.
3. The technologies can only be addressed briefly to underline this argument. They are presented in more detail in Maesse (2015a, Chapter 3).
4. These positioning rules refer to certain logics of the constitution of discursive actors. 'Elitism,' for example, means that economists use an elite logic to become visible as academic actors. By contrast, 'multi reference' covers

the discursive practices which must be applied in media discourses in order to be recognized as a kind of economic expert (or 'star' economist). However, in business contexts, economists act as authorities and refer to their academic credentials in order to obtain a powerful position in the political world (for further details, see Maesse 2015b, p.290ff).

5. All results are available at: http://www.rae.ac.uk/submissions/submissions.aspx?id=34&type=uoa
6. The interviews were conducted in German and translated into English.
7. For further information about the context of these interviewees, see Maesse (2015a), Chapter 4
8. The interviews are anonymized and the letter G points to the interview script.
9. The JOE network is accessible via the American Economic Association at: https://www.aeaweb.org/joe.

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PART II

Disruptive Policies since the 1990s

CHAPTER 4

Stratification through a Binary Degree Structure in Finnish Higher Education

Ulpukka Isopahkala-Bouret

The aim of this chapter is to analyze stratification in Finnish higher education by examining the establishment of a binary degree structure at Master's level. Degree structure reforms that imply the standardization of study programs and the integration into a unitary higher education system, such as the Bologna process, which introduced a two-tiered study system, may also have stratificatory effects on the relationship between different institutions across higher education sectors (Bleiklie 2003; Kyvik 2008). Stratification emerges when the vertical differentiation between institutions and different kinds of credentials become institutionalized as differences in status (Teichler 2002). This study first focuses on the consolidation of the binary model in Finnish higher education via the establishment of a professional Master's degree in 2005, parallel to the implementation of the Bologna reforms in Finland. Second, it analyzes reactions to the new degree by actors affiliated with research universities.

The stratificatory effects of degree structures have not been extensively studied in the Finnish context to date. The policy objective of the Finnish

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binary system of higher education is that traditional academic degrees from research universities and the newly established professional degrees from universities of applied sciences should have their own unique profiles but equally high educational standards. Despite the policy intention of retaining two distinct tracks of academic and professional higher education, the different types of institutions compete for status, funding, students, and 'customers' (Rinne 2004). The credentials of graduates from both types of universities are weighed against each other in the labor market. Formally, the 'different but equal' policy principle implies that graduates with degrees from different kinds of higher education institutions should be treated equally in recruitment (Teichler 2007). They should obtain relevant jobs in their occupational fields on the grounds of their professional competence and not according to the reputation and prestige of the university or higher education sector where they received their degree (Kivinen and Nurmi 2010).

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the stratificatory effects of national degree structure reforms, the idea of educational credentialism is adopted in this study from David Brown (2001, 1995) and David Bills (2003, 2004; see also, Bills and Brown 2011). Among social stratification researchers, educational credentialism has various meanings, which are not necessarily consistent with each other[1] (Bills and Brown 2011). The approach pursued in this chapter defines credentialism as a process through which "societies allocate individuals to slots in the occupational hierarchy on the basis of the educational qualifications that the candidates present at the point of hire" (Bills and Brown 2011, p. 1). Accordingly, employers 'use' educational degrees in order to control access to good jobs and high incomes (Bills 2004). Much research that originates from the United States attributes credentialism to the differentiated positions of individual universities within a system of unified mass higher education. However, as Finland and many other European countries have established binary systems, the credentialist argument needs to be adapted to address positional differences between higher education sectors. The question that arises is how degrees from different sectors are connected to advantages or disadvantages in the labor market.

In the following, first, the types of institutions within the Finnish binary system of higher education will be described. Second, attention will be directed to the implementation of a professional Master's degree and the stratificatory effects of the binary degree structure. Third, an analysis will be made of how graduates with an academic Master's degree and employers have reacted to the new professional

Master's degree. Finally, the paradox that stratification occurs as an effect of policies of inclusion will be elaborated.

Context for the Stratification of Finnish Higher Education

The Finnish higher education system is composed of 15 research universities and 26 professionally oriented universities of applied sciences (formerly polytechnics; *Ammattikorkeakoulu* in Finnish). In 2015, research universities awarded 15,200 bachelor's degrees and 15,500 Master's degrees, while universities of applied sciences awarded 23,800 professional bachelor's degrees and 2400 professional Master's degrees (Statistics of Finland 2016a, 2016b).

Finnish higher education is largely funded and controlled by the state and free of tuition fees. Higher education is regarded as a public good, and its importance is emphasized in carrying out the central policy goals of the social-democratic welfare state (see, for example, Välimaa 2001; Ahola 2014). The egalitarian ideals of equal opportunity and widening access were central principles in the development of the mass system from the late 1960s to the late 1980s (Ahola 2014). The expansion of the Finnish higher education sector at that time was closely linked to a welfare state agenda supported by all the major political parties. Regional equality was especially emphasized, partly to prevent an exodus of young people from rural areas. All major provinces were allowed to establish a university (Välimaa 2001). It was not intended to bring extensive diversity or competitiveness, as this first wave of expansion of the higher education sector was limited to the established type of research university. Although founded at different points in time, research universities were expected to remain similar in substance and quality. All universities and university degrees carried high social prestige in Finland. This rank equality was similar to that in other Nordic countries and Germany (Teichler 2002, cf. Stock in this volume).

The system of Finnish higher education underwent dramatic reform in the 1990s. The biggest change was the establishment of a professional, polytechnic sector. As was the trend in many countries, massification and credentialing pressures caused non-tertiary institutions to drift toward the norms of higher education. In Finland, the most advanced part of upper secondary vocational education was integrated into the higher education system by establishing polytechnics. The formal aim was to improve the

quality of higher vocational education and increase the choice of degrees available (Välimaa 2001). With the establishment of the new polytechnic institutions, the number of students almost doubled overnight. The Finnish higher education system was divided into academic and professional tracks,[2] which was generally understood as a dual or binary system (cf. Kyvik 2004).

Official policy and regulations emphasized that the new polytechnic institutions needed to be essentially different in their character and social functions from research universities (Rinne 2004). The latter concentrated on scientific research and had a discipline-oriented curriculum, whereas polytechnics had a work-oriented curriculum and conducted applied research to promote local and regional economic development. However, all Western countries have shown signs of academic drift. To advance their status, non-university institutions increasingly refer to similar narratives and implement similar reforms as traditional research universities (Kyvik 2004). Around ten years after they were established, Finnish polytechnics started to use academic symbols and titles, especially in their international communication. They are now called universities of applied sciences in English, although the Finnish name has not changed. Moreover, universities of applied sciences have strengthened their educational programs, upgraded the qualifications required of their teachers, increasingly conducted (applied) research, and built international alliances.

The Binary System of Master's Degrees

Degree structure reforms have the power to redefine the social order between institutions. The level of the degrees conferred by an institution plays an important role in defining the position it presumably occupies in a rank order (Bleiklie 2003). In the absence of a college tradition like in the United States, the bottom group is composed of institutions that award only bachelor's degrees, while institutions in the top group award all types of academic degrees, including doctorates. Therefore, if institutions in a non-university sector have aspirations toward improving their relative position in a hierarchical order, the ultimate goal is to strive for higher level degrees. In Finland, universities of applied sciences could initially only award professional bachelor's degrees. Nowadays, the academic as well as the professional track can award degrees at the bachelor's and the Master's level; however, the form and content of the degrees are genuinely

different. Furthermore, research universities are the only institutions to deliver doctoral degrees.

The Finnish professional Master's degree was created in the early 2000s and achieved permanent status in 2005. The decision to implement a new kind of Master's degree, rather than simply allowing the universities of applied sciences to award the established academic Master's, was based on a broad consensus. Relevant stakeholders involved in the process[3] agreed that a new degree was needed but stressed its work-oriented nature in order to distinguish it from the traditional academic Master's degree (Pratt et al. 2004).

The new Master's degree was an attempt to level universities of applied sciences (former polytechnics) upward and to offer graduates with a professional bachelor's degree the opportunity to upgrade their credentials within the professional track (Ahola and Galli 2012). One part of institutional leveling, in a credentialist environment, is to open up dead-end educational pathways. It was important for the new institutions to attract prospective students and make them perceive the university of applied sciences as offering them good future opportunities. Furthermore, the decision took away unwanted pressure from the research universities to provide Master's level education for university of applied sciences graduates.

The new right to grant Master's degrees upgraded the universities of applied sciences and made them more equal in status to research universities. However, the type of new degree differed from the traditional Master's degree in many ways (see Table 4.1).

The professional Master's degree had a more pragmatic and work-oriented profile than the academic Master's degree, which was research-based and discipline-oriented. Some traditional professions, like law and medicine, require an academic degree. The two types of degree differed in form and content. Degree programs at research universities were usually designed for full-time study, whereas programs at universities of applied sciences were designed for part-time study and could be completed alongside full-time employment. The final thesis in a professional Master's degree program was defined as a work development project, in contrast to the traditional, research-based Master's thesis. Moreover, the professional Master's degree was legally defined as an adult education degree, and a requirement for admission was three years of work experience after the bachelor's degree.

Table 4.1 Comparison of academic and professional Master's degrees[4]

	Academic Master's degree (cf. MA; MSc)	*Professional Master's degree*
Eligibility of students	Bachelor's degree in the same or related field	Three years of work experience after Bachelor's degree
Length of full-time study	2 years (120 credit points)	1.5 years (90 credit points)
Study fields	21 academic disciplines	8 professional fields
Thesis	Academic Master's thesis	Work development project
Graduates per year (2015)	15,500	2400

Source: Statistics of Finland 2016a, 2016b

In 2005, the same year in which universities of applied sciences established the professional Master's degree, the Bologna process was implemented, and degree structures were reformed accordingly at traditional, research universities. By the time the universities of applied science were established in the 1990s, research universities were reintroducing the academic bachelor's degree, which had been discontinued in the 1980s as a consequence of an earlier degree reform that had embedded bachelor's level courses in a five-year Master's degree. As part of the Bologna process implementation, it became obligatory to have two degree cycles in all disciplines (except medicine and dentistry), and the number of graduates with an academic bachelor's degree increased.

However, in research universities, the Master's degree was (and still is) considered the 'basic degree' and very few students graduated with an academic bachelor's degree without immediately continuing onto graduate studies in the same discipline. The academic community argued that employers would not be interested in hiring graduates with an academic bachelor's degree. Moreover, research universities developed specific Master's programs, including international Master's programs, in which students would be selected via program-specific application and admission procedures. These degree programs were defined for narrower (multi)disciplinary profiles than generic Master's programs. Some programs were designed to be research-intensive in the hope that graduates would continue onto a doctoral program, and some prepared their graduates for leading positions in society. The research universities thus readily adapted to the requirements of the Bologna process while

preserving their higher status, which was further cemented by the distinction between the academic and professional Master's degree.

Yet differentiation between educational credentials is not the product of structural changes alone; cultural processes also play a role in its advancement, creating common beliefs about the superiority of certain degrees and reproducing those beliefs through mutual self-praise among the interest groups involved in the credentialing processes, such as students, academic staff, employers, professional associations, and trade unions (Brown 2001). Attributing status to a particular academic degree is dependent on the relevant parties sharing and acting on the belief in it. Emerging stratification is evident when students and employers perceive growing differences in the reputation and prestige of formally equal educational credentials (cf. Teichler 2002). This is more likely to occur in the view of the established, research universities than that of the new universities of applied sciences, as the latter are trying to elevate their status. The following analysis will therefore consider how the new professional Master's degree is perceived by graduates at research universities.

Reactions among Academic Actors to Emerging Stratification

The analysis is based on 15 interviews conducted in 2009 with at that time recent graduates from research universities. The data was collected within the research project 'Competence and the dual model of the Finnish system of higher education' (2009–2010), in which the relative value of an academic Master's degree and a professional Master's degree was compared and contrasted (Isopahkala-Bouret 2015; Isopahkala-Bouret et al. 2011; Rantanen et al. 2009). The collection of interview data is based on the rhetorical approach of Michael Billig (1987), and recurrent themes are analyzed based on content analysis. Here the analysis focuses on whether the professional Master's degree and the academic Master's degree have equal status in recruitment (cf. Isopahkala-Bouret2015).[5]

The interviews will be illustrated with findings from an employer survey (n = 134), which was also conducted within the research project (Rantanen et al. 2009; Isopahkala-Bouret et al. 2011). Three survey items (employees with different types of Master's degrees have, in practice, different tasks; employees with different types of Master's degrees can use the same job titles; employees with different types of Master's degrees are paid the same salary) and the employers' evaluation of selected

competence claims (Do employers believe that graduates with a certain degree have the required Master's level competence?) will be considered here.[6]

Employers and graduates from the fields of business, health care, and social services participated in the project. These subjects are taught both in research universities and in universities of applied sciences. The participants worked in the public and the private sector, in large and small organizations. Most respondents had a substantial amount of working experience, and the age range was between 27 and 65 years. The employer survey was targeted to those employer representatives who had been involved with recent recruitment in their organization and had some experience of graduates with professional Master's degrees. Most employers (68 percent) held an academic Master's degree. The data collection and analysis processes are presented in detail elsewhere (Rantanen et al. 2009; Isopahkala-Bouret et al. 2011).

Based on the empirical findings, academic actors reacted in four different ways to the new professional Master's degree awarded by the universities of applied sciences: by refusing to recognize the new degree; by fearing to compete with the new degree; by stressing the superiority of academic degrees; and by emphasizing the exclusivity of academic degree programs.

Non-recognition of the New Degree

The number of graduates with a professional Master's degree is marginal in comparison to graduates with an academic Master's degree. At the time the data was collected in 2009, only 1500 individuals in total had graduated with a professional Master's degree since its introduction in 2005, compared with over 10,000 graduates with an academic Master's degree per year (Isopahkala-Bouret et al. 2011). There are now 2400 graduates gaining a professional Master's degree per year (Statistics Finland 2016b). Clearly, the introduction of the professional Master's degree did not trigger a widespread reaction in the research university community. This is simply because most people had not even heard of the new degree at that time, as the following excerpt illustrates:

> I can't say much about it, because I don't really know what the new professional Master's degree consists of. I can't say, because I don't know

> what it is like... Somehow I first started to think of a professional bachelor's degree. (Graduate with an academic Master's degree in business and economics)

The interviewed graduates from research universities knew hardly anything about the new degree (what it is, its scope, who can be admitted to the programs). Only some reported that they had worked directly with someone who had a professional Master's degree. The lack of recognition of the new degree is exacerbated by its confusing title. In Finnish, the professional Master's degree is called *ylempi ammattikorkeakoulututkinto*, which is entirely different from the academic Master's degree (*maisterin tutkinto*). Rather, because it sounds similar to it, the professional Master's degree tends to be confused with the professional bachelor's degree (*ammattikorkeakoulututkinto*), as the interview quote shows. The name of a degree impacts on the competitive position of graduates in the labor market and therefore also on the differences in status between the academic and the professional sector.

It is not uncommon for graduates with a professional Master's degree to return to the same job they had prior to their studies (Ahola and Galli 2012). Some advance in their career, but only a few graduates with a professional Master's degree hold leading positions in Finnish organizations. As the professional Master's degree is still a novel degree in Finland, employers who themselves have an academic Master's degree have little experience of it and therefore do not recognize its strengths (Isopahkala-Bouret et al. 2011). One interviewee observed the conservative attitudes in his work organization as follows:

> No, we haven't hired anybody here [with a professional Master's degree], we have two employees who are currently studying in that program..., but they are older... and work in [semi-professional] jobs. (Graduate with an academic Master's degree in health sciences)

Professional Master's degree holders may face additional employment barriers on the labor market, and they may be channeled into lower-qualified (and presumably lower-paid) positions. According to Ojala and Isopahkala-Bouret (2014), the relative competitiveness of graduates with a professional Master's degree is weakened by the fact that it is not fully

recognized by employers and is occasionally confused with the professional bachelor's degree.

The Fear of Increasing Market Competition

By contrast, the interviewed graduates with an academic Master's degree feared that the new degree was downgrading their privileged status as graduates of research universities. They referred to the professional degree as "wrong" and "misleading," "useless" and "worrying," and felt that it "makes no sense" to have professional Master's degrees (see also Isopahkala-Bouret 2015). Accordingly, universities of applied sciences should only offer bachelor's degrees, and Master's degree programs should be reserved exclusively to research universities.

To legitimize their own specific position, some of those with an academic Master's degree referred to the formal philosophy of the dual system of Finnish higher education. They argued that the two degrees should remain very distinct from one another and serve different functions in the labor market. However, this call for a strong separation of the two degrees mirrored a fear of competition and loss as stated by one interviewee:

> Graduates with a professional Master's degree are competing [with us] for the same jobs. I know, I've heard from some employers that they may prefer to hire graduates from universities of applied sciences, because they can make them do the same job with lower pay. Graduates with an academic degree know their own [salary] level and they'll check with the [professional union] what the minimum salary worth accepting is and what benefits you can expect. Maybe graduates with an academic degree won't be hired then, because they demand too much? (Graduate with an academic Master's degree in business and economics)

The introduction of professional Master's degrees intensifies the competition for already scarce graduate jobs. Graduates with a professional degree are formally able to apply for the same jobs as those who have an academic degree. Although employers may hire them for lower-qualified positions, as indicated above, they may also see them as a cheaper alternative to academic degree holders. The interviewee expects such graduates to demand a higher salary based on the established prestige of the academic degree, while holders of a professional degree, lacking this prestige, may

be willing to accept a lower salary. The global competition for graduate jobs has a tendency to push down the cost of a highly educated workforce; therefore, rewards from a university degree are no longer guaranteed for everybody (Brown et al. 2011; in Finland, see Aro 2014).

The employer survey confirms that sectoral differences in higher education impact on the graduates' position on the labor market. Almost half of the employers (46 percent) thought that employees with different Master's degrees could use the same job titles, which is in line with professional regulations and collective agreements. The majority (59 percent), however, believed that the different degree types corresponded in practice to different occupational tasks, and only 17 percent agreed that they should be paid the same salary (Rantanen et al. 2009).

Employers justified these differences on the labor market by appealing to different levels of knowledge, skills and competence, with the academic Master's degree warranting a higher level of education than its professional counterpart (Rantanen et al. 2009). Employers who had experience of graduates with a professional Master's degree saw critical and independent thinking as academic strengths and widely agreed that graduates with an academic Master's degree had adequate cognitive competence. The employers also saw academic graduates as having highly specialized knowledge in their field and relatively good knowledge at the interface between different fields. As for graduates with professional Master's degrees, the employers agreed that one of their greatest knowledge-related strengths was their ability to utilize cutting-edge knowledge and develop professional practice. Yet they thought that professional Master's degree holders lacked skills related to research and innovation, as well as management and leadership capabilities (Isopahkala-Bouret et al. 2011). These survey results do not suggest that competition on high prestige positions in research, management, and leadership has increased; rather, they confirm remaining differences that secure the academic degree holders' superior labor market position.

Academic Superiority

Within highly hierarchical higher education systems, most university students are aware of the value of their own degree in the labor market relative to those awarded by other institutions (Brooks 2006; Reay et al. 2001). Students usually develop a strong positive alliance to their own institution – seeing it as a suitable place for them. By contrast, different

kinds of institutions are seen as not being for 'people like us' (Brooks 2006). In the Finnish context, the status of graduates with a degree from a research university is reinforced in a discourse on 'smartness.' As the following quotes suggest, students are made to believe that it was special to be admitted to a research university and that, therefore, they were special, too.

> Graduates from [this high prestige university] are very self-confident, because the academic staff emphasize from the beginning to every student that it is special to be admitted here; and it's so amazing now that you've got in. (Graduate with an academic Master's degree in business and economics)

This kind of attitude is similar to that at American elite universities. Organizations reinforce the image that 'the best' and 'the brightest' are sorted and recognized through a credentialing process (Ho 2009). In a unitary and highly stratified higher education system, students compare their credentials with those who are lower or higher in the hierarchical rank order. In a binary system, students compare the value of their degrees with credentials awarded by institutions from the opposite sector. The interviews show that Finnish graduates with academic Master's degrees began to regard their own degree as superior as a reaction to the introduction of the professional Master's degree. As the professional Master's degree was introduced to increase higher education participation, the incumbent graduates, that is, those with an academic degree, downgraded the new degree by attributing a lower credentialing value to it in the labor market.

> Every true economist will answer: 'No!' . . . those two degrees do not have equal status as credentials. And this is a question of professional pride. (Graduate with an academic Master's degree in business and economics)

In the interviews, it was stated that especially in the most sought after jobs in the finance and banking sector, employers consider academic Master's degrees to be superior. The prestigious title of '*ekonomi*' (economist) is reserved to the holders of academic Master's degree only. Furthermore, in engineering, the value of an academic Master's degree is reinforced by employers: those with an academic degree prefer candidates from research universities, especially if they have exactly the same Master's degree as their

own. One interviewee noted how protective the academic degree holders were of their own status:

> If you are in a recruitment situation, and you have graduated with an academic Master's degree yourself, it is obvious that the recruiter will value the research university graduate more highly. (Graduate with an academic Master's degree in business and economics)

The Finnish labor market can be described as partly segregated according to the sectoral divide in those occupational fields that are common to both research universities and universities of applied sciences, like business, administration, and engineering. Graduates with an academic Master's degree on average hold the highest occupational positions in these fields, whereas the occupational status of graduates with a professional bachelor's degree is lower (Kivinen and Nurmi 2010). This positional difference is not only relevant on entering the labor market, it still remains when measured five years after graduation (ibid.). In a credentialist regime, many employers favor the recruitment of trustworthy, highly educated workers who have been immersed in the appropriate organizational and occupational cultures represented by prestigious graduate degrees (Brown 1995). The safe choice is to recruit graduates who have the same degree as their own.

The graduates with an academic Master's degree argued that professional Master's degrees should have a lower credentialing status because of the competitiveness, length, quality, and reputation of their own degree studies (Isopahkala-Bouret 2015). As the following quote demonstrates, graduates reinforce their own worth by comparing the two sectors:

> When I've looked more closely at professional Master's degree programs, the content of those studies, and especially when I've read the final thesis of those graduates… The academic quality of the thesis work is sh*t… similar to what we are already able to produce after our first year of study at research universities.… I'm really pleased that employers still value the graduates with an academic Master's degree more. (Graduate with an academic Master's degree in health sciences)

In the interviews, graduates said that academic Master's "studies are more demanding," the academic programs are "more extensive" and "last longer," there is "more face-to-face teaching," student "assessment is more demanding," and finally, the academic "Master's thesis has a higher

academic standard." Overall, they attribute a higher quality and therefore a higher level of knowledge to the academic degree. This attitude is mirrored by some of the employers perceiving the study requirements of academic degree programs to be more demanding than those of professional ones (Ojala and Isopahkala-Bouret 2014).

The higher level of education is also deduced from the selectivity of academic degree programs. In Finland, students who want to enroll in a research university must first pass a competitive entrance examination in a chosen discipline. What makes the admission process especially difficult is the limited number of places on each disciplinary degree program. Only a small portion of qualified applicants can gain admission. In many disciplines, fewer than 10 percent of applicants are accepted. Employers may assume that higher education sectors compete for students and that the best degree programs admit the most talented students. However, the number of places is equally limited on degree programs at universities of applied sciences, which means that the admission process can be very selective there, too – yet this selectivity is not acknowledged by employers.

Increasing Exclusivity

Overall, after the binary degree system was introduced, the research universities have over time become more exclusive (Ahola 2014). Growth in Finnish higher education has been directed mainly toward the professional sector. In particular, the academic degrees in traditional high prestige disciplines have become more distinguished in terms of selectivity. Access to disciplines in which the research universities have a monopoly on teaching has become more exclusive, and the relative number of students with a non-academic background has decreased since the 2000s (Kivinen Hedman and Kaipainen 2012). It seems that a discipline not being taught at universities of applied sciences translates into relative income advantages on the labor market: graduates from academic disciplines which are not in direct competition with the professional sector, such as medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, and law, have the highest income level (Kivinen et al. 2012).

The research universities moreover have restricted mobility from the professional sector to the academic sector. In principle, graduates with a professional bachelor's degree are eligible to apply for academic Master's programs. However, the academic bodies that are responsible for the selection process decide on the concrete admission requirements. Cross-

sectional mobility is thus severely restricted by the admission committees of research universities. This policy of exclusivity extends to the labor market.

In addition to their restrictive admission policies, research universities encourage processes of professional closure, that is, restricting access to a profession to academic degree holders. Parallel to the introduction of the professional Master's degree in 2005, the official qualification criteria for social sector occupations were changed. In the face of the competing degree, the status of the academic Master's degree was secured by defining it as the sole credential for social workers. In other fields too, the use of academic Master's degrees as a credential for access to upper-level jobs multiplied.

Discussion

This chapter has investigated the stratificatory effects of the binary degree structure in Finnish higher education. Widening access and equal regional provision have been core policy principles in the development and expansion of the Finnish system. From an egalitarian perspective, the establishment of a professional higher education sector in the 1990s has increased study opportunities and access to higher education. A large number of new students has been able to access higher education via the professional track. Further, the introduction of a professional Master's degree has enhanced the status of universities of applied sciences and made them more equal players in the field of higher education.

At the same time, and although a common degree structure was implemented, the inclusion of new types of credentials has also produced stratification. This stratification is most clearly signaled by the prestige attached to the different Master's degrees delivered by the new and traditional higher education institutions. Finnish graduates and employers with an academic Master's degree generally consider their degree to have a high exchange value in the labor market. This belief is based on a long-established high-level reputation. By contrast, the professional Master's degree is recent and to some extent unrecognized. Thus, the introduction of a new degree specific to universities of applied sciences allowed the research universities to set themselves apart and, by claiming a higher quality of academic degree programs, to cast themselves and their degrees as superior. This is acknowledged by students who choose an academic over a professional degree and

employers who prefer to hire academic degree holders (although they may also decide to cut costs and hire professional degree holders on a lower salary – it remains to be seen which development will actually prevail on the labor market, and there are likely to be differences between disciplines).

The specific focus in this chapter has been on the vantage point of research universities. The stratification of the Finnish degree structure, as argued here, is a direct effect of introducing a binary system on the Master's level. It was only after the professional degree had emerged that research universities and their graduates claimed the academic Master's degree to be superior to its professional equivalent. Furthermore, the research universities made some system-level changes that strengthened the status of their own degrees. They established two degree cycles (as part of the Bologna process implementation) and developed new, selective Master's programs. Even though professional degrees provide formal eligibility, the research universities have restricted access to their Master's program for holders of professional Bachelor's degrees – a practice that is familiar from other European higher education systems with a binary structure, albeit prior to the implementation of the Bologna reforms, which are generally regarded as contributing to "blurring boundaries" (Witte et al. 2008) between the two sectors. The Finnish case shows that the establishment of an inclusive sector goes hand in hand with enhancing the exclusivity of the university sector (cf. Bleiklie 2003).

Thus, somehow paradoxically, stratification is an effect of processes of inclusion. At the same time, as the number of students in the Finnish professional higher education sector has expanded, research universities have become more exclusive. Especially disciplines which are taught only at research universities, such as medicine and law, show signs of credential as well as social closure. They distinguish themselves not only within the binary system but also with respect to less selective disciplines within research universities. This vertical differentiation of disciplines has taken place parallel to increasing equal educational opportunities for students with a non-academic social background (Kivinen et al. 2012).

The analysis has concentrated on sectoral stratification inherent to the binary degree structure. Recent developments point to further differentiation processes between universities of the same type. In 2009, the legal status of academic universities was changed to that of independent foundations, although the state remains the main funder (Ahola 2014), a move which is currently also being discussed for universities of applied sciences. This strengthening of institutional autonomy will enable institutions with a formally homogeneous status to create distinct research and teaching

profiles. Different higher education institutions will presumably attract different student populations and, as a result, heterogeneity may increase in terms of reputation and prestige. Well-established universities with more resources and higher selectivity are at an advantage in the increasing competition for status. Further research needs to explore the effects of the ongoing stratification of Finnish higher education.

Notes

1. Educational credentialism can be understood alternatively as a persistent trend toward the need for ever increasing educational credentials for jobs (credential inflation) or as a non-linear return for schooling, meaning that the highly educated are rewarded more than their contribution to production is worth (Bills and Brown 2011). Both approaches convey a negative image of educational credentialing as superficial and as a mechanism that creates an unjust competitive advantage for people with a degree compared to those without.
2. 'Academic' and 'professional' refer here to differences in institutional profiles.
3. These included experts from the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Federation of Finnish Enterprises, the Union of Health and Social Care Professionals, and trade unions from private sector services and industry. Officials from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health also participated.
4. All professional Master's degree programs included in this study contain 90 credit points. However, some programs exist whose length is only equivalent to 60 credit points.
5. Fifteen graduates with a professional Master's degree were also interviewed in the project. These interviews are not part of this analysis.
6. Results are presented as the proportion of respondents who agreed (fully or partially) with the survey items on a five-point Likert scale.

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CHAPTER 5

How Effective Have Reform Policies Been in Redesigning the French Higher Education and Research System?

Catherine Paradeise

The German, British, and American academic systems, like the French system, are all 'exceptions.' In advanced countries, modern higher education structures were set up and institutionalized at the end of the nineteenth century as expressions and vectors of national state power. Thus each is very specific and difficult to compare with other systems. Such comparisons are not complex in terms of the aims of the system, which are generally very similar, but in terms of institutional approaches. A wide variety of patterns have been implemented, which link organization, governance, curricula, degrees, recruitment and status.

When compared to Germany, Britain, or the United States, France is often considered a particularly 'special exception,' both by foreign observers and by the French themselves. Yet other European national higher education systems also display high levels of complexity and have some similarities with the French system. This chapter explores

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the similarities between France and the countries mentioned above in relation to the reform policies and processes implemented in these countries over the last few decades and in particular since the beginning of the twenty-first century.

It analyzes the aims of these reforms, how they have been implemented, and how much they have contributed to the forming of national elites by restructuring the higher education and research (HER) system itself. After briefly describing the structure of the French higher education and research (HER) system at the end of the 1980s, it shows how policies have developed new organizational and governance tools within the HER system and within each of its components over the last 35 years. The original incremental process turned more radical at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Such reforms aimed to redesign French HER institutions by overcoming the divide between the prestigious *grandes écoles* (elite higher education establishments) and the more accessible universities and promote a new 'excellence-based' stratification. New all-encompassing universities were built to try align with international norms through in terms of accessibility and the merging of research and education institutions within the same institutions. On this basis, the chapter present arguments for assessing the impact of reforms. While it is evident that the policymakers favored major changes, they also had to face the kaleidoscopic and often divergent interests and values of HER stakeholders.

The French Higher Education System after World War II

As other national systems, the French HER system was shaped by history. It exhibits a double dualism between research and teaching, as well as between elite and accessible higher education institutions. Its three subsystems – universities, *grandes écoles*, and research organizations – developed interdependently, as the weaknesses of each of them justified the existence of the others. Over time, each specific legal public status has consolidated the identity, relative power, and social status of each subset. The identities and alliances of these subsystems have developed in a way that excludes agnosticism and makes it difficult for them to evolve. They are still non-challenged products of history, which have been both protected and hindered by their history until the late 1900s.

Universities

Universities were dismantled at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the Napoleonic regime, which feared their political involvement. Universities as organizations became mere aggregations of the local disciplinary faculties or schools, which were governed by Parisian ministry bureaus in collaboration with prominent scientists. As a consequence, academics never fully identified themselves as members of a 'specific' university, only 'the' university really existed (Musselin 2005). Although the political and economic powers of regional authorities increased significantly in the 1980s, they were not given authority over higher education. The situation remained manageable with a small number of universities dedicating most of their activity to teaching a small number of middle-class students, mostly to become teachers, lawyers, and doctors. By the end of the 1960s, the number of student enrollments was growing rapidly as several waves of the post–World War II baby boomers rushed through the open gates of higher education institutions to acquire the qualifications needed to join a labor market that was increasingly complex and technologically advanced. Massification induced change, if only because the number of universities had grown from about 13 in the 1960s to 87 at the beginning of 2012.

In 2015, about 50 percent of the approximately 2.4 million students in higher education in France were enrolled in public universities; although the number of students had increased, this accounted for a lower proportion of all higher education students in France. Despite the monopoly of public universities on state degrees and the relatively small proportion of students attending *grandes écoles*, more students were enrolled at alternative private higher education institutions; these accounted for about 18 percent of all student enrollments in 2015.

As in other Western European countries, public universities are expected to provide the same public service to all students according to uniform rules, regardless of a university's location. This situation has increasingly lost touch with reality as more universities face the challenges of educating a growing number of culturally heterogeneous new entrants. These new students have benefited from open access to universities after completing their high school diplomas; furthermore, rising youth unemployment in France has pushed many young people toward higher education.

Although a growing number of curricula were set up to address this new audience, national regulations straightjacketed diversification. As elsewhere in Europe, prior to the 2000s, universities had to comply with compulsory public regulations on internal governance, human resource management, access, curricula, degrees, resource allocation, accounting, and so on. They were almost exclusively funded by taxpayers' money; budgets were itemized and input-based (with the number of enrolled students as input); universities were organized as professional bureaucracies (Mintzberg 1979). They aggregated a weak local administration, largely disconnected from a loosely coupled academic community. Each subset was subordinated to separate national authorities. The elected presidents were local *primus inter pares*, constantly bypassed by academics, who dealt directly with the central bureaus or national committees, which held power and resources (Paradeise et al. 2009).

The concept of diversity was deployed not between universities, but within each institution. In contrast to American universities, French universities, like their European counterparts, were often characterized by internal diversity across departments on reputation and performance in teaching and research.

Grandes écoles

Professional tertiary education is a common feature of all educational systems. What distinguishes the situation in France is that this sector includes selective prestigious public and private institutions. They were set up at the turn of the nineteenth century to train state engineers and high school teachers in different fields and were placed under the supervision of the corresponding government ministries. In addition, in 1946, the French government established the École nationale d'administration (ENA), a national school of administration, which prepared its students to enter the senior civil service. At the end of the twentieth century, existing schools of commerce, which were supervised by local chambers of commerce and were separate from public universities, joined the world of business schools.

While universities do not differ much from one another in terms of reputation, *grandes écoles* are very stratified. There are about 400 different

institutions, the top 10 of which are public and nationally prestigious. As producers of powerful, educated political and industrial French elites over a period of two centuries, the top *grandes écoles* have developed strong cross-sector social networks, which are able to act as very efficient buffers against any perceived threats.

Grandes écoles are small, selective, and much better funded than universities. Despite the massification wave, these institutions only slightly increased their intake of students as the majority of new students were absorbed by universities. In the 2000s, *grandes écoles* began to open up to the 'lateral recruitment' of strong postgraduate students, and in some cases, the number of students doubled. Aside from a few highly ranked *grandes écoles,* until very recently, these institutions were rarely involved in research. They were not allowed to award state degrees as this right was reserved for universities. Graduating from a *grande école* in engineering or other subjects was more than sufficient for most outgoing students entering the national labor market. Nevertheless, the Bologna process and the globalization of higher education pushed these institutions toward adjusting to international norms, which meant gaining accreditation from the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR), or finding ways to bypass national rules while still securing the international recognition of the degree qualifications they award. International higher education league tables presented a second serious risk, as the *grandes écoles'* small size, limited involvement in research, and independence from universities threatened to leave them out of the scope of 'international excellence' radars.

Research Organizations

After World War II, the ongoing weakness of research in universities and *grandes écoles* favored the proliferation of dedicated and autonomous research institutions. The emergence of each new public issue on the political agenda encouraged the building of a new research institute. These ranged from the very large National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) with its 11,000 researchers, to the small Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) with its 300 scholars; researchers at these institutes had specific, but similar public service employment status.

Two Waves of Reform

The Incremental Wave (1981–2005): Facing Massification

Since the end of the 1960s, as in many other European countries, but to an even greater extent, the French education system has experienced ongoing pressure due to massification and this has caused disruption in a number of ways (Musselin & Paradeise 2009).

Firstly, in spite of rising budgets, since the 1970s, marginal funding per student has continuously decreased, or at best stagnated, while the academic body has grown considerably. Secondly, the input-based allocation method common across Western European HE systems has resulted in an increasingly dramatic disintegration and dispersion of public resources. Therefore, the research mission of universities, which was not formally identified in France until the 2000s, was strongly impacted by this dispersion and stagnation or regression of funding. At the same time, the growth of the university academic body was sustained at a cost of decreasing recruitment in public research organizations. Together, these evolutions appeared to present a threat to the research potential of the country.

Universities

Disjointed and incremental governance decisions to transform French universities were taken by the various governments between 1983 and 2000, backing the emergence of the so-called knowledge-based society narrative.

Pluri-annual contracts were freshly elaborated and signed between the state and each university starting in the 1980s. The groundwork of writing reports and preparing negotiations fostered conversation between co-located faculties which had previously ignored each other. It forced universities to function as more cohesive organizations; externalizing costs and issues to the MESR in Paris became less of a solution to their problems. This encouraged universities to carry on internal conversations, set up their own strategic options, and find solutions by reaching compromises between their many subunits. Debate and collective decision-making capacities were needed locally. For internal stakeholders, this reform brought about a better understanding of their university as a local organization and fostered some sense of a shared identity (Musselin 2005; Musselin and Paradeise 2009).

Though university governance did not changed dramatically, new rules transferred some effective additional power to university presidents. They were given some discretionary authority, such as for setting up internal fees to be paid from suppress grants as provisions for strategic allocation. They also received some discretionary resources from the MESR - for instance, doctoral scholarships - as a reward for playing by the rules; this gave universities some leeway for developing their own policies.

Interaction with local environments also pushed forward their organizational identity. Although they had no jurisdiction on higher education, regions were keen to fund some university investments, in which they saw a source of economic and cultural vitality, as well as a flagship for a regional brand. Companies located in the same area also showed interest in funding research work and endowing some chairs.

Such apparently small steps had major consequences. French universities started building their own organizational boundaries. They were given the opportunity to highlight rather than hide their specificities, and to develop more de facto – if not de jure – differentiation. While establishing some very modest autonomy and stratification within the university system, these changes also increased the gap between what universities really were and what they were supposed to be, thus exposing the need for more legal adjustments.

Grandes écoles

For *grandes écoles*, not much had changed except for the consequences of the Bologna process and globalization, which raised awareness about the difficulties gaining international recognition for the degrees they awarded. This was a serious problem; as long as the associated labor markets were essentially bound within national borders, they could easily defend their specific qualification awards of *titre d'ingénieur* (title of engineer) or *grande école* alumnus. But these labels were at risk of obsolescence as elite labor markets became internationalized. Moreover, the small size and complicated names of the *grandes écoles* limited their visibility and recognition; they were thus vulnerable to the increasing globalization in the field of elite education (Veltz 2007). In spite of their historical reluctance and somewhat arrogant attitude toward universities, the *grandes écoles* were forced to comply with the conditions stipulated for awarding master's and doctoral degrees. This often required them to develop alliances with universities, or to find ways of circumventing national degrees and awarding internationally accredited qualifications.

Research Organizations

As mentioned above, the dramatic rise of universities, which began in the 1970s, led to a sharp increase in the number of teachers at the expense of researchers. This situation was the basis for the formal recognition of higher education teaching staff as 'teacher-researchers' integrated in joint researcher centers, which combined research and teaching institutions.

Besides managing its own existing research centers (*laboratoires propres*), from the 1960s, the CNRS rather cautiously began to expand in universities by designating and modestly funding a range of university research centers. The increasing demand for designation threatened to put strain on the dispersion of research funds. The co-funding of university research centers appeared to provide a win-win solution. By the end of the 1990s, about 95 percent of CNRS research centers had turned into joint CNRS/university centers and this had several implications. Firstly, it helped increase the pressure on universities to organize research and it widened the gap between the haves and have-nots in terms of research funding. Secondly, it led to a coexistence of researchers and teacher-researchers in the same institutions, and thus questioned the relevance of the continuing statutory divide between scholars from research organizations and universities. Finally, it led universities to claim their right to contribute to research center strategies to the same extent as research organizations in accordance with their own local policies.

As a result, the incremental changes from 1980 to 2000 coincided with the development of universities into 'complete organizations' (Krücken and Meier 2006). On one hand, this disrupted the division of labor between mass education and elite education, and on the other, it blurred the boundaries between universities and research organizations. Such developments called for more radical reforms aimed at simplifying and redesigning the whole HER landscape.

Radical Reforms (2006–2012): A Follow-up on Previous Evolutions and a New Starting Point

A Continued Rationale: The Ambition to Restructure the French HER System

In 2006, the introduction of new legislation accelerated the flow of change in governance principles and organizational tools. This process followed on from earlier incremental adjustments but the pace of major

reforms was accelerated. By evidencing the comparatively poor performance of French and continental European universities according to their metrics, the emergence of world leagues provided an unexpected legitimizing narrative to decision-makers (Paradeise and Filliatreau 2016). Two priorities emerged on the public authority agenda: concentrating research in a few top-performing universities and rebuilding universities as 'complete organizations' according to the new public management (NPM) pattern. These issues were linked; they called for governance and managerial tools to turn universities into autonomous decision-making organizations, which were reactive to incentives and'accountable' for their decisions.

Universities were both non-stratified and internally heterogeneous; the double duality between *grandes écoles* and universities on the one hand, and HE institutions and research organizations on the other, contributed to a dispersing of national performance across institutions which were both distinct and increasingly overlapping. To become 'visible from Shanghai,' universities not only needed to improve the way they operated locally, they also had to build their identity and visibility by concentrating education and research on a common territory under one roof and one name. In this way, they complied with the international concept of a 'world class university' disseminated by global higher education rankings.

To sum up, the following five words can be used to analytically describe the targets of the French reforms in the 2000s: simplification, territorialization, concentration, diversification, and stratification.

Simplification could result from the intensification of the 1980–2005 incremental reforms, following the increased cooperation between types of organizations and the harmonization of degrees awarded by universities and *grandes écoles* through the implementation of the Bologna process. If well steered, such developments could lead to the merging or alignment of institutions and labor force status, and foster a new design of career patterns for researchers based on a division between 'publishers' and 'non publishers.'

Territorialization could result from establishing these colocalized, federated, or merged institutions with various statuses and grouping them together under a unique umbrella to build the brand of new 'complete' universities.

Concentration could result from a major restructuration of funding based on a rising share of competitive grants and a new design of public

budgets for the allocation of block grants to universities. These would be partly output-based and thus dependent on an assessment by a new evaluation agency.

Diversification was thus expected to occur by virtue of the autonomous decision-making capacity of universities; these institutions could strategize based on their scientific assets and the economic strengths of their territories.

Finally, more stratification between universities could be fueled by all these changes. Existing de facto stratification could be sustained and increased de jure, and all HE institutions could be offered the chance to upgrade. This could help to clarify the potential of each stratum and concentrate resources on the institutions that performed best.

Two acts were used to extensively redesign the whole system.

New Bodies: The 2006 Research Act

An initial act dealt with the research issue by establishing new bodies to restructure policymaking and resource allocation. Two bodies played a major role by stimulating universities' strategies.[1] The French National Research Agency (ANR), which was actually set up in 2005, provides funding for both basic and applied research to public research organizations *grandes écoles* and universities, as well as to private companies (including small and medium enterprises (SMEs)) for project-based research in all fields of science. The Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (AERES) was set up in 2007 and restructured and renamed the High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES) in 2013. This is responsible for the peer-based assessment of research and teaching at all public institutions in the national HER system, from HER institutions as a whole to research centers, departments, and curricula. Only individual academics escaped this central assessment.

New Governance of Universities: The 2007 Universities Act (revised 2013)

An NPM-style reform sought to provide more autonomy to universities by transferring them jurisdiction over their human resource management and real estate, as well as micro-management tasks. The reform redesigned their internal organization and governance bodies in order to strengthen their presidential teams. It transformed university budgets from itemized to

global, imposed cost accounting, and used assessment to increase the share of competitive-based funding in resources. Universities could decide on their aims and organize themselves accordingly in response to national incentives.

Institutional Tools

New legal frames allowed for federations and mergers, which addressed the issue of the variety of legal statuses among institutions and thus favored the redesigning of HE institutions. These frames facilitated the joint management of programs (for instance doctoral programs) and research centers by establishing new umbrella organizations named Pôles de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur (PRES). In 2013, these organizations became Communautés d'Universités (ComUes), which were more strongly structured associations of higher education institutions. These associations increased internal flexibility in the collection and use of funds. From 2004, the development of competitive clusters (Pôles de compétitivité) and the Frauenhofer-style Instituts Carnot also began encouraging cooperation with industry.

Financial Tools

In addition to the national public funding agency (ANR) grants, the French excellence initiative (Programme d'Investissement d'Avenir (PIA)) played a decisive role. Starting in 2010, this large ongoing investment program, which aggregated approximately 30 billion euros in 2017, was jointly proposed by two respected emblematic politicians, one from the Left and one from the Right. Based on competitive calls assessed by high-level international jury panels, the program targeted research, education and industrial policies as a basis for modernizing a knowledge-based society. Many of the competitive calls were labeled 'excellence schemes' (IdEx for institutions, EquipEx for facilities, and LabEx for research centers). Each selected project was entitled to benefit from significant funding allocations (approximately 1 billion euros for an average IdEx project, and from 5 to 25 million euros for LabEx or EquipEx projects).

Implementation

The patchwork of French reforms is the outcome of many open and behind-the-scenes debates in national political, social, and scientific arenas over several years. These reforms were intended to improve the

performance of universities, to rationalize their governance and their organization at both local and national levels, and to manage costs. Although these debates were progressively sheltered under the wing of the grand NPM narrative, they were not built on an ex ante model imported from elsewhere, be it the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines or the benchmarking of neighboring countries' policies (Bezes 2009).

However, policy reforms are the beginning rather than the end of the story. Their implementation requires a commitment from stakeholders to adapting the new resources and constraints supplied by such reforms to their own values and interests. There are many stakeholders in the field of higher education and research. Among them, universities are unequally powerful and strategically capable (Thoenig and Paradeise 2016); their involvement may either widen or narrow the gap between policy designs and their outcomes.

This last section presents some commentary on the impact of reforms by outlining a few examples of the still partly unwritten story of implementation. This section will also explore the extent to which reforms have achieved or are achieving the goals of simplification, territorialization, concentration, diversification, and stratification.

Evidence of Major Changes in Progress

Toward Concentration, Diversification, and Stratification

Over the last 35 years, French HER reforms have expressed a sustained political will, which has resisted both political changes and, to some extent, stakeholder lobbying. Changing the procedural rules has played a major role in this process, as shown by the dramatic and repeated debates on the allocation of the very substantial amounts of money awarded by the PIA excellence initiative. External and international evaluation by high status international scientific panels impacted pork-barrel style practices by compelling the ministry in charge to comply with its own rules and resist major lobbies and influential French personalities.

New governance and organizational rules encouraged the development of local decision-making processes based on a rising awareness of shared common local interests among co-located disciplines and subunits. The universities that enjoyed the highest strategic capacity took advantage of the new institutional and financial resources. They also found ways to relax

rigid legal public constraints using various tactics. They managed to develop sometimes fragile alliances and joint investments with other universities, *grandes écoles*, and research organizations. They upgraded their reputation status and performance in rankings. As a result, competition to enter their advanced programs increased among students. The development of university brands gave rise to some company endowments, although these were limited.

Thus, reforms contributed to greater diversity within the system. They stressed the strengths of some institutions, highlighted the failures of less reputable ones, and supplied new resources to frontrunners (Paradeise and Thoenig 2015). By encouraging research performance-based isomorphism, they pushed forward stratification and the concentration of resources on the most successful universities. Some universities proved able to become major players in education and research on the international scene, and others to focus on serving local labor markets through teaching and applied research.

Limited Changes in Relation to Targets

As evidenced by the Association of European Universities, French universities are the rearguard of European countries as far as university autonomy is concerned (EUA 2017); from 28 countries, France ranked 20th for organizational autonomy, 24th for financial autonomy, 27th for staffing autonomy, and 27th for academic autonomy. Such rankings show how much the implementation of reforms has impacted on the original policy goals by restricting attempts to further extend autonomy. Organizational and governance rules remain uniform, although some universities have introduced additional rules of their own. Academic and administrative staff remain civil servants. The share of competitive budgets remains limited and the allocation process for block grants has experienced difficulties complying with assessment procedures. The lack of freedom to define curricula and the rules for the selection of students impede change.

One of the reforms' major failures relates to the issue of simplification. As explained above, the goal of reforms was to provide new legal resources, incentives and coercion that would allow or force a variety of institutions with different legal statuses to be hosted under the same roof, either through federations or mergers. Indeed, by combining a wide variety of cooperation statuses from low-level to top-level institutions,

the reforms have created overlaps and complexly organized hierarchies that raise inextricable issues of identity and governance.

So how did this situation come about? The answer lies in the combination of the identities, strategic power and functions of various stakeholders in a context characterized by strong pressure on national budgets. The perfectly ordered 'French garden' designed by imaginative French technocrats collided with the reality of institutions and collective actors in the field. One cannot change society by decree (Crozier 1982).

Manipulating Resources and Constraints: The Real Impact of the Reforms

Stakeholders in the higher education system include HER institutions (ministry departments, universities, *grandes écoles*, research organizations, and their subunits) and collective actors (faculty members, scientific associations, trade unions, higher education and research managers, alumni, unionized student activists, and prominent stakeholders in science, industry, and politics). While reform narratives and tools claim to reshuffle the cards, implementation defines them as providing new resources, constraints, opportunities, and threats, which stakeholders attempt to turn to their own advantage in order to safeguard their own values and protect or increase their authority in the field. A few examples are given below.

Politics

The symbolic aspect of HER policies should not be underestimated. For instance, when President Sarkozy initiated radical reforms as a showcase of his methods of government in 2007, he did so to prove his ability to establish long overdue structural reforms on sensitive, if not taboo issues. At the same time, he was cautious not to displease either potentially disruptive activist minorities, such as students' unions or conservative faculties. He claimed that his actions supported university autonomy but at the same time, he denied this autonomy in relation to major issues such as tuition fees, curricula, graduation requirements, and the selection of students at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

The Administration of Higher Education and Research Affairs

The autonomy act was intended to reduce the power of the ministry to the benefit of universities. Quite the opposite was the case; in order to keep control of implementation, the Parisian central bureaus managed to give with one hand and take away with the other.

Among the many examples, the case of the new institutional legal framework is a striking one. It aimed at encouraging co-located HER institutions of various statuses to build consortia, mutualize resources, and design collective strategies, thus generating shared identities and interests that, in the medium term, would simplify the national institutional landscape.

By delegating the right to negotiate on organizational issues to their component institutions, the PRES potentially deprived the central administration of its power to act as an intermediary between stakeholders. It could also potentially put an end to the widespread practice in some disciplines with strong connections to central bureaucracy (such as law, economics, and medicine) of maintaining national control over their discipline by bypassing the local regulations of universities. Some parts of the central bureaucracy developed a very negative view of PRES; they launched micro-maneuvers, if not implicit alliances, with national leaders of some academic disciplines to undermine this piece of reform, with the tacit or manifest support of students' union leaders. In an effort to resist the potential development of strong macro-universities able to oppose the power of Paris, they, for instance, managed to weaken the promising new umbrella institutions by denying them the right to directly apply for competitive funds and positions, or to merge the doctoral schools of their members. Eventually, an unholy coalition managed to defeat HER minister, who supported the notion of strengthening PRES. This prevented the law from being implemented according to its original essence.

Research Organizations

Starting in the 1990s, the ministers in charge of higher education and research launched several initiatives to promote convergence between the two statuses of researchers in public organizations and faculty members in universities; their intention was to finally merge them. As the rise of joint research centers was deepening mutual knowledge, career tracks were aligned to ease mobility between these two statuses.

Important incentives were set up to encourage full-time researchers to become involved in teaching. In addition, teaching became part of the evaluation process for promoting researchers and accelerating their careers, and specific budgets were offered to mobile scholars. But these few newcomers were not warmly welcomed by faculty members; it was feared they might appropriate the best and most advanced students. Researchers, on the other hand, were not keen to renounce their freedom and take up positions in universities, which were they felt weak in research and mismanaged.

The setting up of both funding and evaluation agencies in 2006 was perceived as a threat by research organizations. The aim of centralizing competitive funding in national programs at ANR might impact the budgets and strategies of research organizations. By centralizing assessment of HER institutions, research centers and scholars, the AERES threatened to deprive them of their own evaluation tools. They fought fiercely for AERES to be structured in subunits in a way that would allow them to maintain their power to evaluate. They were, however, unsuccessful and were only given authority for the evaluation of their staff. They also fought for the ANR to be organized into subfields, which would preserve their authority over competitive budgets. Here again, they failed, only succeeding to extend the share of open calls.

Universities

I have suggested that strategic competence built over time in universities has had an impact on perceptions and the use of reforms, either as resources or constraints. Conflicting perceptions of aims may coexist within the same university, especially in countries such as France, where internal stratification compensates for the non-stratification of the system as a whole. Only some universities actually expect to get greater benefits from stratification and are able and willing to actively participate as organizations and communities.

One important way to incentivize performance is to develop accountability tools. In 2009, the MESR set up a formula (called SYMPA) for allocating block grants to universities based on a three-step process: step one involved the evaluation of a university's organization, programs, and outputs for teaching and research; step two converted the performance results into scores, giving a lion's share to research (80 percent) and the rest to teaching (20 percent); step three was the allocation of block grants

with 20 percent based on evaluation, and the remaining 80 percent based on the number of students.

Obviously, by targeting research activities, incentives favored the universities that focused on research. This was most often the case for universities, which focused on life sciences and material sciences, and which also had joint research centers with CNRS. They were able to handle competitive calls successfully. By redesigning the structure of resource allocation, reforms helped to pave the way for'excellence.' In addition, the subunits of these universities greatly supported the upgrading strategies of their leadership. At the other end of the spectrum, a collection of universities, which mainly, if not exclusively, covered the fields of social sciences and humanities, included many disciplines, which disapproved of the reforms and considered them to be neoliberal and market-oriented. They were perceived as inducing a competition of everyone against everyone, and therefore supposedly neglecting the public service, which students were entitled to. Such universities also feared that reforms would reduce their unconditional block grants while their style of research work would not fit the frame of competitive grants. In the mean time, subunits and the leaderships of many universities were often torn between those who were ready to engage in the challenge and those who resisted it; this gave rise to internal tensions between the haves and the have-nots.

A lack of feasible data, difficulties in computing the allocation formula, and the impact of systemic budget cuts pushed less prominent universities, as well as some more strongly placed institutions, to fiercely oppose this method. With the support of students' unions and many in the academic community, as well as local political powers, the association of university presidents managed to ensure that the allocation reform was withdrawn in 2011.

Academics

With the exception of a growing number of teachers hired on short-term contracts (although these are still a minority), academics employed in French universities are civil servants and their workload officially covers two equal duties: teaching and research. Those academics who publish research consider this job description to be an unjustified fiction that benefits those who do not publish; the'non-publishers,' on the other hand, insist on the importance of their contribution as teachers and fear that in evaluation metrics, their weakness on publications would translate

into increased teaching duties. This explains in part why the reforms have split the academic community in universities. Two categories of faculty formed an improbable alliance in which they both felt at risk from the increasing pressure of research assessment, although for different reasons. The first category was low-status faculties, which had stagnated at the bottom of academic hierarchies and had increased their income through extra paid additional teaching. The second category was high-status academics in professional fields, such as law, medicine, and management, who had not published for some time and who used their professorships to gain access to profitable extra-university professional activities. These two groups jointly protested against any reform that would stratify their unique civil servant status (Paradeise 2011).

Private and Public Companies

Companies remained long suspicious of blue-sky research at universities where, as 'henchmen of capitalism,' they were often unwelcome. They recruited their executives from *grandes écoles* and when research was required, they turned to research organizations or their own facilities rather than to universities.

A change process slowly began at the end of the twentieth century, as an increasing number of students demanded more practical curricula, and the involvement of universities with their local economic environment improved. While elite professional education remained a quasi-monopoly of the *grandes écoles*, the so-called knowledge economy put technological innovation at the top of the agenda. Chambers of commerce, regions, and major companies used the reforms as an opportunity to cooperate with universities and become involved in the training of middle managers, technicians and engineers, as well as to develop pre-competitive research. They also joined and co-funded innovation clusters set up by the government in 2006 and became committed to a few federated projects.

The Emblematic Case of the University of Paris-Saclay

The new University of Paris Saclay (UPS) is the most impressive of the projects fostered by the reforms and is thus a good test as to how the implementation of reforms has resisted HER policies. UPS is legally a comprehensive federated 'community of universities' under a new status

provided by the 2013 HER Act. UPS groups together a top-ranking university, a second-tier university, numerous joint and full research centers from all major French research organizations and (mostly top) *grandes écoles*. Each of the nine public *grandes écoles* is under the supervision of a specific ministry (defense, industry, telecommunications, agriculture, finance, higher education, etc.). All are located at, or are in the process of relocating to an extensive campus in Saclay, an area southwest of Paris. In 2015, a total of 68,000 students were enrolled at UPS, of whom 5,700 were doctoral students. In additions 10,000 scholars work at the new community of universities, accounting for 13 percent of all academic researchers in France. UPS includes several innovation clusters and has already attracted a number of global businesses, as well as more than 300 small and medium-sized companies which are locating their research facilities in the Saclay area. UPS is expected to rank among the top 20 world-class universities, and the *MIT Technological Review* considers it one of the eight most promising innovation clusters in the world. In 2015, the overall public cost of the project, including urban and transportation planning, real estate, and research funds, was estimated at 6 billion euros (Thoenig 2015[2]).

From the perspective of the individual UPS members, this magnificent project has becomes quite complex and has led to numerous dilemmas. In particular, the creation of this melting pot has caused disagreements and conflicts between arrogant *grandes écoles* and defensive universities. For instance, universities are reluctant to lose their best students to *grandes écoles*. By contrast, it is difficult for *grandes écoles* to accept this melding together with universities and to relinquish their former nationally prestigious reputation. UPS has to construct a complex governance model that establishes common ground while preserving the assets of its individual members. Members may in turn be tempted to backtrack or outmaneuver the UPS, as in the case of École Polytechnique's (Attali 2015) attempt to gain control of major project assets in 2015. This resulted in the disruption of subtle and fragile compromises, which had been set up long before.

The collective success of endeavors such as UPS requires a solid political will and the ability of internal stakeholders to consider their best common interests as protection against divergent individual impulses. The destabilization involved in the École Polytechnique's move undermined mutual trust and constrained the further development of the governance model. In May 2016, it was sanctioned following the its midterm assessment and was placed under observation due to the

discrepancy between its excellent research and innovation performance and its less effective teaching and campus life, as well as its poor performance in relation to partnerships, and overall governance. Only time will tell how sustainable such an ambitious project will be.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the two phases of HER reforms, which took place in France over the last 35 years, the most significant phase of which began in 2006–07. In comparison to many other countries, the autonomy of French universities has remained very limited. Yet, it has been a keystone for restructuring the entire national HER system (Paradeise et al. 2009). Although it has not been simplified, the HER system has become more diversified, stratified, concentrated, and territorialized. Using literature and synthesizing several pieces of empirical research carried out personally, I have provided evidence of the actual impacts of reforms.

It is certainly too early to draw final conclusions from policies as the radical phase only started a decade ago. Yet important lessons can be drawn. Firstly, public policies have reached the target of their hidden agenda in so far as they have started a probably irreversible process of concentrating resources in a few universities, and have thus brought about a greater stratification of the system. Nevertheless, it will take time for all academics to accept the impacts of change on academic statuses and working conditions as legitimate. In addition, the 'French passion for equality,' as formal as it may be, will probably continue to obstruct a clear affirmation of stratification. Secondly, academics' concerns about protecting their civil servant status will continue to cause resistance. Thirdly, the issue of the objectives of 'non research universities' remains unresolved. Policies have been obsessed with building 'world-class universities' but they have failed to consider the rest of the system. This has led to an increase in conflicting visions about the objectives of universities. A crisis has arisen concerning the identities of institutions and academics and there is currently no resolution in sight.

What is more, the reforms have generated intricacies that have complexified the institutional landscape although their aim was to simplify it. Reforms brought about a 'hubris' in terms of institutional design. New legal statuses were developed, new governance rules and organizations were set up, new incentives were created, and new

institutions were established to take care of them. These complexities have sometimes led to contradictions between the multiple aims of reforms. For instance, they have made it difficult to draw clear lines between the stratification encouraged by 'excellence schemes' and the territorialization promoted through the building of the large, heterogeneous, territorially based university communities.

Finally, the implementation of reforms involves a complicated process of appropriation; change is not straightforward and many of the impacts of reforms remain fragile and reversible. On one hand, the continuous and somewhat hectic process of reform has caused excitement, generated interest, and pushed for reorganization. On the other, the accumulation of rules and institutional frames, and their constant renewal or change, has rapidly exhausted many stakeholders and encouraged opportunistic approaches to gain resources and evade constraints. Each stakeholder tries to make the best of new norms and rules. But all are not equally gifted in this game so the relative power of each stakeholder plays a major role in the final outcomes. This tends to draw the system toward reproducing the long-established balance created over time, even if it is dysfunctional. To a certain extent, this is expressed by the French saying 'the more it changes, the more it remains the same.'

Political alliances and social networks are invasive in decision-making. In this respect, the introduction of evaluation procedures and institutions, as imperfect as they may be, has played a major role in setting the system in motion. Since 2011 in particular, the decision to entrust international high-level scientific panels with the task of selecting excellence projects has been a traumatic experience for the French HER administration. The independent body responsible for these panels faces an ongoing struggle to resist the numerous pressures – including those from the very top of government and the presidency – to open up these panels to political influence.

Notes

1. Two other bodies were abandoned soon after their creation and were merged with other institutions: the Haut Conseil de la Science et de la Technologie (High Council for Science and Technology) and the Agence d'Innovation industrielle (Industrial Innovation Council).
2. http://www.media-paris-saclay.fr/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Brochure-Paris-Saclay.pdf

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CHAPTER 6

The Global Ambitions of Irish Universities: Internationalizing Practices and Emerging Stratification in the Irish Higher Education Sector

Aline Courtois

Introduction

The internationalization of higher education has become a policy imperative in many countries (Altbach 2007). It is closely connected with national and regional economic objectives (Ball 2012) and leads national university systems, and individual universities within national fields, to compete with each other (Hazelkorn 2015). Internationalization can be understood as the process by which universities respond to the convergent forces of marketization and economic globalization (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Yet universities are complex organizations, which, unlike others, manage multiple and competing obligations and cannot operate purely according to market principles (Marginson 2013). While they may be actors and drivers of internationalization to some extent (Matus and Talburt 2009), they remain tied to the state and are constrained by

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external factors such as national economic or immigration policy. Arguably, all universities (or at least all research universities) are subject to the same forces and expected to compete on the same global market. In this sense, internationalization may act as a homogenizing force, potentially reinforcing institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). In addition, the impact of globalization on universities varies from one national context to another (Currie et al. 2003; Rivzi and Lingard 2010) and from one institution to another: external forces are mediated differently by universities because their internal characteristics influence their capacity to strategize (Bartell 2003; Mosneaga and Agergaad 2012; Paradeise and Thoenig 2015). In terms of impact, while the "world-class" status may be desirable for all (Salmi 2009), some universities manage to position themselves on an international elite market, others on a commercial mass market, while many fall back on the domestic market (Marginson 2006).

In sum, the structure, institutional culture, and organizational identity of universities influence the shape of internationalization and its consequences, even where universities evolve in a relatively homogeneous policy context within national boundaries. Universities operate in fields, namely social arenas, in which interdependent agents vie for positions (Bourdieu 1996; Fligstein and McAdam 2012) and are driven by common institutional practices (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Under globalization, the national field of higher education is no longer isolated from extra-national influences, but it is also shaped by them (Marginson 2006). To better understand how internationalization impacts the field of higher education, a shift in focus from policy-making and organizational adaptation to the microdynamics and their effects on actual practices is necessary (Enders 2004). This is illustrated by Cantwell and Maldonado-Maldonado's case studies, in which they examine internationalizing practices beyond the internationalization discourse (2009).

This chapter sets out to contribute to the ongoing discussion of isomorphism and differentiation in the context of globalizing higher education (Popp Berman and Paradeise 2016) by focusing on the case of Irish universities. It examines how internationalizing strategies and practices vary according to internal characteristics and forces; how universities, as agents, manage, mediate, and produce internationalization; and in particular, how they utilize student mobility programs and partnerships to consolidate or improve their respective positions in the national field.

The basis of this examination is an analysis of national and institutional policies, statistical analysis of university partnerships and student mobility figures, and semi-structured interviews with international officers and academic coordinators (N=10) across six sites.[1]

It is supported by data collected as part of an ongoing project on international mobility among Irish students (under the NUI Dr Garret Fitzgerald Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Social Sciences, 2014–2016), which includes a qualitative questionnaire (N=110) and interviews with students returning from exchange (N=22). Unlike other studies of internationalizing strategies (e.g. Mosneaga and Agergaard 2012), interview participants are not senior managers but individuals engaged in the groundwork of managing student mobility. This approach provides deeper insights into actual practices and effects and helps reveal the internal contradictions and constraints that emerge at the operational level.

The first section presents the Irish policy environment that shapes the overall approach to internationalization across higher education institutions (HEIs). The second section examines the status hierarchy of Irish HEIs in the national field. The third section asks how national policies are implemented at the institutional level and how this intersects with the status hierarchy differentiating HEIs. The final section examines the differential treatment of student mobility programs within institutions and its consequences on stratification within universities.

Global Ambitions: The National Strategy for Internationalization

Marketization and Internationalization

Like elsewhere in Europe and beyond, Irish universities are struggling to adapt to combined global and local pressures (Popp Berman and Paradeise 2016). In Ireland, the most pressing issues include rising enrolment figures, falling state funding, and expectations of economic efficiency and global competitiveness. In particular, state funding for higher education was cut by 37 percent between 2008 and 2014 (IUA 2014), causing a severe funding crisis that accelerated casualization and diminished staff-student ratios across the board (Courtois and O'Keefe 2015). The broader economic crisis justified policies aimed at further aligning HEIs with national economic goals. Thus the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt 2011) framed the mission of the sector

principally in economic terms, deploying the vocabulary of employability, entrepreneurship and international competitiveness. It encouraged HEIs to become more financially autonomous by developing new funding streams and advocated greater government control, or "steering," of universities in order to ensure their alignment with the national economic strategy (Harkin and Hazelkorn 2014). New public management methods have played a central role in the ongoing dual process of rationalization and marketization of the sector (Lynch 2013).

A separate strategic plan focuses specifically on internationalization. Investing in Global Relationships: Ireland's International Education Strategy 2010–2015 (DES 2010) frames higher education as "an important internationally traded service" (2010, p. 31). International students are envisaged as economic units, estimated to contribute over €1 billion to higher education as well as other sectors of the Irish economy, for instance through fees paid to universities and private language schools, living expenses, and travel in Ireland (Education in Ireland 2012). Firstly, the main objective of internationalization, as laid out in this document, is to continue developing this revenue stream. While the government capped EU undergraduate fees at €2750 per year across all universities (approximately a quarter of the amount charged in the neighboring UK), there is no such limit on how much HEIs can charge non-EU students. They are constrained only by market forces – not by considerations of equality, which apply solely to the national sphere (see Tannock 2009). Secondly, internationalization is aimed at "promoting Ireland's international profile, forging strategic links with partners overseas (...) and developing a new network of influence among Irish-educated alumni" (DES 2010, p. 31). It is conceived of as an instrument to support Ireland's position on the global economic market through the establishment of strategic international networks:

> The most compelling rationale for internationalisation is investment in future global relationships: with students educated in Ireland who will become our advocates overseas... and with the countries that will be Ireland's next trading and business partners. (DES 2010, p. 11)

The strategy involves the selection of students according to economic rather than egalitarian or developmental principles. A key strategic goal is to "identify and target" students who are "likely to become the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers in countries of

importance to Ireland" (2010, p. 57), namely future elites who will direct investment to Ireland. Students from countries selected according to "market intelligence" must be prioritized (2010, p. 37). These include in particular the high-growth economies of Asia and South America and the United States.[2] The overarching objectives are thus revenue and future trade and business opportunities, which corresponds to an "imperialist" orientation toward internationalization (Foskett 2010) – even though the national imaginary of this small, post-colonial nation is aligned with non-imperial, benevolent values (Khoo 2011). This strategic document makes visible a willingness to harness the internationalization of HEIs to national economic and diplomatic objectives as defined by the state.

Government Steering and Market Intervention

The state, and in particular the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, is strongly involved in steering the internationalizing activities of HEIs. In 2014, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) established a series of performance agreements with each state-aided HEI. These agreements set binding targets, and institutions failing to achieve them incur funding penalties. Increasing the numbers of incoming fee-paying non-EU students features prominently in the "Mission-based Performance Compacts" signed by each university, with some institutions pledging to double their international recruitment over a two-year period.

In 2013–14, between 10 and 14 percent of full-time university students were international students,[3] while the objective set in 2010 for 2015 was 25 percent. Irish universities face a number of constraints, among them financial and capacity issues, as student numbers increase and state funding plummets. Immigration laws are also problematic.[4] What is more, Ireland does not enjoy a dominant position on the global education market and attracts much lower numbers than the neighboring UK: Irish universities grew in the shadow of their more prestigious British counterparts and do not achieve high positions in rankings, partly due to decreased funding. Constraints linked to funding, capacity, competition, and location make it difficult for Irish universities to become significant players on either the global positional market (dominated by elite US and UK universities) or the global mass market (dominated by less elite UK and Australian universities) (Marginson 2006). An additional constraint is the participation in intra-European mobility through Erasmus: the expectation of reciprocity

at the core of the program (and the fact that Erasmus students do not contribute fees to their host university) runs counter to financial objectives. As elsewhere (e.g. Stensaker et al. 2008), there appears to be a significant disconnect between national policy-making and institutional needs.

Education In Ireland ("World-class standards, warmest of welcomes"), the brand launched under the remit of the Enterprise Ireland state agency, acts as a channel to recruit international students to all (including private for-profit) HEIs. Selected HEIs take part in state-subsidized marketing operations and promotional tours around the globe. In addition, the Irish government has negotiated Ireland's participation in mobility programs funded by the US and Brazilian governments. The Brazilian students, in particular, have been distributed between various HEIs, including peripheral ones. Thus the state interferes significantly in the education market, steering internationalization and assisting HEIs in their promotional and recruitment activities. This ensures a relatively high degree of conformity to the mission of higher education as set by the state. Frequent negotiations between the HEA and individual HEIs ensure that specific characteristics are taken into account and mutually agreed institutional objectives are tailored accordingly, while national objectives prevail.

Elite Universities? Principles of Differentiation in the University Sector

Institutions mediate government policy in different ways. Their capacity to strategize is constrained by their respective institutional structures and locations in the national field. Ireland is a small country (4.5 million inhabitants), with seven multidisciplinary universities, 14 institutes of technology, a number of state-supported specialized third-level colleges and a flourishing private for-profit third-level sector. Unlike the situation in other jurisdictions, there are no distinct third-level elite institutions in Ireland; the educational backgrounds of political and business elites are relatively diverse (Courtois forthcoming), and at third level, elite educational spaces appear diffuse, spread across various institutions and extending beyond national boundaries – in particular to the neighboring UK. Yet, and in spite of its small size, the Irish higher education sector is differentiated and distinctly stratified. It operates as a "two-tiered system" (McCoy and Smyth 2011), in which universities are more selective and prestigious than other HEIs. The university sector is itself stratified: the seven universities are not equal in prestige. Among them, Trinity College

Dublin (TCD) is perhaps the best known. Founded in 1592 to educate the local Protestant elite, it is the oldest HEI in Ireland. Its history of social and ethnic exclusivity (Catholics used to be excluded from it), its central city location and physical character contribute to its aura of prestige. University College Cork (UCC) and the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), were established by Royal Charter in 1845 as "Queen's Colleges" together with Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland. The Catholic college, which later became University College Dublin (UCD), was founded separately in 1854. It has since moved to a modern campus on the outskirts of the city and has grown to become the largest Irish university. TCD, UCD, UCC, and NUIG were the only recognized universities in existence before the onset of massification in the 1970s, which differentiates them from more recent institutions, since, here as elsewhere, ancestry carries significant symbolic power (Paradeise and Thoenig 2015). For its part, Maynooth University (MU) officially acquired university status in 1997, but it has a history dating back to the late eighteenth century as an ecclesiastical college – a relatively long history still visible in the architecture of part of its campus.

Between 1967 and 1992, as theories of human capital channeled through the OECD were introduced to a country embarking on economic development, the number of third-level students more than quadrupled. Institutes of Technology largely absorbed the increased working-class participation (Clancy 2015). The University of Limerick (UL) and Dublin City University (DCU) were founded in the context of massification, in 1972 and 1975 respectively, as "Institutes of Higher Education" but were both elevated to university status in 1989. Yet these new universities have not achieved the level of respectability of their elders. DCU, in particular, is still occasionally referred to as the "Tech," as if its relatively recent university status was somehow usurped. For its part, the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), originally focused on vocational education, is now offering research degrees and has been striving for university status for a number of years. As elsewhere (Teichler 2002/2003), massification has led to vertical differentiation in terms of levels of qualification (with an 18.4 percent increase in postgraduate output over the 2007–2011 period alone [HEA 2012, p. 22]) as well as in terms of differentiated institutional status. Meanwhile, horizontal differentiation (namely between professional and non-professional education) is becoming secondary as the imperative of "excellence" and the hegemony of rankings lead all institutions to compete on the fields of research and postgraduate

enrolments, regardless of their original vocation. Nonetheless, the typological distinction between universities and other HEIs, and their foundation dates and history play a role in the status hierarchy symbolically ordering these institutions.

Another principle of differentiation is the degree of selectivity of HEIs. The grades obtained in the final second-level examinations are combined into a point score, which then determines students' chances of being admitted to their chosen course. High-point courses (requiring over 500 points) are considered "elite" and represent 6.8 percent of the total number of undergraduate courses on offer across the sector. Out of 96 such courses on offer for the academic year 2015–16, 39 are located at TCD and a further 29 at UCD. By contrast, a less established university like UL only offers two such courses.[5] Thus, while high point requirements are aligned with subject specializations (with law, medicine and select business and science courses emerging as elite courses), and while elite courses are not the preserve of one single institution, the symbolic economy of point requirements reflects the status hierarchy of HEIs.

In the 2015 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking, TCD achieved position 138, making it the highest ranked Irish HEI, followed by UCD in the 226–250 bracket, NUIG (251–275), and UCC (276–300). For its part, DCU featured in the "100 under 50" category. MU and UL, while no longer included, celebrated their positions in the same ranking in 2014 and 2012, respectively (UL now boasts instead the highest rate of graduate employment). Roughly the same hierarchy (with UCC ahead of NUIG) is visible in the QS ranking. These rankings based on (supposedly) objective criteria thus replicate and formalize existing status hierarchies between institutions,[6] with TCD and UCD at the top, UL and DCU at the bottom, and the other three universities in between. To some extent, this status hierarchy is reflected in the intake of international students: the proportion of international full-time students is 16.7 percent at TCD, 15.1 percent at UCD, 18.4 percent at NUIG, 12.5 percent at UCC, 7.2 percent at MU, 10.4 percent at DCU, and 6.9 percent at UL.[7] This proportion is 6.2 percent at DIT (slightly higher than the 5.8 percent average over the institutes of technology sector), which indicates that, in spite of its relatively subordinate position on the national market, it is also a contender in the competition for international students. Although much smaller in size, and traditionally locally oriented, four other institutes of technology claim rates of international recruitment of over 8 percent. However, the centralized distribution of students recruited through programs negotiated at state level may partially

account for these figures. Nonetheless, they still suggest convergence in the way institutions have adapted to the "imperative" of internationalization.

The Implementation of Internationalization by Irish Universities

Differentiated Market Positions and Strategies

In terms of institutional identities among the "old" universities, TCD now positions itself as "Ireland's leading university" and UCD as "Ireland's global university"; more modestly, UCC calls itself "Ireland's five-star university," and NUIG is "among the top 2 percent of universities in the world." By contrast, the "new" universities describe themselves as "pioneering and connected" (UL), "young, dynamic and ambitious" (DCU), and "Ireland's fastest growing university" (MU).

Internationalization in Irish universities was "an ad-hoc and marginal concern" until the mid/late 2000s (Khoo 2011 p. 343), although it should be noted that internationalism preceded internationalization (Pike 2012), including under the umbrella of developmental aid programs (detailed in Khoo 2011), and that Irish universities have been sponsoring student mobility since the nineteenth century.[8] All universities have now integrated internationalization in their respective strategic plans and adopted the vocabulary of "world-class" status (for the leading universities) or global ambitions (for the others). For TCD, enhancing its international profile goes hand in hand with reinforcing its elite status:

> Trinity College Dublin's global reputation as a world-leading university is reflected in its standing in the world university rankings... Developing a global focus will raise the profile of Ireland's leading university as an international education destination and research hub. (TCD Global Relations Strategy)[9]

For the better positioned HEIs like TCD in Ireland, internationalization is "instrumental to prestige" (Seeber et al. 2016). For its part, UL has blended internationalization in its institutional image of a dynamic university engaged with enterprise and focused on graduate employability:

> The University of Limerick has the largest and most successful Erasmus programme in Ireland with 1 in 3 undergraduate students spending a semester overseas on study or work placements... it is known that time

> spent abroad directly enhances students' employability, which is reflected in the fact that the University of Limerick has the highest graduate employment rate in Ireland. (Professor Paul McCutcheon, Vice President of UL)[10]

MU aims to double outgoing and incoming numbers in order to create "a truly intercultural and multilingual institution" (National University of Ireland Maynooth 2011, p. 25). Located 30 km from Dublin and its three universities, MU traditionally prided itself on student support and care rather than making claims to elite status; but recent developments ("re-branding" and investment in very significant campus development) seem to indicate a shift. Like the other younger universities, MU is no longer content with occupying a niche on a horizontal market. All HEIs are now competing for higher positions in a vertical status hierarchy, some with a view to competing globally.

All seven universities have gradually centralized and formalized their internationalizing strategies, in part by opening international offices through the 2000s. The level of investment varies, with UCD emerging as the most aggressive recruiter. Its international center is large and includes a "Global Lounge" for international students to socialize. Significantly, it employs 40 full-time staff, twelve of which are based in "UCD Global Centres" overseas. UCD is concentrating its efforts on recruiting from northern America, China, India (four dedicated recruitment officers for each), and South-East Asia (three recruitment officers). Controversially, UCD has also decided to build a Confucius Institute on campus as part of its internationalization strategy.[11] By contrast, the International Office of NUIG (which is half the size of UCD) employs 10 staff. The degree to which internationalization processes are centralized and formalized varies too, although overall the tendency is toward greater administrative and lesser faculty control.[12] Typically, non-EU programs are managed exclusively by international office administrators, and academic coordinators recruit candidates for Erasmus mobility only. Similarly, new non-EU partnerships are often established by senior managers in line with institutional objectives, rather than by faculty.

Strategic Partnerships

A more nuanced picture emerges from looking at international exchange in a qualitative rather than quantitative light. Ballatore and Blöss (2008) argue that partnerships are established within the Erasmus scheme

according to "selective affinities" and reflect national status differences between institutions. Red-brick universities in the UK are thus more likely to be partnered with the newer, provincial French universities than the established ones.

In Figures 6.1 and 6.2, universities are ordered on the vertical axis according to their respective positions in the 2015 THE ranking. Figure 6.1 displays the proportion of UK partners in each rank bracket; and Figure 6.2 the proportion of non-EU partners in each rank bracket. Partners who are not ranked are counted in the "over 400" category. DCU is not included in Figure 6.1, as there was not enough information available on its UK partners. DIT is included instead and illustrates the sharp contrast between low-ranked universities and the highest ranked Institute of Technology.

Figure 6.1 shows that the better ranked Irish HEIs are more likely to secure agreements with well-ranked British universities. In addition, a number of UK partners are ranked above their Irish partner university. For instance, TCD has six UK partners ranked higher than its own position at 138. This is particularly significant in the case of the UK, where there is little

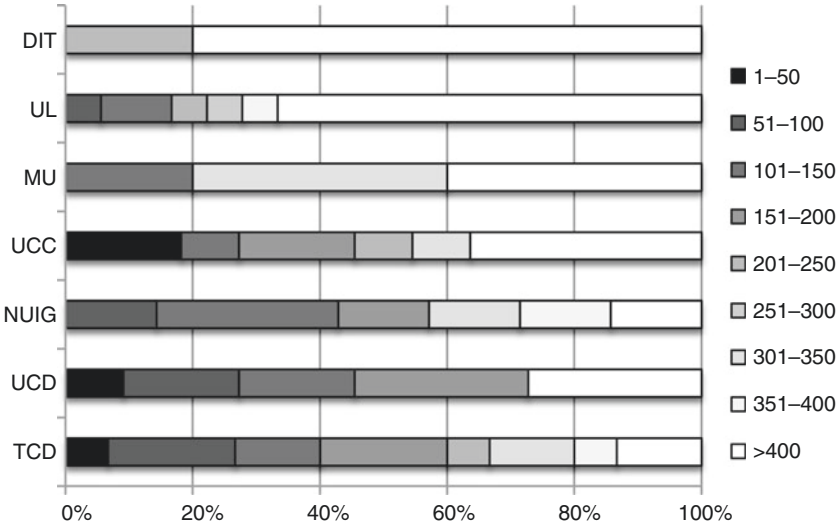

Fig. 6.1 UK partnerships by rank bracket

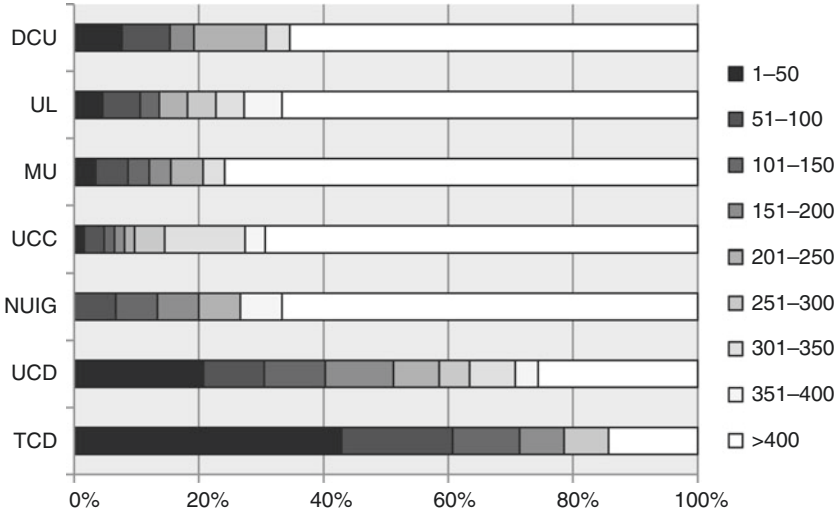

Fig. 6.2 Non-EU partnerships by rank bracket

appetite for Erasmus in Ireland but high demand among Irish students for UK places: flows are imbalanced in favor of the UK, and the Irish universities are in a subordinate position in these particular relationships. A similar pattern emerges from an examination of non-EU partnerships, as Figure 6.2 (which includes all seven universities) illustrates.

TCD again emerges as the university with the highest proportion of highly ranked partners. Over 60 percent of the partners of the other five universities are unranked.

These details are based on lists of partners as displayed by the universities. Some partnerships may be inactive, unbalanced or involve only a small number of places; these do not reflect actual student flows. In addition, new partnerships are negotiated all the time. But the rationale for initiating and maintaining partnerships is not solely based on numbers; in fact, choices are also influenced by the prestige of the partner university:

> China is probably our biggest [partner] but then again the links we have in China, one or two of them would be quite prestigious universities, so we kind of see it as – even though we're not sending [students to them], they're good to have as partners. (S., International coordinator, new university)

The lists of partners displayed by the universities thus speak to the image each HEI seeks to present. Partnerships with elite colleges suggest that the Irish institution is on a par with its prestigious partners.

Out of a total of 210 university-wide partnerships across the seven universities, 137 are with universities in Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. That compares to 82 with universities across Asia and South America, one with Russia, and none with Africa or the Middle East. While partnerships with elite institutions in the English-speaking world may enhance the profile of individual HEIs, these institutional strategies depart from the focus advocated by the government on the high-growth economies and identified future trade partners of South America and Asia. In terms of student flows, this is compensated for by one-way partnerships but not reflected in visible reciprocal agreements. For instance, incoming numbers from Africa and the Middle East are high (16 percent of the non-EU intake),[13] but Irish universities have not established university-wide partnerships in these regions.

This suggests that Irish institutions, and TCD and UCD in particular, are striving to become members of the world-class group of universities, which is essentially a Western model (Deem et al. 2008). The unequal relationship between world regions thus remains unchallenged. The logics of financial profit (drawing wealthy students from developing countries with low capacity for higher education such as China and countries in Africa), economic globalization (partnerships with high-growth economies in China, South-East Asia, or South America), and institutional prestige (partnerships with UK/US elite colleges) overlap but are not completely aligned. In this respect, TCD, for instance, favors institutional prestige, while UCD is more engaged with the long-term economic and political mission assigned to the sector by the government. On a side note, this also confirms the hegemonic position of elite US and UK universities in the global higher education field, as well as the porous boundaries between the national and the global fields (Marginson 2006).

Differentiation within Universities

As already illustrated, not all partnerships are equally valued. In particular, there is a difference in status between Erasmus and other (non-EU) exchanges. Overall, Erasmus flows between Ireland and the rest of Europe are imbalanced in favor of Ireland (6277 incoming and 2762

outgoing students in 2012–13), but this apparent advantage is in fact problematic for HEIs. When a university receives more students than it sends out, the partnership is not financially viable for the receiving university, which is required to provide education to non-contributing students. Students still spend money in Ireland and would be considered beneficial from a national policy perspective, but at HEI level they put increased pressure on capacity and resources. The problem is more acute for HEIs drawing students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as the cost barrier is a significant deterrent for outgoing mobility.

Given the demand for English-language immersion and the relatively low numbers of Irish students studying European languages, Irish universities are in a strong position to negotiate the Erasmus partnership "game" with countries other than the UK. International officers review their international agreements regularly and, when the case arises, either reduce the number of places or terminate the partnership:

> We tend to receive more than we send out, and that's something that we need to be aware of . . . the balance has to be monitored on a yearly basis, and I mean we're not too strict . . . clearly if we have a situation where only four students are choosing Italian as their language, there's no point in having like 18 places, because we'll get 18 students from Italy. (E., international coordinator, old university)
>
> They're sending students here all the time and we just can't get ours to go, so the imbalance grows every year and it's costing us money. (S., international officer, new university)

By contrast, UK partnerships are highly valued. International officers in two new universities commented that it was difficult to maintain these partnerships or to secure new ones.

The difference in status between Erasmus and non-EU programs is sometimes apparent from the allocation of floor space and staffing levels of international offices, with very small numbers of full-time positions dedicated to Erasmus compared to non-EU recruitment or exchange. According to this international officer, such distinctions have financial motives:

> They need the revenue and international students bring revenue . . . the EU students don't bring fees, so there's an element there of – you know, well,

> the international dimension of the campus, but then there's the revenue these students are bringing to the university and that's needed as well. So that's kind of – you know, they're bringing quite a lot of money as well. (E., international coordinator, old university)

Erasmus students are beneficial to the "international dimension of the campus," but the "international students" (understood here as non-EU) add an international dimension and bring in revenue. The hierarchy of students involved in these different types of schemes is also visible in the services afforded to them, for example orientation trips and free access to campus sport services among others. In separate interviews, two international officers complained, off the record, about attitudes toward (incoming and outgoing) Erasmus students. One in particular felt the Erasmus students were treated as "second-class citizens" compared with students involved in non-EU exchanges. Another explained that he resented being asked to increase outgoing Erasmus numbers to make space on campus for fee-paying non-EU students. While this speaks to the differential status of these two types of exchange, and makes explicit the role of outgoing mobility in quite literally making space for incoming fee-paying students, it also highlights the disconnect between institutional strategies and the reality as mediated by agents who value care over financial logics. This was articulated by M., Erasmus coordinator at a "new" university: "I don't care if the president doesn't care about Erasmus students. We still look after them."

These status differences are also visible in academic requirements and more generally in the recruitment process for the various strands of exchange. Applications for non-EU exchange have to be submitted earlier in the academic year and are often vetted by the students' lecturers. They typically require academic transcripts and a statement of interest. As mentioned by an academic coordinator, with some uneasiness, only "elite" students are sent to "elite" partner institutions:

> Toronto is only 1st class honours . . . We wouldn't send a student who is – because it's so prestigious, we wouldn't send a student who is just pass or you know, it doesn't look good [AC: From what point of view?] Like for us to be sending students that are not elite students, you know [AC: Would it be a problem for the host university?] I can't imagine they would accept them; fees there are 10,000 a year; it's a university for elite students. (A., international officer, new university)

By contrast, the imbalance in flows means that it is relatively easy to secure a place on an Erasmus exchange. In the same university, places are allocated on a first-come first-served basis, and students generally get the destination they want (provided it is not the UK). In another university, an academic coordinator explained that each year he ranked student applications by grade and advised students with low grades not to apply. However, most of the selected applicants dropped out, and he ultimately had to accept all applications and even "beg" students to take part. In this case, it was as if there had been no academic selection.

International partnerships may be "university-wide" or established specifically for one or more faculties, as a result of which the offer varies from one faculty to another. Even when a program is designated as being university-wide, in effect students from certain faculties may be prioritized (as several arts students I interviewed found out at their expense; one, for instance, commented that "they were mainly interested in things like engineering students and finance students"). Business or law students can generally avail themselves of additional options, as their departments develop their own partnerships with business and management schools abroad, sometimes independently of the central international office. One coordinator explained that the ranking of the partner university was extremely important in his decisions to set up new partnerships; another, tasked with setting up exchanges principally for arts students, focused instead on the environment and support offered by potential partners.

Compulsory exchange is more likely to be a feature of select business courses with a language element. Language students are generally also strongly encouraged to go abroad. For students of other faculties, it is usually entirely voluntary and takes the shape of either a term abroad in lieu of a term at home, or an additional year assessed only on a pass/fail basis (which again devalues the exchange from an academic perspective). But whether a year abroad is built into a program or not does not necessarily indicate higher status. One of the new universities has thus recently launched an innovative strategy that makes exchange compulsory on many courses. It has allowed the university to achieve a balance between incoming and outgoing student flows. The compulsory term abroad was first rolled out in the arts and social science faculties – subordinate disciplines – and extends to all students, regardless of their academic level and motivation (or lack thereof). This enforced "massification" of Erasmus has put pressure on the international office to secure partnerships in lesser-known colleges in eastern European countries,

where courses may be taught in English and the cost of living is cheaper for students. These are much less prestigious destinations. In addition, the relative lack of resources makes it difficult for administrators (and academics) to monitor the quality offered by these new partners or provide much-needed support. In this case, competing logics are at play, which ultimately are constrained by the inferior position of the institution in both the national and international fields.

Conclusion

The internationalization of higher education is focused at national policy level on increasing revenue and supporting Ireland's position in the global economy. The Irish state takes an active role in driving internationalization by setting financial incentives and helping HEIs materially to penetrate target markets, but at the same time it is reducing funding to the sector and placing other, competing demands on HEIs. All HEIs have embedded internationalization in their strategic plans, and world-class status (for the more established ones) or ambitions (for the challengers) in their institutional identities. But HEIs have to manage multiple constraints, which include funding and capacity issues, international market forces, and the secondary position of Ireland in the global higher education market. Market forces, and congruent government intervention, produce a significant level of isomorphism across the sector in terms of guiding principles and broad patterns of commercially focused internationalizing activities.

However, while all Irish HEIs operate in the same national policy environment and face similar pressures, their ability to respond to and harness internationalization varies in a way that is consistent with allomorphism rather than isomorphism (Vaira 2004). The higher education sector is small but stratified, with universities occupying different positions in the national field. These positions translate into different demographics and varying levels of income, with universities at the top better able to attract higher proportions of postgraduate and non-EU students, who pay higher fees than local undergraduates. Although relatively unknown compared to their English counterparts, well-established universities have a broader repertoire of selling points and more resources to invest in marketing initiatives. These institutions are better able to secure prestigious international partners. In this sense, internationalization is not a game-changer as far as configuration of the national field of higher education is concerned. Rather, it brings out the otherwise subtle

stratification within the field and may reinforce the ongoing differentiation of HEIs.

Both between and within HEIs, exchange destinations are becoming increasingly stratified in a way that mirrors pre-existing hierarchies. Financial logics dictate the resources allocated to the different types of programs on offer. Official university-wide bilateral exchange agreements reveal more complex logics, where institutional prestige, financial considerations and alignment with national trade goals compete. HEIs at the higher end of the status hierarchy favor high-status, strategically located partners, and TCD in particular seems intent on positioning itself on an international world-class market, while other institutions are not in a position to deploy strategies of distinction to the same extent. Closer study of university partnerships, student flows and the various approaches to outgoing mobility thus reveals the differentiation emerging from the interplay between isomorphic forces on the one hand, and organizational identities and field positions on the other.

Notes

1. In some sections, universities are designated not by name but by their status as "old" or "new" universities in order to protect the anonymity of respondents. For the same reason, their names and on occasion their gender have been changed.
2. Given that Irish universities find themselves in a subordinate position on the global higher education market, it is unclear how this can be achieved, as more affluent mobile students are likely to continue choosing elite institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States.
3. The low estimate is based on HEA figures and the high estimate on DES figures for the domiciliary origin of students.
4. In 2014, international students protested against the way they were treated by Irish immigration services, as visa renewals required overnight queuing. Non-EU students are barred from entering the Irish labour market after completing their education. In addition, immigration rules were tightened in 2015 following revelations that a number of for-profit English-language schools had been operating as "visa mills."
5. These figures are based on an analysis of point requirements for all courses across HEIs. A list of point requirements is available at www.careersportal.ie.
6. In addition, the "international" criterion is where all four ranked universities score the highest; rankings constitute an incentive for internationalization in this regard also.

7. Based on HEA figures (domiciliary origin of full-time students, 2014–2015). These exclude students based in Northern Ireland as well as part-time/one-term only students. UCD claims a higher percentage due to its overseas campuses.
8. One example is the enduring "Travelling Studentships," largely based on academic criteria, offered by NUI (of which NUIG, UCD, MU and UCD are part) since its creation in 1908 (NUI 2008).
9. www.tcd.ie/globalrelations/strategy/
10. www.ul.ie/news-centre/news
11. Confucius Institutes are Chinese cultural centers overseen by the Chinese government. Academics in Ireland have expressed concerns over the cost of the center as well as its governance structure, which they perceive as a potential threat to academic freedom.
12. At the other end of the spectrum, the National College of Arts and Design has not set up a dedicated international center or hired additional staff for this purpose; exchange programmes are managed by administrators working closely with faculty. For this particular college, capacity is a challenge, and incoming and outgoing flows must be strictly balanced, which limits the scope for international recruitment; the small size and professional orientation of courses additionally help to explain the high level of faculty engagement.
13. Based on HEA domiciliary origin figures for 2013–2014.

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CHAPTER 7

The Transition from 'Rank Equality' to Vertical Differentiation in the German Higher Education Sector

Manfred Stock

In contrast to Great Britain and the USA, until now, the German higher education sector has not been regarded as having a vertical structure; there has been no hierarchy of German universities (Teichler 2007). With a view to individual institutions and degrees, higher education institutions of the same type have so far been characterized by "equality of rank" (Kreckel 2010, p. 242). In international comparison, Germany's higher education system has been considered relatively homogeneous (Teichler 2009). This also corresponds with the findings of existing studies in elite sociology, which unanimously agree that there are presently no prominent elite higher education institutions in Germany (Hartmann 2001, p. 183; Windolf 1986, p. 251; Kaina 2004, p. 12). Recently, there have been noticeable efforts to move towards vertical differentiation.

The first section (I) of this article will address the question of why, until now, there has been no separate, 'elite' sector in German higher education and hence no institutionalized hierarchy between universities. Against this

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backdrop, the second section (II) of the article will briefly describe current efforts to introduce vertical differentiation into the higher education sector.

Higher Education in Germany and the 'Rank Equality' of Universities

Until now, the German higher education system has been dominated by research universities. The modern research university first evolved in Germany. In the higher education sector, research universities have occupied a dominant position as general institutions for elite education and, despite expansion, they still maintain this position. Nevertheless, in the course of this development, the character of these elite educational institutions has changed. To demonstrate this in more detail, this section will first outline the development of universities in Germany from a historical perspective using 'ideal type' terminology.

In the pre-modern university in Germany, as elsewhere in Europe, the study of classical professions held a predominant position. They belonged to the three higher faculties and administrated the knowledge to which the highest social prestige was attributed and which encompassed all human relationships to both internal and external forces (Kant 1984 [1798]; Stichweh 2005): relationships to god (theology), to other humans (law), and to the self (medicine). At the same time, the three higher faculties served the political interests of the sovereigns and enabled them to influence and to control their subjects through these three relationships. In this respect, the services of these professions and the knowledge represented by them were heteronomous in character. The three higher faculties were contrasted with the lower philosophical faculty. In the middle ages, the philosophical faculty initially provided preparation for the higher faculties under the name *facultas artium*. This encompassed the liberal arts (*artes liberalis*), in other words, verbal and logical reasoning (grammar, rhetoric and dialectics), and mathematics (arithmetic, geometry and astronomy).

The philosophical faculty became the starting point for a transformation which, in the eighteenth century, resulted in the modern university. This transformation was primarily described by Immanuel Kant in his 1798 study, *The Contest of Faculties* (*Der Streit der Fakultäten)*. Kant argued that, in contrast to the three higher faculties, the government's authority to determine how and what should be taught ceased at the gates of the philosophical faculty. According to

Kant, the philosophical faculty was obligated only to the "truth of the teachings which should be embraced" and in this respect should "be considered free and abiding by the laws of reason, and not by the laws of the government" (Kant 1984 [1798], p. 24). This autonomy led to a rise in the importance of the philosophical faculty within the ensemble of faculties.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, differentiation between academic disciplines emerged within the philosophical faculty on the basis of a methodically and systematically controlled acquisition of knowledge (vom Bruch 1999, p. 392). The universities of Halle and Göttingen were the forerunners of this development and were the first to advocate norms for the freedom of research and teaching. Teaching and research topics were chosen and academic achievements assessed according to the universities' own criteria. Hence academic research gained significance in terms of which knowledge was imparted by universities in teaching (Stichweh 2005). The autonomous assessment of research results led to the anticipation of their publication and subsequent publishing endeavors gave rise to specialist periodicals (scientific journals).

In the nineteenth century in particular, this accelerated differentiation within the philosophical faculty and led to the establishment of additional academic disciplines in the fields of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences (Stichweh 1984). The philosophical faculty became "the supporting foundation for all academic activities" within universities (Paulsen 1966 [1902], p. 528). The fundamental aspects for structuring degree programmes were now determined by the disciplinary structure of science. Academic teaching rested on the autonomy of science and its logic, thereby also changing the knowledge base of the professional disciplines. These disciplines were now also based on scientific knowledge; the political rulers no longer held the power to define that knowledge.

This link between research and teaching ensured that research universities acquired an uncontested key position in the academic landscape and became the focal point of higher education. Student numbers at other higher education institutions, such as the technical colleges (*Technische Hochschulen*), which were established in the early nineteenth century, were of little significance in comparison to the numbers studying at research universities. Over 90 percent of all students in Germany in the mid nineteenth century were enrolled at research universities (Titze 1987, p. 23ff.). Research universities did not constitute just one segment of higher

education, they constituted almost the entire sector. This was a distinctive feature of higher education in Germany in comparison to the UK and the USA. This situation was highly significant to the further development of higher education in Germany.

The pre-eminence of research universities also meant that the preceding secondary education at the *Gymnasium* was oriented to the academic standards specified by those universities and it hence took on a propaedeutic academic character. The only way to gain admission to university was by acquiring the highest secondary diploma, the *Abitur*, at a *Gymnasium*. The *Abitur* symbolized the ability to participate in higher education in which teaching was closely linked to research. *Gymnasium* teachers therefore also received their training in the philosophical faculty, where it coincided with the academic education of scholars. Accordingly, the *Gymnasium* curriculum was oriented towards the disciplines and degree programme structures of this faculty.

Gymnasien and universities were closely related to each other; in Germany, the above-mentioned *Abitur* school leaving exam was the central link for the transition between the two institutions and it prevailed over specific university entrance exams (Wolter 1989; Zymek 2009). The *Abitur* exam and the access to it within the hierarchical structure of the school system[1] were decisive for gaining admission to university, which in Germany was considered the highest form of knowledge acquisition. All research universities were therefore uncontested leading educational institutions. They embodied the model of the "unity of research and teaching" devised by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1964 [1810]) for the highest level of education, which combined science with the idea of "subjective education." Only those who held the exclusive *Abitur* were entitled to study at university.

The elevated status of university education was further reinforced by the career paths it offered. In Germany, schools and modern research universities were public institutions, or rather publicly controlled institutions. The official authorization system not only linked *Gymnasien* and universities via the *Abitur* but also linked universities with a hierarchically structured public bureaucracy (see Wolter 1989). Aside from academic or professional careers, a qualification from a research university most frequently led to a senior post in public administration. German research universities were not initially concerned with the world of trade and commerce. In this way, a specific educational elite

emerged in Germany, which has been described by Friedrich Paulsen (1966 [1902], pp. 149–150) as follows:

> Those with an academic education represent a kind of intellectual aristocracy in Germany.... Together, they form a kind of official gentry, as they are all involved in state government and administration.... they acknowledge each other *as equals on the basis of their academic education* [emphasis added]... Conversely, in Germany, anyone without an academic education is lacking something which cannot be fully replaced by wealth or noble birth.

Altogether, across the system, these research universities were institutions which formed and reproduced a specific educational elite. Accordingly, in Germany, the research university as a distinct type was regarded as the 'most superior' educational institution; at the same time, it represented the 'highest' academic education, which relied on knowledge and 'intellect' rather than 'property' and 'background'. Especially prior to the unification of the German Empire, the research universities were held up as

> shining symbols of national *cultural* achievements. Their influence on a nation which was beginning a race to catch up with other Western European countries through a defensive modernization cannot be overestimated (Bollenbeck 1996, p. 186, original emphasis).

Research universities corresponded to the idea that academic education was based on scientific universalism and therefore could not be stratified[2]; at the same time, it represented the 'highest' form of qualification and the legitimization of an elite. Hence, in the field of universities, there were no particularly superior or 'elitist' institutions that were distinguished by a higher level of selectivity. Admission to university depended on the highly selective admission to a *Gymnasium* and hence relied on the transition to secondary education. This transition was the decisive "channeling point" for access to elite academic education (Schelsky 1957).

The dramatic post-war expansion of higher education, particularly in the 1960s, had little impact on the central role of research universities.[3] It would be an undue simplification to describe the impact of this expansion in terms of Martin Trow's frequently cited formula, which is primarily an

interpretation of quantitative values of higher education participation; Trow (1970, 2006) described the transformation of universities from institutions of "elite higher education" into those of "mass higher education" with the preservation of a small sector of elite institutions where appropriate. In Germany, however, the institutions which expanded were, until recently, uniformly considered to represent the 'highest' education. In this respect, they did not lose their 'elitist' character despite expansion.

As German research universities are all public (there are currently two exceptions) and education is a constitutionally guaranteed civil right, it is not possible to categorically restrict access (Oehler 1989, p. 37; Peisert 1990, p. 395). With the exception of the National Socialist dictatorship and the GDR, public policy has not been able to limit higher education expansion since the late nineteenth century (Stock 2014, 2015). Restricting the education of individuals through governmental regulation would violate the freedom of education and training, the freedom of science, the freedom of occupational choice, and the freedom of contract, to name just the most significant.

In post-war Germany, there were some attempts to restrict admission to universities, however, a restrictive educational policy was eventually forbidden by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1972 and 1977 in the *Numerus Clausus* decisions (BverfGE 1972, 1977). Although admission restrictions are allowed in exceptional circumstances, the state is not authorized to establish disproportionately high barriers which would obstruct applicants' access to higher education (Thieme 2004). Moreover, the expansion of higher education participation, at least from the 1970s until 2006, followed guidelines that were set by higher education policy and had a standardizing effect. This ensured that similar standards for student-staff ratios and admission were established for particular subjects at universities across the system.

These guidelines implemented the *Numerus Clausus* decisions by the Federal Constitutional Court, which called for equality across Germany in exercising the fundamental right to a free choice of training institution for those eligible. The imperative of maximum capacity utilization was derived from these guidelines (see Kluth 2001). By determining the number of students to be matriculated in a degree programme through the teaching loads of all faculty members, it guaranteed uniform study and admission conditions for particular subjects. These regulations applied, and still do apply, only to public universities,[4] where 94 percent of all students in Germany study at present (Statistisches Bundesamt 2014a, 2014b). As a

result, to this day, individual higher education institutions are restricted in stipulating specific entrance requirements in order to increase selectivity for certain study programmes. In this way, vertical differentiation between particular degree programmes in one discipline has been systematically excluded.

Nevertheless, certain disciplines are socially ascribed with particular prestige. Strict admission limits (*Numerus Clausus*) and a very small number of places in relation to the number of applicants are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the ascription of vertical differentiation. In addition, high prestige needs to be ascribed to the related professions. Only in a few exceptional cases do both the conditions described above apply, for example, in the field of medicine. In view of the fact that medicine is offered as a course of study at almost all research universities, there has so far been no consolidated vertical differentiation between universities. The assertion that German art and music academies "exhibit all the qualities of international elite institutions" (Zymek 2011, p. 13) should also be considered against this backdrop. There are very limited places in relation to the number of applicants and there is also a highly selective entrance exam – a great exception in German higher education – because eligibility is not connected to the *Abitur*. Up to now, however, arts and music as disciplines and specialized arts and music colleges have not actually been ascribed elite status because, at least in Germany, the associated professional fields are considered precarious (see Deutsches Musikinformationszentrum 2014).

Another aspect has contributed to the fact that academic education has not on the whole lost its elevated status despite its expansion: the 'structure' of access to universities has changed only minimally. Even now, only one percent of all students do not have either the *Abitur* or the vocational equivalent, the *Fachabitur* (Middendorff et al. 2013, p. 54).[5] Whilst the rate of *Abitur* holders has increased, the crucial selection points for university admission have remained the same: access to and successful completion of upper-secondary education.

In comparison to other Western industrialized countries, the ongoing selection related to the acquirement of the *Abitur* has curbed university expansion in Germany. In addition, within Germany's tripartite secondary education structure, for those who do not have the *Abitur* and are thus excluded from the 'elite route' via university education, the dual vocational education system offers an alternative path to well-paid positions. This system has alleviated the demand pressure on *Gymnasien*

and universities (Powell and Solga 2011). According to OECD figures, in 2013, 48 percent of the relevant age group in Germany began a Bachelor's degree programme; this compared to 71 percent in Denmark, 60 percent in the Netherlands, 58 percent in the UK, and the OECD average of 58 percent (OECD 2015, p. 447).

Due to the continuing link to the *Gymnasium,* with its propaedeutic academic focus, the expansion of this school type also led to higher education expansion whilst preserving the research university's central position. The transformation of vocational colleges (*Fachschulen*) into universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) in the early 1970s was intended to relieve the pressure from an influx of students in the research university sector. However, this only partially succeeded as universities of applied sciences have never expanded to the same extent as universities. Two thirds of all students still study at universities (Statistisches Bundesamt 2013, p. 3). Universities of applied sciences were intended to focus solely on teaching; they were not expected to conduct their own research and did not have the right to award doctoral degrees. The teaching load of professors was significantly higher than at universities. However, universities of applied sciences were, in fact, increasingly modeling themselves on research universities (Teichler 2005, p. 169; Lenhardt 2005).

Universities of applied sciences now carry out an increasing amount of research (Webler 2008); those specializing in social work were the forerunners in this respect. Professors at a university of applied sciences are also able invoke the freedom of science guaranteed in the German constitution (BverfG 2010). Several German states have begun to adjust professors' teaching loads in line with those at universities, and there are plans to grant some universities of applied sciences the right to award doctoral degrees. All of this indicates that an intertwining of research and teaching is gaining ground and that the universities of applied sciences are gravitating towards universities in a kind of 'academic drift' (cf. Bloch in this volume). In this respect, any attempts to differentiate vertically within the higher education sector with regard to a distinction between universities and universities of applied sciences have to contend with strongly opposing trends. Furthermore, with the introduction of the Bachelor's and Master's system, degrees from universities of applied sciences and universities are now formally equal.

Employment opportunities in Germany are also related to structural conditions that have not promoted the use of vertical differentiation between universities and their degrees as a means of redistributing access

to leadership positions. Higher education expansion in Germany was accompanied by an increase in public sector employment so that until the 1980s, contrary to all predictions, graduates were still able to find suitable employment positions. Even after a decline in the absorptive capacity of the public sector, career opportunities for university graduates did not diminish. Since the 1980s, the private sector has taken on an increasing number of graduates (Schubert and Engelage 2006; Köhler and Naumann 1994). This expansion neither led to an increase in unemployed graduates (Weber and Weber 2013; Stock 2014) nor to financial losses compared with those holding other qualifications; on the contrary, the income gap widened (Möller 2011). Overall, despite higher education expansion, graduates continued to find appropriate jobs (see Reisz and Stock 2013, pp. 150ff.; Grotheer et al. 2012; Rehn et al. 2011). In this respect, there is no devaluation of academic qualifications despite the expansion of higher education.

The characteristics described above illustrate that there has been no vertical differentiation between German universities, although the majority of students are enrolled at research universities, in other words, at institutions which strive towards research-related teaching in both their Bachelor's and Master's programmes. This is unparalleled in international comparison.[6]

At the same time, the expansion of higher education participation pushed the research universities to their limits, primarily because funding lagged behind increases in student numbers. In 1977, the *Länder* passed the so-called *Öffnungsbeschluss,* the decision to maintain open access to higher education whilst at the same time freezing funding levels. By this point at the latest, university staffing levels were no longer able to keep pace with the growing number of students; it was "structurally a decision for stagnation" (Naumann 1990, p. 383). The number of teaching hours per week allocated to academic staff increased over the years. At the same time, student-professor ratios worsened, particularly in the humanities and social sciences (Lundgreen 2009, pp. 52ff.). This trend continued in the former West Germany until 1989.

In the course of German reunification, the East German higher education system was expanded. Differing starkly between disciplines, staff-student ratios were improved to some extent. However, in the early 2000s, staff-student ratios stagnated again (see Lundgreen 2009, p. 52ff.) and the situation deteriorated dramatically after 2007 (Bloch and Lathan 2012). Conditions of "permanent overstrain" (Enders 2010,

p. 447) now characterize German universities. This situation systematically conflicts with universities' orientation towards research:

> The combined pool of resources for teaching and research at universities means that research is constantly being pushed aside by teaching. Whenever the demand for teaching grows and the basic endowment is not increased accordingly, an ever increasing share of the existing resources is used up for teaching, thereby diminishing the funds for research. This is precisely what has happened at German universities since the mid-1970s. (Schimank 1995, p. 96)

Written in 1995, Uwe Schimank's analysis still applies today. Research has been diminished in terms of duties; due to an increase in teaching loads, all academics have less time allocated to research.[7] Research has also been reduced in terms of interaction with teaching. High teaching loads suggest a standard teaching programme which conflicts with teaching along research related parameters and which tends towards the teaching of expert knowledge rooted in predefined knowledge bases. This model is reinforced by the Bologna reforms, which express student workloads in credit points (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS) and are thus oriented towards mere units of time for the appropriation of the curriculum.[8]

Seen as a whole, the traditional system of German elite education continued from the post-war period to the early 2000s without the internal creation of exclusive routes and without triggering a dynamic of vertical differentiation. It linked the propadeutic *Gymnasien* to public research universities through an eligibility system. This was supported structurally, above all, by higher education policy stipulations, which were explicitly committed to the civil right to education. It was also supported by the requirements of different professional fields, which were not only able to provide employment for the increasing number of graduates, but were also able to do this at a level which largely fulfilled the salary and career expectations of those graduates. This was, however, accompanied by a structural underfunding of universities, which led to a serious shortage of resources in both research and teaching.

Due to scarce public finances, this resource shortage did not improve. Instead, since about the mid-1990s, state higher education policy protagonists have treated this issue as a symptom of efficiency problems, which could primarily be brought under control by 'more competition.'

Competition also increasingly became accepted as a means of managing universities. Accordingly, it also made sense to advocate an uneven distribution of scarce funds between universities; this was coupled with an emphasis on certain elite universities or elite study programmes (Kreckel 2006).

In Germany, this change was part of a global development which pushed forward standards to base the higher education sector on the premise of all-embracing competition and which was oriented towards an abstract 'output-based' university management model. The international ranking of universities and study programmes, the efforts of international accreditation agencies, particularly in the business school sector (Mitterle and Stock 2015) and the worldwide institutionalization of "policies for excellence" (Rostan and Vaira 2011; Vaira 2009) within the new "world polity of higher education" (Rostan and Vaira 2011; Ramirez and Meyer 2013) deployed a logic of vertical differentiation within the higher education sector. It transcended national borders and hence also put pressure on the German higher education system.

Furthermore, belief in the benefits of vertical differentiation in higher education was reinforced by the politically imposed introduction of the Bachelor's and Master's system in the course of the Bologna process. This implementation had a two-fold effect; Bachelor's and Master's degrees attained at research universities and universities of applied sciences were now officially recognized as equal, in accordance with the above mentioned convergence on the level of higher education institutions. At the same time, this promoted the vertical differentiation process at the level of study programmes. The political motivation for the introduction of the Bologna structure in Germany was that as "the first professional degree in a tiered system, the Bachelor's degree [represents] the standard degree and, for the majority of students, thereby [leads] to their initial entry into a profession" (Kultusministerkonferenz 2003, p. 3).

"Further admission requirements" (ibid., p. 5) therefore applied to Master's degrees. The introduction of the Bachelor's and Master's study programmes was intended to reduce the number of students graduating from university with the level and duration of studies which had been usual up to that point. Moreover, the incorporation of a selection barrier was meant to ascribe an exclusive character to Master's programmes.

Although the actual number of transitions from Bachelor's to Master's programmes is much higher than the original political targets envisaged (Winter 2011), in the course of introducing the tiered system, the

selection process for study programmes has gained significance, even for Bachelor's programmes.[9] In fact, it is still unclear to what extent this practice complies with constitutional rights. At the same time, new fields and selection procedures are becoming institutionalized and it can be assumed that these processes will advance vertical differentiation between study programmes. In addition, some universities plan to establish pilot study programmes which circumvent the above-mentioned decision on maximum capacity utilization (Achelpöhler 2012, p. 7); by setting higher admission barriers and offering better supervision, such programmes attempt to accentuate vertical differentiation.

Current Trends towards Institutionalizing Vertical Differentiation in the Higher Education Sector

Against the backdrop described in the previous section, there have been increasing efforts to introduce vertical differentiation in the higher education sector since the early 2000s. This section provides a brief outline of the current situation.

(a) The Excellence Initiative: By creating a few 'flagships' of research at the level of universities as organizations, the politically instigated Excellence Initiative is an attempt to enhance the status of research, which has increasingly been "[over]shadowed by teaching" (Schimank 1995). The Excellence Initiative is a government programme which seeks to create and highlight a group of 'top-level' universities with appropriate research resources at their disposal. The German state wishes to channel more funding into and attach higher prestige to a few specific universities. The Excellence Initiative has so far focused on

> promoting research. . . . to strengthen Germany as a location of excellent science and humanities . . . and to increase the visibility of top-level universities and research areas (ExV 2005, p. 1).

This has had little impact on the alarmingly low funding levels for research and teaching in general. The process and funding criteria under this initiative suggest that, in effect, they create a dominant position for major centers (Münch 2007) and that research is oriented towards the abstract requirements of the funding programme logic rather than towards factual viewpoints (Kühl 2016).

Whilst the Excellence Initiative is aimed at research activities,[10] in reality it is directed towards selected universities as a whole; awarding the title 'elite university' is certainly a manifestation of this. The ascription of elite status extends to teaching and hence also leads to institutionalized vertical differentiation. Initial analyses have shown that the status ascribed by the Excellence Initiative has an impact on the choice of university; those with higher *Abitur* grades (Wagner 2015) and a higher social background (Winkler 2014) are more likely to apply to these prestigious universities.

(b) Special elite study programmes at public universities: Current efforts to establish a few select 'elite study programmes' are related to the general conditions of overstrain in public universities described earlier. With the creation of the Elite Network of Bavaria in 2004, the first German state took a step in this direction. The network is made up of 21 'elite study programmes' at nine selected Bavarian universities. Higher education policy requires that these study programmes should be characterized by "elitist teaching content" (Seib 2004, p. 43) and "elite modules" (Goppel 2004, p. 39).

Although, on a factual level, the added value of "elitist teaching content" in comparison to the general curriculum is unclear (see Stock 2011 for further details), on a social level, the self-descriptions of elite study programmes highlight their superiority even more emphatically. In 2016, this elite programme was expanded but there have not so far been any other such initiatives in the public higher education sector.

(c) Strategic positioning, emanating from the private higher education sector: Some institutions, particularly in the private higher education sector,[11] claim to provide superior teaching and strive to establish rank differences in higher education. In the popular media, such institutions are sometimes presented as 'elite institutions'. These institutions claim to educate future top executives and leaders. Whilst some business management programmes at public institutions also put forward such claims, they do so less vigorously.

It is no coincidence that private higher education institutions and study programmes particularly excel in this respect. In contrast to the public sector, in the private higher education sector, the structural conditions foster strategic positioning as providers of elite education. Unlike publicly-run institutions, private higher education institutions are not bound to the constitutional rights described in the previous section, in which education as a civil right is the norm and the limitation of access to universities is

prohibited. As these rules do not apply, private universities can rely on their specific selection processes as the basis for their claim to a leading position. Hence, the promoters of vertical differentiation are to be found in the private sector, particularly in private business schools and schools of management. Moreover, by German standards, the fees charged by the institutions striving for top positions in this sector are extremely high: up to 5,000 euros per semester for Bachelor's programmes and up to 25,000 euros per semester for Master's programmes. Such institutions can therefore count on affluent clientele. They occupy top positions in the relevant university rankings.

In the private business school sector, a 'top level' has emerged 'from above'; this status is to some extent performatively created by the way that certain business schools seek to single themselves out by describing themselves in superior terms. This has resulted in a tendency to overbid. Paradoxically, this has unfolded as the flip side of a standardization that is particularly advanced in the business school sector. When defining themselves, business schools refer to accreditation criteria, which have been institutionalized as general standards by accreditation agencies, and which must be met by universities (Mitterle et al. 2016). Strategic positioning on the level of self-descriptions, however, must be underpinned by the actual development of activity-related and structural features which are subject to a logic of superiority.

These business schools attach importance to the research reputation of their staff, orient themselves towards criteria which stand for a high level of 'internationality,' establish close relationships with the corporate world to create career opportunities for their graduates, and so on. It is significant that these criteria are scaled in discipline or programme-specific rankings thereby establishing avenues of ascent and descent (Bloch et al. 2014). Thus, positional relationships are formed between universities, which follow a logic of vertical differentiation and which have accordingly activated a field of interrelated strategic positioning.[12]

At the same time, it is a matter of constructing criteria for the formation of future elites in the field of business management. As certain business schools seek to highlight their superiority, they also ascribe corresponding expectations to their graduates. Whether explicitly or implicitly, these expectations have created a new concept of the 'elite' which goes beyond previous constructs of 'executives' and 'leadership positions'. In the past, the completion of studies in engineering along with the principle of in-house advancement led to a senior management position in a commercial company (see Freye, 2009). Business schools which lay claim to a top

position are institutionalizing very different role expectations for 'leadership positions' in business and at the same time cultivating corresponding types of graduates. A graduate from a top business school now seems predestined to reach a senior management position. It remains to be seen whether such positions and career paths will indeed increasingly be oriented towards these expectations, however, there is a tendency towards this.

The cases described above (a, b and c) indicate initial efforts to institutionalize a stratified system in higher education or study programmes rather than established vertical differentiation. At the same time, it is not yet clear which specific universities and disciplines will actually succeed in assuming a relatively stable position within a stratified structure.

Germany is still some way off from a stable, institutionalized top level in the field of higher education institutions which is also socially accepted. There is, however, undoubtedly a move in this direction.

Notes

1. In Germany, the traditional division into 'lower' (*Volksschule*) and 'higher' (*Gymnasium* and university) education did not allow students to transfer between school types. During the Weimar Republic, a tripartite school system with a new structure was introduced, the essential features of which are still in place. All children attend primary school together; they are then channelled into three different types of secondary school (*Hauptschule*, *Realschule* and *Gymnasium*). Whilst this system has generally become more permeable, this transition is still the crucial selection point in the German education system. The types of secondary school are completely separate so the transfer from primary school to one of the three secondary school types not only sets the course for an individual's future education but also for their further career. Only a degree from a *Gymnasium* qualifies a student for university education. Although some flexibility was introduced in the post-war period and particularly in recent years, the *Gymnasium* is empirically still by far the most common route to university, as will be shown below.
2. See Stock (2011) on the functional incompatibility of an education based on scientific universalism with stratified differentiation.
3. The share of freshmen of an age cohort increased from five percent in 1950 to approximately 50 percent nowadays (Wolter 2014).
4. This framework was relaxed in the 2006 state agreement on the allocation of study places (*Staatsvertrag über die Vergabe von Studienplätzen*). Until that

point, the provisions for determining the capacity of study places applied to both degree programmes subject to the central application procedure (ZVS, central office for the allocation of places in higher education) and to those that were not included in this procedure. According to the KMK (The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder*), this regulation was canceled to enable federal states to set the rules for determining the capacity of those degree programmes which were not bound to the ZVS central application procedure (see Zimmermann 2010, p. 13). The issue of whether this change was appropriate under constitutional law is as yet unresolved (Berthold and Kluth 2008, p. 608).

5. In the 2012 summer semester, 83 percent of students enrolled at German universities and universities of applied science (*Fachhochschule*) had acquired the general qualification for university admission (*Abitur*). For university students, this figure was 96 percent. Students with a vocational diploma (*Fachabitur*) accounted for 16 percent, whilst only 1 percent had a different university entrance qualification. (Middendorff et al. 2013, pp. 54ff)
6. This is evident from a comparison with the USA: "The bulk of academic research and advanced teaching at graduate level are carried out by a relatively small number of US universities. According to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, there are currently approximately 3400 degree-granting institutions in the USA serving approximately 14.5 million students. Among these, 127 are classified as research universities by the foundation, defined as being institutions that offer a full range of baccalaureate and graduate programmes and obtain more than US$15.5 million annually in federal grants. Ranked in order of their R&D performance, the top 100 US universities account for 80 percent of all such expenditure and the top 200 for 96 percent" (UNESCO 2010). Higher education expansion in the USA is predominantly accommodated through institutions where there is no structural link between teaching and research. Research universities, in particular leading research universities, which have implemented this link in an exemplary way, and which, from a German perspective, are often viewed as representing the whole American higher education sector, are only remotely related to the mainstream of higher education participation.
7. Research performance increased despite this (see Baker et al. 2015).
8. See Stock (2011) for the ECTS logic taking the example of elite study programmes.
9. In the 2007/08 winter semester, 14 percent of all applicants for undergraduate studies were confronted with admission requirements in addition to the *Abitur*; in the 2003/04 winter semester, the figure was just 7 percent (Heine et al. 2008, p.130). According to a recent survey, two thirds of all Master's students were required to fulfil between two and four admission

requirements. In total, the survey named 558 different combinations of admission requirements; these included an academic degree, a minimum degree classification, a formal record of achievement, a motivation letter, a foreign language certificate, a subject-specific aptitude test, practical experience, an admission interview, a letter of recommendation, a work sample/suitability test, and vocational training (Scheller et al. 2013, pp. 17–18).

10. See Bloch (in this volume) on graduate schools as part of this initiative.
11. The private higher education sector in Germany is currently made up of 106 institutions. Approximately 6 percent of all students are enrolled at private higher education institutions (Statistisches Bundesamt 2014a, 2014b). The top group in this sector is composed of doctorate-granting institutions, which are hence categorized as universities.
12. For further details see: Mitterle and Stock (2015); Mitterle et al. (2016); Mitterle, in this volume.

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PART III

Organizing Competition through Incentives: New Policy Devices

CHAPTER 8

The Production of Research Elites: Research Performance Assessment in the United Kingdom

Julian Hamann

Introduction

Performance assessment has always been a vital part of academia. Knowledge is perceived as sound for as long as it can withstand the critical evaluation of peers. For a long time, there was no direct link between research performance assessment and the distribution of resources. Governing bodies in higher education distributed funds more or less equally and left the performance assessment to a decentralized community of peers. However, in the 1980s, there was a focus in higher education governance on performance-oriented research output rather than financial input, increasingly stimulating research with centralized instruments and orienting assessment partially on non-academic standards like societal impact (Braun and Merrien 1999; Paradeise et al. 2009). New instruments of systematic research performance assessment were installed at the interface between academia, the state, and the market. The assessment instruments now guide a selective allocation of scarce resources to what are

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supposed to be the best performers, thus rewarding "research elites" (Slaughter and Leslie 1999; Münch 2014).

Drawing on data that I have examined elsewhere to address related questions (Hamann 2016), the current contribution asks whether the production of research elites produces unintended stratification effects. The case study is the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)/Research Excellence Framework (REF), an instrument of research performance assessment in the United Kingdom (UK). After discussing consequences of research performance assessments, particular attention is drawn to whether stratification is actually a consequence intended by the RAE/REF. Building on data from the three most recent assessments (RAE 2001, RAE 2008, REF 2014), the unequal distribution of symbolic, social, and economic resources in the discipline of history is examined in a field and capital theoretical framework. This distribution is correlated to RAE/REF rank groups. The closing discussion interprets the stratification of the field and its consecration by RAE/REF rank groups. The contribution concludes that the elite (re-)produced by research performance assessments in the UK is not (solely) based on "excellence," but on previous allocations of resources.

Research Performance Assessment in the UK

The UK system pioneered the development outlined in the previous section. It institutionalized performance assessments very early on, and since then has developed one of the most advanced assessment programs in Europe. When close government regulation was withdrawn under new public management, UK universities and departments were forced to compete for financial resources, researchers, and students (Deem et al. 2008; Brown and Carasso 2013). Traditional bureaucratic systems of delivery were superseded by competitive quasi-markets, which were supposed to be the more efficient form of organization, although in contrast to conventional markets their providers are not necessarily for-profit. Ever since, the decisive assessments for the selective allocation of public research funds are delivered roughly every five years by Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) and, since 2014, by the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The assessments are conducted by the funding councils of England (Higher Education Funding Council for England, HEFCE), Scotland (Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, SHEFC), Wales (Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, HEFCW), and Northern Ireland (Department of Education, DENI).

Since 1986, the UK funding councils organize a centralized peer review system that evaluates research output. The output is submitted, mainly in the form of publications, by research staff who have been selected for assessment by their respective departments. The actual assessment is conducted by subject-specific panels that are appointed by the funding councils. Composed of 15 to 30 experts from within a relevant academic field, these panels grade the quality of research across dozens of fields and more than 150 institutions. The assessment panels are charged with "identifying excellence in the rich diversity of research" they cover (REF 2012). In doing so, the panels employ a grade system that appears to be rather simplistic compared to the complexity of research in even a single academic field (Table 8.1).

Their high degree of simplification – or, in other terms, their ability to reduce complexity – may contribute to the efficacy and potency of the assessments (see also Werron 2014; Hamann 2017). More crucial, however, is that the RAE/REF produce distinctions that are not merely symbolic and thus blurry enough to be contested, reinterpreted, or ignored. Rather, the symbolic distinctions that the assessments make are linked to the (re-)production of material classes (cf. Maesse 2016). This is why the RAE/REF are particularly powerful assessments. Since the RAE/REF results inform the allocation of funds by the UK funding councils, the entire basic research funding of institutions and, ultimately, research fields, is at stake. The most recent REF 2014, for example, informed the distribution of £1.6 billion annually for

Table 8.1 Grades of research quality, according to RAE 2008 and REF 2014

Rating	*Description*
4*	Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour
3*	Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which nonetheless falls short of the highest standards of excellence
2*	Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour
1*	Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour
Unclassified	Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.

Source: RAE 2008a; REF 2011

the subsequent six years. From a sum of almost £10 billion, the departments rewarded with the best grade (4*) receive 80 percent, those with the second best grade (3*) receive 20 percent. The departments below those grades receive no public basic research funding at all (HEFCE 2015).

While the main aim of the RAE/REF has always been to assess the research quality of departments, and thereby inform the distribution of public funds, the assessments have evolved significantly since they started in 1986. In the space of 30 years, the RAE/REF have become increasingly sophisticated, advancing the criteria, their calculation, and compilation (Bence and Oppenheim 2005). The RAE 2001, for example, was characterized above all by grade inflation, which led to a more concentrated funding policy. The main change in the RAE 2008 was the introduction of research profiles for each department based on the proportion of publications that met respective quality standards. In the RAE 2001 and 2008, the submissions included data on staff, research output, and the research environment, for example, research income and doctoral degrees awarded. The most important new feature of the REF 2014 is that this data has been expanded to include information that is intended to document the societal impact of research. Thus the former two pillars of research assessment, research "output quality" and "research environment," have been complemented by "impact" (weighted with 65, 15, and 20 percent respectively) (REF 2011).

Regardless of their development over time, the underlying principle behind the assessments is straightforward: "Institutions conducting the best research receive a larger proportion of the available grant so that the infrastructure for the top level of research in the UK is protected and developed" (RAE 2001e). The following section will consider the effects of a policy that sets out to "protect" the "best research."

Consequences of Research Performance Assessments

The literature on performance assessments in general and the RAE/REF in particular suggests that they have several effects. One finding is that instruments of higher education governance may influence the development of disciplines by dictating the criteria used in peer review (Hicks 2012). In the RAE/REF, assessments are conducted by experts from the research fields, but in order to ensure fairness across disciplinary fields, the experts must adhere to common criteria that are defined by the funding councils (Tapper and Salter 2003). Although defined by the funding

councils, the criteria are grounded in expert advice – which can have a reinforcing effect in itself (cf. Martin and Whitley 2010). Disclosing such wide-ranging assessment criteria has standardizing effects on research. Overall, researchers' choices of publication topics (Talib 2001) and publication patterns (Moed 2008) seem to have changed under the influence of the RAE/REF. In economics, heterodox approaches have fallen victim to orthodox assessment panels, criteria geared toward mainstream journals, and a general orientation toward "excellence" (Lee et al. 2013; Maesse 2016). In life sciences, academics have shifted their research practices in order to cooperate with an intrusive policy regime (Morris and Rip 2006). In law departments, academic work is increasingly concentrating on placing articles in a small number of highly ranked journals (Campbell et al. 1999).

Studies have also revealed that status assignments create new layers of dependency and authority, for example between funding institutions and universities (Salter and Tapper 2002), between university management and the departments they intervene in (Henkel 1999), between panel members and the colleagues whose research they are judging (Sharp and Coleman 2005), and between research active personnel and the colleagues who are required to take over their teaching duties (Salter and Tapper 2002).

The literature has further identified increased stratification as an effect of research performance assessment. On the general level of universities, the RAE/REF is seen as a mechanism of status allocation and resource concentration (Henkel 1999) that manifests, for example, a bias against new universities and in favor of traditional universities (Tapper and Salter 2003). In chemistry, research grants and highly cited scientists are concentrated in just a few institutions (Münch and Schäfer 2014). Economics, a rather stratified discipline even before performance assessments were applied, is even more dominated by a select group of prestigious elite departments that receive the major share of funding (Lee et al. 2013; Maesse 2015). In the humanities in general, the RAE/REF is assumed to have led to a concentration of research activities in certain institutions (Kehm and Leišytė 2010; Hamann 2016). In all cases, the accumulation of capital can be interpreted as a result of the intensified struggle for resources in a system that is becoming increasingly stratified which is consolidated by the RAE/REF.

This study contributes a longitudinal perspective to the literature. It reveals that the RAE/REF (re-)produce and consecrate a disciplinary center-periphery structure that is not oriented toward research "excellence" (alone) but follows previous allocations of resources. This argument will be developed taking the discipline of history as a case study. The currencies that are valued most highly on the newly established quasi-markets – journal articles and research with societal impact (Moed 2008; Martin 2011) – have less weight in a discipline that still perceives research and teaching as a unit, traditionally focuses on monographs and edited volumes rather than journal articles, and attaches more weight to basic rather than applied research (Kehm and Leišytė 2010; Zuccala et al. 2014). A longitudinal examination of the production of elites in the discipline of history thus makes it possible to see the effects a highly developed system of performance assessment has on a discipline with very different research and publication cultures. The empirical evidence revealed for history may not be as distinct in disciplines that link teaching and research less closely, have a proclivity for incremental research within an established paradigm, and are used to quantify performance measures in the form of impact indices.

The (Dys)Functionality of Stratification

With present research already indicating effects of stratification, this contribution must address one aspect in particular: it is the declared aim of the RAE/REF not only to "identify excellence," but also to protect and develop a "research elite" by granting the corresponding institutions the largest proportion of funding (RAE 2001e; REF 2012). It is thus a vital part of the mission behind the assessment to indeed create a stratified academic landscape. The question is therefore to what extent the effects of stratification discussed here might actually be intentional.

The position of the RAE/REF on stratification can best be described in terms of traditional structural functionalist perspectives. Here, the hierarchical structuration of social entities appears to be functional for the establishment of social order (Davis and Moore 1944). Positions at the top of social hierarchies are occupied by a performance elite that is evaluated according to unambiguous, universal, meritocratic criteria, and rewarded appropriately. This is exactly how the RAE/REF is supposed to operate. Authors who have applied a functionalist outlook on science (Cole and Cole 1973; Merton 1973b) have emphasized that the

functionality of stratification relies on at least two conditions: the performance assessments that justify stratification should not be influenced by the assessment procedures themselves (reliability); and the assessment indicators should be able to actually measure what is supposed to be measured (validity), that is, they should indeed be able to identify "research performance" in the complex reality of the academic world. Regardless of whether the hierarchical structuration of academia – or any other social order for that matter – is actually considered desirable, the corresponding performance assessment instruments must be reliable and valid.

However, neither seems to be the case for the RAE/REF. An entire body of literature concerns itself with the reliability of performance assessments. Studies highlight that what the RAE/REF measures is not research performance (alone), but the ability of researchers and departments to adapt to the metrics of the assessments (Talib 2001; Hare 2003). In addition to what is referred to as the reactivity of rankings (Espeland and Sauder 2007), scholars have also questioned whether performance indicators exist that permit valid measurement of research quality at all, let alone capture the broad range of *academic* performance beyond it (Laudel 2005; Blockmans et al. 2014). Valid research performance indicators are especially difficult to imagine for disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, where highly differentiated publication practices, schools and communities are even more prominent and research is thus standardized to an even lesser degree (Archambault et al. 2006; Angermüller 2010).

Given these serious problems regarding the validity and reliability of research performance assessments, the current contribution does not intend to promote a better approach to identifying "excellence" or demonstrate how research performance should actually be measured. Picking up on studies that illustrate the overall complexity and situational embeddedness of notions such as "research quality" (Lamont 2009; Hirschauer 2010), any notion of "good," let alone "excellent," research must be far too vague and slippery to develop and operationalize a definition in assessment instruments. What can be examined, however, is the assessment instruments themselves and their performative effects on research infrastructures.

In light of the significant doubts regarding a structural functionalist interpretation of stratification in academia, it seems worthwhile to consider alternative approaches. The current contribution will draw on a

Bourdieusian (1988) heuristic of field and capital theory. According to this perspective, performance assessments do not necessarily reward performance (alone). Equipped with this heuristic, the analysis in this paper is sensitized for the construction of status hierarchies alongside the structurally unequal distribution of resources. Attempts to identify research elites then (re-)produce a relatively stable center-periphery structure in the academic landscape, rewarding social, symbolic, and economic capital rather than "excellence" alone (Burris 2004; Weakliem et al. 2012; Münch and Schäfer 2014). The analysis will pursue this perspective for the RAE/REF in the discipline of history.

Data

The investigation is based on data for history in the UK according to the three most recent assessments (RAE 2001, RAE 2008, and REF 2014). In order to reveal longitudinal stratification effects, four rank groups, two at the top and two at the bottom of the RAE/REF status hierarchies, are constructed for exploratory analytical purposes. The ranks are based on the overall ratings in the case of the REF 2014, and on grade point averages of the quality profiles in the case of the RAE 2008 and REF 2014. The "top 6" and "top 14" represent research elites attributed with a strong research output, the "bottom 6" and "bottom 14" represent departments attributed with a lower research output (see Table 8.2).[1] These rank groups are necessarily artificial. As in any other ranking, they overemphasize gradual differences between key figures. However, the purpose of the rank groups is not to highlight actual differences in research performance but to serve as a proxy for the rank differences produced by the RAE/REF. In this way, the rank groups can be used as a starting point for an exploratory longitudinal analysis. The current study relates these rank groups to three different types of data, all of which are listed in the reports of the RAE/REF.

The contribution first investigates the composition of assessment panels (see Table 8.3). Members can be nominated by professional associations, for example, by the British Society of Sports History, and by stakeholders from business and society, for example, by the British Museum of Natural History. The four UK funding bodies assemble the panels on the basis of these nominations (RAE 2001c; RAE 2008b). The panels for history consist exclusively of UK historians.[2] Membership of an assessment panel indicates symbolic capital, defined as academic authority that makes it possible to consecrate research by determining legitimate problem definitions and

Table 8.2 Rank groups based on results for history in RAE 2001, RAE 2008, and REF 2014

Groups	*RAE 2001*	*RAE 2008*	*REF 2014*
"Top6"	Birkbeck	Imperial College	Birmingham
	Cambridge	Essex	York
	Durham	Kent	Sheffield
	East Anglia	Liverpool	Southampton
	King's College	Oxford	Hertfordshire
	SOAS London	Warwick	King's College
"Top14"	Oxford Brookes	Cambridge	Warwick
	LSE	University College London	Oxford
	Birmingham	Birkbeck	Exeter
	Essex	Southampton	Cambridge
	Exeter	Hertfordshire	Manchester
	Hertfordshire	LSE	Leeds
	Huddersfield	Sheffield	St Andrews
	Hull	Aberdeen	University College London
"Bottom14"	St Martin's	Goldsmiths	Chichester
	St Mary's	Sheffield Hallam	Newman
	Westminster	Leeds TAS	Chester
	Worcester	Canterbury CC	Westminster
	York	Chichester	Central Lancashire
	Glamorgan	Cumbria	Liverpool Hope
	Bath Spa	Westminster	Leeds Trinity
	Bolton	Gloucestershire	Greenwich
"Bottom6"	Chester	Liverpool JMU	St Mary's
	Edge Hill	Edge Hill	Bath Spa
	Liverpool Hope	Northumbria	Sunderland
	Middlesex	Newman College	Anglia Ruskin
	Staffordshire	Wales, Newport	Gloucestershire
	Thames Valley	Worcester	Bishop Grosseteste
Sum of departments	95	83	83

Sources: RAE (2001a); RAE 2001b; RAE 2008b; RAE 2008c; REF 2014a; REF 2014b, author's presentation and calculation

Table 8.3 History panel member affiliation and whether they were in the top 14 in the respective previous assessment (PreT14) and in the respective current assessment (CurT14)[4]

Panel members' affiliation RAE 2001	*PreT14*	*CurT14*	*Panel members' affiliation RAE 2008*	*PreT14*	*CurT14*	*Panel members' affiliation REF 2014*	*PreT14*	*CurT14*
East Anglia	x	x	East Anglia	x		East Anglia		
Cambridge	x	x	Cambridge	x	x	Cambridge	x	x
Edinburgh	x		Edinburgh			Edinburgh		
York	x		York			York		x
Nottingham			Nottingham			Nottingham		
School of Oriental and African Studies, London	x	x	School of Oriental and African Studies, London	x		St. Andrews		x
Liverpool	x		Liverpool			St. Andrews		x
Hull	x	x	Cardiff			Cardiff		
Hull	x	x	Newcastle			Newcastle		
Reading	x		Southampton		x	Southampton	x	x
Durham		x	London U			London U		
King's College	x	x	Sheffield H.			King's College		x
Manchester	x		Belfast			Manchester		x
Glasgow			Sheffield		x	Glasgow		
Teesside			Aberystwyth			Glasgow		
Oxford	x		Oxford		x	Oxford	x	x
Leeds	x		Dundee			Oxford	x	x
						Keele		
						Exeter		x
						Hertfordshire	x	x
						University College London	x	x
						Birmingham		x

Sources: RAE, 1996; RAE 2001b; RAE 2008b; REF 2014a, author's presentation and calculation

problem solutions (Bourdieu 1988). Second, the contribution analyzes research staff in terms of full time equivalent (FTE) research positions at history departments (see Figs. 8.1 and 8.2). These are the staff nominated by departments to submit their publications for assessment. Research staff serve as a proxy for social capital, which is defined as the aggregate of resources that are linked to more or less institutionalized membership of a group (Bourdieu 1986). In this sense, the number of research staff indicates the resources available in a department for research proposals, reviews, or academic networks, for example. Third, external research funding indicates the allocation of economic resources to departments (see Fig. 8.3). External grants can include, for example, funding from the research councils,[3] public and private funding, and funding from the European Union.

Research Elites and the Structurally Unequal Distribution of Resources

Results from the three most recent RAE/REF show that, apart from isolated cases, there seems to be considerable consistency among the departments that are attributed with the strongest research output and those regarded as

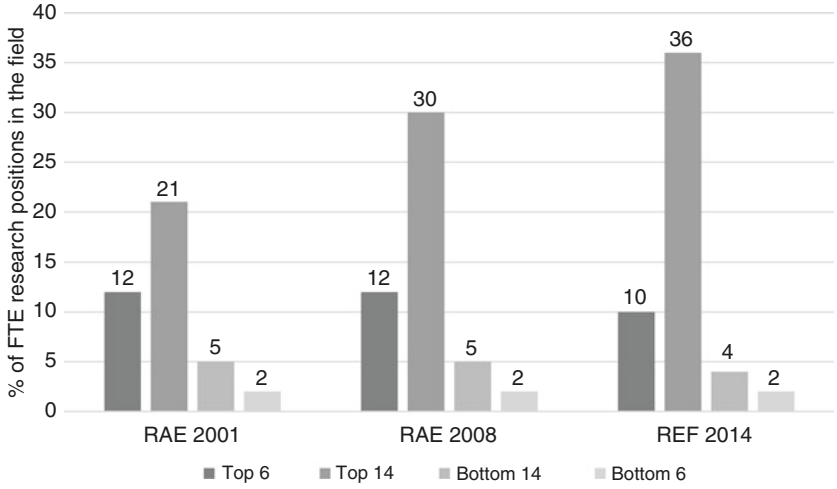

Fig. 8.1 Rank groups and their share of FTE research positions in history

Sources: RAE 2001a; RAE 2008c; REF 2014b, author's presentation and calculation

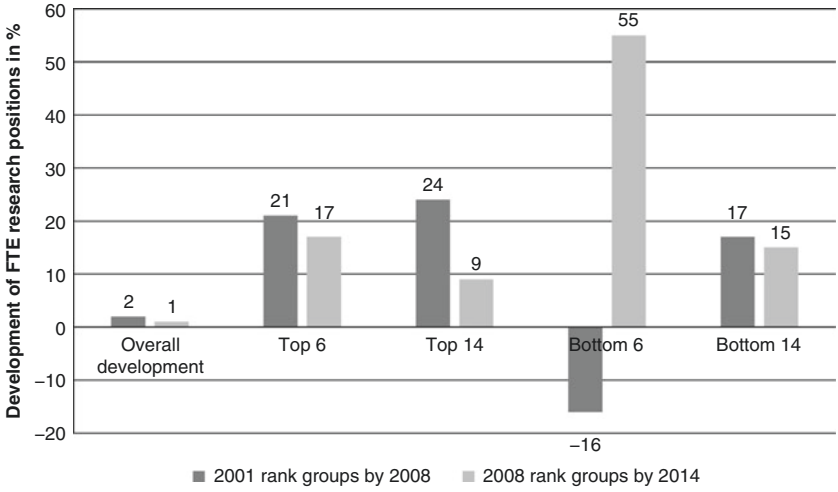

Fig. 8.2 Rank groups and development of FTE research positions over time[5]

Sources: RAE 2001a; RAE 2008c; REF 2014b, author's presentation and calculation

having the lowest research output (see Table 8.2). From 2001 to 2014, three departments made it into the top 14 in all three assessments, and 10 more departments are included in the top 14 two out of three times. There is a similar stability at the bottom of the status hierarchy: while only one department is in the bottom 14 in all three assessments, nine more are in the bottom group two out of three times. Only one department moves from the bottom 14 into the top group, and not a single department is relegated from the top into the bottom rank group.

A classical functionalist perspective might explain the high stability of status allocation with a stable allocation of "excellent" research among the elite positions of the hierarchy. The most relevant contributions to the state of research are valued highly and thus rewarded, while insignificant contributions are less visible and ultimately dispensable. In contrast to this – inevitably simplistic – sketch of functionalist perspectives, an analysis informed by Bourdieu's field and capital theory can explain the stable hierarchy with structurally unequal opportunities of capital accumulation that are consecrated by the respective rank groups. In the following, the unequal distribution of resources will be examined for symbolic capital in

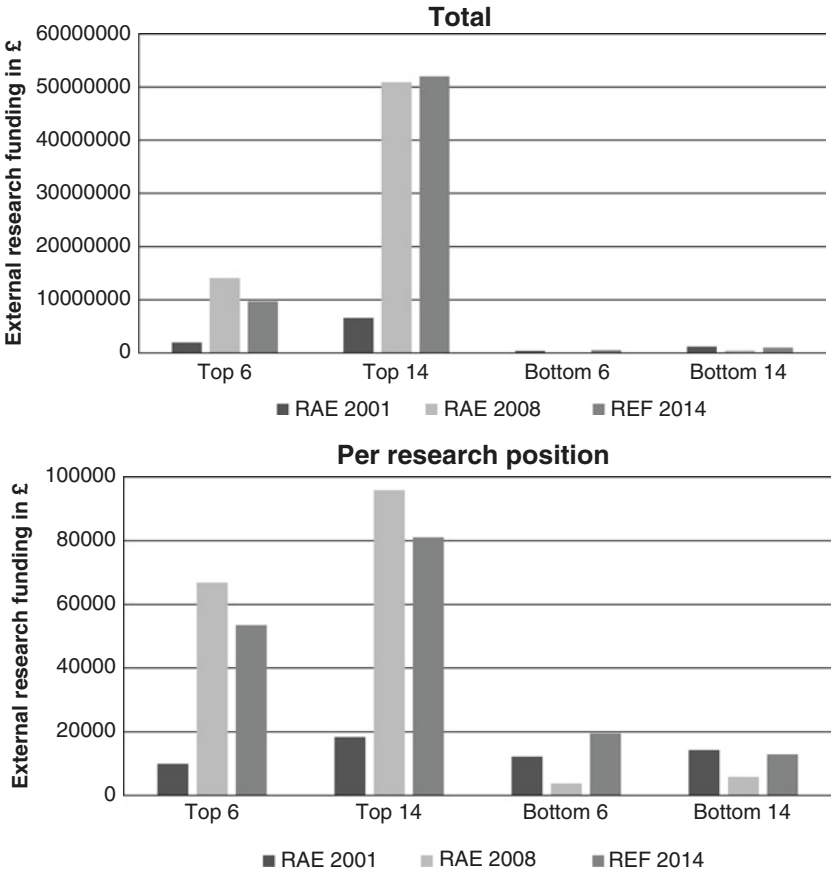

Fig. 8.3 Rank groups and external research funding (in £), in total and per research position

Sources: RAE 2001d; RAE 2008d; REF 2014b, author's presentation and calculation; cf. footnote 6 for an elaboration on the extraordinary rise in funds in the top 14 of 2008

terms of panel membership, for social capital in terms of research active staff, and for economic capital in terms of external research grants. The analysis will examine how this distribution correlates to RAE/REF rank groups and is thus consecrated and (re-)produced.

Symbolic Capital in Terms of Panel Membership

The RAE/REF rank groups can be related to the composition of assessment panels. This gives insight, first, into the link between the performance of departments in the assessment and their simultaneous representation on the panels of the same assessment; and, second, into the recruitment of panel members according to their rank group in the respective previous assessments (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3 illustrates that 16 departments were represented on the history panel of the RAE 2001, 17 on that of the RAE 2008, and 19 on that of the REF 2014. Without exception, panel members come from departments that received grades higher than the average grade of all history departments in the respective assessment. In combination with the rank groups from Table 8.2, the data illustrates that twelve, three, and five departments respectively were ranked among the top 14 in the previous assessments (PreT14). These are cases in which panel members were recruited from elite departments. Six, four, and eleven departments respectively were placed in the top 14 in the same assessment (CurT14). These are cases in which the departments of the panel members became elite. Hence, in the period investigated, there is a close relationship between the status elite of the field and the allocation of symbolic capital. The converse pattern can be found for the periphery: in all three assessments, not a single panel member was recruited from a department that was ranked in the bottom 14 in the previous assessment, and overall only two departments fell into the bottom 14 despite being represented on the panel of the same assessment. In other words, in the period investigated, no department from the periphery is granted symbolic capital through panel membership, and cases in which departments with symbolic capital nevertheless fall into the periphery are extremely rare.

Social Capital in Terms of Research Active Staff

The RAE/REF rank groups from Table 8.2 can further be related to the distribution of research staff in the history field. Figure 8.1 illustrates for each assessment the shares that respective rank groups have in the overall number of history research positions.

On average, the top 14 departments from 2001 to 2014 account for 30 percent of all FTE research positions in the field, while only 5 percent of the researchers are located in the bottom 14. This stratification becomes

even more apparent for the top 6, with 11 percent on average, and the bottom 6, with 2 percent of all research positions. The unequal distribution of research staff is exacerbated over time.

Building on this, the data depicted in Fig. 8.2 illustrates how endowment with research staff changes after departments have been assigned to status groups. In other words, it demonstrates whether there is a correlation between the classification of departments into respective status groups and their research staff.

Figure 8.2 shows that the elite departments of the RAE 2001 increased their research staff considerably by 2008: the top 6 of 2001 had 21 percent more researchers at their disposal by 2008 and the top 14 had 24 percent more by the same year. Both growth rates are much higher than the 2 percent total average increase in research staff. The same pattern is revealed for the development of the elite departments of the RAE 2008: the top 6 of 2008 had 17 percent more research staff by 2014 and the top 14 had 9 percent more. Again, both growth rates are much higher than the total average increase (1 percent) in research staff in this period. The movement of research staff to the elite departments suggests that very good assessments contribute to an improved endowment with research staff. The development of research staff for the departments in the periphery, however, indicates that staff movement is not a zero sum game. Less successful assessments can also lead to an increase in research staff. This is illustrated for the bottom 14 of 2001 and 2008, which increase the research staff at their disposal by 17 and 15 percent, respectively. The bottom 6 of 2008 have 55 percent more researchers by 2014, while the bottom 6 of 2001 have 16 percent fewer by 2008.

The flow of research staff subsequent to status allocations as displayed in Fig. 8.2 should be interpreted in light of the markedly different absolute staff numbers from Fig. 8.1. For example, while a 55 percent increase in research staff for the bottom 6 of 2008 corresponds to an absolute growth of 16 FTE research positions, the 17 percent increase in research staff for the top 6 departments in the same period is equal to absolute growth of 36 FTE research positions. Even though the differences in relative staff increases (55 and 17 percent) may indicate the contrary, the gap between both rank groups still grows in favor of the top rank group.

In any case, the movement of research staff as depicted in Fig. 8.2 shows that very good assessments are followed by an improved endowment with researchers, while less successful assessments do not by default imply an exodus of research staff. Unsuccessful performance can indeed

lead to reduced funds and therefore cuts in research positions, although another reason for reduced staff endowment may equally be that departments are more selective about whose work is submitted to the next assessment. Nevertheless, low status assignments can also lead to heavy investment in research staff and a subsequent rise in research positions (cf. Elton 2000 on strategic staffing in the wake of RAE/REF results). Nonetheless, a concentration of social capital in the center of the field is evident.

Economic Capital In Terms of External Research Grants

Relating rank groups to the external funding they attract reveals a close connection between research grants and status attributions (Fig. 8.3). This is to be expected, because departments submit their funding information to the RAE/REF for assessment, and since incoming funds are performance indicators, they directly influence the assessments. However, this means that the RAE/REF merely ennoble an established research elite that is already successfully attracting third-party funding, while the economic periphery can also expect worse overall grades in terms of research output. The RAE/REF thus attribute research performance to those departments that have attracted the most external funding in total and per research position.

Figure 8.3 demonstrates the unequal distribution of external research funding across RAE/REF rank groups. It is illustrated for the absolute amount of external funds as well as for their distribution per FTE research position. Elite departments tend to have the highest absolute amount of external funds as well as the highest per capita amount. In a longitudinal perspective, the data reveals that the gap between the rank groups by external funds was much smaller in 2001 and has been growing since then. For example, the top 6 departments of 2001 attract five times more external grants than the bottom 6, the top 6 of 2008 over 150 times more than the bottom 6, and the top 6 of 2014 still 18 times more than the bottom 6.[6] This aggravation applies to absolute funding and almost to the same extent to per capita funding.

The distribution of external research funds per capita, displayed in the lower half of Fig. 8.3, requires particular attention. Since top rank groups acquire more funds per capita than lower rank groups, the data might suggest at first sight that elite departments do indeed perform better and thus confirm the meritocratic ideology behind RAE/REF's. If this was

indeed the case, expensive and time-consuming peer review assessments could be dispensed with and simply those departments rewarded that attract the most external funds. However, the underlying assumption that external funds (an input variable) are a reliable indicator for research performance (an output variable) is questionable at least (cf. Johnes 1996 on input and output performance indicators). Some departments might attract little funding but use the funds very well in order to produce "good" research; other departments might attract a lot of funding but use the funds inefficiently – and thus "underperform". Hence, assuming that a concentration of external funding in the top ranked departments is a meritocratic distribution of economic resources confuses input with output indicators.

Crucially, the meritocratic explanation of a concentration of external funding also ignores the marginal utility a higher number of research staff has for attracting research grants. Personnel resources can be expected to contribute to the accumulation of economic resources. More research staff means that a department has more time for grant proposals, not least because the overall teaching load is relatively lower. More research staff brings with it a larger network of colleagues, which in turn is advantageous for collaborations and reviews of proposals. Lastly, more research staff also leads to a higher visibility of departments in the field, again beneficial in a competitive research environment. In sum, research staff has a marginal utility for external research funds (cf. Münch 2007 for similar effects in the German case). With the highly stratified distribution of research staff in mind, larger departments can be expected to have better chances with research proposals due to the marginal utility of their research staff. This interpretation would explain the concentration of economic resources in the top rank groups not in terms of meritocracy, but as a self-reinforcing process that encourages the emergence of monopoly structures.

Discussion: The Consecration and (Re-)Production of Research Elites

This chapter has examined stratification effects in relation to RAE/REF rank groups. First, data on symbolic capital in terms of panel members reveal that a substantial amount of authority over evaluation criteria is placed not only in the hands of very few researchers, but in the hands of

largely the same very few researchers throughout three assessments. Elite departments have good chances of being represented on a panel and, in turn, departments represented on a panel have good chances of becoming – or remaining – elite departments. Simultaneously, being represented on a panel is a very good safeguard against being pushed out into the periphery, while being in the periphery drastically reduces a department's chances of being represented on a panel. These relationships reveal a persistent concentration of symbolic capital among the elite departments in the history field.

Second, data on social capital in terms of research staff suggest that departments might follow different strategies in response to status allocations, namely, acquiring more or fewer research staff, or being more or less selective when nominating staff for the assessment. Low scores in the assessment can lead to development strategies in which departments invest in research staff in order to perform better in the following assessment. However, low scores can also lead to a reduction in the research staff of a department, or even its closure. What holds true either way is an unequal distribution of FTE research positions between elite departments and the periphery. The center-periphery structure in terms of social capital is aggravated over time.

Third, data on economic capital in terms of external grants illustrate that the elite departments were very successfully increasing their rate of external grants over time, while the periphery could not keep pace. The widening gap between the status groups is hardly surprising, as it is based on a self-fulfilling prophecy: successful acquisition of funds is already included as a performance indicator in the assessments and thus directly influences status allocation. Departments performing well in the assessments are further endowed with economic capital, and, completing the cycle, they can also be assumed to have advantages for future external funding. Hence the RAE/REF reproduce an economic center–periphery structure and consecrate the unequal distribution of external funds.

The many ways in which research elites are consecrated and (re-)produced have been revealed for the discipline of history. Current research suggests that the findings also apply to other disciplinary fields (cf. Campbell et al. 1999 for law; McNay 2003 for education; Kehm and Leišytė 2010 for medieval history; Lee et al. 2013 for economics). Still, further research must address a variety of disciplinary cultures and how they relate to the effects of the assessments in different ways. In order to do this, a reasonable starting point seems to be to distinguish social sciences and humanities

disciplines from other disciplines that have a culture of refereeing and linking quality to a hierarchy of journals, established rather uniform paradigms guiding incremental research, and a weaker link between teaching and research (Martin and Whitley 2010). Only then can a more systematic comparative perspective with other disciplines be developed.

The empirical evidence at hand could be explained by a functionalist perspective. In this view, scarce resources are allocated to the departments with the best research. Following this logic, departments that attract high amounts of funding, employ high numbers of research staff, and are represented on assessment panels are indeed part of a meritocratic research elite that needs to be protected under higher education governance. It is therefore only logical that the center-periphery structure revealed here is further developed and promoted by the assessments and the funding that accompanies them.

However, it is not by mistake that Merton (1968), himself an advocate of the functionalist perspective, warned that a capitalization of research achievements would lead to the Matthew effect, according to which the probability of gaining reputation or resources increases exponentially with every previous gain in reputation or resources until these gains reach a point at which their marginal utility begins to diminish. In this light, the evidence that departments already well endowed with economic resources receive further funds, that the gulf between research staff endowment of elite and peripheral departments is widening, and that there is an almost circular nomination of panel members and the top rank groups of their departments, can be explained by the previous distribution of these resources. Research performance (alone) does not seem to be the cause of this stratification. Another mechanism that, like the Matthew effect, intertwines the material and symbolic dimension of stratification, provides further important insights. According to Weber's (1978) theory of social status, prestige hierarchies are reproduced when an elite adopts a distinctive style of life, and when there is no social intercourse between status groups. This mechanism of social closure explains persistent status differences between, on one side, peripheral departments that have few resources at their disposal and (have to) concentrate on teaching and, on the other, elite departments that exemplify a privileged academic lifestyle with sufficient grants and research staff, deciding on panels over the quality standards for the entire field. They enjoy the benefits of ample resources, including network effects in terms of social capital, marginal utility effects in terms of

research equipment, and magnitude effects in terms of visibility in the field (Burris 2004; Münch 2008).

The empirical evidence supports the claim that the RAE/REF not only reinforces the serious stratification in the field by producing rankings that reward those at the center of the field with an "elite" label. The assessments also (re-) produce research elites themselves because the distribution of basic research funding that is based on them follows previous allocations of resources. The production of research elites through stratification is inherently antithetical to the distribution of rewards on the basis of universalistic criteria of value or merit, as envisioned by functionalistic perspectives (Merton 1973a). As soon as the Matthew effect and the effect of social closure set in, any competitive distribution of funding privileges those who enter the competition with ample resources at their disposal. The present contribution cannot put forward a concise definition of research merit or "excellence," and thus it cannot refute that the elites produced by the RAE/REF are indeed research elites. However, it shows that the RAE/REF results, rather than rewarding research elites alone, certainly reward resource elites, whose status is not necessarily linked to actual research achievements.

Notes

1. These categories are rank groups from the RAE/REF rankings. They are not the author's invention, and thus make no claim to sociological validity.
2. This is not only in contrast to a number of other panels that also include non-academic members. The decidedly national composition of the history panel also contrasts with the RAE/REF's emphasis of with international quality standards (see Table 8.1).
3. The UK dual support system combines the allocation of public funds by the funding councils (oriented on RAE/ REF results) and funding of specific projects by the research councils.
5. Imperial College London, Wales Newport and Cumbria have not been included in the 2014 assessment; their number of FTE positions has been taken from the 2008 assessment.
4. If a department is named twice, it had two colleagues in the respective panel.
6. The extraordinary gulf between the rank groups from 2001 to 2008 (and between the top 6 and the top 14) is caused by the exceptional financial position of the history department at UCL. The UCL Centre for the History of Medicine received two major grants from the Wellcome Trust in the period in question. This significantly increased the funds of the top 14

rank group in 2008 RAE (2008d) *RAE 2008 submissions, UOA 62 History*. [online] Available at: http://www.rae.ac.uk/submissions/submissions.aspx?id=62&type=uoa [Accessed: 08.08.2015]. Subtracting the UCL out of the top 14 rank group of 2008 "normalizes" the gap between 2001 and 2008, and puts the top 14 in a region similar to the top 6.

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CHAPTER 9

Organizational Change in Response to the German Excellence Initiative: A Case Study of Humboldt University of Berlin

Rachelle Esterhazy

Introduction

This study explores the organizational changes which took place within Humboldt University of Berlin (HU Berlin) after it applied to the German Excellence Initiative. The Excellence Initiative is a governmental policy instrument aimed at advancing research excellence and the international visibility of German universities by promoting institutional strategies (GWK 2005). By granting funding only to a limited number of universities, the Excellence Initiative has contributed to the creation of a competitive field in which universities have to compete for a position among the most outstanding institutions in the country. This growing competition has increased the pressure on universities to construct institutional identities that enable and legitimize their success in this search for excellence. So far, only a few empirical studies have focused on how universities respond to this increasing competition in higher education (Fumasoli et al. 2014; Fumasoli and Lepori 2011). Therefore, this study focuses on the

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question of which organizational changes have occurred within HU Berlin since it applied for funding through the Excellence Initiative. Taking a theoretical approach based on neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) and resource dependency theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), this study also addresses questions about the extent to which organizational changes have been triggered strategically by the university leadership and the role institutional identity has played in facilitating or impeding change. This helps shed light on the way policy instruments act as drivers of elite formation and stratification within the higher education system by putting pressure on universities to maintain their legitimacy by competing for a reputation for excellence.

HU Berlin was chosen as a particularly interesting case due to the fact that it only received funding for its institutional strategy in the third round of the Excellence Initiative after being rejected in the first two rounds. Investigating this case in depth thereby provides an insight into the responses and change processes that took place within the institution, both after the initial rejection and following eventual acceptance into the funding program. The phase that followed the rejection provides a rich display of the complex dynamics between the strategic decision making of the institutional leadership and the organizational changes that emerged from the bottom up in response to threatened legitimacy and institutional identity. In this regard, this study also contributes to the question of whether universities can be considered rational organizational actors (Krücken and Meier 2006; Whitley 2008), and to what extent they are capable of strategically positioning themselves in an increasingly competitive field (Fumasoli and Lepori 2011; Thoenig and Paradeise 2016). Moreover, it provides an example of how the considerable driving forces in the search for both excellence and legitimacy can bring about organizational change within an institution (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

Theoretical Framework

This study builds on a combination of two prominent perspectives on organizational change: resource dependency theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) and neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Resource dependency theory focuses on the adaptive capabilities of organizations, which are assumed to adjust their behavior according to the observed changes in their environment. In order to

survive, organizations need to get access to resources by making active and strategic choices in response to changes in the environment. This implies that organizations have the ability to deliberately influence and manipulate their environment.

In contrast, neo-institutional theory stresses the taken-for-grantedness of organizational action and the importance of cultural elements in the organizational process (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). This means the adaptability of organizations is determined by their acceptance of the established rules, beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions, which constitute the institutional environment. Organizations are believed to seek stability and conformity, which leads to convergence among institutions over time. This so-called isomorphism leads to stability among organizations, but it can also be a source of conflict and resistance, as institutional identities might clash with isomorphic changes.

Despite their different underlying assumptions, the two theoretical perspectives converge on a number of points. First and foremost, they share the basic assumptions that organizational behavior is constrained by various external pressures, and that organizations can only survive if they are responsive to those external demands and expectations (Maassen and Gornitzka 1999). In addition, both assume that organizational environments are collective and interconnected, that organizations seek stability, predictability and legitimacy, and that they are interest driven (see also Oliver 1991).

Oliver (1991) has combined the two perspectives in a typology of organizational responses to environmental pressures, which rests on the assumption that while organizations are affected by their institutional structure, they are also able to make strategic choices by manipulating their environment. According to this framework, organizational responses to external pressures can be categorized as a form of a) acquiescence, b) avoidance, c) compromise, d) defiance or e) manipulation. These categories are placed in a dimension that reaches from 'acquiescence', as the most passive and conforming type of response, to 'manipulation', as the most active and strategic response to the environment.

The analysis provides a descriptive overview of the organizational changes that took place in two areas of interest: internal governance (e.g. changes in structure and decision-making processes) and research profile (e.g. changes in funding and cooperation). Moreover, these changes are analyzed according to Oliver's (1991) typology by interpreting their position on the dimension between passive acquiescence and

active manipulation. This helps shed light on the following two issues: the extent to which the organizational changes observed have been triggered strategically by the institutional leadership, and the role institutional forces, in particular institutional identity, have played in facilitating or impeding those changes.

The Excellence Initiative Framework

The Excellence Initiative in the Context of Societal Change

In order to understand the changes that are taking place within universities, it is necessary to view the issue within its wider societal context. Universities are faced with changing societal expectations as they are increasingly perceived as producers and diffusers of knowledge for the sake of national and regional innovation, and economic performance (Paradeise et al. 2009). However, in the European context in particular, universities are not adapting quickly enough and are therefore struggling to meet these growing expectations. Recent higher education reforms in Europe have attempted to influence the factors that seem to hamper the success of European universities in global competition. The solution to the gap between rising demands and performance is seen as the reorganization of national systems of higher education with the aim of making systems perform better and adapt more quickly while at the same time lowering costs (Paradeise et al. 2009). Such reforms typically entail policy instruments that are aimed at initiating organizational change within universities by creating competition among institutions, as is the case with the German Excellence Initiative. Whether reforms actually lead to the organizational change they are aiming for is an empirical question that has not been addressed sufficiently in higher education research.

Objectives and Impact of the Excellence Initiative

The Excellence Initiative (GWK 2005) is a policy instrument implemented between 2005 and 2017 and its intention is to strengthen Germany as a location for research excellence. The initiative aims at increasing the visibility of top-level universities and enhancing their international competitiveness. It does so by granting money via three funding lines, which are open to applications from any German university. The funding lines

comprise Clusters of Excellence, Graduate Schools, and Institutional Strategies (*Zukunftskonzepte*). The third funding line (Institutional Strategies) is intended to strengthen universities as institutions in order to make them more competitive at an international top level. Moreover, it aims to increase the strategic skills and autonomy of universities and strives to improve the performance of the research system as a whole. To be eligible for such funding, universities need to develop long-term institutional strategies for top-level research and for supporting young researchers (Wissenschaftsrat 2010).

There is a growing body of literature supporting the idea that the Excellence Initiative has had an impact on German higher education and created an "atmosphere of departure and readiness to reform" in universities, in which a "mobilization effect" took place (Neidhardt 2010, p.59; translated by author). This mobilization of self-regulation and organizational re-structuring processes within institutions had already begun before the first funding phase of the Excellence Initiative as in order to successfully compete in the initiative, these institutions needed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their internal decision-making structures. Universities felt pressured to set priorities, produce successful project proposals, administer processes effectively, and create structures that promote research excellence. This caused many universities to reshape their governance structures, internal organization, and recruitment processes (BBAW 2010; Kehm 2012). The prospect of additional resources and improved working conditions caused university members to invest large amounts of time and effort into the application process (BBAW 2010). However, empirical studies of the organizational changes that have taken place within universities during the Excellence Initiative remain scarce. By presenting an in-depth case study of HU Berlin, this study aims to fill the gap in research literature on organizational change in higher education.

The Excellence Initiative in the Light of Autonomy and Competition

Opinions vary on the degree to which universities can be reformed through deliberate intervention; this is dependent on the extent to which institutions are seen as autonomous actors, independent of environmental stability and change (March and Olsen 1983). Traditionally, universities were conceived as loosely coupled professional bureaucracies, which had weak institutional leadership and were

not important decision-making entities in their own right (Paradeise et al. 2009). However, in the case of German higher education, recent reforms have aimed at increasing the strategic capabilities of universities' institutional leaderships by means of professionalization and centralization. An increased degree of institutional autonomy and a reduction in the level of state control over higher education institutions increasingly required universities to define their positions within the system (Bonaccorsi and Daraio 2007; Fumasoli and Lepori 2011). The resulting increase in competition between universities requires them to develop strategic profiles (Bonaccorsi and Daraio 2007). This process is further encouraged by policy instruments such as the Excellence Initiative, which are based on the assumption that universities need to be given enough autonomy to be able to make strategic choices within their environment (Gornitzka et al. 2007). Indeed, this is reflected in the unusually open thematic and formal specifications of the application process for the Excellence Initiative, which shows the willingness of the policy makers to place a considerable amount of trust in the self-regulation capabilities of the institutions (BBAW 2010). Moreover, it shows that within the Excellence Initiative framework, universities are perceived as integrated, goal-oriented organizations, which deliberately choose their course of action and are capable of being held accountable for their decisions (Krücken and Meier 2006).

By encouraging higher education institutions to strategically position themselves within the system, the Excellence Initiative promotes the institutional differentiation of the German higher education system as a whole, both horizontally and vertically (Meyer 2010). According to Hazelkorn (2009), every German university has been affected by this new differentiation paradigm, even those that might have previously been sheltered by their history, mission or governance. Albrecht (2013) argues that the Excellence Initiative not only aimed to bring about structural change in German higher education institutions, but also more general cultural change within the German higher education system. In the same vein, some authors suggest that a fundamental paradigm change within Germany's higher education system was initiated by, or at least advanced by, the Excellence Initiative. Despite the fact that up to now, the Humboldtian idea of equality has always been predominant in the German system, there have recently been an

increasing number of advocates for the idea of institutional differentiation (for a critical review, see Hartmann 2006; Münch 2007).

To summarize, the characteristics of the German Excellence Initiative and its context make this case a valuable empirical setting for studying organizational change in response to environmental pressures. For one, it is a policy instrument that is explicitly aimed at initiating organization change and increasing strategic behavior in German higher education institutions. At the same time, it is situated in a higher education system that has traditionally been opposed to competitiveness but which is now under pressure to change. Universities are hence confronted with rather drastic changes in their institutional environment, which makes this an ideal case for studying the range of responses a university might develop when faced with environmental pressures, especially if they conflict with its institutional identity.

Research Design and Methodology

This study uses the case of HU Berlin to investigate organizational change in depth. The case was chosen based on a predefined set of operational criteria whereby the possible candidates would be deemed qualified to serve as cases (Yin 2014). Based on these criteria, HU Berlin was identified as the most appropriate case, as it is expected to provide enough room to maneuver and to develop strategic behavior. Moreover, HU Berlin successfully secured funding for its institutional strategy in the third round of the Excellence Initiative in 2012. The fact that the university's institutional strategy funding application was unsuccessful in previous rounds (in 2006 and 2007) adds another interesting aspect to the case. It is likely that both the initial failure and the process of reapplying may have had a particularly strong impact on the institution's strategic behavior. Moreover, HU Berlin was identified as having a set of institutional characteristics in the form of strong traditions and norms that make it likely to exhibit institutional rigidities that interfere with organizational change processes. As a former poster child of the Humboldtian tradition, HU Berlin is very protective of its norms and values. Moreover, the university is located in the former German Democratic Republic (DDR), a country which had strong regulations and protective employment contracts, some of which still apply. This might also have contributed to its strong institutional frame.

Empirical Setting of Humboldt University of Berlin

HU Berlin was established in 1810 based on a foundation concept developed by Wilhelm von Humboldt. The identity of today's HU Berlin is shaped by its turbulent history, which is characterized by major transformations such as the split among staff and students during the rise of the Communist Regime in 1948, which led to the establishment of the *Freie Universität* (Free University of Berlin), or the re-foundation of the university after German Reunification in 1990. In order to understand how HU Berlin responds to environmental changes today, it is important to keep in mind the drastic impact these historic events had on the institution in the past, and that this is likely to influence the university's openness to change.

In 2013, HU Berlin offered 185 degree programs and there were 33,540 students enrolled. Moreover, it had a total staff count of 2,287, of which 415 were professors. It comprised ten faculties in all major academic disciplines. Unlike most German universities, which have a double structure with a rector and a chancellor, HU Berlin has a single structure management with one president, who is supported by three vice-presidents[1] (from now on referred to as the *Präsidium*). The governing bodies at HU Berlin comprise the Academic Council[2] (*Konzil*), the Board of Trustees[3] (*Kuratorium*) and the Academic Senate[4] (*Akademischer Senat*). The Academic Council is the highest governing body and takes decisions on the legal framework and governance of the university. The University Senate is responsible for decisions concerning the daily business and routines of the university, such as internal organization, research profiling, and the development of study programs.

HU Berlin's total budget in 2012 was 338.4 million euros. It is composed of about 235 million euros in governmental grants and 88 million euros in third-party funding. The expenditure of third-party funding has more than doubled since 2003. In the last approval ranking of the German Research Foundation (DFG), HU Berlin ranked eighth based on the sum of 179.8 million euros, which it received from DFG between 2008 and 2010. These numbers include the funding that was received through the Excellence Initiative. If the Excellence Initiative funding is disregarded, HU Berlin takes fifth place in the DFG ranking, which means that it has also been effective in attracting funding beyond the Excellence Initiative. With regard to the Excellence Initiative, HU Berlin has a history of both failure and

success. In the first round in 2006, out of the ten universities short-listed for the third funding line, only three managed to fulfill the demanding requirements to gain Institutional Strategy funding. Even though HU Berlin had applied to the third funding line, its proposal was rejected in the first round. However, the university was awarded funding for several of its graduate schools, as well as for Clusters of Excellence in later rounds. HU Berlin was only successful in the third round in 2012 with a newly developed institutional strategy entitled 'Educating Enquiring Minds' (HU 2011).

Data Collection

The time frame used for the collection of data covers the years 1998 to 2014. As the first round of the Excellence Initiative was announced in 2005 (GWK 2005), it can be argued that organizational responses could be observed following this first official announcement. In order to answer the research questions, several sources of evidence have been used. First, relevant documents related to the university and the Excellence Initiative were analyzed, such as strategy documents, regulations, and meeting protocols. In particular, the performance reports of HU Berlin *Präsidium* and the Berlin government's common performance reports for all Berlin universities were a central source as they contained detailed accounts of the changes that took place within HU Berlin. Moreover, in addition to the document analysis, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of different respondents in spring 2014. In order to gain a comprehensive overview of the organizational changes taking place in the university, interviews were conducted at all levels (i.e. the institutional level, the faculty level and the department level). Six of the respondents held leadership positions as those occupying such positions were expected to have more insight into decision-making processes and the rationales behind them. In addition, to get the perspectives of other involved groups, interviews were conducted with an academic employee (Mittelbau), an administrator, and two regular professors. Before selecting the respondents, it was ensured that they had concrete connections with the development or implementation of the Excellence Initiative (e.g. as members of consultative bodies or through involvement in Graduate Schools or Clusters of Excellence). To ensure anonymity, information will only be given on the respondents' type of position.[5] All interviews were conducted in German and transcribed verbatim. The quotes provided in this chapter have been translated by the author.

Results and Discussion

Organizational Change: Between Strategic Decisions and Institutional Forces

The interviews and document analysis revealed several changes that have taken place at HU Berlin. Many of these changes seem to be directly related to the implementation of the Excellence Initiative. In particular, the changes that were initiated through the Institutional Strategy funding program are a direct response to this policy instrument. HU Berlin's Institutional Strategy document (HU 2011) is a strategic document that gives an overview of the changes to be implemented with the funding received through the Excellence Initiative. However, there have also been other institutional developments that seem to have emerged in response to the Excellence Initiative, although they were not part of the official Institutional Strategy document. These include changes in the informal communication culture, in perceptions of the role of the university leadership, and in the institutional identity. The changes that were related to the Excellence Initiative will be summarized in this section.

The 2011 Institutional Strategy document triggered several changes in internal governance. A governance reform, which pursues the strengthening of the university and faculty leadership, has been incrementally implemented at HU Berlin since 2012. It forms an explicit part of the Institutional Strategy program funded by the Excellence Initiative. The elements of the governance reform are three-fold: a structural and functional reform of the faculties, strengthening of the deans' position, and a reform of the administration through organizational and personnel development. A *Concilium Decanale* had already been established in 2007 in preparation for the first full application to the Excellence Initiative; this panel of deans was considered a consultative body of the *Präsidium* and acted as an extended university leadership. However, as there were no adjustments to the university constitution granting formal decision-making rights to the *Concilium*, some respondents questioned its effectiveness and considered the panel to be of limited use as the deans were not really included in decision-making:

> Actually [the *Concilium Decanale*] is simply the president telling us things we already know anyway. But real involvement in decisions, that has not really changed yet. Because it is just about information and maybe a bit

> about exchanging ideas, but in the sense that it has any authority to take decisions or initiate change, that is not really the case. [Acad, Lead, Fac]

Another attempt to strengthen the position of the deans was the introduction of a budget; the deans were able to distribute this budget freely within their faculty to fund internal reform projects that they regarded as worthy of support. However, the budget was perceived as too limited to increase the power of the faculty leadership to any considerable extent. One respondent in a faculty leadership position remarked that even though the governance reform had the clear aim of strengthening the power and influence of the deans, this was impeded by the strong belief within HU Berlin that this goes against democratic principles:

> The *Präsidium* had a strategic goal to improve the strategic capacities of the whole university, but also of the faculties by empowering the deans and including them in the extended university leadership... To be honest, not much of this [original plan] is left, because you simply cannot empower deans in a '*Gremium* university[6]'. I mean, giving more power to the deans, that's simply something you don't do![Acad, Lead, Fac]

According to Oliver (1991), these changes to internal governance are examples of a compromising response to external pressure from the Excellence Initiative, which required universities to strengthen their institutional and faculty leadership. By implementing the *Concilium Decanale* and a separate budget for the deans, HU Berlin attempted to comply with the demands of the Excellence Initiative, but only to the extent that institutional norms were not jeopardized. However, there seems to be little relation between whether deans are actually able to influence decision making and the formality of their increased power; the implementation of this power is greatly restricted by institutional norms. Instead, the deans' actual room to maneuver is related to personal commitment and the ability to gather support for their cause:

> But then every individual also has influence. As a dean, as a member of the Senate, you can start an initiative, but first you need to mobilize enough people to support you there. [Acad, Lead, Fac]

This indicates that the formal changes, which were aimed at strengthening the faculty leadership, were to a certain extent window dressing, while the

institutionalized informal power structures were largely upheld. Nonetheless, respondents in leadership positions did report a slight increase in their freedom to maneuver.

Another change that has taken place is that the institutional leadership has slowly gained influence over the last decade. Several respondents stated that the influence of the *Präsidium* greatly depends on the president and his or her leadership style. While some presidents were perceived as dominant and making mostly top-down decisions, others were said to base their decisions more on the opinions presented in the University Senate:

> What is good about the current *Präsidium* is that it normally tries to get everyone on board. I think this was not always the case in the past. [Acad]

The difference in leadership styles was also relevant in the application process to the Excellence Initiative. The period between the first official announcement of the initiative in July 2005 and the first application deadline in October 2005 was too short for HU Berlin to successfully develop an Institutional Strategy document based on university-wide consensus. Faced with this time constraint, a draft was developed by a few members of the leadership. Retrospectively, this was identified as the main reason for the failure of the application as the top-down nature of the draft met with strong resistance within the institution:

> The first application was criticized because it was top-down . . . [The second time] the group who developed the application was comprised of deans, student representatives and other employees. It was much more bottom-up and has certainly increased the acceptance within the university. [Acad, Lead, Fac]

Moreover, this resistance can be explained by the strong status quo orientation of HU Berlin's University Senate:

> It's normal to start from the status quo. Those who were part of the process had the chance to develop, and those who sit in [the Senate] and are presented with such a proposal, they don't have the time to go through such a learning process. That's why they have such a high status quo orientation, which often leads to the failure of reforms. [Acad, Lead, Fac]

Having learned from the difficulty of gaining the support of the University Senate in the first two rounds, preparation for the third round was carried out in a much more inclusive and communicative way. An Excellence Initiative Task Force comprised of academics was set up to help the new *Präsidium* to develop the new draft. Several respondents mentioned a growing willingness to accept compromises within the decision-making bodies of the university:

> In several votes in the Senate last year... all professors voted 'yes'. And they didn't vote 'yes' because they were convinced by the proposal... But they voted that way because they didn't want to lose the president.... You don't want to lose him because this would again damage the reputation of HU Berlin, because we have already had so many presidents in the last 20 years.[Acad]

In particular, minor decisions relating to the implementation of the Excellence Initiative were delegated to the *Präsidium*, which now consults with smaller committees instead of having to ratify all decisions in the University Senate. This development relates to the trust in the *Präsidium* that the University Senate seems to have developed during the successful application process.

According to Oliver's (1991) framework, the changes that took place in the leadership demonstrate a very interesting example of the different ways a university can respond to the external demands of a policy. The first application to the Excellence Initiative was a manipulative response in which the *Präsidium* took the lead and attempted to implement change from the top down. After the failure in the first round, there was a change in the leadership and a compromise was sought by shifting the internal decision-making processes from a top-down approach to a more consensus-seeking one. This supports the neo-institutional assumption that institutional norms and traditions are decisive for any change (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). However, this does not explain why the University Senate has given some of its decision-making power to the leadership and agreed to a governance reform, even though it opposed the traditions and well-established structures within the institution. According to resource dependency theory, this increased willingness to accept internal change could be related to the institution's growing awareness of its dependency on external resources and the necessity of reacting strategically to external demands and opportunities (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Nonetheless, the pace at which an institution adapts strategically to its environment

varies considerably according to the openness a higher education institution has demonstrated toward its social environment in the past. In particular, universities which have an institutional history that has mainly been defined by a sense of elitism, as is the case with HU Berlin, typically incorporate new institutional elements in a much slower and more superficial way (Krücken and Meier 2006). The combination of the two theoretical approaches helps explain the ambiguous role of the University Senate; it attempted to preserve the status quo and safeguard the principles of academic self-governance and academic autonomy while at the same time being the decisive actor for legitimizing and driving organizational change within the institution.

As these findings indicate that HU Berlin has engaged in strategic responses to the Excellence Initiative to a certain extent, this study supports the idea that universities can be considered organizational actors that are capable of responding to their environment as an organizational entity (Krücken and Meier 2006). This is also reflected in the way HU Berlin has used its institutional strategy to sharpen its research profile. In 2004, a new structure called Interdisciplinary Centers (IC) was introduced in an attempt to counteract the rigid internal division of faculties and to enhance the visibility of the university's profile. After a positive evaluation in 2009, a decision was made to keep the concept of ICs and to integrate them into the newly emerging structure of Integrative Research Centers (IRI). The Institutional Strategy document was based on the concept of the IRIs and the positive outcomes of existing IRIs were considered crucial to HU Berlin's success in the third round of the Excellence Initiative. The IRIs were supposed to attract new excellent researchers and lead the research focus within the university in a unified direction, thereby building the critical mass needed to to ensure research excellence:

> I assume that [the IRIs] will have a long-lasting effect on the research profile because they have a kind of 'magnetic effect'. [Acad, Lead, Fac]

The active channeling of resources into certain research domains demonstrates the university's capacity for strategically positioning itself in an increasingly competitive field (Fumasoli and Huisman 2013). However, the capacity of the leadership to make top-down decisions is limited by the dominance of the University Senate in the decision-making process. For this reason, the university leadership operates rather like a portfolio manager; it decides to make strategic investments

in particular project teams, which then become relatively autonomous and develop their own goals and ways of reaching them (Whitley 2008). Whether the Senate and those project teams support the implementations proposed by the leadership depends on the degree to which they perceive them to be in line with the institutional identity. The following section will therefore present findings that shed light on the role of institutional identity in organizational change within a highly institutionalized context.

Institutional Identity and the Struggle for Excellence

To fully understand the findings, it is important to consider the reasons why HU Berlin chose to participate in the Excellence Initiative. Firstly, HU Berlin was under pressure to live up to its reputation as one of the best universities in Germany. Secondly, the difficult funding situation in Berlin seemed to leave no options other than to apply for additional funding; this was considered essential in order to stay competitive and maintain high standards. However, HU Berlin's application to the Excellence Initiative was not only driven by financial benefits, but also by the fact that a successful application would provide the university with a firmer societal standing. In other words, the university was looking for a legitimate position in the societal and political order by finding ways to explain and justify its institutional rules and principles. It thereby gave policy makers and the general public good reason to accept the institution's right to protect its core institutional values, such as university autonomy or academic freedom (Gornitzka et al. 2007). It is therefore no surprise that, for a university like HU Berlin, the threat of losing its reputation as a top university and hence losing the basis for its legitimization has led to great concern among its members. Interestingly, the awareness of this threat seems to have developed rather late and came almost as a shock after the rejection of the initial application:

> Personally, back then I thought – and I think my colleagues did as well – that [the application to the Excellence Initiative] is something the *Präsidium* is dealing with and that they are doing their thing; HU Berlin will be successful anyway, because we are the HU Berlin! So, there was a certain arrogance, to be really honest. [Acad]

It is therefore insightful to follow the development of the university's internal discourse around the Excellence Initiative; this discourse was

initially very critical of the stratifying effect the Excellence Initiative was supposed to have on the German higher education system:

> [Before the first round,] the Excellence Initiative was much more controversial. What are the consequences of the Excellence Initiative? And what does it mean that the focus is now on top research? What does that mean for the rest of the university? That was debated much more controversially back then and it was not really clear what we really wanted, what our commitment was. [Acad]

At the beginning of the first round of the Excellence Initiative, this skepticism initially led to a strong refusal to participate in the application process among many academics at the university:

> There was all this criticism beforehand, so many [academics] were afraid that they would be sold out if we got the funding, that we [the academics] would be the ones who suffer. [Acad]

However, after the failure to acquire 'excellence status' in the second round of the Excellence Initiative, it became apparent that the idea of being one of the top universities in Germany did indeed matter a great deal to most members of HU Berlin. These academics overcame their initial skepticism and felt obliged to get involved in order to avoid yet another failure:

> I think, the university has learned immensely from this initial failure. Because it really hurt the whole university and everyone individually, that we – the HU Berlin – failed, even though we assumed we would certainly be selected. [Acad]

It was argued that due to the drastic budget cuts and restructuring in the years prior to 2006, the university had more or less lost sight of its identity. However, following the rejection and in particular during the university's 200th anniversary year in 2010, many internal and external events reminded university members of the values of the Humboldtian model and the elements which had made the university excellent in the past:

> I think everyone of us has a pretty strong identification with HU Berlin . . . Its connection with Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt . . . But all this had simply got lost in the chaos of daily fights and struggles. And then it was back again, and that was the reason for the success of the third application, which it was suddenly possible to present in such a coherent way that everybody was able support it. [Acad]

This seemed to change the attitude of many HU Berlin staff, who were now more willing to work together and to invest more time and effort into thinking about strategy in order to ensure success in the next round. In general, a sense of competitiveness seemed to be triggered in the heads of university members, as well as a willingness to invest more time in tasks that were not only beneficial to them as individuals, but also to the institution as a whole:

> [The moment we failed] was the point when people started thinking differently. Maybe it is necessary to actually do something so that the excellence, which we thought was there all along and was obvious to everyone, would actually be communicated to others. All this required a higher degree of unity and it was a learning process that took place at the base of the university.[Acad]

The realization that succeeding in the Excellence Initiative was necessary in order to maintain the reputation of excellence gave legitimacy to the idea that universities have to act as strategic entities, which compete against other organizational actors (Krücken and Meier 2006). At the same time, this shows that, despite initial skepticism and resistance in the academic world, the Excellence Initiative quickly gained legitimacy and evoked considerable changes within universities.

The Institutional Strategy document played a central role in forming an institutional identity. The German Research Council, which coordinates the Excellence Initiative, provided all applicants with a template for the Institutional Strategy document, which was divided into sections. The university was first required to give a description of its status quo along with its strengths and weaknesses. This was followed by a section about the actual strategic measures which the university intended to implement in order to further develop these strengths and to improve the weaknesses (Wissenschaftsrat 2010). As pointed out by one respondent, this structure helped to define HU Berlin's institutional strategy in a way which represented the university's identity as a whole and made it easier for university employees to identify with:

> The Präsidium learned... that the institutional strategy should not just cover some things here and there, but reflect the whole image of the university. [Acad]

The Excellence Initiative, which was first and foremost developed to introduce more competition and stratification into the German higher

education system, provided a source of institutional identity in the case of HU Berlin. Especially the Institutional Strategy document served as an interpretative device that helped the university leadership to form an institutional identity and to encourage positive attitudes toward the university among internal and external stakeholders by conveying meaning to them (Maassen and Potman 1990). Indeed, the strategy seems to have had a positive effect on the willingness of staff members to support the strategic measures. At the same time, it provided a publicly accessible document which explained why HU Berlin was entitled to receive several million euros; this supported the university's legitimacy in the eyes of both students and external stakeholders.

It is important to consider the formation of institutional identity in the context of the institutional environment at the time of the application to the Excellence Initiative. In general, the science sector in Berlin is made up of many institutions, which are all competing for limited resources. As HU Berlin's main competitor, FU Berlin plays a considerable role with regard to HU Berlin's identity. When FU Berlin was successful with its Institutional Strategy application in the second round while HU Berlin's application failed, HU Berlin came under pressure to maintain its self-image as the best university in the region. Faced with this direct comparison to FU Berlin, HU Berlin seemed to have no other option than to attempt to acquire excellence status as well. One could argue that the development of HU Berlin's identity was therefore to a large extent predetermined by its environment. Its identity as an excellent university was also shaped by general developments in the Berlin science sector. In 2009, the Einstein Foundation was established; the foundation allocates funds to regional research projects and has a central focus on research excellence. Moreover, during the late 2000s, there was a noticeable emergence of 'excellence rhetoric' in political debates in Berlin in response to the Excellence Initiative. Names such as 'Einstein Foundation' or 'Super University' were used in some of the political programs that were discussed and partially implemented in the Berlin higher education sector. This shows that not only HU Berlin, but also its host city felt pressured to prove its relevance to the national and international research community and to position itself in the competition for excellence. Considering the centrality of universities within this political discourse on excellence and competition, it is certain that HU Berlin's strategies and identity have been shaped by the prevalent excellence rhetoric and political agendas in its institutional environment.

To sum up, the findings show that institutional identity played an important role in HU Berlin's responses to the Excellence Initiative; this supports the neo-institutional premise that the search for legitimacy is at the core of organizational change. Once the image of excellence and competitiveness began to gain legitimization within the university and its environment, this accelerated change. However, the fact that the institutional identity seems to have changed in response to external demands is not easily explained through a neo-institutional lens. The identity was partly shaped by manipulative responses, such as the active use of excellence rhetoric and the incentives offered by the university leadership to apply for funding from other programs within the Excellence Initiative. Moreover, extensive media coverage after the initial failure forced many HU Berlin members to take a stance and to reflect more clearly on the image they desired for their university. Changes in institutional identity due to external pressure and internal manipulative forces support the premise of the resource-dependency theory, which assumes that institutions are capable of observing the environment and reacting strategically. In line with Oliver's (1991) framework, the developments within HU Berlin are therefore best explained by a combination of these two theories.

Conclusion

When the identified changes were analyzed according to Oliver's (1991) typology of strategic behavior, it became clear that both deliberate and emergent strategies could be observed in the university. Some changes were not seen as strategies during their emergence; only in the aftermath were they identifiable as gradually emerging strategic responses, which had been triggered by a variety of institutional forces. This includes changes in the identity of the institution and the attitude of university members toward certain topics, such as the Excellence Initiative or the role of leadership. However, there have been several deliberate attempts to actively change the environment and to adapt to external pressures. As expected in an institutionalized environment, some of those attempts were met with strong resistance. Nonetheless, some deliberate strategies were successful, especially when they took institutional norms into consideration and were built on the consensus of the whole institution. Autonomy and self-regulation are traditionally strong among HU Berlin academics in relation to decision-making processes and the execution of tasks. This is reflected in the extent to which most decisions are dependent on a

consensus in the University Senate. It seems that one of the main factors that slowed down the organizational responses to the Excellence Initiative was the bottom-heavy governance structure; this led to the lack of success in the first two rounds. While the bottom-heavy governance structure in itself has not changed, the growing legitimacy of following a common institutional strategy seems to have made the difference in the successful third round. The leadership learned from the initial failure and prepared the third application in a more consensus-seeking manner. This helped establish the common goal of a successful application, which in turn legitimized the empowerment of individual strategic actors, such as the university leadership and the deans. While the University Senate initially strongly resisted the emergence of a top-down authority, this development was now less contested.

The failed applications to the Excellence Initiative seem to have been among the most efficient drivers of organizational change; it is telling that the initial strong institutional resistance only began to diminish when there was an increase in public interest in the Excellence Initiative and its winners and losers. This increased the pressure on HU Berlin to maintain its reputation as one of the top universities in Germany. In fact, the failure to secure Excellence status and the risk this posed to the institution's top reputation exposed an 'elitist' thinking among HU Berlin members. This was also reflected in the universities responses, which were not only rational (i.e. top-down decisions, rolled out by the executive management, based on rationalist decisions of where strengths and weaknesses are), but were also strongly identity driven (i.e. safeguarding their legitimacy by emphasizing their institutional identity).

This case study has contributed to the literature on the impacts of the Excellence Initiative; it provides insights into how universities have responded to increasing competition and the demand for proof of excellence. This study is limited in that it is based on only ten interviews; it would be interesting to follow up the developments within the institution and to expand the sample of respondents to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the changes taking place in the institution. This would also make it possible to take into account the differences within the institution with regard to the way interviewees responded. The current study indicates that some stakeholders in the university participated in a strategic search for excellence while others remained passive or showed resistance. Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate and compare the responses of other universities. It is

likely that the types of responses would vary depending on the institutional traditions and available resources. It would be especially interesting to examine the strategic responses of universities that were unsuccessful in the Excellence Initiative. As this study has shown, when investigating organizational change, institutional identity plays an especially important role. Shedding light on how institutional identity influences organizational behavior and vice versa will help us comprehend the ways universities respond to external pressures exerted by policy instruments and reforms.

Notes

1. The president and vice-presidents are elected for five year terms by the Academic Council based on the recommendations of the Board of Trustees
2. There are 61 members including the University Senate and 18 additional professors, six other academic Staff, six administrative staff, and six students. They are elected for a two-year term by all university members.
3. There are nine members, including the president of HU Berlin and a representative of the *Länder* government of Berlin. The other members are elected by the University Senate.
4. This comprises 13 professors, four other academic staff, four administrative staff and four students. Members are elected for a two-year term by all university members.
5. Interviewee code: Acad = Academic; Admin = Administrative; Lead = Leading position; Fac = Faculty level; Dep = Department level; Inst = Institutional level
6. A *Gremium* university is governed by committees composed of elected representatives of different status groups.

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PART IV

University Strategies for Redesigning Higher Education as Stratified Systems

CHAPTER 10

Grasping the Global with One Foot in China: The Rise of Chinese Schools of Management

Tupac Soulas

Management education in the People's Republic of China has been expanding rapidly ever since the Chinese leadership started opening the country up to the Western world in the 1980s. But it is only in the last decade that some of the schools providing management education have set out to compete internationally with North American and European schools. They implement many changes in order to become part of an international field of schools of management to which the most prestigious schools belong.

This chapter addresses whether such transformations will lead these schools to a higher level of standardization and cause them to converge toward a single model of school.

I argue that the growing international field of schools of management shapes and promotes a particular model of school. However, this 'business school model'[1] has characteristics that allow schools to interpret it differently according to their local situation.

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My observations are based on 12 months of fieldwork undertaken between 2010 and 2013 in three Chinese schools of management located in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shanghai.[2] More than one hundred interviews were conducted with administrative and academic staff as well as students. Data was also collected through observations and locally available documents (internal documents, school publications, etc.).

Based on these three cases, I will analyze how the schools adapted to one feature of the business school model and show how they managed to enter the international field while implementing changes specific to their own local setting.

The chapter will first present the concept of the international field of schools of management and the model that it encompasses, and the three cases for this study. I will then analyze the way these schools are changing in order to encourage international faculty to adopt the business school model.

Becoming a Business School in the International Field

Since the end of the 1990s, a global social space of schools of management has emerged. An increasing number of schools claim to belong to it, and they adopt changes according to what I shall call the "international field of schools of management."

The International Field of Schools of Management

Strategic Action Fields

Picking up on the work of Fligstein and McAdam (2012), I argue that schools of management worldwide are more and more embedded in a strategic action field:

> A strategic action field is a constructed mesolevel social order in which actors (who can be individual or collective) are attuned to and interact with one another on the basis of shared (which is not to say consensual) understandings about the purpose of the field, relationships to others in the field (including who has power and why), and the rules governing legitimate action in the field. A stable field is one in which the main

> actors are able to reproduce themselves and the field over a fairly long period of time. (ibid., p. 9).

This definition is based on several studies dealing with the emergence, stability and transformation of social spaces in which actors compete for symbolic or material resources. In the studies, organizational theory focuses on the rise and spread of organizations and the role of the state and specific actors in their environment (Scott 1995). Economic sociology has analyzed markets as social constructions and investigated the role of the state and enterprises in this process. It has also looked at how the construction of social hierarchies determines market value in a designated field (Fligstein 2001; Garcia-Parpet 2009). The sociology of science also refers to the concept of fields in order to understand the social conditions surrounding the production of science.[3]

Fligstein and McAdam (2012) rely on several general works theorizing stability and change in the dynamic of fields. The work of Dimaggio and Powell defines organizational fields as organizational aggregates focused on change at the organizational level (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Powell and DiMaggio 1991). Taking another perspective, the work of Bourdieu (1984, 1989) encompasses the concept of field in a general framework of capital distribution and domination relationships in a social space. These works embrace neither macro-level field dynamics and implications of change beyond the level of meso-level fields, nor the relation between different levels of fields.

I turn to the concept of the strategic action field developed by Fligstein and McAdam (2012) in order to capture both the micro-dynamics of actors as well as a broader perspective explaining the links between embedded fields and their implication for change at a macro-level.

Many studies on schools of management and business education rely on the concept of field. Pavis (2003) analyzes business education as embedded in economic and academic fields. Accreditation agencies are regarded as fostering the emergence of fields for business education in the United Kingdom and Canada (Bell and Taylor 2005; McKee et al. 2005). In Europe, Hedmo et al. (2006) refer to the construction of an organizational field for business education through the combination of state regulation and the actions of accreditation agencies. All these frameworks legitimize this concept for the study of schools of management. However, they do not extend the concept at an international level, which is now the pertinent level for understanding the transformations occurring in the schools.

Schools between Two Fields

I argue that schools of management seek to obtain a position in a strategic action field: the international field of schools of management. It relies on a shared understanding of what is a good school of management that I have called the business school model. This field emerged in the late 1990s and contains many local strategic action fields, most of them based on national borders.

Some countries may have several local fields of schools of management. For instance, the French dual system of higher education contains a field for *grandes écoles* and for university-based schools. As will be shown later, there are three local fields in the People's Republic of China (see Section "Three Chinese Schools in Local Fields"). Schools of management are historically located in one local field and more recently have begun seeking a place in the international field.

Membership of a field is not based on objective criteria. Schools can be very different but still claim to be part of the international field using adaptation and communication strategies. To give credit to their claim, they carefully look at what other schools in the world – especially those in the United States – are doing and adapt their own actions accordingly. Although they struggle for a spot in the international field, they do not cut the ties with their local field, preserving any benefits they may have at this level (Kodeih and Greenwood 2014; Soulas and Blanchard 2017). As a result, all the schools in the international field are integrated on two levels.

The international field of schools of management is currently stable. There were two phenomena that drove schools at this level and prompted emergence of the field in the late 1990s. First, the reduction of public funding in higher education encouraged many institutions to seek resources at international level. The example of British universities increasing their recruitment of full-fee-paying foreign students in order to compensate for the cut in public funding illustrates the link between national reforms and the move of higher education institutions toward an international dynamic (Soulas 2010, pp. 665–668). Second, the development of new forms of judgment coupled with new evaluation instruments has fostered comparison among schools worldwide. In local fields, the value of schools based on contextual reputation is now challenged by the emergence of what Paradeise and Thoenig (2013) call "excellence judgments," which do not require the mediation of local or

national social networks to assess quality. International rankings serve as instruments to measure "excellence" and compare schools embedded in different local contexts.

The international field is regulated by what Fligstein and McAdam (2012) call "internal governance units": organizations or associations within the field whose sole job it is to ensure the routine stability and order of the strategic action field (ibid., p. 77). Despite the claimed impartiality of their actions, they are not neutral judges but enforce the dominant perspective in the field (ibid., pp. 13–14). Accreditation agencies and ranking bodies are the two governance units of the international field of schools of management. Of the first, three agencies worldwide have been considered important since 1997 (Cret 2007): AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) and AMBA (Association of MBAs).[4] The international ranking of schools is dominated by one body, the *Financial Times*, and its highly influential "Global MBA Ranking" (Kwon and Easton 2010).

The Business School Model

The international field of schools of management fosters a set of ideas about what a school should be. The business school model[5] is a shared understanding among members of that field of what makes a "good" school of management. Contrary to what actors usually imply, the business school model is not based on a precise definition. It exists through prescriptions – or scripts – that circulate in the international field, especially through the activity of the internal governance units.

The concept of scripts initially suggested by Meyer and Rowan (1977) is adapted by Musselin (2008, p. 15) for the study of the international market for higher education. She defines the scripts as "normative prescriptions that circulate in the institutional environment of schools and universities, and formulate legitimate propositions, norms, and standards, that these institutions should adopt in order to appear rational and efficient." Despite the lack of a real consensus among actors on what defines a business school, these scripts are sufficiently prescriptive to create a shared understanding and sufficiently broad to translate into very different contexts.

Three International Scripts

The business school model is defined by three scripts: the delivery of MBA programs, a strong academic emphasis, and the international scope of the school.

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) is a management training program for people with working experience that combines theoretical learning and real-life practice. It is often taught through case studies. Based on the MBA format, schools have also created derived programs for specific kinds of professionals, the most popular being the Executive MBA (EMBA), designed for people with greater experience and responsibility. Offering an MBA has become mandatory to ensure the legitimacy of a school of management in the international field. As explained by Moon and Min Wotipka (2006, p. 125), "Increasing proportion of discourse related to professional management education in academic and popular publications universally treated the MBA as if the MBA were the only form of professional management education."

Since the late 1960s, schools of management have started to seek legitimacy through the academization of their activities. The reports of the Ford and Carnegie foundations,[6] calling for management teaching to be anchored in academic disciplines such as mathematics and statistics, boosted this shift toward stronger research activity in these institutions. This second script encourages heavy investment of resources – financial and human – in research activities and the production of knowledge. It has several dimensions, including the production of research outputs, the creation of research centers, and the opening of doctoral programs within the schools.

Management has a history of exportation from the United States to Europe (Djelic 2001) but also to Asia. In the latter regions, the value of internationalization is related to the historical idea that schools should align themselves with the best practices abroad, mostly those from the United States. Worldwide there is also a discourse that pushes schools to train professionals for a globalized economic labor market. As Mintzberg (2005, p. 201) explains, the words "international" and "global" are now central to the strategy and discourse of the schools of management. The scope of this script relates to the teaching and student body; programs and diplomas; exchange partner schools; and the language of instruction, among others. The recruitment of international professors considered in

the second part of this paper is an important element of this script because of the history of the schools and the governance of the field. At the end of the 1960s, many schools in Europe sent their professors to the United States for training at a foreign university (Chessel and Pavis 2001; Puig and Fernández 2003). In the same way, the very first Chinese schools of management used international cooperation in order to import the best practices from the West. As a credential for teaching and research at higher standards, it is recognized by the *Financial Times* as a criterion for its MBA ranking. Other criteria are furthermore derived from it, such as research rank based on international publications.

The three scripts (MBA, research, and international) together define on a global scale what a good school of management should be. However, they can vary over time and leave sufficient room for interpretation by local actors.

The Model and Governance of the Field

In the international field of schools of management, the internal governance units promote the business school model through their accreditation and ranking activities. In the field, according to Fligstein and McAdam (2012), schools considered as incumbents are accredited and highly ranked.

Accreditation agencies deliver a label that enables institutions to be part of "an elite club" (Bell and Taylor 2005). Their action is not a posteriori, because their work relies on a great deal of auditing in order for schools to gain accreditation. Initially used as a tool for distinction, accreditation is now mandatory if schools want to enjoy a minimum of status in the international field. By assessing the teaching body, research activities and international scope, these agencies evaluate and circulate the scripts of the business school model.

Every school ranking "simultaneously unifies and distinguishes the objects that it encompasses or evaluates" (Espeland and Sauder 2007, p. 19). The *Financial Times* Global MBA Ranking unifies schools of management worldwide using a common measure and creates a hierarchy by giving them a relative rank. The three scripts of the business school model are reflected in this hierarchy. Indeed, it is assessment of MBA programs that gives value to a school as a whole. Furthermore, it contains several criteria for the measurement of research activity and internationalization of the schools.[7]

Three Chinese Schools in Local Fields

Business education in China dates back to the early twentieth-century Western missionary colleges. With the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, these mainland colleges went into exile in Hong Kong. They developed in the British colony, and new schools were established on the mainland after it opened up in the late 1970s. There, schools opened as university faculties but also as dedicated training centers.[8]

As a consequence of history, there are three local fields of schools of management in China. Two of them correspond to faculties in the university systems of Hong Kong and mainland China. The other is a field of independent graduate schools derived from the mainland training centers that opened in the early 1980s.

Three Local Fields of Schools of Management in China

There are two higher education systems in China. Hong Kong has been part of the PRC since its retrocession in 1997. However, following the "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong local government has its own higher education policy. Management education was developed within this university system.

The first MBA was offered in the 1960s with the opening of the Hong Kong National University. This university opened the first faculty of business administration in the colony. Several other faculties followed in the 1990s as the number of public universities expanded. There are currently eight public universities with schools of management under local regulation. Three of them are among the best schools in the world, accredited and ranked among the top 100.

There is a separate higher education system on the mainland, where universities opened their first schools of management in the 1980s. Under the PRC Ministry of Education, they comply with the regulations inherited from the communist system of public universities. Seven of them launched the first mainland universities MBA in 1991. According to various estimations, there are now more than one hundred university-based schools of management in mainland China. Absent from the international field in the early 2000s, they now have three that are among the best business schools in the world according to the *Financial Times*.

The first MBA in mainland China was not offered by a university but by a training center separate from the educational system. In the 1980s, the

government signed several cooperation agreements with foreign countries and opened joint ventures in which thousands of Chinese were trained for the market economy (Warner 1987). A decade later, one of these centers became a professional school, and other independent graduate schools recently opened based on this experience. Currently, at least three of them teach professionals and are under the regulation of the Ministry of Commerce.

Management Training for a New and Future Elite

Management education in China has developed in the recent past. Contrary to the experience in many Western countries, the established elites did not receive this kind of training. The opening of China in the 1980s created a new elite based on personal enrichment and rejecting the Maoist definition of social status and values (Bergère 1984). These people did not receive any management training because many of them had no access to higher education, which was almost stopped during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). However, this new elite is now wealthy and has reached a high management level with a low level of higher education. Its members are now joining the executive programs of the local schools of management in order to certify their social status. They give a great deal of prestige to the schools of management that can count them as students and part of their alumni network.

This return to school of many new elites, combined with the ideological context of personal enrichment, gave the schools of management a key role in the quest for social ascension by offering both academic credentials and a strong personal network. Young Chinese are therefore attracted by these schools of management, which now have the most selective undergraduate programs in Chinese universities. With the rise in unemployment figures among university graduates, being accepted onto a management program and into a prestigious institution are the two keys the new generation of Chinese choose to preserve or acquire elite status.

Three Schools of Management Importing the MBA

To analyze the position of Chinese schools of management in the international field, this chapter looks at three cases from each local field.

HKNU Business School is a faculty of business administration in a public university of Hong Kong. Its MBA is the oldest in China, ranked

among the top 100, and the school has one accreditation. The program was created in the 1960s, managed by US professors invited to HKNU, and supported by two US foundations. These foreign professors imported the MBA format and its teaching methods. In the 1970s they started building a local teaching body to perpetuate the program. They recruited many US-trained Chinese professors, who now account for the majority of the academic staff.

Nanzhu College is a faculty in the most prestigious university in South China. Its MBA does not appear in the world ranking, but it is in the mainland China top 10, and the school has recently obtained two accreditations. The program was opened jointly in 1998 with the School of Management of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Since then, US professors have come to Guangzhou to teach, and local professors train at the MIT. Through this cooperation, the school imported the MBA format and all the teaching and administration skills related to the program.

Asia Business School (ABS) is a non-university school that only offers professional training programs. Its MBA is ranked as the best in mainland China and it has two accreditations. The school was created on the basis of a management program opened in 1984 in a joint venture hosting European visiting professors to teach local cadres. Established as a school a decade later, the entire teaching body was initially imported and has been replaced progressively by US-trained Chinese professors.

These three schools imported the MBA program and rebuilt it locally under three different kinds of regulations. For instance, first-year students at Nanzhu College are recruited through the national university entrance examination for mainland universities[9] and at HKNU Business School through the local university examination system, while ABS does not recruit freshmen students. Because of their differences, these schools were not usually compared to each other. Until the end of the 1990s, the environment they used to consider was that of their local field.

I argue that Chinese schools of management grew up within a local field and are currently projecting themselves into the international one. In the process, they adopt the business school model and adapt it locally. Far from standardizing the schools, this quest for global legitimacy creates a variety of practices in Chinese schools. For the sake of empirical demonstration, I will present one transformation toward the business school model in the three cases: the internationalization of the faculty of the schools.

Local Arrangements for International Faculty

The business school model is built on a myth of a global market in which professors circulate between schools around the world. These institutions are supposed to recruit the best professors by formulating the best job offers. With this model in mind, school leaders have tried to overcome local constraints in order to be "competitive" and recruit what they refer to as international permanent faculty.

Because of China's history of importation from the West and a distrust of Chinese quality in higher education, the schools of management use international faculty in order to claim elite status. Professors are believed to be better trained abroad, and only the institutions with greater resources are able to attract them. The national policy for higher education legitimates this vision by constantly financing expensive programs that foster the return of Chinese academics trained abroad to its universities.[10]

Chinese Routes Toward International Salaries

In two of the local fields, the main constraints are related to the university salary grids for professors considered to be public servants. In the non-university school the pay is not an issue, but the school does have to formulate specific job offers in order to recruit international faculty.

Creating a Dual Salary System

In mainland universities, professors are public servants paid by the state. In 2010, the monthly salary paid by the university for full professors was around 10,000 RMB (approximately €1250). This salary is supplemented by an allocation paid by the relevant faculty or school in the university. Depending on the resources of the schools within the university, the salary can be adjusted. Nevertheless, this fixed salary is not generally the main source of income for professors, who have many variable incomes based on their research and teaching activities (and also on their work outside the university). Their income structure is presented in Table 10.1.

This income structure, made up of a low salary and many variable incomes, gives professors a decent revenue. However, the system is very

Table 10.1 Income structures for mainland university professors

Paid by the university		*Paid by the faculty or school*		
Fixed incomes		*Variable incomes*		*Low incomes*
Basic Salary	Allocation	Course Remuneration	Rewards (Research)	Complementary Compensations

Note: This table does not include incomes for activities outside the university

far removed from international payment norms, where the fixed salary is high and accounts for the main source of income. Hence, the school cannot attract young doctors or professors based in the West. The solution found at Nanzhu College was to introduce a dual salary system. The school started to offer high salaries with no variable incomes. The fixed university salary remains very low, but the school uses its own resources to pay a very high allocation in order to offer a salary that is closer to international norms. This practice was introduced in other mainland schools aspiring to be part of the international field, and their new recruits are often compensated according to this system.

> In Chinese schools of management, especially among the top 10, or at least the first 20, a differentiated salary system is set up, a dual salary system, one called "domestic" and one called "international". If you take all the associate professors, there are those graduated in China and those graduated in the US: their salary is not the same. [. . .] That is a policy of the school itself, especially the best ones, the 20 best schools of management in China, almost all have set up these policies to attract foreign PhDs.
>
> (Hu Jiashi, full professor at Nanzhu College, 2012)

Nanzhu College uses its resources to come closer to international salary norms and recruit professors who correspond to the business school model. It is able to finance these salaries thanks to the revenues generated by its professional programs (MBA, EMBA and other customer-tailored programs), allowing the school to free itself from the local salary grids. It is likely that this locally constructed "international salary system" will expand among other schools in China along with their willingness to become business schools.

Negotiating a Secret Salary

Hong Kong universities have similar constraints related to salary grids. For many years, the pay was still internationally competitive, but in the early 2000s professors at HKNU Business School realized they could not recruit at the international level with the local salaries.

In Hong Kong, the university receives public funding and pays its professors according to the public servant salary grids. The faculties and schools do not handle the pay for professors; therefore any change has to be negotiated at university level. Having long had no voice in the university leadership, the school's first opportunity to have its interests represented at a higher level came in 2000, when a professor reached the presidency board. She now serves as a "bridge" to convey the interests of the school.

The solution they found was for the university to pay a higher salary to professors in the school of management. This was possible because of the revenue that the HKNU Business School generates for the university, but it could only be implemented in secrecy: the inequality is accepted because most people do not know about it, as a high-level university administrator explains:

> — How is this [difference in salary] accepted by the other faculties?
>
> — We have a lot of tricks to do that. [laughs] It is very simple. As long as how much you pay for professors in the faculty of business administration, this piece of information, is not known to people in the other faculties, it will work. [...] Even among professors within the same department. Say we are both professors in the marketing department, our salaries could be different. How can they do that? Very simple: if salary is a confidential piece of information, then ... [claps hands as sign of accomplishment]. (Rebecca Tse, full professor at HKNU Business School, 2012)

The school used its "breadwinner" position within the university in order to obtain special treatment for appointing professors. The higher salary is only implemented for new recruitments; many professors therefore ignore this unequal treatment and assume that "salaries are more or less the same" throughout the university. The school of management now has the salary tools to attract international faculty in order to be a business school, but most people in the university are unaware of the price they pay for this effort.

Buying Professors with Time

As a school that is not part of a university system, Asia Business School (ABS) does not have many constraints. In fact, the school only offers expensive professional programs, which makes it financially autonomous. ABS therefore simultaneously enjoys good resources and a lot of freedom in its salary levels. The school built its reputation on "star" staff, hence it specifically targets senior international professors. However, highly recognized professors in the international field do not usually want to live in China, even on a very high salary. In order to recruit these people, the school arranges ad hoc job offers.

The school uses its independence in making appointments to adapt positions to individual demands. A professor involved in the recruitment process explained that job offers are very flexible because "these people have a certain amount of bargaining power".

Negotiations are undertaken by the dean personally, who often has to cede presence time in the school. A recently appointed full professor at ABS negotiated his mandatory presence in China. He has a very high profile at a well-known Western school and explained the reason behind and negotiation of his part-time presence in Shanghai:

> — [My wife] is not here anyway. She lives in [Europe]. So I just come here for a couple of weeks every other month. [. . .] I spend about 60 days a year here.
> — And how did you negotiate that? Did you say to [the dean] "I have this . . . "?
> — Yes. It took some negotiating but . . . I don't want to live in China, this is the most I can do. So it was an individual negotiation, and they were fairly flexible about it. [. . .]
> — So . . . The 60 days, that was your original request or did you have to extend it?
> — No I had to extend it, I asked for fewer days than that . . . [*smiling*].
> (Anthony Lee, full professor at ABS, 2013)

It is hard for a very young school in China to attract a professor from a long-standing Western institution. But the flexible management at ABS allows it to recruit full-time faculty who do not have full-time presence. That is the price it is willing to pay to be a business school.

Each of the three schools has its own method in its quest for international faculty. They do not turn to the same solution to make them look and behave the same: they take advantage of their own resources to overcome whatever restrains them in their local field.

Playing with the Imperfection of the Global Market

The previous testimony reveals another issue in recruiting professors. An appointment is not just the result of a good job offer. Many social constructs can help or hinder an individual's choice, especially because, from their point of view, China is a special place.

The "home bias"

Depending on who you are, accepting a work position in China can either be considered as moving away from or returning to your homeland. This aspect is very strong in the case of China. Westerners consider China a very exotic place, but it also attracts Chinese that have settled abroad.

In Hong Kong, considered to be a very cosmopolitan city, a former department chair explained the influence of what he calls "home bias" in the attractiveness of its school of management:

> — In the business schools they always say "We are competing at a global scale"[. . .]
> — It's a global market, yes.
> — [. . .] So do you really think that Hong Kong National University can recruit from all over the world, and institutions all over the world can recruit professors from this school?
> — It's true, it's not really a global market because people have a strong – if you like – home bias. So most people from Europe, most people from North America, will not think about coming to Hong Kong, Singapore, or other parts of Asia, because of family attachments, because of cultural differences . . . Even if we pay a big premium, we sometimes find that we might be able to draw someone in, and then they might decide very close to the end of the negotiation to pull out for family or other localized reasons. The same thing applies to our professors if they want to go somewhere else. Even if there's a big premium in salary, it has to be very significant to draw them away from this part of the world.
> (Edward Black, full professor at HKNU Business School, 2012)

Many career paths confirm this statement. Westerners usually do not want to commit to a Chinese school because it moves them away from their family or because they find it difficult to adapt to the place. The global salary that each Chinese school manages to come up with may not be

sufficient to get the international faculty they ideally want. The definition of international faculty therefore becomes the one that corresponds to the professors they are able to get.

From that perspective, the salaries they can offer are attractive to many overseas Chinese. Most of the foreign-trained Chinese I met mentioned a desire to return as important to their choice of a position in China. From the spiritual need to come back, to the sick mother at home, there are multiple local reasons that would have the opposite effect on Westerners. One Chinese full professor explained several times the importance of the food: "I did not want to go back to the US. The reason . . . You won't believe this. The reason is the food in Hong Kong was so good [slight laugh]." The return of the diaspora was a godsend for Hong Kong's schools of management in the 1990s, especially because political tensions and academic working conditions in mainland schools were scaring off many overseas Chinese. Since the 2000s, the mainland has been growing more and more attractive, with non-university schools at the forefront in terms of the flexibility of their job offers. As a high-level administrator at ABS explained, "Because everybody wants to come back to China, the market is, you know, . . . you get good people even for not so much money basically." University-based mainland schools that are becoming business schools also benefit from this dynamic on a large scale. If ABS would never recruit a professor with a Chinese PhD, it is also becoming less and less likely at Nanzhu College.

Local Definition of "International Faculty"

I have not defined what I consider "international faculty." The reason is that, as part of a script of the business school model, it is not precisely defined. In other words, every school defines it in its own way.

At Nanzhu College, a brief look at permanent faculty shows only ethnic Chinese with mainland names.[11] However, the college is proud of its international professors because their definition has nothing to do with nationality or ethnicity. It is based solely on foreign training. Most of the professors graduated from a mainland Chinese university, but those who have a PhD from overseas are classed as the international professors, even if their qualification is from Hong Kong, because as one administrator put it, "we consider

Hong Kong as overseas." The trend in the school is toward more international recruitment based on this definition.

At ABS, the school has had a high number of Western foreigners coming to teach since its early days. However, the school struggles to stabilize a professoral body who often manages a full-time position with only part-time presence. The consequence is that many new recruits are overseas Chinese who have a degree and a career in the West and are willing to commit to the place. An European full-time professor at the school explained the rise of Chinese people to executive positions in the school: "The Chinese want to control the deal [...] little by little I think they are placing their own pawns." Indeed, the main executive responsibilities in the school are now held by these overseas-trained Chinese. But in the same way as this foreign professor spends 60 days a year at the school, many Westerners want to limit their physical presence in Shanghai, hence leaving room for Chinese people returning to China. This need for local commitment redefines what international faculty at ABS means:

> From the outside it looks like: "Oh, they're all Chinese people in there," but if you look at their background, then they are quite international. They have lived abroad, they have studied abroad. So in that sense I think we are definitely more international than all the other schools.
>
> (Alexander Mooney, high level administrator at ABS, 2013)

Located in the former British colony, HKNU Business School has historical ties with the West, yet Hong Kong is still exotic for non-Chinese professors. Hence, even though the school is trying to recruit Western professors, their numbers are declining among the total number of staff. This trend in appointments is apparent in Table 10.2, which shows the change in the geographical origin of the permanent faculty during the last two decades.[12]

The last 20 years show a decline in the proportion of Westerners and a rise in that of people from mainland China. This reflects the evolution of the pool of candidates for positions. More and more mainland Chinese earn a PhD in the West and return to China looking for a position. By the same token, recruiters are finding fewer and fewer Westerners who meet their requirements. Interestingly, these requirements also tend to place

Table 10.2 Faculty profile at HKNU Business School by shares of geographical origin

Population (n)	1992 *36*	2000 *87*	2012 *109*
Mainland China	–	15	**38**
Hong Kong	**28**	**38**	**42**
Overseas Chinese	25	**20**	6
Taiwan	8	11	5
Other Asia	8	8	4
Western countries	**31**	8	6
	100%	100%	100%

Note: The two highest % are in bold number

ethnic Chinese as good candidates. Because of the specific nature of life in Hong Kong, recruiters are increasingly turning to people who have a potential commitment to the place. This US professor explains the school's thinking behind his appointment:

> — I think because I showed some commitment to Hong Kong. I mean I had lived here before and I speak, continue to try to speak [slight laugh], the local dialect, and I've learned some other Chinese a little bit. It was more of a commitment. So I wasn't here just for three years or five years. I mean I was prepared to stay a lot longer, which I have.
> — Was that important to your appointment?
> — Well, I think for new faculty, and especially younger faculty, I think that . . . Yes, I think they probably want somebody who's committed to the place and also knows about Hong Kong and maybe won't want to leave after two years, because then you run into the inevitable problems of living in a place that's really a lot different in many ways than North America.
> (George Wart, full professor at HKNU Business School, 2012)

The search for a commitment to the school means that there are fewer and fewer Western professors, and mainland Chinese account for most of the new appointments. "International faculty" in the school is a matter of PhD degree. Hence someone who has a Master's degree from a mainland university and a PhD from the United States will still count as "international."

In the international field, even when they hold a Chinese passport, professors are still acknowledged as international, mostly because of their

capacity to publish in journals considered international by the internal governance units in the field. Foreign nationality of professors accounts for 4 percent of the *Financial Times* MBA ranking, but the weight of international publications accounts for 10 percent of the ranking score. Hence foreign-trained professors are recruited because of the promise they hold for the business school model, beyond the nationality criteria. These foreign-trained Chinese are a useful resource, because their research potential improves the school's profile with respect to one of the scripts of this model (investment in research). Furthermore, they help the schools to stay locally relevant with teachers and researchers who know and study Chinese business.

Chinese schools of management are therefore becoming increasingly international in terms of faculty, even if local constraints mean there are fewer foreigners in these schools. They are taking advantage of the diaspora and the growing number of Chinese graduates to turn to this model by redefining locally the script of internationalization.

Conclusion

Strategic action fields have captured current dynamics in the development of management education. Most research acknowledges the changes taking place at the international level and the importance of rankings and accreditation in this process. However, the concept of internal governance units enables us to understand both the role of these bodies and their impact in a lower-level strategic action field. It helps us to understand that the global field is a social order fostering a model of school that coexists with the rules of the local fields. The positioning of the schools is a game between the prescriptions of these two levels.

The analysis of how Chinese schools of management turn to the business school model invites rethinking of the idea of a global market and its standardizing norms. As I explained with the example of the quest for international faculty, every school comes up with a solution that is adapted to its local field. This solution redefines locally the scripts of the international field that allow the schools to grasp the global with one foot in China. Adaptation in this way reveals the plasticity of the model and the capacity of organizations to redefine global standards locally. The variety of practices shows that these schools act as "local orders" that "ensure behavior regulation and the integration of divergent strategies, if not contentious, of the actors concerned" (Friedberg 1993, p. 187). Schools

of management operating as local orders redefine global standards preserving organizational diversity (Paradeise and Thoenig 2013), but they can also turn around or even elude the scripts of the business school model. Each of them built up a very specific teaching body, but all can claim to have "international faculty" and hence be considered as *business schools* by other schools in the international field.

Notes

1. In this chapter, I will use the term "school of management" to designate the schools as an empirical reality and differentiate them from the "business school model." Schools of management can be independent schools (such as many French *grandes écoles*) or university-based schools (such as the major schools of management in the United States).
2. This work was undertaken for my doctoral thesis in sociology at Université Paris-Est Marne-La-Vallée as part of the ANR PrestEnce. The names of the institutions and the people interviewed for this research have been changed.
3. For an overview, see Gingras (2015).
4. Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) is an association of institutions based in the US that delivers an eponymous label to schools. The EQUIS accreditation is delivered by a European association: the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD). Unlike the other two, the AMBA accreditation targets the MBA programs and not the schools. It is administrated by the British Association of MBAs.
5. Initially formulated for the analysis of Chinese schools (Soulas 2013), this model is built to elucidate the transformation of all schools of management and facilitate analysis between countries (Soulas and Blanchard 2017).
6. The reports commissioned by the Carnegie and Ford foundations respectively are: F.C. Pierson, *The Education of American Businessmen: A Study of University-College Programs in Business Administration*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1959; R.A. Gordon and J.E. Howell, *Higher Education for Business*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1959.
7. The ranking is based on 18 criteria that determine the score of a given school. Half of the criteria are directly related to the assessment of research emphasis or internationalization, accounting for 40 percent of the total score.
8. I present the history of management education in China in detail in the first two chapters of my doctoral thesis "Business schools made in China. L'émergence des écoles de gestion chinoises" (2016).
9. The *gaokao* (高考) is the national university entrance examination inherited from the imperial examination tradition. Considered the most extensive

exam in the world, it attracts around 10 million applicants every year in mainland China.

10. Two of the famous programs are the "100 people program" of the Academy of Science in 1994 (百人计划, *bairen jihua*) and the "1000 people program" of the Ministry of Education and the Communist Party in 2008 (千人计划, *qianren jihua*).
11. Because of the reform of the phonetic writing of Chinese language on the mainland in the 1950s, it is possible to distinguish people from the mainland because their name in letters uses the *pinyin* transcription.
12. This data was obtained with the names and the university background available in the faculty profiles published by the school. I used the name to distinguish the mainland Chinese from the overseas Chinese (see previous note). The distinction between Hong Kong and Taiwan is based on undergraduate background. "Overseas Chinese" groups together all Chinese whose entire tertiary education was not in a Chinese location (mainland, Hong Kong or Taiwan).

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CHAPTER 11

Elite Business Schools and the Uses of Visibility

Jan Nespor

This chapter examines the strategies elite business schools use to shape how they are visible at a distance. The aim is not to survey the entire range of visibility strategies used by such schools, but to identify some of the characteristic problems those strategies respond to, and to provide a rudimentary framework for analyzing them. To that end, I focus on the website visibilities of two top-rated business schools in the United States, Harvard Business School (HBS), and the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business. I treat these as "heuristic" (Mitchell 1983) or "information-oriented" (Flyvbjerg 2006) cases: instead of typifying "elite" schools, they are meant to suggest the range of visibility strategies used by such schools, and thus facilitate the development of theory.

Although websites are the main sources of evidence I draw on, my interest is not in their "meaning making potentials" or purely "visual" aspects (cf. Djonov et al. 2015; Meyer et al. 2013). Rather, my concern is with how the sites make the schools' campuses and students visible to distant viewers, and how these visibilities instruct the viewer to understand the effects of the schools on their students. My analysis procedure was to

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repeatedly read through the portions of the websites dealing with the schools' main campus and their MBA programs, scrutinizing texts and audio as well as photos, videos, and maps. The resulting interpretations are obviously different than those other viewer-readers would produce. It is also worth stressing that different viewer-readers encounter different 'texts' through the websites: While campus landscapes may change slowly, some of the webpages, particularly those devoted to students, are designed to change from year to year as students graduate, while other pages change even as one views them (one set of pictures and links fades away, to be replaced by another). The student narratives from which I quote below were selected from the arrays I encountered on first visiting these pages. They can be seen as examples of the ways schools and students address the common problem of making themselves visible as distinct-yet-linked entities embodying certain characteristic styles and orientations. The next section provides definitions and a preview of the analytic scheme used to make sense of this material.

Visibility and Power

By "visibility" I mean the ensembles of images, texts, video, and audio files that shape how people, organizations, and events are made to appear at a distance and over time. By ensemble I mean a network of physical forms and digital representations: landscapes and buildings as well as webpage images, recordings, and texts. The ensemble "codes" the school as an "object of knowledge," and "highlights" features viewers are meant to attend to; it provides a "socially organized way of seeing and understanding events that are answerable to the distinctive interests of a particular social group" (Goodwin 1994, p. 606). Thus organized, photos, texts, and audio and video files create a political aesthetic. They show us the world at a distance, tell us what power and poverty should look like, and provide lessons in how to discriminate on appearance, style, and form. Visibility ensembles thus "direct" the viewer "towards a meaning chosen in advance" (Barthes 2004, p. 156).

I use Khan's (2012) definition of "elites" as groups with "vastly disproportionate control over or access to a resource" (p. 362), and assume that these groups take the form of networks that can be assembled at multiple scales, function as temporary alliances or stable collectives, assume hierarchical or "rhizomic" forms, and span legal, financial, military, entertainment and other fields (cf. Mills 1956; Barley 2010;

Courpasson et al. 2012, 8; Woods 1998, 2112; Reed 2012, p. 206). With increased complexity and extension in scale, however, such networks generate problems of intra-elite communication and coordination. As Bauman (1998) suggests, elites must not only "make their own situation opaque and their actions impenetrable for outsiders," they must keep "them clear to themselves – free from misty spots and secure against surprises" (p. 33). This clarity and self-recognition become more difficult to achieve as neoliberal capitalism reassembles city-based or regional elites into geographically dispersed and culturally diverse trans-local networks (Mizruchi 2013; Chu and Davis 2013). In this context, elite schools are mechanisms for generating intra-group clarity and cohesion. One way they do this, I argue, is by structuring visibilities that allow students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to recognize one another as members of shared projects.

The key to this structuring is the ability of elites to control visibility and use it to translate education into economic value. The underlying issue is the relation of visibility to power. In Foucault's (1979) take on this relation, power in early-modern Europe was partly produced through spectacle and display, "power was what was seen, what was shown and what was manifested" (p. 187). Modern disciplinary power, by contrast, imposes a "compulsory visibility" on subjugated groups (Foucault 1979, p. 187): one controls others by making *them* visible, in particular through calculative surveillance – censuses, statistics, databases, and predictive algorithms (Haggerty and Ericson 2000, p. 606). Power through spectacle does not disappear. Rather, new forms of visibility – architectures, media campaigns, "shock and awe" strategies, and distinctive dress and display – combine with technologies of surveillance and calculation to form "aesthetic/political interventions" that structure "what can be seen or sensed and our ability to speak and discuss it" (Weizman 2012, p. 49). This pairing of what is 'sensed" and what can be "spoken of" needs to be broken apart, however. For those who cannot control how they are made visible, the governmental aesthetic becomes an obligatory part of the ways they and their worlds can be publicly represented (depicted or "spoken of") in official discourse. Ghertner (2015), for example, describes an "aesthetic governmentality" in Delhi, where "intensely political decisions about who and what belongs in the city" take place "primarily on the basis of codes of appearances, not documents and records" (p. 6). Such "codes of appearance" include representations of how things *should* look as well as criteria for identifying people and spaces as deficient or abject. By contrast,

for elites who can control the means of appearance, forms of appearance and display function not only as discursive tools, but as sources of sensibility and feeling, generating a "mundane aesthetics" of power, a "synesthetic, sensuous feel of things fitting together (and not fitting together)" (Handelman 2010, p. 74). Spectacle and display are thus not only ways of controlling others, but mechanisms for defining in-group boundaries and fostering intra-group recognition. Elite schools foster these elite ways of seeing and being seen by physically concentrating student activity within exclusive spaces organized for display and observation, and by making schools and students visible in controlled ways by projecting images, audio, and texts over the web.

Control of the means of appearance is the precondition for using visibility in these ways. In Butler's (2015) words,

> a "right" to appear is tacitly supported by regulatory schemes that qualify only certain subjects as eligible to exercise that right. . . . Its universalism is undercut by differential forms of power that qualify who can and cannot appear. (p. 50)

This is not simply an individual's right to present themselves as they like, but a right to make oneself visible along with, and as part of, a collective – an enactment of membership articulated with the performances of others making linked claims of commonality. To do this presupposes at least four capabilities, which I present below, though it should be understood that this analytical scheme is actually an outcome of repeated readings of the websites.

First, elite visibilities require control over a site or place of appearance from which it is possible to exclude others. In contrast to subaltern groups, which coalesce in temporarily seized or claimed spaces (Butler 2015, pp. 71, 91), elites draw on sites over which they exercise stable control. School campuses allow groups to link their collective and individual visibilities to the histories of the sites, and to other locations with which the sites are connected (e.g., corporate headquarters, alumni-linked firms).

Second, elite visibilities require the control of how visibilities can be extended spatially, that is, how people and places are made visible elsewhere. Without visibility at a distance, the impacts of events remain concentrated in their immediate proximity, and depend on the memories, narratives, and subsequent actions of participants. Extending the visibility

of events allows others elsewhere to acknowledge the group's existence and use its actions as lessons, inspiration, or reference points. As Butler (2015) says of the Tahrir Square protests:

> The street scenes become politically potent only when and if we have a visual and audible version of the scene communicated in live or proximate time, so that the media does not merely report the scene, but is part of the scene and the action; indeed, the media is the scene or the space in its extended and replicable visual and audible dimensions (p. 91; Gordon 2002, p. 137).

Third, control of appearance requires the capacity to imbue visibilities with temporal depth. At elite schools, the emphasis is not on immediate visibility in "proximate time," but on visibilities that project the setting and its inhabitants into the past and future. Old buildings and campuses, or new ones that evoke older architectures (often named for alumni donors), establish temporal depth, as do webpage narratives recounting institutional histories, and representations of students that recount their biographies and experience. Visibilities of the future, by contrast, are generated through student-authored narratives (in text or audio) describing future plans and ambitions, and through forms of "statistical picturing" (Demeritt 2001) that suggest the "the possibility of economic performance" in the future (Tsing 2000, p. 118) – website charts and statistics showing viewers what graduates can anticipate doing or making in the future (e.g., jobs taken by "2nd Year MBAs," median base salaries and signing bonuses, and so forth).[1]

Finally, a fourth capacity needed to control appearance is that of making individuals visible as extensions or fractal versions of the collective. Elite schools use webpages to interweave student visibilities with their own to produce a kind of gestalt imagery that shows students as both/either individuated actors, and/or representative elements or extensions of the school.

The analysis that follows uses this four-element scheme to examine and contrast the visibility strategies of HBS and Booth.

The Elite Campus as Excludable Site

Controlling elite visibilities and engendering sociability and group cohesion among students requires distinctive settings from which it possible to exclude others. Virtually all major universities in the United States spend

large sums on architectural projects and luxury buildings to attract students (Frank 2004; Martin 2012; Marcus 2012; Kirshstein and Kadamus 2012), but within such environments, elite professional schools pursue their own architectural projects to produce "territorial stratifications" (Brighenti 2012) that define symbolic and physical boundaries and give them independent visibility. Balmer and Wang (2016) thus quote two deans of top-ranked business schools in the UK:

> We have spent a lot of money on this campus: in the past twenty years, millions of pounds. Much of the investment has gone into how the school is visualised. (Associate Dean: Business School F)
>
> The building isn't just a building! It is an architectural statement. (Dean: Business School B) (p. 15)

This idea that architectures send "statements" and control how a school is "visualised" is common both in management (e.g., Berg and Kreiner 1990, pp. 42, 46) and business education discourse. Buildings are said to "symbolize themes, values, or other messages that the business school hopes to convey."[2] The HBS's student center, Spangler Hall (opened 2001), was intended to "rebuild the brand" by resuscitating "the architectural language of the original campus" (Rybczynski 2014). Its architect suggested its "stylistic language" could "express the identity of an institution . . . [its] inspirations and aspirations . . . a system of values" (quoted in Drori et al. 2013, p. 127). These "statements," "values," and "identities" may become palpable to those who inhabit the campus, but prospective students and outsiders must be taught to see them. This is where visibility ensembles play a role.

Harvard Business School

The HBS webpage describes its setting as an "elegant 40-acre campus of classic red-brick buildings, tree-lined walkways, and open, grassy courtyards,"[3] separated from the main Harvard campus by the Charles River. According to its website, HBS is "the only top business school in the country with a residential, self-contained campus" – an "idyllic" setting (Rybczynski 2014) where, according to the school, "the daily interactions of residential life only increase the potential for learning."[4]

> This environment offers students countless opportunities for interaction with one another and with faculty beyond the classroom, easy access to a range of on-campus activities and resources, socializing, and building lasting relationships. . . . MBAs have found not only a community of support, but a close-knit network of friendships that last a lifetime.[5]

Put another way, by concentrating students' time in an exclusive space that creates a field of vision in which they are constantly seeing and being seen by one another, and coordinating their activities through multiple forms of sociality, the campus creates an infrastructure for the production of tight social networks and mutual recognition. Students are physically and socially clustered into "sections" that move through the curriculum together: "section mates take their first-year classes together, sharing cases, classroom facilities, and their own dedicated team of faculty" (ibid). Functioning as a bordered, self-referential, the campus "grounds represent for students not just their weekday environment but also their nighttime and weekend environment" (Anteby 2013, p. 22). At the same time, the school presents itself as indefinitely extensible in space:

> Breakthrough moments can happen any time: in a late-night discussion among peers, during a journey along India's east coast, in service to a neighborhood nonprofit – or simply while relaxing in a Spangler lounge or competing on the tennis court.[6]

The website narratives thus attribute a certain 'disposition' of space to the campus: a "potential agency . . . a tendency, activity, faculty, or property in either beings or objects – a propensity within a context" (Easterling 2014, p. 72). In this case, the propensity is to engender embodied values and feelings, in the words of an HBS faculty member and ethnographer, the ability to produce "a rather cohesive, closed community . . . approaching on foot makes one feel lucky to be part of that community . . . The campus feels like a small town" (Anteby 2013, pp. 18, 19–20).

Booth

Booth, by contrast, is a non-residential school, centered in a single building: The Harper Center, a 415,000 square foot facility, opened in 2004, that includes a cafeteria, game room, classrooms, offices, study areas – all serving as spaces that cluster and concentrate student activity and situate

students in each other's sight lines, as well as structures that can function as "envelopes of space time" (Massey 1999, p. 22) folding distant corporate offices into the Harper – "42 interview rooms where corporate recruiters meet with MBA students and where prospective students are interviewed for admission," and architectural features that index the Center to elements of the main campus's architecture "a six-story tall atrium winter garden rises through the center of the building topped by curved steel beams that form Gothic arches, a signature of the University of Chicago's architecture."[7]

In 2013, the main page of the school website provided a four-minute "virtual tour" of the Harper Center – a sequence of still images, moving from exterior to interior views, with side-text and sound-over, the latter mostly by students, with some faculty and administrative voices, narrating the setting as a space of gaze and inward-focused activity.[8] The presentation shows the viewer how to imagine the center's social and psychological:

> I think when you walk into the Harper Center, the first thing is, you feel inspired. The architecture makes you feel like there's limitless potential.
>
> I really appreciate how much the space makes a difference. Even the most meticulous detail, such as little spaces for nametags, on the desks – so when you're trying to have a discussion about a case with 65 students, you're actually able to look across and know someone's name.
>
> I had lunch a few weeks ago and realized that sitting right next to me was Gary Becker [a Nobel Prize winner economist]. You see his picture and you hear his name and you read about him, but there he is sitting two feet from you in the cafeteria. . . . It's a little humbling as well to sit next to somebody like that.
>
> The Harper Center encourages interaction. I also think it gives them a sense of awe, in how deep the talent pool is in this building [an administrator speaking].
>
> This building really works. It's comfortable, it's fresh. And I think a lot of people walk out of the building, like I do, and you just feel like it's a privilege to be part of the community. . . .

Other slides and comments describe areas in the building used for relaxation (fireplaces and lounge chairs), pool playing, and socialization.

The 2015 version of the webpage lacks this real estate tour, but elaborates on the nature of the Booth "community." One embedded video, "Chicago Booth: Possibility, Opportunity, and Inquiry,"[9] plays

background music over pictures of an elevated train moving out of Chicago's Loop (the city is much more visible on the Booth website than is Boston on the HBS sites), while a woman's voice-over recounts her first train trip to the school. "This is a very special place for those who have an entrepreneurial spirit," a student voice explains. "The faculty has been really amazing in creating an environment that really inspires thought." Another embedded video, "Getting to Know the Booth Community," emphasizes the School's diversity and its contribution to one's individual "skill set": "You're taught how to ask the right questions. You're taught a keener sense of what your strengths are; it's very team based."

Extending Visibilities in Space and Time

The idea of "community" percolates through the images and narratives of both schools' webpages. The HBS site evokes a bucolic, small-town ambiance: the school is represented as an enveloping space, structuring students' off- and on-campus experiences, and intertwining their future paths with those of other members of the section through "close bonds" and tight networks. At Booth, the Harper Center is the center of activity, represented as a space combining work-intensifying interaction with leisure activities to produce "community" in the form of a corporate work collective.

As spaces where one is constantly visible and observed, and academic and leisure activities flow into one another, elite business school campuses encourage students to see themselves and others as members of elite collectives. The campuses are represented not as passive containers, but as actors who mold students into these "community" forms. The visibility ensembles at both schools emphasize the display and appreciation of 'talent,' and the cultivation of one's ability to become part of a "community" or "team" and "contribute" to it. Speaking at the dedication ceremony of an HBS building named for and largely funded by him, Ratan Tata, the now former chair of the Indian conglomerate, Tata Group, provided an exemplary anecdote:

> He recounted that his first weeks on the Harvard campus [in 1975] were "confusing" and he felt "humiliated" by the impressive and overwhelming calibre of his fellow students. . . . "But . . . the confusion sort of disappeared, and you understood the magnitude of what you had learned in a manner

> that I believe is not possible to do in places other than at this business School," he said. "As I look back, those 13 weeks were probably the most important 13 weeks of my life. They transformed me and my perspective." (PTI 2013)

Like the website narratives, this account depicts the campus as an instructional technology teaching students to see others in certain ways (as friends, community, of "overwhelming calibre") and to see themselves as belonging with these others as part of a community. The campus experience Tata describes weaves students' identities into the identity of the school. Put in management terms, it makes students into elements of the schools' visibility ensembles. The concept of the "brand" is useful in making sense of this spacetime extension of schools and students. A brand, in the sense used here, is

> a constellation of signs through which processes of social interaction and communication are mediated and captured and hence transformed into economic value (Arvidsson 2005). Branding, in this sense, involves both the strategic process of image management and the putting to work of sociality and public communication in ways that reproduce or enhance the qualities that the brand image embodies. (Mumby 2016, p. 6)

Instead of generating interchangeable commodities detached from specific sites of production (where your shoes are made, for example, doesn't affect their brand identity) elite school brands are tethered to highly visible campuses and buildings that can provide the "sustained public presence and . . . extensive duration period" (Klingmann 2007, p. 7) required to anchor a brand. The brand derives an "aura" from this architectural anchoring, an "authenticity" and "authority" (Benjamin 1968) that students, as they immerse themselves in these settings, are taught to perceive as adhering in their own bodies and those of their peers.

This insertion of the student into the visibility frame of the school (or the infusion of the school brand into the image projected by the student) involves what Gershon (2014, p. 282) describes as a "recursive movement across scale," as the school assembles landscapes, buildings, histories, faculty, curricula, and students into corporate brand identities, and these identities become elements of the "aspirational projects" of individual students – projects, which, as we see below, are then recycled into the

schools' visibility ensembles. School brands are thus meant to work not only on external audiences of potential employers or clients, but on the students, faculty, alumni, and donors who carry and animate them. As a professor on a task force developing a brand for the management school at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) explained, "'the new branding must feel right, first and foremost, to the students, faculty and alumni. . . . Branding is a way to remind everybody what the place is all about.'"[10]

The brand, in this sense, is a strategy for controlling and extending school visibilities by situating students in school-branded networks or "communities" tethered to the excludable campus. Becoming part of such a network involves attending and obtaining a degree from the school, and being seen and seeing others as embodying essential and excludable qualities associated with the school. The brand is part of the school's pedagogy of recognition and association, and brand management, the maintenance of the school's exchange value, has become a priority for schools as well as students. An article on a well-known website "devoted to the coverage of business schools" notes that Booth has "an executive director of marketing (who is top notch), so you know that the brand of your degree is being advanced and protected" (Byrne 2013).[11] The first chief marketing and communications officer of the HBS (a position created in 2008) explains that the school uses social media to mobilize alumni networks – the school's extended "community" – to extend the school's visibility by creating a kind of exclusive viewing space for graduates:

> We use it extensively to tie together the alumni clubs around the world. In the Executive Education program, you're invited to a LinkedIn group [a social media network restricted to approved members] before you step foot on campus . . . and then those LinkedIn groups stay active long after students leave here . . . [In the MBA program] social media's really going to serve us well in promoting those ideas by leveraging the voices of students and faculty who are directly involved in the innovation. They can tell the story in their own words, and we use it across all the platforms we're on.[12]

The social media networks rest on both the website representations of campuses (as discussed above), and on the relatively recent uses of video and audio to make the schools' current MBA students visible in controlled

ways. As the following sections show, school websites have many other kinds of displays, but the images, voices, and narratives of individual students have now become key components of the schools' visibility ensembles.

Havard Business School

Representations of students on the HBS webpage usually take the form either of video clips, usually about 1-1/2 to 2 minutes long, in which students speak of themselves, their projects, or the school, or as texts with photos, in which students are made visible and narrated as they might be in the corporate press. A page devoted to "The Academic Experience"[13] at HBS has two links. One leads to "The Case Method,"[14] an embedded two-minute video that shows a student explaining her experience with the method. The other link, to "The Field,"[15] contains four embedded videos describing a multi-segment curriculum that uses small workshops to structure students into teams that are intended to "reshape" how they "think, act, and see themselves," then immerses those teams "in emerging markets, requiring them to develop a new product or service concept for global partner organizations around the world," and concludes by requiring the students to synthesize what they have learned "within a real microbusiness they must design and launch themselves."

This image of students as close-knit networks with globally expansive scopes of action also appears elsewhere on the website. The page for "Full-time MBA"[16] makes countries, continents, and business fields (e.g., Africa, Arts and Entertainment, China, Culture & Community, Emerging Markets) visible as objects of entrepreneurial initiative.[17] Each term is linked to four embedded videos showing students explaining their interests and work. A link to "More about MBA" leads to a webpage headed by four embedded videos of students and an alumnus talking about the program.[18]

Perhaps the most striking feature of the visibility ensemble, however, is the use of webpages to portray individual students. Gerhon (2014) has explored students' uses of social media representations to promote themselves on the job market, but the situation in these two elite schools is a more looped process of students using the school brand as part of their self-promotion, while the school uses the students' visibilities to extend the brand. Representations of students, for example, generate temporal depth by providing snapshots of individual students' corporate

biographies – a visible "pedigree" (Rivera 2011) in the form of a list of the student's "Home Region," "Undergraduate Education," "Previous Experience," and "HBS Activities." In one of these, besides a photo of the student, a text written in the third person portrays the HBS as a nodal institution connecting students' present interests to their future activities: the student is quoted as describing how the HBS helps her pursue "disruptive technologies in emerging markets" (Africa):

> "I wanted a broader understanding of how to do business, of how to lead companies," she says. Both Stanford and Harvard appealed to the entrepreneur in her, and both accepted her application. While the choice was difficult, HBS had the edge. "The international network at HBS was appealing to me."

The representation of the school as part of an international "network," visible through the social media groups that function as vehicles for the school's brand, is coupled to a campus-based representation of HBS as committed to "entrepreneurship."

> When I visited the campus, I saw a true commitment to make this a great place for people interested in entrepreneurship with a tech focus.[19]

The concept of "entrepreneurship" functions here as both a way of portraying oneself as an independent actor, with an individuating ambition, and as an identifying marker of the school brand, which the student's narrative makes visible (in one sense) to a global audience, even as it informs the reader/viewer that the school's "true commitment" is visible to those physically present on the campus.

A similar summary of a 2013 MBA links her international aspirations to the campus experience. While working for a major transnational consulting firm, she had become interested in the:

> "immense potential for innovation" in growth sectors like health care and, just as importantly, awakened a desire to work on products that "target the 'bottom of the pyramid.'" . . . "HBS does train you in the 'hard' skills of how to think about financial modeling, strategy, and marketing," G- says. "But the greater part of our education is in the 'soft' skills, the essential ingredients of leadership such as motivating teams, managing change and working across different cultural contexts. In a world where people are becoming more connected than ever before, these skills become more important each

> day." Fellow students, she continues, become "colleagues" in tightly-linked networks: "You develop close bonds with each of your colleagues, you recognize each of them for their uniqueness. . . . You make friends you know you can call at three in the morning for help."[20]

HBS, in this account, is both a model and a prefigurative space of corporate practice – immersive, stretching across all hours of the day, a determinant of identity and association: You become part of the HBS "team." In this context, the school brand can be foregrounded in some situations, that is, students can claim its attributes or claim to have absorbed its "approach" or "soft skill" curriculum, but it can also be pushed into the background in other situations, allowing students to represent themselves in terms of distinctive ambitions and biographies. Students can thereby negotiate a characteristic neoliberal quandary of making oneself visible as both an organizationally embedded team member, and at the same time visible a flexible worker capable of integrating oneself into whatever organization or collective one might come to work for: "flexible enough to appeal to employers, but stable and distinctive enough to be recognizable and coherent" (Gershon 2014, p. 290).

Booth

At Booth, a link to the "Full-Time MBA" page connects the viewer to a page of "student profiles" that clusters students into a single array. The page contains photos of 25 students, and each photo is different in size and shape: some depict students in classrooms, others elsewhere in or out of Harper; some show students in interaction, others portray them alone; in some, students face the camera, in others, they seem unaware of it.[21]

Each photo is also a hyperlink to an individual page devoted to that student.[22] There, the reader finds the student's image, captioned by a brief resume and text listing his or her hometown, post-secondary education history, work before coming to Booth, internships, post-MBA goals, student groups joined, and so on.[23]

One student explains that Booth will help her reach a "long-term goal, 5 of 6 years down the road . . . to be a key leader education in closing the achievement gap in our country." She describes the Booth

faculty as "beyond impressive," and gives viewers a way to see other students and the school:

> Booth students, the more you get to know them, the more you realize how incredibly talented they are, both in an academic setting and outside the classroom. We definitely have a very down to earth culture.[24]

Such descriptions flow into the Booth's iteration of the "community" trope. A video with student voice-over explains that hundreds of Booth students live in the same downtown high-rise.[25] Another link takes the viewer to a page on the "Chicago Approach"[26]: a brand visibility that unites school and students in a kind of work orientation and argumentative style:

> Our community is intensely collaborative. At Booth, ideas compete and people collaborate. We have a culture where we value people who are curious. Whether presented by a classmate or a professor, every idea is examined with a belief in data over dogma. . . . Ideas are authentically and rigorously tested and refined through honest and thoughtful discussion and discourse. There are no wrong questions, except the ones that go unasked. . . . The Chicago Approach becomes a signature of our alumni's personal brands. It prepares you to face any business challenge, at any company, in any industry, and at any point in your career.

The audio narratives describe the mobile, flexible, individuated students who can engage in collaboration through the expression and testing of "ideas" with data: Each student acquires a "personal brand" into which is woven such features of program's brand – "the Chicago approach."

Coupled to the "community" trope that runs through the websites, the representations of individual students on the two webpages make the schools visible as both sites of concentrated sociality, and as global and multi-generational networks of individuals united through the school's brand "signature." Distinctive school pedagogies or curricula – Harvard's "case method" or the "Chicago approach" – are "wrapped up in the person" (Stephen 2007; Law 1986) and incorporated into students' personal brands. Like a gestalt image (Munro 2001, pp. 7-8), the integration of students' visibilities into the visibility ensembles of the schools produces either/or pictures of unity and exclusion, individuality and collectivity.

Conclusion

One of many questions that remains is whether those pictures are school-specific. Students speak of being impressed, humbled by faculty and peers, of learning to see themselves as members of a "community" composed of "incredible" "talented" individuals; of cohorts defined by their "uniqueness," and, as Ratan Tata puts it, their "impressive and overwhelming caliber." But do those ways of seeing apply to students from other elite business schools, or only to graduates of one's own school? Looking at school websites cannot answer such questions, but some of the material available on various blogs and websites suggests that the relative qualities of schools and values of school "brands" are hotly debated by alumni.[27] The graduates of elite schools such as HBS and Booth are visible not as equal members of a single class, but perhaps as eligible candidates, albeit differently "pedigreed" (Rivera 2011), for participation in elite projects. The question then is how school-tethered ways of seeing are brought into focus with the regimes of visibility promoted in various worksites, social settings, and in popular culture.

These questions flow into other open issues: how, for example, are students' self-representations on social media sites such as LinkedIin, Facebook, or Twitter articulated with the representations they lend to the school websites? How do the students and alumni linked through such platforms use them to make themselves visible in strategic ways? How do such practices change as the contours and spatial and temporal forms of elite networks change? How indeed, do the processes visible in the web-pages play out in embodied practice: how are websites used or read by students and prospective students, and how are they articulated with the ways of seeing produced as students move through and beyond school campuses. The analysis above is perhaps best seen as an effort to raise such questions by making issues of visibility more visible.

Notes

1. http://hbs.me/2bNUWdg
2. http://bit.ly/2bGOGq8
3. http://hbs.me/1DXvoS1
4. http://hbs.me/1DXvoS1
5. http://hbs.me/2c4mcrk
6. http://hbs.me/2bGN2EO
7. http://bit.ly/2bIGUcg

8. This slide-show was a key link from the school's webpage in the summer of 2013. By 2015 there were no links to it, though at the date of this writing (November 2016) it remains accessible at URL http://www.chicagobooth.edu/phototour/hydepark/index.aspx.
9. http://bit.ly/2boTkLM
10. http://bit.ly/2bPfSTO
11. http://poetsandquants.com/2013/12/09/where-would-you-go-wharton-or-booth/
12. http://on.mash.to/2bgErrV; see also Blackman, 2011.
13. http://hbs.me/1eNgeEU
14. http://hbs.me/14pjdSw
15. http://hbs.me/1uS1euy
16. http://hbs.me/13qh4FB
17. http://hbs.me/13qh4FB
18. http://hbs.me/13qh4FB
19. http://hbs.me/2bPOPbK
20. http://hbs.me/2bcTOOV
21. http://bit.ly/2bxZHsI
22. http://bit.ly/1k2CAY2
23. Student testimonials are common at other elite business schools as well, such as MIT (http://bit.ly/2bxZ16Z) and the Wharton School (http://bit.ly/2bHMPyZ).
24. http://bit.ly/2bceWYO
25. "What Makes Booth Booth" – http://bit.ly/2bKir8j
26. http://bit.ly/
27. Note the "comments" for example, generated by this post on a MBA-focused website: http://bit.ly/22uiHLr

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CHAPTER 12

How to Make it in(to) Management: The Role of Business Education in Changing Career Pathways in Germany

Alexander Mitterle

Introduction

In August 2016, the German weekly news magazine *DER SPIEGEL* reported that the CEOs of the top 30 German companies in the DAX (German stock index) had educational backgrounds in "business – and then nothing."[1] This suggests that, as in the United States and other Anglo-Saxon countries, the business degree has become the dominant route to the upper echelons of German companies. It implies that there has been a considerable change to the dominance of German engineers, which Germany became famous for after the Second World War.

However, on closer examination, the top 30 companies might not be the best indicators of such a development. There are considerable differences between the US and Germany. While the Master of Business Administration (MBA) has been an unparalleled success in the US, it barely plays a role in Germany (cf. Moon 2002; Hartmann 2015).

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Rather, a Bachelor of Science and a consecutive Master of Science in business and/or economics are the preferred degrees in Germany; this resembles the traditional specialist diploma in business (*Diplom-Kaufmann*). Also the institution that granted the degree plays a far more important role in the US (Rivera 2015) than in the German labor market (Hartmann 2009). In fact, German universities do not differ considerably in status with regard to labor market opportunities. For a long time, due to regulatory restrictions and specific historical developments, a "fictious equality" among German universities was assumed (Kreckel 2010).

This chapter describes the specific national conditions in higher education with regard to career pathways to high status positions in Germany. It accounts for changes in disciplines that have favored the rise of business administration. It concentrates on how universities affect these pathways by mapping out the interrelationship between content and structure of business degree programs as well as the implementation of new organizational arrangements in universities.

I first discuss the theoretical reasoning that lies behind higher education as a co-constructor of labor market structure. I will also give a short overview of the data and methods applied in this article. Second, I briefly outline the historical structural development of the relationship between higher education and high-status positions in Germany and discuss the changes that have taken place in relation to management positions. Third, I draw on empirical data to show how large scale reforms in higher education might be contributing to these changes. Finally, I will turn to organizational arrangements that foster a tighter coupling between education and the labor market. I provide a close-up look at the career service of an ambitious private university and show how it acts as a nodal point for both the way degrees are taught and for the recruitment patterns of companies. I conclude by discussing the limits and potential of a perspective that relates organizational, structural and disciplinary changes in business education to changes in the world of work.

The Role of Higher Education in the Production of Elite Careers

In the extensive literature on transitions from education to work, only a few scholars have investigated how education is involved in co-constructing and legitimizing certain organizational structures and employment

positions – especially for high-status positions. This is due to the relative lack of importance which elite studies attribute to what students learn in universities (see Introduction). Although studies in the sociology of professions indeed recognize the relevance of university education to professional mindsets, they often frame such mindsets as ideologies of social closure to obtain specific high-status employment (Collins 1987). Organizational changes and productive aspects of knowledge acquired at university have frequently been sidelined.

The impact of education on company structures was empirically investigated by Lutz (1976), Sorge (1979) and Maurice et al. (1980) in comparative studies among similar companies in Germany, the UK, and France during the 1970s. These studies showed that employees' "acquisition of competence" – whether practical or theoretical – is "intimately involved" in the way organizations structure their employment positions (Maurice et al. 1980, p.80; cf.; Sorge 1991). They argued that the hierarchical structure in companies corresponds to the respective sectoral hierarchies produced in the education system. These studies thus validate the role of education in structuring occupational pathways. While each system operates autonomously, the relationship between education and employment can be described as one of "mutual dependency and inducement" (transl. Lutz 1976, p.155,). A student's choice of degree and educational socialization are hence to some extent independent of available occupational positions in the labor market, even though such students structurally aim to fill such positions. The diffuse set of cognitive skills and competencies obtained at university are abstract enough to allow for adequate job adjustment and thereby successively reshape individual positions in organizations (Stock 2016; cf. Meyer 1977). Indeed, Baker (2009) has argued that the very nature of work in the US is changing due to the growing number of formally educated people in companies. In order to assess the relative chance of a graduate in a given discipline of reaching a management position, the interrelationship between a vacancy, the interpretation of that vacancy by the predecessor, the objective manpower need as defined by the organization, and the qualifications as signaled by those applying for the position need to be taken into account.

Under these circumstances, the correspondence between education and occupational positions can be transformed into a linear career pathway based on the content learned in a degree program. Rather than co-creating a specific disciplinary knowledge that legitimates itself by addressing a specific societal need (information, health, justice, 'fitting in', belief, etc.),

as is the case for professions, a degree program can also legitimate procedural competencies that improve the organization of work activity (including that of professions). Consequently, such credentials target and legitimize organizational positions that are situated above the work activity they aim to improve. Notions that describe these procedural competencies, such as 'administration' and 'management,' are thus dominant among such credentials. They rationalize, usurp, and resolve the conflict between the equal status of professionals and the thereof independent organizational hierarchies in companies (cf. Collins 1987).[2] The short-term practice-oriented Master of Business Administration (MBA) is the most prominent of such degrees. Both its extraordinary expansion and success in the Anglo-Saxon world and the impact of the knowledge it transfers have been widely studied and described (Moon 2002; Khurana 2007; Byrkjeflot and Fligstein 1996; Grey 1999; Byrkjeflot 2003; Whitley 1995; Mintzberg 2004) and have considerably informed the debate on changes in the German education system (cf. Freye 2009; Pohlmann et al. 2014; Byrkjeflot 1998). Several scholars have argued that there is a certain causality between expansion and success as "the expanded employment of people trained as generalized managers . . . directly increases the subsequent diffusion of new ideologies of expanded management" (Meyer 2002, p.41; cf.; Engwall 2007, p.9). In a similar way to the social closure described in the sociology of professions, procedural management competencies lead to recruitment patterns among those using similar "mind maps" (cf. Byrkjeflot 1998). This development is attached to the global diffusion of a specific organizational model, namely that of the American business school (Hedmo et al. 2005; Sahlin-Anderson and Engwall 2002).

Such an argument aligns the success of a specific degree – beyond its inherent knowledge base – to the organizational rationalization of a career pathway. In other words, organizational theory, which considers the university as a (non-)manageable entity, comes together with a theory of professions, which generally regards the university as a producer of and source of legitimacy for professional knowledge to investigate the production of specific high-status or elite career tracks.

The remarkable alliance between the organization and a specific occupation, as described by Engwall and Meyer, is interesting because it is built on a specific analytical logic with regard to stratification. In the study of elites, pathways are mostly discussed in terms of status differences between universities (Bloch and Mitterle 2017). They focus

on vertical differences in graduates' educational pathways that are not directly connected to the taught content but to the organizational arrangements and the ways these arrangements transmit prestige from a university. Other than occupational stratification, which evolves from graduates' success in establishing their knowledge-driven functionality to society vis-à-vis other occupations and professions, organizational stratification depends on the spatio-temporal inscription of superiority (and the perception thereof) into a specific place of study. This has two consequences; first, it means that universities need to establish an organizational identity beyond the degree level in order to transfer their status to graduates, irrespective of their choice of discipline (cf. Stock 2015). To position themselves vertically, universities have to see themselves as organizations rather than as loosely coupled academic units and they must aim to act accordingly. As organizations, they can rationalize the functions of the university and aim to establish a stronger alignment between education and employment. With regard to career pathways, they establish arrangements that distinguish pathways through and beyond the university, improve learning-outcomes, help to build alumni networks, foster careers, incubate start-ups, and so on. They can also transcend non-career related success (research output, Nobel prizes, patents, media presence, rankings, etc.) to the organization or develop a unique "organizational saga" (Clark 1972).

The second consequence relates to the specific organizational identity of a discipline as evident in the business school model. If a business school draws on specific organizational arrangements to alleviate the role of credentialized managers vis-à-vis other academic occupations, it must either be able to accumulate its own resources separate of the university's or be able to defend an unequal resource distribution towards its own students against other faculties. Moreover, stratification through specific organizational arrangements is quite different in character to knowledge-driven stratification. While an engineer can defend his position precisely because his knowledge base differs from that of a lawyer or a business graduate, successful organizational arrangements are copied and diffused among similar organizations and on all levels (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The establishment of a unique organizational arrangement that is independent of a specific degree is thus likely to be copied by other universities; it thereby becomes a feature of the organization rather than of an individual school.

I will address the specific aspects related to apprehending the productive force of education both through occupation-related knowledge and in education's ability to build exclusive career pathways. I will concentrate on business administration and contrast it with engineering using quantitative data. The argument will focus on the bureaucratic and labor markets rather than on traditional professions.

Data, Case Study and Methodology

The chapter draws on different sources of data to highlight the relationship between education and the employment market in relation to business administration in Germany. The respective relationship between graduates of different disciplinary fields is based on annual publications of the German Bureau of Statistics. For reasons of comparability I equate the old degrees and *state exams* of polytechnics and universities to today master degrees.[3] First I draw on an in-depth field analysis of Master's degrees in business administration at universities. The data is based on the degree program search engine of the German Rectors' Conference (www.hochschulkompass.de) and the subsequent collection of further data via the websites of institutes and faculties included in the search engine in Nov 2014. The degree programs were then aligned to the degrees as listed in the degree guides for the winter semester in 2005/2006. Data on career centers for business administration were drawn from the websites of the business faculties (N=61) and faculties that offer degrees in mechanical engineering (N=53) in August 2016. The latter were chosen as it was assumed that mechanical engineering and the faculties which offer this study program were most likely to be targeted by large production companies.

The case study of a career center at a private business school is one of seven case studies (partly ongoing) which investigate vertical differentiation among prestigious degrees at both public and private universities in Germany in the classification scheme of law, social sciences, and business administration (cf. Bloch et al. 2014). In discussing specific career paths at the above-mentioned private university, I draw on 22 semi-structured in-depth interviews (ranging from 43 to 112 minutes) with students, professors, and members of the university administration. I also draw on observations of selected day-to-day activities, career events and courses, as well as commencement and graduation ceremonies. The interviews were coded regarding career-related activities using MAXQDA.

Academic Career Pathways in Germany: Past and Present

In Germany, two distinct routes to obtaining high-status employment have evolved and these date back to the nineteenth century. One route has a long history of university education; the second route only gradually became incorporated into the university. The first route comprises the classical degree programs of (protestant) theology, law, education, medicine, and pharmacy (cf. Locke 1989, p. 4; p.56). These studies terminated in state exams and led into reputable positions in government, law, health and society. They followed the Humboldtian model of teaching and research, and fostered a common culture around what has become known as *Bildung*. While there were differences in research status among universities in the nineteenth century, those who graduated from a university were generally considered an educational elite. As the number of students was small, the German research university was seen as an elite institution *per se* and despite the growth in student numbers, this model has persisted until today (Stock 2011).

The second route originated outside universities and comprised merchants, entrepreneurs, and engineers. This is a significant group in terms of elite pathways as prestigious employment opportunities in Germany were traditionally clustered around the production industry. Rather than being lead by financial and service industries, Germany has always been, and to a certain degree still is, dominated by large steel and chemistry conglomerates (such as Thyssen-Krupp and BASF), technical companies (such as SIEMENS), and of course, major car producers (such as Daimler-Benz, Volkswagen, and BMW). There are also a large number of medium-sized engineering and technical companies with considerable dominance in their respective markets. Industry accounts for about a quarter of Germany's overall economic output (Locke 1989; Freye 2009).

German industry had an aversion to generalist management knowledge; it believed in job performance (*Leistung*) and specialist knowledge (*Fachkenntnisse*) rather than academic credentials (Lawrence 1980). This is rooted in the specific history of engineering education and *Betriebswirtschaftslehre* (business administration or business management) in Germany, both of which only became university disciplines in the early twentieth century. While from the beginning, engineering was very practice oriented and maintained strong ties to industry, business administration was not. Originating at *Handelshochschulen* (commercial colleges), which were closely connected to local merchant chambers, over the course of the twentieth century, business administration was transformed into a

rigorous academic discipline, which taught business knowledge as a logic of thinking, rather than the practicalities of how to succeed in business (cf. Byrkjeflot 1998). Abstract sub-disciplines, such as accounting, were common while hands-on studies, such as operational research, were less prevalent. The first chair for entrepreneurship was not established until 1998 and this was through a private initiative and, not surprisingly, at a private university (Locke and Schöne 2004; cf. Nicolai 2004). Thus, the field of engineering, which had maintained its close relationship with industry throughout the twentieth century, viewed 'management' as a position in a company rather than as education that could be obtained.

This explains why for a long time the majority of seats on governing boards in the German production industry were occupied by engineers and natural scientists (Faust 2002; Freye 2009; c.f. Hartmann 2015). The recruitment pattern for these positions was framed as part of a corporatist market model which has become known as *Deutschland AG* (Germany Inc; Streeck 2009). This post-war relationship between the state, company, and union representatives was unique in that it gave union-representatives well-paid positions on governing boards and built on mutual bargaining processes over collective labor agreements (*Flächentarifverträge)*. Reaching a top management position in such companies relied on an internal market within the core company. An employee remained in one company – often within a specific specialization – and worked his way up the ranks (Faust 2002). German company leaders were therefore not generalists but (technical) specialists who acquired management knowledge while moving into higher positions (Freye 2009; cf. Locke and Schöne 2004). Industrial elites also held leading positions for long durations of time and overwhelmingly left these positions on good terms in comparison to countries such as the US, where industry is management dominated. In Germany, significant parts of production companies were owned by family dynasties, which shielded them against hostile takeovers and diversified shareholder influence. Companies and governing boards also maintained strong connections with large German banks, which secured sufficient loans for market engagement. The high level of regulation and the strong ties to state institutions also lead to lawyers occupying high positions alongside the engineers.

Since then, the *Deutschland AG* has experienced a considerable transformation, which has led to a disentanglement of the close connection between the state, banks, and companies, as well as to the privatization of larger public service companies, and towards a stronger influence of shareholder interests (Streeck 2009). There are several studies that indicate that the background of

middle and top managers in the industry has changed. Indeed, engineers and natural scientists – with a short intermezzo of leaders with a business background in the 1990s – still hold the majority of management positions among the top 50 chairs, respectively the top 100 boards of DAX companies (Freye 2009; Hartmann 2015). Bluhm et al. (2014) report a similar engineering dominance among their survey participants from small and medium-sized companies.[4] However, company leaders and governing board members with a business administration/economics background dominate the banking, insurance, and service sectors, which were privatized in the 1990s (Hartmann 2015). The main change is in the relative decline of lawyers in top positions.

The structure of career paths has also changed. Top managers in industry are still predominantly recruited from within companies. Yet, the international expansion of the German production industry has expanded the recruiting pool beyond the core company and includes managers from subsidiaries. In addition, periods of service in top management have decreased with a larger number of managers leaving their positions following criticism from shareholders for poor performance (Freye 2009). Among small and middle-sized companies in-house careers – the slow upward progression within companies – have been confronted with an increasing number of what Bluhm et al. (2014, p. 91) call "parachute careers": the assignment of executive positions to managers who have not worked in the company before has become the "predominant path to the top" for their research sample. Bluhm et al. also reported that cross-sector degrees have become more common (see also Hartmann 2015). Even though engineering degrees still seem to be dominant among managers in the production industry, the relative decline of lawyers in favor of graduates with business degrees in other sectors, the increase in shareholder value models, and the structural changes to management careers indicate that the importance of formalized and general management knowledge for management positions is increasing (cf. also Weitzel et al. 2015, 1.10).

Higher Education and the Structuring of Career Pathways

Structural Developments

How does higher education complement and structure this development? As in other OECD countries, Germany has experienced educational

expansion since the 1960s, however, the increase in student numbers has been moderate compared to other Western countries. As late as 2000 only a third of an age cohort enrolled at universities. While graduates generally transitioned quickly into well-paid positions suited to their education (Reisz and Stock 2013; Schomburg und Teichler 2011; Rohrbach-Schmidt and Tiemann 2016), their small numbers affirmed the role of practice-oriented and apprentice-model qualifications; this consequentially confirmed the importance of expert technical knowledge for companies. However, unemployment rates for those lacking a higher education degree have risen steadily in recent decades. This development has been accompanied by a relative shift in disciplinary background among higher education graduates. While the overall number of engineering graduates has generally increased since the 1970s, its relative numbers have declined. Graduates in business administration/economics on the other hand have risen disproportionally,[5] and the number of law graduates has remained stable on a low level (see Figure 12.1). The graduate numbers to a certain degree reflect the changes to the labor market as discussed above. They confirm the relative importance of business administration for career progression vis-à-vis the other disciplinary backgrounds.

Since the early 2000s, overall freshman numbers have been increasing rapidly accounting for around 58% of the relevant age cohort in 2015 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2016). This expansion went hand in hand with considerable structural reforms in the governance of universities, the funding system, and degree structures. Thus, not only did student numbers increase, but the way in which higher education was provided, distributed, and presented also changed. These developments are likely to have severe consequences for both the university sector and the labor market. While it is still too early to determine these changes as a whole, we can establish how higher education is changing and how this might affect the employment sector. Regarding pathways to employment, there are two ways in which the labor market is impacted by changes in education. They are induced through the 'Bologna Process' and concern the form and the content of degree programs. The Bologna Process is a pan-European reform project which was introduced in the early 2000s; it aims to ensure that degrees from different European countries are comparable and compatible (Witte 2008). In contrast to traditional German degree programs it concentrates on creating structural coherence rather than content-related coherence.

One of the reasons for the lack of strong vertical differentiation in German higher education was the homogeneity of degrees within a discipline.

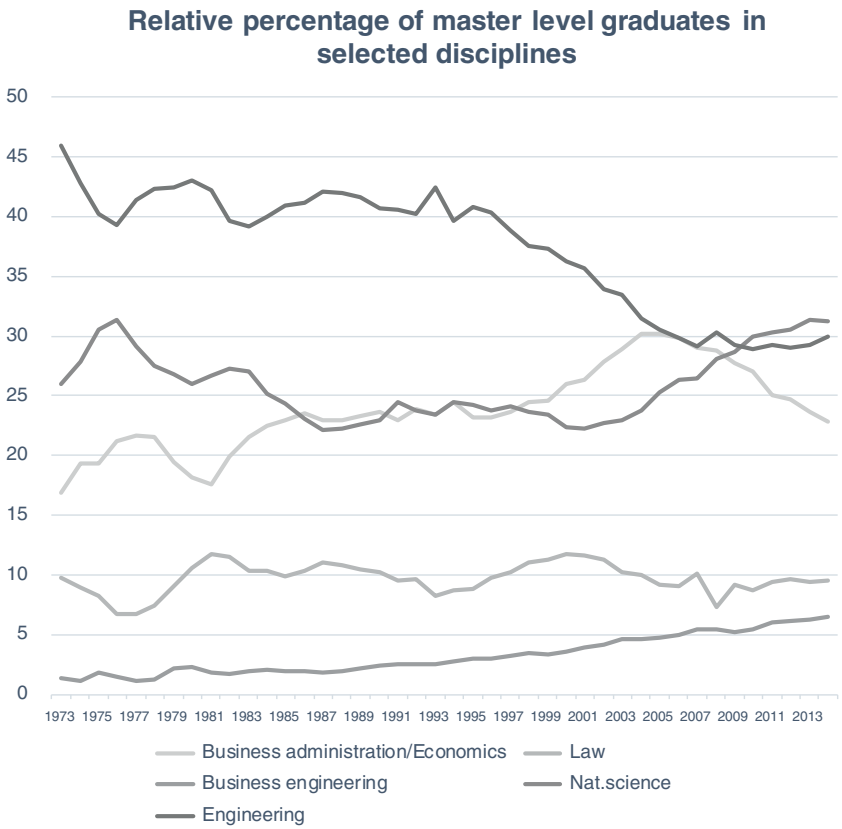

Figure 12.1 Relative number of graduates at Master's-level (Diplom, Magister, Diplom (FH), Staatsexamen (state exams), Master's) in engineering, business engineering, business administration/economics and law; obtained from Tab 2.9 Statistisches Bundesamt, Studierende an Hochschulen, Fachserie 11 Reihe 4.1; calculations by author

Curricula were regulated through framework examination regulations (*Rahmenprüfungsordnungen*), which ensured a common core for relevant disciplinary topics across Germany and thus instituted knowledge milieus among graduates with the same degree (cf. Immer 2013). While these frameworks provided sufficient leeway for academic teaching, they were detailed enough to hamper differentiation and were connected to a national admission system that determined student intake numbers per discipline and thus

reinforced similarity (c.f. Mitterle et al. 2015; Stock in this volume). With the harmonization of degree structures in Europe, both the old diploma programs and the framework examination were abolished. Instead, universities introduced a two-tier system of Bachelor's and Master's degrees. The curriculum of these degrees was developed from the bottom up in institutes and faculties. Quality assurance shifted from a content-related coherence to procedural aspects regarding student work-load and employability (Kaufmann 2011). In analyzing changes in degree title between 1999 and 2011, Marco Schröder found that this re-drafting led to a "radical differentiation" among first degree-programs across all disciplines, where differentiation increased by more than 1,400 percent (from 180 to 3,059 degree programs with different titles) (transl., Schröder 2015, pp. 98–100). We found similar results for business degrees at Master's level (cf. Mitterle 2016); of 140 university Master's programs in business administration offered in 2014, only 36% had existed under the same title in 2005. As discussed earlier, the old term *Betriebswirtschaftslehre* (business administration) suggested an academic distance from practical management and graduating students were awarded the title *Diplom-Kaufman/-frau* (businessman/-woman or merchant). This title does not allude to a specific position in an organization (management) but rather to an abstract work category. On the contrary, degree programs today range from "health management" to "educational management" and "leadership", thus re-framing their degrees with regard to specific business fields and job positions. Among the analyzed Master's degrees in 2014 every fourth degree had an English denomination that explicitly carried the term management. The programs thus allude to management as a research-based knowledge of managerial skills. Graduates from business faculties are quite literally'masters' of such management practices/knowledge. Beyond the performative effects, this of course reveals nothing about the content taught: a Bachelor's in economics (with a strong mathematical focus) is often a prerequisite for Master's programs referring to the German tradition of an 'expert culture.' Nevertheless the use of the English term 'management' carries with it the same claim to business leadership that has developed in the Anglo-Saxon world. This development goes hand in hand with an increase in the number of Executive and MBA programs for business leaders.

Organizational Change and Career Services

Even though – or perhaps because – degree titles have become more oriented towards employment positions, they can also make it more

difficult for companies to recruit suitable graduates. Whilst under the old framework regulation, similar degree titles were easy to compare, degree programs now have a wide range of titles. This can put pressure on faculties to establish differentiation via prestige (vertically) rather than via content (horizontally). New Public-Management reforms have provided universities with more decision-making competence regarding professorial denominations (e.g. Schimank and Lange 2010) and admission policies, as well as governance and teaching structure (Mitterle et al. 2015). Universities and faculties can engage in the differentiation of degree programs without the need to consult government ministries (Bloch et al. 2014).

One key organizational arrangement that has been developed in order to influence the relationship between university degree programs and the employment market is the so-called career service. These units have a rather short history in German higher education. As graduate employment was generally high and the number of graduates relatively low compared to other OECD countries, universities usually saw no direct need to engage in measures to improve the employment chances of their graduates. This changed gradually in the 1980s. The first initiatives developed in disciplines where graduates were expected to experience difficulties finding suitable employment, namely social sciences and humanities. The structure of such initiatives varied, ranging from student initiatives to cooperations with the federal employment office. On a broad scale, however, there was little support for job-seeking graduates up until the mid-1990s (Jörns 2002, p.180). Today, nearly every university has a career service; in 2016, 95 percent of public research universities that offered business degrees had a career center in place. With relatively small staff numbers, such career centers cover whole universities. It is therefore questionable whether they can establish privileged career pathways into companies that benefit graduates of specific degree programs. At faculty level, however, the situation differs. Compared to other disciplines, business faculties have most noticeably established organizational career arrangements. They range from alumni groups and job portals to for-profit cooperations with companies, and they differ in number and form of organization. Thirty percent of business faculties – among them several highly-ranked programs offering management degrees – had an affiliated service entity, which organized meetings between students and companies; engineering faculties, in comparison, had none.[6] These service centers, however, also present a structural problem: several are organized as (semi-)autonomous

foundations with professors as board or advisory members in order to bypass the funding restrictions of public universities. At some faculties, these structures are rather new and have only recently employed personnel to build relationships between employers and students.

Private universities in Germany started to establish such ties earlier. They are dominated by business degrees and are mostly mono-disciplinary. Career services in such institutions are thus simultaneously university-wide and focused on a specific discipline. In addition, private universities are less restricted by state regulation; they are, to a large extent, financed by the tuition fees they charge and thus have to react to educational changes more rapidly.[7] There is a small group of non-profit universities in this sector, which aims to provide high-profile, competitive education, and which is backed by robust private foundations. These universities aspire to gain recognition both for excellent teaching and for research (cf. Mitterle and Stock 2015; Mitterle 2016). Organizational structures that have evolved on a global level – namely the so-called US business school model (cf. Soulas in this volume) – are thus more willingly imitated. The career services of top private universities usually employ at least one full-time member of staff and combine alumni management, career placements, and company events. They can thus be seen as promoters of a rationalized pathway to the labor market; they construct a privileged pathway from a discipline to well-paid, prestigious employment opportunities.

The Construction of Pathways Through Career Services at Private Business Schools

Unlike in France or the UK, in Germany, there have not been any distinct career pathways to top-notch companies via a small group of universities. Although there are certainly economic and societal elites in Germany there is so far no obvious pathway through a given university or group of universities (Hartmann 2009).

Private university career services thus follow a step-by-step processes to build strong ties with desirable employers, rather than draw on tight elite pathways. I will highlight this process by drawing on the case study of a career service at the business school of one private university. At the investigated university the career service functions as a nodal point for external career-related relations and plays an important role for the

occupation-oriented business degrees. As part of their studies, business students have to gain work experience during at least two obligatory internships. A substantial part of what it means to study is thus assigned to tasks outside the organization's walls (cf. Nespor 1994). The role of the career service is to turn this external experience, which students from other universities potentially have equal access to, into an internal access route. When Jan Nespor (2014) refers to the building of such pathways as "institutional wormholes," he means that through a process of field isolation, pathways into specific job positions create a shortcut in timespace: it becomes quicker and easier for university students to access desirable jobs. In order to achieve this, the career service aims to establish ties with human resource units in various companies.

The career service begins by providing guidance to students as is evident from the following quotes:

> The offer was, even before the program had started, that you could send them your CV, your cover letter. They give you feedback on how to change things or what you could improve. They also have a [university] template for your CV, which you should use, but you don't have to. I just used that, adjusted my whole CV to that. (student 1, 312–317)[8]

The career service hands out fact sheets, proofreads applications – especially for international students, who are not accustomed to the German employment market – it holds mock and case interviews, and can recommend the best ways to approach companies for internships. While the career service does not consider itself to be a filter, it nevertheless aims to channel students into a harmonized university pathway, with their consent, and for their own benefit. This contradiction is illustrated in the way the quoted student maneuvers between "should" and "don't have to". The career service has a considerable interest in making sure that students from the university make a good impression outside the university, as shown in this quote regarding the quality of graduates:

> So far, those who go out really have a good reputation, the companies are practically queuing outside [to take them]. . . . many say 'we want your people.' They get offers based on their graduation yearbook, . . . and if a company has a bad selection twice and takes in people that are really not

> good, then they will stop employing them [our graduates]. Doing this would harm the next [cohort]." (Administration 2, 565–570)

This quote illustrates the difference to an individualistic career track at a public university. A large cohort of public university graduates usually includes both high and low achievers. Employment in larger firms thus follows an individualistic assessment rather than one that is based on the name of the school or the reputation of a degree program. In order to single out their graduates in labor market competition, the interested university has to turn this relationship around. Step by step, the individual assessment of the company has to be replaced by procedures that fulfill the companies' selection criteria. A "bad selection" has to be filtered out, either at the admission gates or by counseling students on appropriate behavior. Even though the career service seems to be successful, these pathways are still a rather newly trodden track. Focusing on relationships with specific companies is a circular process: students apply for obligatory internships and after they are successfully placed, they function as 'grappling hooks' for the career service to draw the potential employers nearer to the university:

> The first employees, the first interns [in a specialized consulting company] came from [this business school] . . . about a year and a half ago. They were very happy with them and said 'Okay, if the three we recruited were that good' – they were all completely different guys, who work in totally different sectors – 'then maybe the others aren't that bad either.' So they set their focus on it [the degree program]. . . . They offered a'hands-on' project . . . they flew the participants to Shanghai to a customer to show them: this is extraordinary. And they told me, in the end that cost them around 6,000 euros, for those four people; but those guys were happy – two of them applied and they got the job. Just for that, it was worth it. (student 2, 296–301, 330–335)

The above quote shows that companies profit as well. While the recruited students and employees were all "completely different guys," their quality signifies the university left a mark. Companies thus use 'grappling hooks' as well. If a university maintains a certain level of quality among the students they send, the company can minimize the costs and efforts they put into recruitment (cf. Rivera 2015).

For the career service, internships provide an opportunity to get first access to industry. They provide information about the companies which students aim to be placed in and about the students' priorities. The career service then follows up on these tracks and establishes relations with the relevant representatives of these companies:

> The main interface is the H[uman] R[esources] departments [with bigger companies]. In smaller enterprises, we have the director, and in several cases, alumni. They are our first contacts, our door-openers, . . . with whom we keep in contact, parallel to our contact with decision makers. This is because with HR departments, you often have the problem that there is a high fluctuation. So in order to not constantly be starting from scratch, we maintain multiple tracks. (Career Service,19–27)

The career service relies on several parallel grappling hooks while building up pathways. These hooks are of varying quality. While individual students' positive internship experiences may convince directors to take on further students, they are rather unstable. This also applies to HR departments, which at some point may show an interest in the university, however, if there is a change in personnel, or the link has not been properly maintained by the career service, it may be lost. The experience of one student shows this problematic:

> I just got the mail [addresses from the career service] . . . [of] all the people and alumni who are working. they gave me the emails of the director of the company, and when I emailed the director, I didn't get a reply from him . . . I don't know how it is in Germany . . . I'm just a student from [this business school] and I just emailed the director of a company saying: 'Hi I'm from your university, can you get me a job?' So I don't know how – in [my home country] that would never work. So I don't know if it's the same in Germany. For a few directors, I wasn't very sure about applying, but I could email them and the others, there were a few who I did email and I didn't get a reply from them. (NT: student 3: 216–224)

The student describes how several of the top contacts that were provided by the career service were dead-ends. They lead to disappointment on the part of the student and presented a threat to their aspirational endeavors. Maintaining pathways to companies is thus essential for the career service. The most effective method is alumni relations. Graduates from small

universities which offer an intense study experience often maintain strong ties with their university. In order to structure these ties, a university has to invest in the relationship from the early stages. The career service thus proactively seeks such relationships and stages events that foster "binding forces" (Career Service, 1654). As a result, alumni are not just grappling hooks: they continue to move back and forth along the pathways between their school and their employer.

Graduates return to alumni events, they are usually the ones selected to represent their company at presentations in their university. The university has to build up 'enthusiasm' and motivate graduates to become path-builders for future student and alumni. Many graduates are more than willing to take on this role:

> The big schools are made by their students and made by their alumni. So there will be problems within the next months, I guarantee that to you. And you will be disappointed, I also guarantee that. Will we share that with somebody externally? Never. This school is shit hot and it is the fucking greatest campus on earth. And (...) that is what's creating the value of great schools, and that is why the US schools have such a great reputation because this reputation is created and financed by students and alumni. And the very last consequence, Master's programs, MBAs, and PhDs, is also a marketing approach and it is your job to be the marketer for [this university]. We can do the same and that's what I'll expect from you as alumni." (NT: management board member, large retail company)

The management board member makes it obvious how strongly he feels towards the university. Using "we" and insisting that the university should "never" be spoken of negatively in public emphasizes his preferential attitude towards students from his university. Alumni mingle with students at company-funded cooking events, they run case-studies, judge elevator pitches for students' start-up ideas, or even teach courses. While observing a technology day at the university, it was difficult to tell which of the participants did not have any connection with the university. Thus, career events often maneuver between being alumni meetings and actual recruitment events. This familiarity and enthusiasm is in the interest of both the companies and the university. Indeed, it is not only the career service that aims at building such pathways. Especially larger companies actively support the university through partnerships and donations, lecture rooms carry their name, they sit on governing boards, and their employees

participate in the admission process. Aside from decreasing recruitment costs,[9] this also enables them to have stronger influence over the way students are educated. While this does not mean that they have a say in constructing the curriculum, the way that the curriculum is constructed resonates more with their demands than other more discipline-centered degree programs.

> They [big consulting firms] are really looking for people who they can form. And their [Master's students] education just fits, with their case study training, very analytical, strategic. Those are the profiles they are looking for, for the work that has to be done there. (Career Service, 305–308)

This is supported by the fact that alumni and recruiters participate actively in the admission process. The alignment of the university and companies make them more alike. They are drawn closer to each other and further away from state programs, which do not run a career service or invite alumni back to their alma mater. Indeed, after years of work, the university has built up ties with all sorts of different employers. Even though these relationships are still very unstable – some company connections are lost and new ones are established – such universities can offer their students a long list of internship options that seem tailor-made, as one student describes:

> And then, as soon as it [the program] starts, you can make a special . . . appointment with them [the career service]. And then we just talked about what I would like to do . . . So the career service looks at the interests I have and what I have done in the past, and then they recommend maybe applying here, or maybe there. . . . . if you compare it to my applications before [coming here], . . . I applied twice [to companies] and was accepted twice for an internship here. If you look at before, I sent hundreds of applications to get accepted by two [employers] – well you can see, that it is way more efficient [here], or rather that you can really use the networks here. I thought that was impressive. (student 1, 317–328)

The list of internships, however, also shed a light on what sort of pathways are built: consulting and investment firms resonate the most with the ambitions of the career service. The top-notch companies play a decisive role in the student discourse and their placement choices – not least because large salaries will quickly pay off the tuition fees and these

placements function as a stepping-stone into other jobs. The career service aims at manifesting exactly these pathways, but these are also the pathways students tend to take. In fact, half of the graduates at the business school take the route into strategic consulting. As prestigious as they may be, the individual career pathways students take are what Debra J. Schleef (2006, p.164) calls the "paths of least resistance". In some interviews, students reported that if they expressed interest in internships and jobs which differ from those usually requested or which are difficult to access (e.g. positions in state ministries), the students had to organize this for themselves. It is only possible to establish closer connections between the university and some employers – they establish spatial proximity – to make it easier for students to move back and forth along distinguished pathways. Such paths may be exclusive for students of these schools, but they are still far from being the "wormholes" described by Nespor (2014). Among the still largely equal universities companies are drawing closer to various ambitious occupation-oriented degree programms. If pathways from universities no longer provide what companies are looking for, they may be decoupled in favor of other organizations.

Conclusion

Changes in career pathways in Germany are difficult to trace and are subject to a wide range of factors. This chapter has addressed the changes in the pathways of business graduates by emphasizing the role of the university. The data shows that a considerable increase in the number of business administration/economics students is mirrored among top positions in the employment market. Engineering graduates have maintained their dominant position on governing boards and in leadership positions in the large German production industry and have expanded their knowledge base to include credentialized management knowledge. The evidence is mixed with regard to changes in the perception of 'management' as education rather than as a position in a company which would resonate with the global expansion of the US management model. Changes in the higher education degree structure have increased the number of Master's degrees that are taught in English and that use the term 'management' in their degree title: However, such programs still require a high level of specialization in business administration through a Bachelor's in the same discipline. The overall increase in student numbers, the rise in 'parachute careers,'

and an increase in cross-branch employment suggest that competition for management positions among graduates with different disciplinary backgrounds might be increasing and that there is a preference for those with business degrees.

The organizational rationalization of educational pathways for careers in large companies through universities likewise emphasizes the productive role of universities in structuring access to high-status positions. While several business faculties in public universities have established career services, engineering faculties have not. However, an increase in the number of career services – most notably as a central part of a university's services – is evidence of a changing approach to educational pathways within universities. Due to their character, ambitious private universities have developed these pathways most extensively and provide an insight into how the transition from university to employment might change in the future. Private universities functionalize students as grappling hooks to draw companies closer towards them and to transform the 'rope' into a proximate and privileged pathway along which their alumni and interns can move back and forth, as long as the universities can avoid 'bad selections.' Both employers and universities build networks that reach beyond simple recruiting events and transform business knowledge in a specific way. In seminars and lectures, the companies provide hands-on management skills to accompany the curriculum and potentially establish a greater understanding of management as knowledge rather than a position. However, the "pathways of least resistance" (Schleef 2006) also show that such routes have so far lead to companies which are already dominated by business graduates, rather than to the production industry, which remains the domain of engineers and natural scientists.

The relationship between discipline and organizational arrangement has also become clear from the above example. The way the career service aims at framing their students up to the "shit hot" talk of the alumni suggests that the more important the label and the coherence of a program becomes, the competition among students of the same discipline increases. Some business students have better access options to the labor market than others. This rationalization has the potential to transform the transition from university to the employment market in Germany, especially if such organizational arrangements are widely imitated and are thereby legitimized. So far, outside of the private higher education sector, only small international programs at public universities have displayed a similar density and focus. Master's programs that follow the

tradition of the *Diplom-Kaufmann* qualification are too big and understaffed to show a strong tendency in this direction. Nevertheless, in the open structure of such programs, motivated students can pro-actively build their own networks between their university and high status employers in their region (for example finance in Frankfurt, consulting in Munich, and start-ups in Berlin). With the growing number of graduates the competition is likely to become fiercer and universities have the capacity to organize and influence the transition. The different rate of transition from Bachelor to Master among the various disciplines (see discussion of Fig 1.1) may also play an increasing role. Under these conditions, the question of how exactly education and high-status work are coupled within disciplines and through the university has become an important issue for further research.

Notes

1. The data included 30 CEOs with 34 academic degrees between them. http://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/das-haben-die-dax-chefs-studiert-fotostrecke-139822.html (accessed: 18. Aug. 2016)
2. While there is no consistency as to why one doctor might direct another doctor given that they are both trained to identify and approach illness, a credentialized manager can always manage another credentialized manager given that the former's work improves the latter's.
3. The old *Diploma* of universities of applied sciences have been retrospectively degraded to Bachelor-equivalent by political decision. I however still equate them to those granted by universities as their time of schooling exceeds that of the Bachelor.
4. Bluhm et al. (2014) present different results for large companies but do not differentiate between sectors. Also, their sample is more fragmented.
5. The drop in the relative weight of business administration/economics graduates after 2007 has to do with degree level differentiation. While the number of bachelor graduates is still high compared to the other disciplines, the transition rate from bachelor to master in the other disciplines is much higher.
6. They might, however, have long established informal relationships with the production industry through research projects as indicated above.
7. I only refer to state-accredited private higher education institutions. This sector is quickly expanding in Germany, both in enrollment and university numbers. However, it still accounts for less than seven percent of all students in higher education (Mitterle 2016).
8. All quotes have been translated from German into English by the author except those labeled with the abbreviation 'NT' (not translated)

9. Some scholars have raised different arguments, for instance that companies look for like-minded people (Brown et al. 2010). The data referred to here only addresses the perspective from within the university.

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CHAPTER 13

Stratification Without Producing Elites? The Emergence of a New Field of Doctoral Education in Germany

Roland Bloch

To this day, German higher education could hardly be considered as vertically structured (cf. Teichler 2009, p. 164). Up to now, a "fictitious equality" (Kreckel 2010, p. 242) has been assumed for universities of the same type. Degrees were of equal value. If there were reputational differences, they were related to specific disciplines in specific places but not to specific universities. In the last decade, both the reforms implemented in the course of the Bologna process and competitive funding schemes like the Excellence Initiative have triggered processes of horizontal and vertical differentiation. In contrast to the highly stratified Anglo-Saxon higher education systems, the emerging rank order here is still new and provisional (Bloch et al. 2014).

This is even more the case for new fields such as doctoral education in Germany. Graduate schools and other programs for the education of doctoral researchers are a relatively new phenomenon in German higher education. In the course of the last 10 years, such programs have been established nationwide at universities. They are designed to substitute the

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traditional individual relationship between supervisor and doctoral researcher with a curriculum as well as formalized supervision and recruitment. They are programs for the education of doctoral researchers. The Excellence Initiative supported the establishment of graduate schools in one of its three funding lines. It induced stratification by selecting a group of graduate schools and officially assigning them excellence status. As only a few graduate schools existed prior to the Excellence Initiative, a new field of doctoral education was created that had a stratification in place even before it was populated by graduate schools (Bloch and Mitterle 2017).

The first part of this chapter reconstructs the emergence of this new field. Based on longitudinal data, I will employ a neo-institutionalist perspective to explain the expansion of doctoral programs in Germany. In particular, I will ask whether this development is the outcome of isomorphic change in the German higher education system and how it is connected to new vertical differentiations.

The second part of the chapter analyzes how rank differences between graduate schools are established. It focuses on the connections between institutional prestige and career pathways. In a highly stratified higher education system like that of the United States, academic careers are built on the institutional prestige of the degree-granting university or graduate school (Burris 2004, Athey et al. 2007, Hurlbert and Rosenfeld 1992, Smith-Doerr 2006). Such "intra-prestige-group 'inbreeding'" (Baldi 1994, p. 38) is a self-enforcing process in which career success (in terms of being hired by/admitted to a top-ranked institution) is related to the preceding level: post-PhD career success is attributed to the graduate school, whose prestige is simultaneously built on the placement of its PhDs in top departments. Institutional prestige is therefore crucial in the competition for talent (Paradeise and Thoenig 2014, p. 399). In an egalitarian higher education system like that in Germany, the institutional prestige of specific universities is not very pronounced. Rather, holding a doctoral degree in general enhances employment opportunities (Lenger 2008) and increases income levels (Mertens and Röbken 2013). Doctoral education is related to the reproduction of elites, as obtaining a doctoral degree and pursuing a (successful) academic career is heavily influenced by social background (Graf 2015; Möller 2015). The social capital of supervisors in terms of networks appears to be decisive for academic career advancement (Jungbauer-Gans and Gross 2013; Lenger 2008; for psychology: Lang and Neyer 2004). By

contrast, institutional prestige only has a weak influence (Jungbauer-Gans and Gross 2013, p. 88).[1] As university programs, the graduate schools of the Excellence Initiative can be seen as an attempt to establish "excellence careers" (Bloch and Würmann 2014, p. 150). Drawing on organizational case studies[2] of two graduate schools funded by the Excellence Initiative, I will show whether and how these relate to their graduates to construct academic elite career pathways.

The Establishment of Doctoral Programs in Germany

Until the early 2000s, there was no specific sector of doctoral education in Germany. The only relevant regulation was derived from the binary structure of the German higher education system, which defines doctoral education as a prerogative of the universities. However, doctoral education is only loosely coupled to the university. In contrast to Anglo-Saxon higher education systems, it is not conceptualized as the third cycle of studies but as the first stage of professional academic practice (Kreckel 2016). Doctoral researchers nevertheless lack a specific status in the personnel structure of universities (Enders 1996). They are not enrolled in specific schools. The majority of them are employed as research associates.[3] They are recruited by professors and not the department or the university. Research associates take on tasks in research, teaching, and administration. Alongside these organizational tasks, they work on their dissertation (Bloch and Würmann 2012). There is no formal curriculum. Instead, doctoral education is envisioned as a socialization process based on a master-apprentice model between supervisor and doctoral researcher that is shaped by informal learning processes, expectations, and sanctions (Engler 2001; Enders 1994; Oevermann 2005). In the traditional academic career system, career advancement is largely unregulated (Bloch and Würmann 2014), and universities have no specific programs for the education of junior researchers.

This situation changed in 2005, when the Excellence Initiative, a competitive device for the distribution of government funds over a period of five years, prompted the universities to apply for graduate schools in one of the program's three funding lines. The framework of the Excellence Initiative and its official selection criteria has two performative effects on doctoral education. First, it addresses the universities as organizational actors, capable of strategic action and accountable for the effects of their actions (Krücken and Meier 2006; cf. Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersson

2000; Ramirez 2010). Graduate schools are conceptualized as university[4] programs for the education of excellent junior researchers. They are expected to be part of a university's profile (German Research Foundation and German Council of Science and Humanities 2010). Different from the traditional model of doctoral education, graduate schools include a curriculum, supervision agreements and formal admission procedures, as well as measures to increase gender equality and internationality. Universities thus have to transform the old master-apprentice model into an organizational program with formal rules.

Second, the Excellence Initiative induces stratification in the field of higher education. The competitive and formalized process of the Excellence Initiative leads to a clear assignment of status. A group of graduate schools is selected and officially declared to be excellent. Only these graduate schools are funded. This unequal distribution of resources marks the Excellence Initiative out as a "policy of excellence" that assigns universities and their graduate schools "an apical status and position within the higher education system" (Rostan and Vaira 2011, p. 57). Graduate Schools of Excellence, as they are officially called, are thus a resource used for positioning a university; they "are one method of a faculty or a university to create 'critical masses' of research capacity" (Schimank and Lange 2009, p. 71). In this they differ from their predecessors, the Research Training Groups (RTG; *Graduiertenkollegs*) funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Despite being a "support program for outstanding research and an elite of doctoral researchers" (transl. German Research Foundation 2000, p. 8), the prestige of the RTGs was tied to the selection procedure of an intra-academic institution for the competitive distribution of research funds and bestowed mainly on the successful applicants. These were groups of professors and not universities. Lacking an institutionalized status, RTGs are inherently temporary in their design, while Graduate Schools of Excellence are expected to persist beyond the frame of the Excellence Initiative.

After the Excellence Initiative had been launched, doctoral programs in German higher education boomed. Several other research associations, such as the Leibniz Association and the Max-Planck Society, started to implement their own doctoral programs, but the greatest expansion was seen in single universities or faculties: the number of doctoral programs without support from the Excellence Initiative, the German Research Foundation, or research associations increased from 91 (2006) to 516 (2014) (see Figure 13.1).

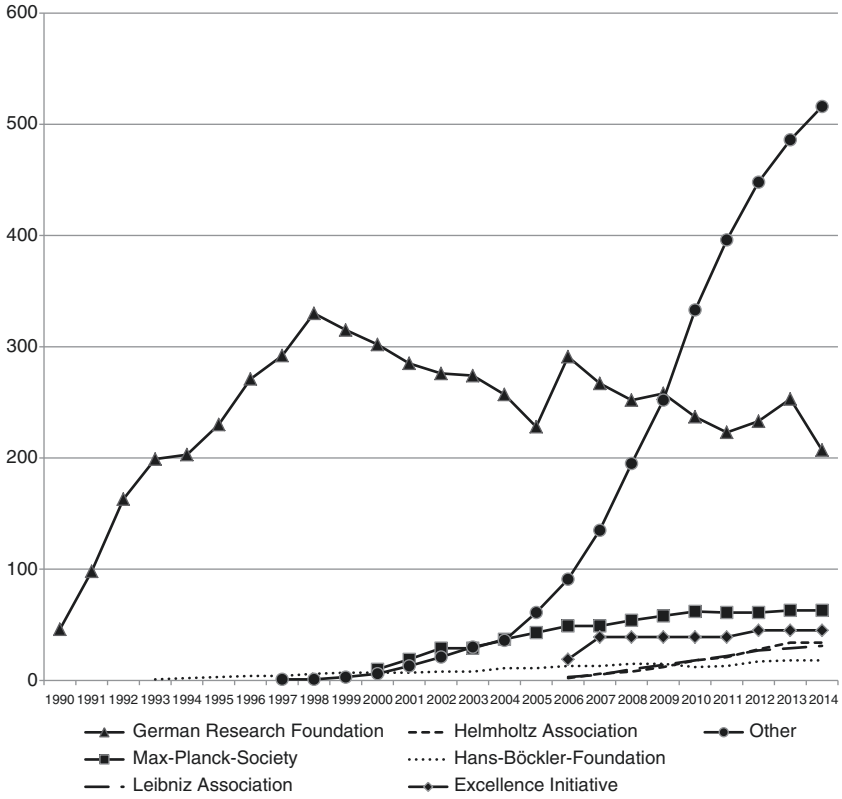

Fig. 13.1 Number of doctoral programs by funding organization 1990–2014

Sources: annual reports of the research associations, own data[5]

The boom in doctoral programs points to isomorphic change in the German university sector. Within the space of a few years, the overwhelming majority of doctoral-granting public universities (78 out of 88) set up at least one doctoral program on their own.[6] Because this boom followed the funding of graduate schools through the Excellence Initiative, it can be related to both coercive and mimetic isomorphism in the field (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, p. 150f.). Public universities are to a large extent dependent on a single source of support, namely the state. Although the state has refrained from making doctoral programs obligatory within the

university sector by law, access to the Excellence Initiative's considerable resources depends to a large extent on having a graduate school.[7] As graduate schools were still being funded in the second round of the Excellence Initiative, universities can also be expected to copy the strategies of their successful counterparts. From this perspective, Graduate Schools of Excellence act as promoters of stratification and simultaneously generate the very field of doctoral education in which they take the top position. This dynamic meets political expectations "to initiate a performance spiral [*Leistungsspirale*] with the goal of establishing top positions as well as an increase in quality across Germany as a site for universities and science" (ExV 2005, Preamble). Although graduate schools will no longer be funded directly in the next round of the Excellence Initiative, it has become a prerequisite for universities to have a graduate school if they want to be competitive in attracting public resources across different funding schemes.[8]

There is, however, a third source of isomorphic change to which the boom in doctoral programs can also be related. Normative pressures to ensure the quality of the PhD have been mounting in Germany, especially after some highly publicized cases of plagiarism at doctoral level, involving the minister of foreign affairs (Guttenberg) and education and research (Schavan), who as a consequence had to resign from office. Both the German Rectors' Conference (HRK, 2012) and the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR, 2011) have recommended the general implementation of doctoral programs as a means of quality assurance. The establishment of doctoral programs is further promoted by the Bologna process, which aims at institutionalizing doctoral education as the third cycle of a European study system (Hornbostel 2009). Having a doctoral program has become proof that universities assume responsibility for the quality of their doctoral education.

The boom in doctoral programs, then, points to two dynamics in the newly emerging field of doctoral education: (1) a stratificatory dynamic driven by doctoral programs as a means of vertical differentiation and (2) a horizontal dynamic driven by alignment with a general model of doctoral education (cf. Bleiklie 2011, p. 21). The two dynamics are mutually reinforcing: although the Bologna process had already started in 1999, only a few doctoral programs had been established in Germany by 2006.[9] In the absence of other normative pressures to transform doctoral education, the Excellence Initiative legitimized doctoral programs as a means of stratification. It sparked 262 proposals to establish a graduate school.[10]

Apparently, many proposals have been realized anyway, regardless of their success in the Excellence Initiative. These doctoral programs may be related to positioning a university in future competitions,[11] but they – and other newcomers – are also legitimized by the Bologna process, which promotes the *general* implementation of doctoral programs across the system. Thus, many of the newly established doctoral programs are not intended to be competitive, nor do they have the necessary funding. For instance, almost a fifth (95 of 516 in 2014) of all programs run by single universities are service-oriented programs that structure the PhD phase only formally and only offer extra, not directly PhD-related, courses. The movement of these programs is not vertically-aspiring but horizontally-aligning.

This horizontal movement also impacts, however, on the binary structure of the German higher education system, and therefore on an established stratification between different sectors. The European degree structure differentiates between academic levels but not between types of higher education institutions. As a consequence, differences in the degree structure between universities and universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) have vanished, which has led to a "blurring of boundaries" (Witte et al. 2008) between the two sectors. This is only the latest development in a longer process of "academic drift" (Neave 1979) that has led universities of applied sciences to more and more resemble universities. Still, the universities retain the privilege of granting doctoral degrees. It is legitimized through their higher research quality and capacities, as universities of applied sciences are still considered primarily teaching-oriented institutions and their professors have a considerably higher teaching load. Without the right to grant doctoral degrees, they also lack positions for doctoral researchers.[12] The privilege of the universities has, however, become a contested political issue. Universities of applied sciences demand the right to grant doctoral degrees at least for those faculties that have an established academic record. Lately, the government of Hesse[13] has granted them this partial right. They establish doctoral programs to prove the quality of their doctoral education and to legitimize themselves as doctoral-granting institutions. Already, 26 of the 516 doctoral programs beyond the Excellence Initiative are run in cooperation between universities and universities of applied sciences.

Nevertheless, this "de-diversification" (Teichler 2008, p. 367) triggered by the Bologna process has not led to a leveling of all differences "but rather towards processes of reassembling and restructuring" (Rostan

and Vaira 2011, p. 68). Isomorphic change does lead to institutional resemblance, but it also brings with it new differentiations and can thus be related to stratification. If higher education institutions perceive themselves to be similar, and common concepts diffuse into the field (Strang and Meyer 1994, p. 103), then they also open up a space in which they can be compared with each other (Bloch and Mitterle 2017). Furthermore, if competition in this comparative space leads to a general "leveling upward" (Trow 1984, p. 144) of higher education institutions, this may run counter the state's interest in institutional diversity.[14] As a result, the state may react with policies of "leveling downward, toward the development of a large comprehensive unitary system marked by the characteristics of mass higher education, with certain small and selective elite 'centers of excellence'" (ibid.).

If the "leveling upward" of universities of applied sciences means that they are subject to the same requirements as universities, namely to set up doctoral programs in order to assure the quality of doctoral education, then the "blurring of boundaries" between the two sectors will continue and new vertical differentiations may come to replace the old binary structure (cf. Bleiklie 2011, p. 31): between universities of applied sciences or some of their faculties with the right to grant doctoral degrees and those without; and between universities with excellent graduate schools and those without. The latter universities then hardly differ from doctoral-granting universities of applied sciences. A new field of doctoral education thus emerges. At the bottom, universities of applied sciences are no longer excluded and some[15] move into the field, while at the same time "centers of excellence" are demarcated at the top.[16] Beyond their shared characteristic as university programs, different types[17] of doctoral programs are connected with different aspirations and relate to different comparative spaces. Interdisciplinary programs relate to competitive funding devices such as the Excellence Initiative that take interdisciplinarity as one official criterion of excellence (German Research Foundation and German Council of Science and Humanities 2010). Disciplinary programs relate to the academic profession, as they educate doctoral researchers for a specific research area. Topic-centered programs relate to specific research discourses in the scientific community, as they bring together senior as well as junior researchers for a temporary research alliance. Service-oriented programs relate to the university as an organization, as they aim to incorporate all doctoral researchers of a university or a faculty into formal structures.

Isomorphic change thus leads to a general alignment with one model of doctoral education while simultaneously advancing the emergence of new vertical differentiations that are connected with different types of doctoral programs.

The 'Production' of Academic Careers Through Graduate Schools of Excellence

The question now remains as to how graduate schools deemed excellent by the Excellence Initiative build their reputation in the new field of doctoral education. For the universities, having a graduate school is no longer per se a mark of distinction, as it used to be at the beginning of the Excellence Initiative. Moreover, so far there are no other devices beyond the Excellence Initiative that rank doctoral programs in Germany.[18] What is perceived as constituting an excellent graduate school is open to the actors in the field. In following the criteria set by the Excellence Initiative, they cast themselves as selective (Bloch 2015), international (Bloch et al. forthcoming), and research-productive.

However, a key function of top graduate schools, especially in the highly stratified Anglo-Saxon higher education systems, is to produce academic elites. Here, academic careers are built on institutional prestige. In a new field of doctoral education like that in Germany, the interconnection between the prestige of the graduate school or the university and career pathways is still being established. As the Graduate Schools of Excellence have existed now for only ten years and the length of the postdoctoral phase varies considerably in Germany, the number of professorships obtained by their graduates cannot be used as a measure of success. They have, however, produced a considerable number of PhDs so far.[19] The further careers of these PhDs have not been surveyed yet, nor is it the intention of this chapter to do so. Rather, I will focus on the question of whether and how graduate schools cast themselves as 'producers' of academic careers. Following the example of highly stratified higher education systems, the graduate schools could be expected to build a visible placement record.[20] One indicator of how they relate to the subsequent careers of their PhDs is therefore the information provided on their websites. A survey[21] of the websites of the Graduate Schools of Excellence, as well as of other doctoral programs run by single universities, shows that the information presented varies considerably (Table 13.1).

Table 13.1 Information about graduates on the websites of Graduate Schools of Excellence (N=33)[22] and other doctoral programs run by single universities (N=409, service-oriented programs are excluded) (March 2016)

Information about graduates	*Graduate Schools of Excellence*		*Other doctoral programs*	
None	8	24.2%	181	44.3%
Limited to name, dissertation topic, graduation date	13	39.4%	212	51.8%
Also includes current position	12	36.4%	16	3.9%
Total	33	100%	409	100%

In general, only a minority of both the Graduate Schools of Excellence and other doctoral programs refer to the current positions of their graduates. However, more than a third of the former include such information, compared to only four percent of the latter. It appears to be more self-evident for Graduate Schools of Excellence to connect with their graduates' careers. Nevertheless, a quarter of them and almost half of the other doctoral programs disclose no information at all about their graduates. Neither the individuals who have completed the program nor their subsequent careers are linked to the graduate school. Thirteen Graduate Schools of Excellence and more than half of the other doctoral programs limit information on their graduates to name, dissertation topic and graduation date. They specify their output in terms of persons and research topics but not of careers. Excellent graduate schools of both types do not conform to the expectation that connects them with elite career pathways. Rather, their sphere of influence ends with the date of graduation.

The remaining 12 Graduate Schools of Excellence that include information about current positions transform their graduates into alumni who belong to the graduate school's community beyond graduation. The graduate school connects with them and their careers. Their career pathway can be constructed as part of the graduate school's track record. Yet only one Graduate School of Excellence, the Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences at the University of Mannheim, speaks of "job placements" when referring to its alumni.[23] The term 'placement' constructs the subsequent careers of alumni as an effect of the graduate school, which by its reputation 'places' graduates in top positions. The

graduate school is devised as a means to embark on an elite career trajectory.[24]

This very superficial data gives an initial impression of how differently Graduate Schools of Excellence relate to their graduates' careers. It would, however, be wrong to conclude that the majority of them are completely disconnected from the further career advancement of their graduates. Data from organizational case studies at two Graduate Schools of Excellence, High Tech Graduate School and Scheelheim Graduate School,[25] reveal a more differentiated approach.

At High Tech Graduate School, it is generally acknowledged that one of its purposes is the production of excellent PhDs for top positions:

> It's about elite education. Well, elite I don't know, but for sure these are people who, during their PhD phase, have met the criteria you have in science in an outstanding way, that are going fast through their PhD, nevertheless publishing outstandingly, and getting a very good subsequent position. (Professor, High Tech Graduate School, interview 6)

Other Graduate Schools of Excellence share this notion when they advertise with "accelerated careers at the world's best academic institutions and in high-technology industries."[26] They nevertheless refrain from using the term 'placement', as it narrows the effects of the graduate school to its graduates' positions and employers. The term 'alumni,' by contrast, allows them to attribute a broader range of activities to the graduate school:

> First, the graduates of 2013 as in all previous years are high-performing. (. . .) This student has been a very prolific writer. And this student has published in very high-ranking journals. And this student has moved on and took another position as a postdoc or at an Ivy League University et cetera, et cetera. So the first noteworthy thing I want to say is: Thank you very much for making us very proud. (Observation protocol, laudation at graduation ceremony, High Tech Graduate School)

The quality of the work, publications in high-ranked journals, and career advancement in general and at prestigious institutions are put forward as characteristics of High Tech's graduates. A range of individual achievements is thus attributed to the graduate school. For instance, High Tech

also provides a list of alumni with their current positions on its homepage. The sheer presence of the list is a claim that High Tech is 'somehow' related to these careers. Its concrete impact on them, however, is difficult to specify, especially in the interdisciplinary settings promoted by the Excellence Initiative:

> *Q:* If I may inquire, there could be a conflict between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity if you think about the later career. Well, I don't know how far this interdisciplinarity reaches into the postdoc phase or whether the people return to their mother disciplines, being again [discipline A] or [discipline B], for instance?
>
> *A:* Well, that is a good question. To tell the truth, I don't know. (. . .) we should maybe sometime look at this (. . .) Also, to maybe do a follow-up survey in a few years. Let's say, you have been a postdoc for three years, how has our interdisciplinary educational program influenced your current career or research? Did it leave a noteworthy mark at all? That is really, yes, it's true, that is an important question. (Professor, High Tech Graduate School, interview 5)

As executors of a program for the education of doctoral researchers, faculty at High Tech as well as at other Graduate Schools of Excellence must believe that their program has an effect. Otherwise, they would be engaging in an organizational program that misses its purpose and as a consequence experience a lack of motivation. High Tech is an interdisciplinary graduate school, yet career pathways are to a large extent shaped by the disciplines, especially in their connection to specific areas of teaching. Interdisciplinarity is thus associated with career disadvantages,[27] which raises the question of whether it continues to be practiced after the doctoral program has been completed. Against this background, it appears plausible that High Tech would not leave any "noteworthy mark." Similarly, faculty at the likewise interdisciplinary Scheelheim Graduate School find it difficult to estimate the surplus generated through the program:

> Well, it is very difficult to measure. You do not have more PhDs, thank God, that would be a wrong signal if these graduate schools [were to function] as 'PhD mills,' yes, for which labor market? You always have to see that. But this raising of the general level [*allgemeines Niveau*], which is so difficult to measure, that is what we are committed to. (Professor, Scheelheim Graduate School, interview 1)

Scheelheim Graduate School legitimizes itself through its role in increasing the quality of doctoral education. A measurable indicator such as an increase in the number of PhDs is delegitimized by a lack of labor market demand.[28] Instead, the abstract purpose of the program allows a wide range of activities to be attributed to the graduate school without it having to specify the concrete relation between program and effect:

> Yes, well, one of my doctoral researchers has just won the award for the best dissertation from [professional association]. (...) Now that is not the only example. And it is of course an indicator of success. (Professor, Scheelheim Graduate School, interview 1).

Similar to the term alumni, the reference to an abstract quality allows awards, publications, and the acquisition of third-party funded research projects to be attributed to the graduate school. They appear as manifestations of the special quality of the program.

> I think that we have excellent students, which really distinguishes us. I think that we also have a very excellent faculty, which you can easily see from – we have done this very systematically for the evaluation – the many winners of the best awards (...), the Leibniz awards, or the European Research Council, where we clearly have an above average number of people; publications in the best journals, the number of publications per student, and for the faculty also, next to the awards, what other projects and clusters have been acquired. There is the [name of science center], there is the Research Unit [prestigious DFG program, r.b.]; there are many things that show that, on the student as well as on the faculty level, it is a special, outstanding, excellent group of people. (Professor, High Tech Graduate School, interview 6)

At High Tech, the list of achievements is extended to the faculty. However, these are not depicted as effects of the graduate school. Rather, the special quality of the graduate school is deduced from the faculty's reputation; the performance of its doctoral researchers is only secondary. Thus, the graduate school's performance record is disconnected from its graduates and their careers:

> The excellence criterion (...) is based less on the people but rather on the school itself, and how it pursues the professionalization of [individuals from discipline A] and [individuals from discipline B]. (Professor, Scheelheim Graduate School, interview 5)

Hence, the production of academic elites can be neglected – it is not the graduates but the graduate school that is excellent. Disconnecting themselves from career pathways allows graduate schools to be or stay excellent without producing academic elites. However deliberate this disconnection may be, it is in line with the political goal of the Excellence Initiative, which was not to establish elite career pathways but excellent programs for the education of doctoral researchers. It is a policy aimed at the university as an organization, not at individual academics. It seeks to establish "centers of excellence" rather than an academic elite.

This "hesitant approach to elite education" (Deppe et al. 2015) in terms of the production of academic elite career pathways can partially be explained by the structure of the German academic career system. After the PhD there is a structural gap. PhDs do not embark directly on a tenure track potentially leading to a full professorship but on an insecure postdoctoral phase with shifting workplaces and an open end.[29] Their career is solely aimed at obtaining a professorship (Bloch and Würmann 2013), which is only possible at another university, as in-house recruitment is prohibited by law (*Hausberufungsverbot*), and which still requires in most instances a further academic qualification, the *Habilitation*.

This has two consequences for the universities: first, the establishment of graduate schools does not change the structural condition that universities produce PhDs for an external labor market (Enders 1994, p. 234; cf. Musselin 2003, p. 15), that is, they cannot profit directly from the quality of their graduates. This is aggravated by the fact that the PhD is also valued in the non-academic labor market. It is estimated that a quarter of all doctoral researchers work on their dissertation alongside a job outside academia. At university, doctoral as well as postdoctoral researchers are employed as research associates who are part of the chair endowment (Kreckel 2016, p. 25f.) and are thus recruited by individual professors and not by the university (Hüther and Krücken 2012). For a scientific community that is primarily organized along disciplinary differences and specific schools of thought, the prestige of a university or its graduate school is only of secondary importance for the highly informal recruitment of junior researchers.

Second, in spite of this very limited impact on academic careers, it is nevertheless in the interest of universities to have a graduate school or another form of doctoral program. Graduate schools are a means to gain legitimacy by fulfilling demands posed by the environment, most prominently the state. As elaborated, a graduate school can stand for aspirations to model a university's own doctoral education after top-ranked programs.

But it can also be taken as proof that a university has taken care of assuring the quality of its PhD. Either way, having a graduate school enhances a university's legitimacy.

If a graduate school relates to the comparative space established by the Excellence Initiative, fostering academic careers is not among the excellence criteria. These include only a vague reference to a general personnel development concept into which the graduate school needs to be integrated (German Research Foundation and German Council of Science and Humanities 2010). It is rather in specific disciplines that the placement of PhDs plays a role. This is acknowledged by disciplinary doctoral programs that refer to a comparative space *different* from the Excellence Initiative, in which other ranking devices take placement records to construct vertical differences between programs. For the other doctoral programs, career success is only secondary.[30] Faced with a structurally limited influence on academic careers, it even appears to be rational for them to evade explicit references to placements or elite career pathways, as these impede their performance record. They must generate the impression of enhancing the career opportunities of their graduates without letting their graduates' careers become a benchmark of their performance. Both organizational case studies show that these Graduate Schools of Excellence do not cast themselves as producers of academic elites or elite career pathways. Their faculty refrain from speaking of placement and experience difficulty in assigning concrete effects to the program. Stratificatory claims are derived from the special quality of the program and are thus decoupled from career effects.

Stratification Without Producing Elites

By reconstructing the emergence of a new field of doctoral education, I have shown how the introduction of rank differences by the Excellence Initiative is related to a successive boom in doctoral programs. From a neo-institutionalist perspective, this boom appears as the outcome of isomorphic change in German higher education. However, the question of change is also a matter of debate in neo-institutional theory. Greenwood et al. (2002, p. 60), for example, propose different "stages of institutional change" that eventually culminate in the diffusion and reinstitutionalization of new concepts. Such a model of different stages is useful in accounting for early adopters, taking the Graduate Schools of Excellence as promoters of stratification. Yet it has been criticized for limiting the actors' responses at later stages of change to "mindless

imitation fueled by anxiety-driven pressures to conform" (Lounsbury 2008, p. 350). As I have shown, the rapid expansion of doctoral programs in Germany is not driven by imitation alone but also by new vertical differentiations in the university sector and beyond.

One key factor affecting the diffusion of concepts is the "perceived similarity" of the actors: "perceptions of similarity provide a rationale for diffusion. They make it sensible for an actor to use another's choices and the consequences of those choices as a guide" (Strang and Meyer 1994, p. 103). In the case of German doctoral education, we can see two different sets of actors acting on the basis of their "perceived similarity": first, universities that aspire to a top position in the Excellence Initiative seek to satisfy its official criteria of excellence. Although graduate schools will no longer be funded through the Excellence Initiative, they have become a cornerstone of universities' excellence strategies and may well serve stratificatory purposes in other comparative spaces in the future. Second, universities of applied sciences set up doctoral programs to prove their quality and thus as a means of substantiating their claim to be not only similar but also equal to universities. "Perceived similarity" thus relates to different segments of German higher education, depending on institutional type or position in either higher education sector. Isomorphism depends on who perceives whom as similar and along which lines. The general model of doctoral education as a program is adopted, but it serves different purposes. A new field of doctoral education has emerged, populated with doctoral programs that are driven by isomorphic change but cutting across different higher education sectors and generating new vertical differentiations.

It remains to be seen whether and how these vertical differentiations will eventually be stabilized. The work necessary to achieve such stabilization is left to the universities, as they have been transformed into organizational actors. Building a placement record based on institutional prestige, as might be expected when looking at highly stratified higher education systems, is not an immediate concern of Graduate Schools of Excellence or other doctoral programs, however. Faced with the structural limits of a career system that postpones the ultimate career success (obtaining a professorship) well beyond the PhD, they disconnect themselves from the career pathways of their graduates and do not cast themselves as producers of academic elites. Yet this does not mean that career pathways are generally neglected. Graduate Schools of Excellence and other aspiring doctoral programs have several organizational arrangements in place to increase the competitiveness of their graduates in the labor market, among

them international mobility grants, career workshops, grant proposal writing training, hosting international conferences, and lectures by internationally renowned scientists. With such arrangements in place, they claim "to provide an excellent environment for doctoral research and education"[31]:

> The education we receive here prepares us quite optimally, I think, for the academic market. Whether you consider the many graduate schools that have been established [through the Excellence Initiative], and as a consequence the ever increasing competition, a good thing, is a different question. But for sure I think that we are all very well bred [*hochgezüchtet*] here. (Doctoral researcher, Scheelheim Graduate School, interview 6)

Having access to resources, being internationally mobile and used to interacting with well-known scientists in academic settings, PhDs from Graduate Schools of Excellence are well aware that they are in a good starting position to face the fierce competition for a professorship. The Graduate Schools of Excellence provide their PhDs with the capital (publications, networks) that research has shown to be crucial for academic career advancement (Jungbauer-Gans and Gross 2013; Lenger 2008). They seek to disconnect these processes of capital accumulation from the traditional individual relationship between supervisor/mentor and doctoral researcher and attach them to the organizational level. The accumulated capital of the PhDs is transformed into an output of the doctoral program. Though Graduate Schools of Excellence refrain from claiming to place their graduates in top positions through their institutional prestige, they seek to empower their graduates to reach such positions. As "incubators" (Stevens et al. 2008, p. 132) that socialize their doctoral researchers to aspire to top positions,[32] Graduate Schools of Excellence are a first step toward a rationalization of academic career pathways.

Notes

1. Some studies, however, claim that the reputation of the PhD-granting university plays an important role in specific disciplines, such as education (Röbken 2009), business administration (Röbken 2007; 2010), or mechanical engineering (Röbken and Grötzinger 2012).
2. The case studies were undertaken in 2012 and 2013 as part of the research project "Elite Formation and Universities" within the DFG research group "Mechanisms of Elite Formation in the German Educational System" (FOR 1612). They involved 25 interviews with professors,

staff, and doctoral researchers as well as the observation of specific organizational arrangements such as extracurricular events, meetings of the selection committees, graduation ceremonies, and workshops.

3. Because there is no central database for doctoral researchers, their exact number in German higher education is unknown. The Federal Statistical Office (2016a) estimates that there are altogether 196,200 doctoral researchers, of which 64 percent (124,900) are employed by universities (ibid., p. 39), usually as research associates. Although some of them may also be matriculated in doctoral programs, altogether only 23 percent of all doctoral researchers participate in such programs (ibid., p. 33), among them scholarship holders. In some disciplines there is also a high proportion of 'external' doctoral researchers who either work in extra-mural research institutes or outside academia (ibid., 35f.).
4. Universities of applied sciences and private universities are excluded from the Excellence Initiative.
5. Based on a survey of all doctoral programs in 2014 at the 88 public research universities that are eligible to participate in the Excellence Initiative. The survey included the founding year of each doctoral program; however, those programs that had ceased to exist in the meantime could not be accounted for.
6. Of the ten universities that had at the time of writing not introduced a doctoral program, five are monodisciplinary universities for teacher education or public administration.
7. Within the framework of the Excellence Initiative universities need at least one graduate school (and research cluster) to be eligible for the most prestigious of its funding lines, "institutional strategies," which assigns excellence status to the whole university (ExV 2005).
8. For instance, the latest federal competitive funding scheme, the Pact for Junior Researchers (*Pakt für den wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs*), requires the universities to have a personnel development concept in place for acquiring additional professorships. Graduate schools are one cornerstone of such concepts. In a similar fashion, research clusters funded by the Excellence Initiative and Collaborative Research Centers (*Sonderforschungsbereiche*) funded by the German Research Foundation have set up their own doctoral programs.
9. Apart from the RTGs funded by the German Research Foundation, which had already been in place prior to the Bologna Process but were inherently temporary.
10. Number of draft proposals (*Antragsskizzen*) for the first phase in 2005/06. Universities submitted another 98 draft proposals in 2011 for the second phase (German Research Foundation and German Council of Science and Humanities 2015, p. 13).

11. Some rejected proposals for graduate schools have received intermediate funding from excellence programs at *Land* level to enable them to prepare a successful application for the next round of the federal Excellence Initiative. Such funding is, however, very limited in scope. Apart from one explorative study on rejected research clusters (Simon et al. 2010), there is no research on the 'losers' in the Excellence Initiative.
12. These are mainly positions for research associates. In 2015, German universities employed 166,692 of the same, while the universities of applied sciences only 11,755, most of them third-party funded (Federal Statistical Office 2016b).
13. The *Länder* are responsible for higher education legislation.
14. "Governments generally do not like the tendency of modest or new institutions to emulate the styles and pretensions of the old elite ones. What they want is more diversity in the national higher education system, more vocationally relevant studies, new and more efficient modes of instruction, new and more democratic governance arrangements, new channels of access. The last thing they want is a bigger and bigger university system, with all the new colleges and technical schools aping the universities, taking on more arts programs, and demanding the rights and privileges of the universities, their research and graduate work along with their autonomy and self-governance" (Trow 1984, p. 143f.). In the end, it is the state that originally set up the binary structure and has maintained it up to the present day.
15. As devices like the Excellence Initiative focus on research, teaching-oriented institutions may regard them as "irrelevant to the activities in which the institution is engaged" (Bleiklie 2011, p. 31) and will thus refrain from such aspirations.
16. Both the Excellence Initiative and the funding ranking by the German Research Foundation reflect a tripartition of the German university sector, with 10 to 15 universities with an excellent in record in all research areas at the top, followed by another 30 to 40 universities that are excellent in some areas and have been partially successful in the Excellence Initiative (by gaining a graduate school and/or a research cluster). The remaining 70 universities are not competitive within the Excellence Initiative and are also at the bottom of the DFG funding ranking (Kreckel 2015, p. 407; cf. Hornbostel and Möller 2015, p. 52).
17. Based on the survey of all doctoral programs (N=516), four different types can be distinguished: (1) interdisciplinary programs in which disciplines from at least two different subject groups (e.g. humanities and natural sciences) participate (19 percent, N=97); (2) disciplinary programs that are confined to one discipline, often named in the title of the program (e.g. "graduate school of social sciences," 37 percent, N=193); topic-centered programs that are related to a specific research

topic in the tradition of the DFG RTGs (25 percent, *N*=131); service-oriented programs that structure the PhD only formally (19 percent, *N*=95).

18. There are, however, several research rankings in specific disciplines such as economics that are connected to these programs (cf. Maesse 2015).
19. Up to 2013, 2499 PhDs had been completed within the framework of the Excellence Initiative, 1897 of them in graduate schools (German Research Foundation and German Council of Science and Humanities 2015, pp. 31, 189). Overall, 27,707 PhDs were granted in Germany in 2013 (Federal Statistical Office 2016c).
20. See Nespor in this volume for visibility strategies of elite business schools in the United States.
21. I thank Norman Tannhäuser for his help in gathering the data.
22. Thirty-three out of currently 45 graduate schools of the Excellence Initiative have been funded since the first phase (2006/07) and have been in place long enough to produce graduates.
23. The Erlangen Graduate School in Advanced Optical Technologies does refer to placements, yet it includes under the heading "awards" a list of all faculty positions offered to their principal investigators and their graduates and whether they were accepted or declined (http://www.aot.uni-erlangen.de/saot/awards/offer-faculty-positions-at-universities.html [Accessed 8 May 2017]).
24. This explicit reference to career trajectories may be due to the specific academic culture in economics. According to Maesse (2015, and in this volume), doctoral programs in economics are unequivocally committed to the future career success of their graduates. This is supported by our findings on other doctoral programs that include information about the positions of their graduates. Five of these 16 programs include only cursory information. Of the other 11 programs, seven belong to economics, where this information is commonly expected.
25. All names are anonymized. High Tech belongs to the natural sciences and Scheelheim to the humanities.
26. Karlsruhe School of Optics and Photonics (https://ksop.idschools.kit.edu/mission_and_philosophy.php [Accessed 8 May 2017]).
27. Based on a survey of German professors, Zuber and Hüther (2013) show that interdisciplinarity is related to prolonging the period between PhD completion and obtaining a professorship.
28. Ironically, it is precisely such a presumed overproduction of PhDs which has led the international commission for the evaluation of the Excellence Initiative to recommend the exclusion of graduate schools from future rounds of the competition (cf. IEKE 2016, p. 28).
29. A transparent performance-based career system like the tenure track is only just beginning to emerge, for instance at Technical University Munich (TUM).

There, the tenure track clearly serves aspirations to win talent and secure the institution's position as an elite university: "TUM offers promising young scientists from around the world attractive career perspectives with its new career model: TUM Faculty Tenure Track. Highly qualified candidates are appointed as assistant professors (W2) with prospects for performance-based advancement to a permanent professorship (associate professor, W3). With further research achievements at the highest international level, this path can lead to promotion to a chair position (full professor, W3)." (http://www.tum.de/en/about-tum/working-at-tum/faculty-recruiting/tum-faculty-tenure-track/ [Accessed 8 May 2017]). The recent Pact for Junior Researchers (*Pakt für den wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs*) is an attempt to establish tenure track professorships as an alternative career path across the system.

30. Graduate schools may be used strategically to establish a specific school of thought or a new research field, and they may take the career success of its PhDs not as an end in itself but as a means for achieving this specific purpose (cf. Bloch and Mitterle 2017).
31. Graduate School for Advanced Manufacturing Engineering (GSaME) (http://www.gsame.uni-stuttgart.de/EN/Pages/default.aspx [Accessed 8 May 2017]).
32. Gumport (2000) shows that US elite graduate schools socialize their doctoral researchers to aspire to top positions (cf. Maesse 2015 for similar effects of German doctoral programs in economics). In line with this, Morrison et al. (2011) found that graduates from elite programs value the prestige of faculty appointments more highly than those from non-elite programs, who value salary more highly. Consequentially, the former are more likely to choose their academic positions with respect to prestige.

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PART V

The Production of New Elites?

CHAPTER 14

Producing a Global Elite? The Endurance of the National in Elite American and British Universities

Jonathan Z. Friedman

To some, ours is an age marked by the emergence of a global elite: a small sliver of the world's population that has come to control vast amounts of political and economic power, without much regard for national borders (Freeland 2012; Rothkopf 2008; Sklair 2001).[1] Associated with cosmopolitan attitudes, jet-setting travel, and philanthropic benevolence, individuals in this global class have been described as "a nation unto themselves" (Freeland, p. 58), sharing more in common with each other transnationally than they do with fellow citizens from less affluent social strata. The emergence of this class and its ability to concentrate great wealth and power has been frequently tied to the proliferation of international business; but it has also been interlinked with key changes in the realm of education, such as the worldwide growth of international schools, as well as the dominance of elite Western universities as pathways into prestigious careers.

Elite educational institutions have long been seen as a form of breeding ground, where the children of advantage congregate to gain first-rate

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instruction, receive informal lessons in high-culture tastes and behaviors, join key elite social networks, and above all, acquire high-status credentials. In America and Britain, this view has been generally applied to the study of both private boarding schools (Cookson and Persell 1985; Khan 2011), as well as top national universities (Binder et al. 2016; Brown et al. 2016). With globalization however, such processes which were once viewed as taking place nationally have come to be seen as having global elements and repercussions. Particularly at the tertiary level, scholars have highlighted the "supreme value" of educational credentials from elite universities in these two Anglophone countries on the global stage (Marginson 2006, p. 21). Some stress how these institutions now admit high-achieving students from high socio-economic backgrounds, many of which have grown up across multiple countries, known as 'third culture kids' (Vandrick 2011).[2] Others suggest that, in a related fashion, cosmopolitanism has been institutionalized as an unequal form of cultural capital which these institutions bequeath to their graduates, who are able to signal their worldliness for labor market advantages (Igarashi and Saito 2014). In these ways, elite universities in the US and UK have been cast as part of a global system of elite production: incubators where the world's future political and business leaders forge ties, develop shared sensibilities, and gain the necessary opportunities to ascend into this transnational class.

Compelling as these accounts may be, there is reason to consider their limitations. For, somewhat implicit in discussions of the 'global' elite has been an expectation that the 'national' has lost its historic significance to elite formation. To be sure, a range of scholars have discussed the idea of convergence as a central aspect of globalization, where national societies that were once thought to be structurally and culturally distinct have over time come to resemble one another quite strikingly (Bennett 1991; Meyer et al. 1997). In higher education in particular, scholars have highlighted cross-national similarities in the organization of mass tertiary systems (Shavit et al. 2007), the model of the university as a social institution (Meyer et al. 2007), the structuring of academic disciplines (Frank and Gabler 2006), and the rise of neoliberalism in approaches to management (Slaughter and Rhoades 2000). This is especially so between the US and UK with scholars suggesting that the two countries have undergone strong convergence in higher education (Pickard 2014), and that universities worldwide have tended to emulate their models and traditions.

Scholarship on convergence in higher education, however, has tended to focus more on the production of research and the organization of mass systems than on the everyday practices that go on inside universities related to education. Yet much prior work has suggested that cultural differences between the US and UK in this realm are significant. Turner (1960), for example, argued that norms for gaining admission to selective institutions differed between them, as he characterized the United States as a 'contest' system – in which pathways into the elite school were won through a publicly legitimated competition – and the UK as a 'sponsorship' system – in which applicants were selected by those already in power, and promoted through social networks. Cookson and Persell (1985) also described cultural differences in the way students were socialized to behave in elite boarding schools, with British students expected to "parade their eliteness publicly" (p. 29), while American students were taught to disguise their high-culture tastes and downplay their social advantage – an observation about American elites which has been reaffirmed more recently by Khan (2011).

Despite this history of Anglo-American comparison, recent discussions of the global elite class and the global elite university have delved into the cultural dimensions of schooling only minimally. Freeland (2012), for example, suggests that entrance to elite universities in the two countries is now a hallmark for the children of the global 1 percent, who she says are accustomed to operating fluidly across national borders, and have a shared identity as "citizens of the world." Yet she does not examine how such students actually choose to pursue these credentials, or how they make sense of their own identity, treating the global elite, and elite American and British universities, as largely undifferentiated groups. Similarly, Baker (2014) posits that global elite universities no longer produce national elites, so committed have they become to a mission to be global and serve the world as a whole. However, he too offers little empirical evidence concerning what messages students are receiving, internalizing or reproducing as they move through these institutions, eliding the possibility that any patriotic or geopolitical sentiments endure inside them. Given that elite universities' historic ties were to national cultures and national spheres of political and economic power however, there is reason to suspect that cultural differences between them have lingered, and that their political ties to the nation-state have not unraveled completely.

This chapter offers a preliminary consideration of this topic, by comparing data from interviews with university personnel at two case universities

from the US and UK.: *American Elite* (AE) and *British Elite* (BE). In the sections below, I first detail the research study on which this chapter is based and then analyze three cultural dimensions of the production of elites across these two institutions, including (1) how students are evaluated for admission, (2) how university personnel perceive the aims of the education they offer, and (3) the linkages which university personnel perceive between these universities and their national societies. I end by discussing the endurance of the national in the educational dimensions of these two global elite universities – even while other aspects of their operation are convergent – and call for more nuanced research and analysis in thinking about the place of the national in the formation of the global elite class.

The Study

The two universities at the center of this analysis were each visited as part of a larger comparative study of internationalization and globalization in American and British universities conducted in 2013–2014. Each is an elite university in its own national context, with a long history of being seen as a stepping stone to high-paying jobs and the upper echelons of society. Each has also long been a target for public criticism of how elite families reproduce their social advantage. Today, these two institutions are among those which share top billing in various global university rankings, commanding immeasurable prestige worldwide. If elite Western universities have indeed transformed into breeding a global elite – disconnected from national borders and identity politics – then these cases form appropriate empiric referents for capturing such a trend.

At each site, semi-structured interviews were conducted with university administrators working in a range of offices, to examine similarities and differences in the motives, rationales and conceptions of international dimensions of higher education. Participants ranged in age, time working at the institution, level of seniority, and core responsibilities; but all were collectively involved in the administration and operation of their particular universities, based in different offices. Some had academic backgrounds, while others had significant employment experience outside of academia. To offer confidentiality to the study's participants, institutional pseudonyms are employed herein (*American Elite* and *British Elite*), and in some cases, other personal details have been altered.

One-on-one interviews with participants were driven by open-ended questions, and discussions covered a range of topics, as university personnel commented on issues like institutional status and research priorities, views of incoming students and expectations of outgoing graduates, and their sense of their nation's place in the world. Findings presented in this chapter are based on an analysis of 20 such interviews, 12 of which were conducted at AE, and eight of which were conducted at BE.[3] Although a small sample, and only one lens on these institutions, these qualitative data provide rich insight into the way some of the individuals who work inside them think about issues like student admissions, education and training, and the production of world leaders. Together, they provide a window on both cross-national similarities and differences in the production of elites, and an empirical source for approaching this as a global phenomenon. Throughout, the focus will be on undergraduate education, because this was a common topic across the interviews, and because this level of schooling marks students' transition into adulthood and a key phase in their preparation for future careers.

Getting in

For the legions of students who dream of attending AE or BE, gaining admission is no easy feat. The process is arduous and involves scoring well on standardized tests (such as scholastic aptitude tests (SATs) in the United States, and A-levels in the UK), procuring positive recommendation letters from secondary-level teachers, producing finely tailored personal statements, and appearing favorably in individual interviews. Applicants who are national citizens of any country in the world are allowed to apply to both AE and BE, and the number of students who decide to do so annually has grown in the past two decades. Despite the rising applicant pool however, admission slots have not expanded in tandem, and today these universities are among the most selective in each of their countries, if not the world. Owing to their high status, these institutions face unique popular and academic scrutiny of their admissions criteria, and there is no shortage of advice circulating through social networks and on the Internet for how students should craft personal statements or behave in interviews in order to sway admissions gatekeepers.

Beyond these general similarities, some differences remain salient between these two global higher education leaders. In conversations at

BE, personnel stressed that admissions was based on "academic potential alone," and that other factors of individual biography such as extracurricular interests or socio-economic status were considered only secondarily, if they were considered at all. Interviewees pointed out how this was significantly different from the United States. As an officer in the university's international strategy office explained:

> A lot of US universities, when they're recruiting at undergraduate level, they're very interested in what sports people play or whether they're on the debate team or whatever . . . and we always make a big point about saying that it really doesn't matter to us. . . . We're looking to recruit the people who have the most excellence within their subjects, and we're totally unconcerned about their all-round ability.[4]

In this way, admissions decisions at BE were rationalized as involving a technical process, in which the best students are identified based on rational evaluations of intellect, and without regard for extracurricular talents or "all-round ability." Mountford-Zimdars (2014) has referred to this as a focus in the UK on "individual merit," and others have suggested this attitude tends to be shared not just by those who work in elite British universities like BE, but also by students who gain admission (Warikoo and Fuhr 2014). This academic focus is also reflected in the actual admissions process, as it is professors who are appointed in a particular academic program who are recruited to serve as admissions tutors for each application cycle, charged with conducting the interviews and making decisions about who to admit. The gatekeepers at BE are thus predominantly subject-specific: individuals who have expertise in an academic field and are evaluating potential candidates for that field. Further, although students are required to compose personal statements as part of their application packages, these are not specific to BE, but part of a general application which goes to multiple universities. BE, along with other leading British universities, encourages applicants to focus these statements on their rationales for pursuing academic study, insisting that other extra-curricular interests may be included, but are neither necessary, nor considered significant.

Admissions in the US indeed work differently. AE is avowedly committed to a broad consideration of individuals' talents, interests and accomplishments, looking beyond the academic evaluations of teachers and tests when evaluating applicants. Karabel (2005) explains that this

distinctly American practice evolved so that elite universities could control admissions in an opaque fashion, as their Anglo-Saxon leaders sought, in the early twentieth century, to limit admission of "socially undesirable" groups like Jews of East European descent, who had begun to excel in conventional measures of academic merit. University leaders turned to admitting students based on what they called "character," a vague and largely intangible personal trait which gave them "the latitude to admit the dull sons of major donors and to exclude the brilliant but unpolished children of immigrants" (Karabel, p. 2). The practice became institutionalized in elite US higher education, and Stevens (2007) has chronicled how prestigious liberal arts colleges there continue to make complex calculations concerning applicants, involving judgments about their past accomplishments and future potential. Elsewhere, he describes how having a diverse group of students from across the continental US as well as from a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds has also come to be a mark of prestige among elite US universities, as well as an important symbolic reinforcement of the national narrative of equal opportunity (Stevens and Roksa 2011). Applicants to AE and its peer institutions are thus encouraged to give substantial weight to biographical considerations and unique interests and talents in their personal essays and interviews – to articulate their unique 'character' – which they can also tailor to universities differently. It remains possible to gain admission and even scholarships to elite US institutions based on a proclivity in sports or the performing arts, rather than on scholastic performance alone.

As part of this history, undergraduate admissions processes were thus institutionalized differently in the US than in the UK, and they came to be managed by a professional cadre of officers who often do not have expertise in the academic fields students apply to study. Unlike at BE, where admissions interviews are mandatory and conducted by academic tutors, at AE such interviews are only encouraged, and are usually conducted by alumni, who then report their impressions to the university's admissions office. Reflecting an American national ethos that has long prized 'rags to riches' narratives of individuals who are able to 'pick themselves up by the bootstraps,' admissions officers at AE have become particularly fond of finding students from modest beginnings who exhibit this unique kind of 'character,' to be admitted alongside their more affluent applicants. For example, AE's director of international admissions explained that his job involved trying to find ambitious students who have "not let their

circumstances deter them." He explained how he tried to judge applicants from around the world "in their context" as a form of "free and fair" competition:

> We can't reward a student for what opportunities he or she has had available, only look to see to what extent they've made the most of those opportunities. So in that sense I think it is free and fair. We don't expect everybody to hit a certain mark, belong to x number of clubs. . . . so it is very much looking at a student in his or her context. And I feel pretty strongly that it is a free and fair comparison, because we really do compare the kid from Singapore to the kid in Syracuse, to the kid in Sierra Leone, but in their context, their representative context.

Rather than seeing his work as involving strictly rational calibrations of academic intellect, this administrator repeatedly spoke of his office's need to evaluate students holistically, in terms of how they had taken advantage of the "opportunities" with which they were presented in life. Along with other interviewees at AE, he also spoke about the importance of selecting not just students who would thrive at the institution, but who would "contribute" to it – a notion that was virtually absent in conversations at BE.

Offers of admission, and who is able to take advantage of them, are also tied up with financial considerations in different ways between these two institutions. AE offers need-blind admission to all of its applicants: selecting students without regard for their ability to pay its high tuition, and then using their generous endowment to subsidize students from families at different income thresholds. For those who can afford it, tuition in recent years has surpassed $40,000, but many admitted students do not pay it in full. There is also no substantial difference in tuition charged to domestic and foreign students. At BE though, domestic students as well as those from the European Union (EU) are charged less tuition than their international peers. Apart from some institutional scholarships and subsidy programs, most students must pay full tuition, which for universities in England increased in 2012 to £9,000 for UK and EU students. Tuition and fees for international students meanwhile can total as much as £20,000 or £30,000, depending on the course of study. While students from the UK and EU are able to access loans from the UK to cover these costs, their peers from other international origins cannot.

This means that in addition to differing evaluations of merit and admissions processes, the incoming students at AE and BE face different

financial obligations. This impacts how they are recruited as well as how they get in. At AE the director of international admissions stressed that one of his chief challenges was simply "getting the word out": communicating the university's advantageous offer around the world, especially to students from lower-class backgrounds in foreign countries who often believe that attending it is out of their reach. At BE, by contrast, one interviewee explained that the university had "little appetite" for focusing on recruitment in countries in Africa, as she emphasized that their main priority was "to recruit excellence" and they did not view secondary education in most African countries as very strong. Another administrator at BE felt that the university's international student population was restricted to "those who could pay," and seldom included foreign students from lower social strata.

In this way, there is reason to suggest that AE and BE do not form a singular pathway into the global elite, but rather somewhat differentiated avenues. Indeed, Mountford-Zimdars (2014), in an analysis of similar interviews with admissions personnel in the two countries, also found such variation, theorizing that while a focus on "individual merit" was the hallmark of elite admissions in the UK, there was a greater focus on "social utility" in the United States, meaning a concern for future benefits to society that extend beyond academic considerations. This is evident here in the focus in the United States on students who "make the most of their opportunities" rather than on the most academically able. As Mountford-Zimdars explains, even though these two systems do bear a new semblance as two 'contest' systems in which individuals must compete for slots, they retain a cultural difference, with a new axis of variation formed around the way they asses admissions merit.

This does not mean that the same student could not gain admission to both, or that many children of the new global elite class do not try. However, there are significant differences in the means by which offers of admission can be legitimated, giving gatekeepers at the two institutions different kinds of latitude to justify their choices. Depending on their background, an applicant may also face very different financial obligations upon admission, with AE being more advantageous to those from lower socio-economic strata (who can gain full scholarships), and BE likely being more advantageous to those from higher socio-economic strata (who will pay less tuition overall). As their admissions processes are not regulated by the same cultures of

valuation or financial dispensation, there is cause to suggest that the ways these two institutions structure pathways into the global elite have not completely converged to a uniform model.

The Aims of Elite Education

Not all of those interviewed agreed with their universities' admissions policies, nor were they necessarily familiar with these cross-national differences. But there was collective sentiment at both AE and BE that their institutions' reputations helped them recruit the "best and brightest" students from around the world, and that they offered these students the best possible undergraduate education. Nonetheless, they had differing visions of what this entails.

Mirroring their focus on students' academic abilities, individuals at BE tended to describe their aim of educating students who would be the best in their academic fields. The international strategy officer related this to what she understood as a British tradition of "specialism and excellence" in education. Others stressed how the university's education was "first-rate" and had a history of educating people "to a particularly high level." One administrator who worked on curriculum policy explained that the university brought in "talented people" and was engaged in "curating" them "in a selective way." Another interviewee reflected similarly that BE students are "thrown into a very high pressured, high quality, highly competitive course from day one." She contrasted this intensity and depth with American elite universities, which she viewed as offering an education that was "broader" and "shallower."

Interviewees at AE may have seen their educational offering as similarly excellent; but in conversation they tended not to emphasize competition, selectivity, or specialism as its particular virtues. Instead, they focused on how the university's liberal arts curriculum produced "well-rounded" students who would be able to solve "complex global problems" such as international debt, population growth, and climate change. One dean who oversaw the university's general education curricular requirements referred to their students as "go-getters" and explained the rationale for the university's core liberal arts courses thus: "Our students are going to go out in the world and be leaders and citizens and we want them to be informed, educated, and thoughtful leaders and citizens. And that's what we want them to be getting out of this." As part of this aim, she wanted to ensure students understood "something about global forces" and that they had "deep knowledge about

cultural differences," especially, as she noted, before trying to effect change in foreign countries. The director of international admissions echoed this view, explaining that he believed they were "investing in students as individuals" and giving them "the skills and abilities to do good things with their lives." He was adamant that graduates would go on to use their education from AE "for the benefit of a bigger ripple" in the world – reflecting the focus on "social utility" in their admissions decisions described above.

Personnel at AE also tended to view undergraduate education, or the experience of "college," as a fundamentally transformational time in their students' lives. A dean of students referred to their need to recognize that students are "still developing people," and that as they begin to make choices concerning their adult lives, they need "nurturance and oversight and guidance." Corresponding with the view that incoming students would contribute to the community at AE, these personnel also imagined that they were contributing to students' growth. One dean related her vision that they were working to produce "global citizens," who would recognize that many of the world's problems must be solved globally, and would appreciate the challenges of seeing things from other cultures' perspectives. By admitting both domestic and international students and giving them four years to be educated together, another administrator explained that AE was "making the world a better place."

Individuals at BE shared similarly altruistic visions of their institution's role in the world, but they linked this much more to the university's research outputs, like producing cures for global diseases, than to any effort to transform their students as emerging adults. In fact, some were expressly opposed to the idea that the university should be doing anything like this. One administrator related that she and her colleagues viewed the idea of global citizenship as "kind of shallow" and "passé." She elaborated:

> I think nothing makes you a better global citizen than being the top global person in your area (laughs).... I think it's important that people have the right support within their area to do the best they can within their studies and to do the best they can internationally within their role.... but I don't – the idea that you somehow train people, you know somehow in globalization, other than that, other than how it pertains to their subject, to me seems like a distraction from developing excellence.

At BE, participants related that the focus of undergraduate education was thus on preparing students to "develop excellence" in particular subjects,

so that they could work on global challenges through research. These individuals spoke about their graduates getting "elite jobs. . . . some of the best jobs in the world," attaining "world leading roles and influence," and going on "to do phenomenal things," espousing in practical terms what they believed their rigorous teaching and high-status credential offered their pupils. But the vision at AE was broader, as personnel there spoke more passionately, elaborately and idealistically about their graduates effecting social change in the world as a result of their unique experiences at the institution.

These data suggest that the undergraduate experience of these two academic institutions is not entirely interchangeable. At AE, just as admissions processes have been regulated by conceptions of "character" and "social utility," so too is the vision of the ideal student that of a generalist with a broad liberal arts education, primed to effect social change. Meanwhile at BE, a focus on "specialism and excellence" is similarly evident in both the admissions process and the approach to "curating" students, with the model student someone who becomes a leading expert in a particular academic field. It is not possible from this study to assess how these institutional conceptions permeate students' views of themselves, but it is possible to surmise that they are exposed to these different expectations about their future social contributions. Rather than together helping to produce a global elite with uniform attitudes and values then, these interviews reveal how these universities continue to reflect national educational traditions. As Cookson and Persell (1985) suggested a generation ago, personnel at elite American and British educational institutions seem to approach education with different goals in mind, even if they simultaneously share some components in common.

Linkages with National Society

So far the emphasis has been on cultural differences between AE and BE; but there is also a key similarity they share, as there are some ways in which both remain strongly tethered to their national societies. For example, both continue to predominantly admit undergraduate students who are national citizens, even though they do not claim, officially, that such national service is part of their mission. Thus at AE, international student enrollment has not surpassed 15 percent of an incoming class, and at BE, it has not surpassed 20 percent. There are admittedly fewer international

applicants than domestic ones to both institutions; but to suggest that national membership has nothing to do with admissions is to overlook the fact that there are annually recurring limitations on how many international students are offered slots, or that their personnel may choose to keep this population in check.

For example, some personnel at these two universities explained that they felt this was important, as they saw these institutions as somewhat obligated to serve their national populations first. One administrator explained:

> You don't want to jettison that valuable resource you have in the UK in this institution... and throw that overboard and say that doesn't matter, we'll just open the gates to all comers. I think there's still a sense... there's an obligation to development talent within the country.

To him, BE was a "valuable resource" to the country that should continue to be protected. Another administrator who worked in BE's office of diversity and equities concurred, explaining that there was massive domestic demand for admission which had to be met. She related: "Most high achieving students in UK schools will see it as the pinnacle of what they want to achieve." Even a relatively younger interviewee, who was a recent graduate elected as a representative for BE's student union, shared this view:

> It's actually a view – and it's something we've talked about here, me and my colleagues, a lot recently. It's something I'm very uncomfortable about and it's something that my British colleagues are very uncomfortable about.... I'm not particularly patriotic and everyone I spoke to about this felt the same, but there is something ingrained deep (laughs) down inside me that makes me feel like [this university] has a responsibility to the UK to train a particular percentage of British students.

Despite his own discomfort with the idea, this interviewee, and others, expressed strong feelings that BE should continue to admit and train British students in high numbers.

At AE, similarly, an administrator working in the office for international students and scholars suggested at first that the university did not have any national obligations to the US. Despite this initial reluctance, over the course of the interview she changed her mind: "I'm going to backtrack

now on half my answers," she said, "but I think the university probably *does* have . . . the university feels an obligation to the American students, to give them the opportunity." Though she was unfamiliar with any discussions about limiting the number of international students admitted, she had the sense that such conversations were probably taking place in other parts of her institution. An administrator working on the business school's international programs who had worked there for 20 years likewise shared that such a national sentiment to admit US students remained in the air, particularly among some of the school's alumni and donors. He related: "I think we still feel as though there's a responsibility to the US, to the US economy, and to the US business world."

As mentioned above, there were some personnel who spoke about producing global citizens or world leaders at both sites. However, these comments were intertwined with others which positioned these universities as still having a responsibility to train leaders for their national societies. At BE, one administrator related that the university was historically seen as an "incubator" for leadership in the UK, and that it remained an important British institution, "like the monarchy and the BBC." As such, she emphasized that it was still important for the university to serve as an "escalator of opportunity" for people going into national leadership roles. Others agreed, with some noting in particular that if more students were admitted from the international realm, it would challenge BE's efforts to admit enough domestic students from lower social class backgrounds, an issue which they stressed as important. One administrator offered that BE was not really 'global' at the undergraduate level, even as much as it was seen as a global leader in terms of its graduate education and cutting-edge research. Similarly, the representative of the student union clarified that the university had a "mixture" of obligations, functioning to help humanity as well as to help British people.

At AE, an administrator in the central international office questioned whether the university was truly 'global' too:

> Are we an American institution with a global reach, or are we a global institution that happens to be situated in the United States? I'm pretty sure the answer today is the former, a US institution with a global reach; and for the foreseeable future I would see it being the same. . . . I think there are certain values [which] probably cannot be decoupled from our location in the United States.

As much as this administrator recognized the institution's "global reach," he also recognized that its values were still strongly tethered to its national context. Another administrator who worked in communications was similarly reluctant to say that they did not have any national obligations, and sought to balance the two: "We care deeply about the American government system and about American citizens, but we also care about the world and about being a citizen of the world, as well as a citizen of this country." Elaborating on this idea, she stressed, "I don't think that one is at the expense of the other."

Thus not only do these institutions each overwhelmingly admit their own national citizens as students, they also continue to be seen by some of their personnel as national institutions, subject to national obligations and reflecting national values. Although not all interviewees espoused these views in concert, their endurance reflects the reality that the national has not necessarily faded with globalization, a view which has been espoused by others (Marginson and Rhoades 2002; Nelson and Wei 2012). Such national linkages remain largely implicit for university personnel when they discuss their work to produce future leaders, even when they also expect students to develop particular mindsets toward cultural differences or global responsibilities. As much as their students are forecasted to become world leaders, students admitted from their domestic pools still attend institutions where one message in circulation is that they continue to serve national interests. Some personnel, especially in the US, were somewhat reluctant to express this, or, in the case of the student representative in the UK, regretted it. But they nonetheless related that the national was important to these institutions' historic legacies and contemporary mandates.

Discussion: The Endurance of the National in Elite Universities

It is evident from these three comparisons that to visit these two universities and speak with their personnel is not to visit two sites that are entirely alike in their priorities and values. Though they do share a great deal in common – for example, in their similar positioning atop their domestic higher education systems, in their dispensation of high-status credentials, and in their ontologies as institutions responsible for research and teaching – it is also apparent that some

aspects of their ongoing operation remain dependent on traditions which are nationally based, and nationally variable.

Thus at BE, personnel emphasized their limited focus on academic ability as the sole determining factor in admissions, which is reflected in the way their admissions process has been organized, with professors central to all stages of decision-making. The university also offers limited financial support to its international applicants, which may play a significant role in who chooses to apply, and who is able to take advantage of admission offers. Further, personnel at BE collectively extolled the virtues of their competitive, selective, and specialized educational offering, stressing how this would produce individuals who were the best in their fields. Thereby, they prized the depth and rigor of their education as its signal value. Although some discussed how their students would move into positions of national and global leadership, they did not really connect such career trajectories to the experience of studying at BE, but rather to the talent that incoming students already possessed, which they simply sought to harness into an acumen for excellence.

By contrast, personnel at AE detailed their holistic evaluation of applicants, their general liberal arts curriculum, and their aim to produce "thoughtful leaders and citizens" who would go on to solve global problems. Admissions processes were not just structured differently at AE; they operated according to a unique logic, the product of a past decision to give their personnel greater discretion in admissions decisions (Karabel 2005). In this system, applicants are evaluated by admissions professionals rather than academic specialists, and are interviewed by alumni who, in theory, exemplify the "character" traits the institution is searching for, and know how to identify them in others. There is also much greater latitude at AE to admit students regardless of their financial background, and an emphasis placed on how incoming students will contribute to the university's community, first as a student, but later, as an alum and potential donor. Education at AE is thus largely viewed as a transformational experience, aiming to catalyze individual growth, civic responsibility, and produce more generalists than specialists. In interviews at AE, there was an explicit and widespread focus on the ideal of preparing students to improve the world and work across cultures – a focus on "social utility." Whereas, to some at BE, such extra-curricular and extra-academic engagement was viewed as peripheral to the institution's core responsibilities, which centered on "individual merit."

The implication of these cultural differences is not that there is no global elite class or that these universities do not play a role in its production. However, this comparison does suggest that the educational pathways through these two universities each remain marked by the national in significant ways. Even as various policies and practices between them are convergent (Pickard 2014), it is the endurance of these national traditions, alongside ostensibly global trends, which deserves greater scholarly consideration. As Laura Adams (2008) has theorized elsewhere, this is perhaps best understood as a convergence in cultural form rather than total convergence in cultural content. By this I mean that though many of the structures and practices of higher education have become undeniably similar between the two contexts, elements of cultural content – such as how university personnel judge merit or articulate their institutions' purpose – have not necessarily become cross-nationally uniform. Just as Adams used the distinction between form and content to explain the worldwide diffusion of forms of cultural production (such as the importance of a 'national' dance), alongside the reproduction of different kinds of cultural content (such as different kinds of dance steps), so too am I suggesting that convergence in these elite educational institutions can be partial, allowing them to appear similar in many ways, yet remain different in others.

In as much as these universities have been conceived as institutions for the cultural production of a global elite then, they are better understood as incubators of high-status dispositions that derived their power historically from their distinctly national fields, and largely, continue to do so. While they may bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds in a spirit of cosmopolitanism, AE and BE are also each tethered to their national contexts, producing somewhat competing – rather than consensual – visions of merit, and of what an elite undergraduate education entails. In essence, the cultural differences highlighted in this chapter seem to have largely impeded the total cross-national convergence in the idea and practice of elite higher education, even when other aspects of the elite research university as an organizational model appear globally homogenous (Baker 2014).

Thus while Freeland (2012) and others have articulated a vision of a global elite operating across national borders and developing a shared identity, these findings suggest that scholars must go farther in exploring cross-national variation among these individuals. In particular, for those who look at AE and BE as institutional breeding grounds for this transnational class, there is a need for more nuanced analysis of the values and

expectations to which their students are being socialized. Some scholars, like Calhoun (2007), have been emphatic that nationalism remains the means of organizing and dividing the world, even in the contemporary globalized era, and this view is largely supported by these findings, as the national has not faded as a form of difference, nor ideological tether, for personnel at these institutions. It is possible, of course, that the visions articulated by participants in this study do not trickle down into actual experiences of their students, and that another sample of interviewees, perhaps drawn exclusively from the ranks of faculty, would illuminate a different picture. However, it is also likely that even members of the global elite continue to experience national borders and cultural differences in significant ways, and that such differences remain present in the educational institutions through which their children are molded for the future. Examining how these populations modulate between the national and the global, and how institutions like elite universities experience both at the same time, may be of more analytic utility than suggesting that all has become 'global' in a homogenous and uniform fashion.

Finally, it is also necessary to consider the distinctly national benefits to the US and UK of having universities that have attained supreme global status. For, as the credentials they offer have come to be seen as essential capital on the trajectory into the global elite, AE, BE, and some of their domestic institutional peers, have been able to attract many of the world's highest-achieving students. By continuing to predominantly admit students from their own national populations however, they privilege the transition of their own citizens into positions of global power (Igarashi and Saito 2014). Research into the global elite, therefore, as much as it has centered on the transcendence of the nation-state system, must do more to recognize that this class has emerged in a world-system where older international inequalities linger, and where the national retains significant power over some of the mechanisms of elite production, such as elite universities. As such, the production of the global elite may be global in its repercussions, but the processes behind it continue to favor middle and upper class children born in Western countries to English-speaking parents. Likewise, while the national may indeed be more muted today in globalizing processes, its historic entanglement with elite universities remains a part of the way they process students for positions of global leadership.

Concerning the claim that institutions like AE and BE have together come to produce a global elite class then, this chapter suggests the

need for a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Indeed, the production of the global elite may not be as harmonious as has been previously presumed, as elites from different countries may share some forms cosmopolitan capital and fellowship in common, yet fall short of forming a cohesive "nation unto themselves." That elite universities in multiple countries have come to be seen as incubators for this transnational class suggests that the ways in which they converge and diverge in their cultural and organizational practices are important topics for further consideration. As yet, these findings challenge the view that the global elite has come to be constituted as an entirely denationalized social formation.

Notes

1. Special thanks to the volume editors and to Mitchell Stevens for helpful comments on earlier versions of this chapter.
2. For more on the notion of 'third culture kids,' see Fail et al. (2004).
3. Of the 20 interviews analyzed for this chapter, 19 were conducted in face-to-face meetings in participants' offices, and one was conducted via telephone. All of those interviewed gave consent to participate in the study, and interview length varied depending on their availability, with an average interview length of 73 minutes. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and then analyzed using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti.
4. Quotations in this chapter have been reproduced verbatim from the transcripts of the interviews, but false starts were removed. Ellipses with three periods indicate pauses in the comments of the interviewees, and four periods indicate where some text was omitted.

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CHAPTER 15

Academic Identity Constructions of the Écoles Normales Supérieures and the Challenges of Internationalization

Anne Schippling, Johannes Zimmermann and Maria Schmidt

Introduction: France's Elite Education System in the Process of Transformation

In comparison to elite education systems in other national contexts, the French system could be considered an *exception française* (French exception) (Lazuech 1999) in relation to its structure and function, as well as to the rigor of the selection process. The remarkable influence of the state over the centuries and in different historical contexts has played a central role in this since the foundation of the

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first *grandes écoles* in the late eighteenth century; these prestigious colleges included the École polytechnique (l'X) and the École normale supérieure (ENS), which were both founded in 1794. These institutions were founded to complement universities in forming a functionally specialized elite in areas such as engineering, administration, and the military. In this context, the French higher education system is characterized by a fundamental dualism, which dates back to the eighteenth century: the separation of universities and *grandes écoles*. While universities have developed into institutions of 'mass' education, due to the expansion process in the French education system, the *grandes écoles* have remained highly selective.

In his study of the French elite education system, Pierre Bourdieu (1989, p.163) differentiates between two domains: the intellectual, scientifically orientated domain, which includes the ENS institutions, and the economic and administrative domain, which incorporates the École des hautes études commerciales (HEC), school of management and the École nationale d'administration (ENA), school of government and administration.

In a national context, the influence of the state and the strong anchoring of elite education in French institutions relate to an understanding of the school as a public institution, which guarantees the principle of equal access (freedom from discrimination, neutrality, and secularism, based on the ideals of the French Revolution). These ideals are also manifest in the *concours*,[1] the *grandes écoles*' highly competitive selection procedures, which follow a meritocratic logic (see Darchy-Koechlin and Van Zanten 2005; Zymek 2014; Van Zanten and Maxwell 2015).

At the same time, this selectivity is also influenced by social factors, as Bourdieu and colleagues showed in their influential work using data from the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Bourdieu 1989; Bourdieu and De Saint Martin 1978, 1987). More recent quantitative studies on the social composition of students confirmed the social closure of these elite colleges (see Baudelot and Matonti 1994; Euriat and Thélot 1995; Albouy and Wanecq 2003; Institut Montaigne 2006).

Since 2001, there have been several initiatives aimed at making the *grandes écoles* more accessible to a wider section of society, such as the introduction of tutorial programs that provide students from disadvantaged backgrounds with intensive supervision and systematic preparation for entrance to elite colleges. One example of this is the Une grande école pourquoi pas moi[2](PQPM) program, which was developed by the École

supérieure des sciences économiques et commerciales (ESSEC) in 2002; many similar programs were introduced at other *grandes écoles* in the ensuing years. The *grande école* Sciences Po introduced a different model in 2000/2001; the Conventions d'Éducation Prioritaire (CEP) aimed at structurally changing access procedures, however, this model was not reproduced. All in all, attempts to make structural changes have largely been unsuccessful (see Van Zanten 2010; Beaud and Convert 2010; Pasquali 2010; Allouch 2013; Schippling and Allouch 2015; Van Zanten and Maxwell 2015).

The process of internationalization is another aspect of the current transformations in the French higher education system that has affected the *grandes écoles* in particular. Pierre Veltz (2007, p.59) concludes that these institutions are "particularly affected by global changes" due to their strong foundations in national culture. The *grandes écoles* are based on a selection system regulated by the state and this hence constitutes an important part of their raison d'être. If this key component were to be challenged by internationalization processes, it would threaten the unique position of the *écoles* (for further details, see Chapter 5 in this book).

At the same time, international opening has become a key component of the institutional image of the *grandes écoles.* In an atmosphere of increasing national and international competition between higher education institutions and research, which is characterized, for example, by the growing importance attributed to rankings and the necessity for cooperation, the *grandes écoles* could no longer ignore these issues.

The effects of international opening in recent decades can be found within the microcosm of elite colleges, for example, in the way different national and international student groups are perceived in terms of status (see Darchy-Koechlin and Draelants 2010; Darchy-Koechlin 2012). The challenges of internationalization have brought about changes and shifts in the "institutional habitus" (Reay 1998) of the *grandes écoles* and the self-perception of the protagonists in these institutions. International opening has therefore had a direct impact on the academic identity patterns of elite colleges (see also Schippling forthcoming).[3]

This chapter focuses on an analysis of how processes of internationalization influence the institutional habitus, understood as "the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behavior as it is mediated through an organization" (Reay 1998, p.521). In this context, a special focus is placed on the analysis of the social construction processes of the institutional habitus of the Écoles normales supérieures. The chapter is

based on case studies of two ENS: the oldest ENS in the center of Paris, ENS de la rue d'Ulm, and the ENS de Cachan in the south of the city.

After an introduction to the French elite education system and current transformation processes, there will be a discussion on the internationalization dimension of the ENS, both from a historical perspective and in relation to current aspects. This is followed by the results of an analysis of the social construction processes of the colleges' institutional habitus. We draw on expert interviews with academic staff at two ENS.[4] Finally, there is a discussion about the consequences of internationalization processes for the identity construction of these colleges; this includes a prospective view.

ENS and the Challenge of Internationalization

Role of ENS Institutions and Students/graduates in the French Academic Landscape

The ENS are ascribed a specific locale in the French academic landscape. As traditional places of elite education, they clearly belong to the universe of the *grandes écoles*. They are public higher education institutions characterized by stringent entrance requirements and a restricted number of students. The ENS are connected to specific preparatory classes (*classes préparatoires*), which follow on from 12th grade and prepare students for the *concours* at the *grandes écoles*. This institution emerged in the nineteenth century and constitutes an "independent system of institutional, professional and regional hierarchy of the French education system" (Zymek 2014, p.64; see also; Sirinelli 1997). Of all the French *grandes écoles*, the ENS and their related preparatory classes are considered some of the most selective. In addition, they occupy a special position in the field of *grandes écoles* and in the academic landscape as a whole. This is because they traditionally served as establishments for the state education of teachers; during the twentieth century, they developed into the most renowned institutes of education for young scientists (see Karady 1986; Bourdieu 1988).

The oldest of the ENS, the ENS de la rue d'Ulm, which was founded in 1794 and is located in the center of Paris, presents itself as "an elite higher education institution (graduate school) for advanced undergraduate and graduate studies, and a prestigious French research center" (ENS Ulm 2016). It offers study and graduate programs in natural sciences and the humanities. The ENS de Cachan was founded in 1912 and is situated in the south of Paris; its initial aim was to

educate teachers in technical fields. It now specializes in (applied) natural sciences and technical courses.[5]

All ENS in France award the standard European qualifications: bachelor's (*licence*), Master's, PhDs, and additionally, the ENS institutional diploma. Only the first year of study in the ENS is undergraduate training corresponding to the third year of a bachelor's (*licence*) course at university. All the other study years are graduate training, including two years of Master's courses and one year dedicated to preparing students for research or professional training.

The aim of the ENS is firstly to enable students to "quickly become real researchers" (ENS Ulm 2015). Especially since the mid-twentieth century, the *normalien/nes* (the term used to refer to students/graduates who entered the ENS via the traditional routes) has had a "unique influence" (Rieffel 1994, p.215), not only on the French academic field, but also on the intellectual landscape. The peak of this influence is apparent in the assumption of the existence of an "*esprit normalien*" (*normalien* spirit) (Debray 1993, p.21).

Today, the principal object of both the above mentioned ENS is still the formation of a national research elite. The vast majority of ENS graduates complete their studies with a PhD at their own École (at ENS de la rue d'Ulm, this is about 80 percent of graduates), often having conducted a research project with a public research organization or state administrative department, or at other *grandes écoles* or universities.

Consequently, the formation of an academic elite has evolved. Today, many ENS graduates work in high public functions following careers in research (particularly in national scientific organs or industrial research centers), in the higher ranks of the civil service (governmental departments, technical service or ENA) or in teaching (at universities or in *classes préparatoires, grandes écoles,* or other schools). But there are also graduates working in private enterprises (business and finance, journalism and publishing, etc.). The ENS de Cachan places a stronger emphasis on the private sector.

History of Internationalization and Current Transformation Processes at ENS

The idea of internationalization has been related to the ENS for centuries. Traditionally, this idea was more closely related to connections between French and foreign teaching education institutions worldwide which were

orientated toward the model of the French ENS, such as the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (SNS), founded in 1810 by Napoleon I and the Collège Eötvös, founded in 1895 in Budapest. Both these institutions still have highly developed exchange programs with the ENS in France, although these exchanges are now more research-oriented. There are also various ENS in former French colonies, such as the ENS de Casablanca and the ENS de Marrakesh in Morocco, the ENS de Port-Au-Prince in Haiti, and the ENS de Constantine in Algeria.

During the twentieth century, there was a shift in international cooperation from teacher education toward research. Though it is still one of their objectives, teacher education has become less important for the French ENS. This particularly concerns the European and worldwide ENS, some of which are now members of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie, a worldwide network of francophone institutions of higher education and research.

In the last few decades, processes of internationalization have entered a new dimension. As a result of growing national and international competition, research output orientated rankings, such as the Academic Ranking of World Universities, have become more important. They are seen as a challenge to the French ENS, which are now faced with previously unknown problems. Orivel (2004, p.2) points out that the *grandes écoles* "have neither the critical size nor the pluridisciplinarity" to attain a good position in these international rankings.[6] Even if the ENS are an exception because they focus on pluridisciplinary research and are heavily involved in international research cooperations, they are too small in size in comparison with research-orientated universities worldwide.

As a reaction, state subsidy programs were initiated to promote the formation of larger research clusters. They include, for example, the program for the creation of Pôles de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur (PRES) launched in 2007, the Investissements d'Avenir initiated in 2010 and the creation of the Communautés d'Universités et d'Etablissements (ComUE) in 2013. The ComUE promotes cooperation between member institutions to a greater extent than the other programs. In the case of the ENS, it is evident that the various *écoles* are all members of several associations. The ENS de la rue d'Ulm is a member of the association Paris Sciences et Lettres (PSL) (renamed PSL Research University in 2013), in which different institutions like the Collège de France, the Observatoire de Paris or the Université Paris-Dauphine

cooperate mainly on research. The ENS de Cachan is a member of the research alliance Paris-Saclay (renamed Université Paris-Saclay in 2014) of which the École polytechnique (l'X), the École des hautes études commerciales (HEC) and the Université Paris-Sud are also members.

Increased International Mobility and Cooperation

The *grandes écoles* developed different strategies in response to the need for greater international visibility at the level of higher education in international comparison. One strategy refers to increasing the international mobility of students and researchers. The ENS de Cachan website includes the following text under the heading *ouverture internationale* (international opening):

> The presence of numerous students, researchers and foreign teachers from all over the world on our campus, as well as the increasing international mobility of pupils and students are a sign of a declared intention to open up.[7] (ENS Cachan 2016)

All ENS students are expected to go abroad for one or two semesters during their course of study. They have a choice of options: studying at international higher education institutions which have bilateral agreements with ENS, working as assistant teachers for French as a foreign language at universities, participating in Erasmus exchange programs, international internships and research stages for scientists, or volunteering internationally (in teaching, culture, sciences, humanitarian aid, etc.).

At the same time, the ENS are increasingly attempting to attract incoming teachers and students. The ENS de la rue d'Ulm reports that "hundreds" of professors and foreign researchers stay every year for more than six months, over 100 Erasmus students and around 100 other international students come to the ENS through bilateral cooperation. In addition, nearly 300 foreign researchers work in the ENS' laboratories. However, despite transformation processes regarding admission (see Section "Increased International Mobility and Cooperation"), compared to other French higher education institutions, the numbers of international students at the ENS are modest (see Schmeken 2013, p.68). This is largely due to the orientation toward national culture and the nature of the admission procedures, especially in the humanities.

The ENS are also extending their cooperation networks to different research fields with research organizations worldwide. Cooperations involve university exchanges and international research cooperations, as well as joint international programs for applied research in most European countries and worldwide. The ENS Ulm participates in "annual exchanges with countries of high scientific repute such as the United States or Japan, as well as emerging countries like China and India" and "a constantly increasing number of science and humanities summer schools aimed at ever-more varied nationalities" (ENS Ulm 2016). Another example is the promotion of integrated double courses and double diplomas. The ENS de Cachan, for example, promotes a specific international predoctoral and joint PhD program with the East China Normal University in Shanghai, and double diploma programs with universities in Spain and Poland.

Consequences for Admission Paths and the Student Microcosm

Efforts toward internationalization are also affecting the selection procedures in the ENS, as well as the microcosm of students. After completing two or three years of higher education, foreign students from the EU are able to take part in the traditional *concours* selection process. However, their chances of success in the *classes préparatoires,* as well as in the *concours* itself, are very limited. The *classes préparatoires* for arts and humanities present a particular challenge as participation in these classes requires a perfect command of the French language and an in-depth knowledge of French culture, both of which are difficult for foreign students to acquire.

Due to this contradiction between an increased opening of the institution on the one hand, and the traditional means of access on the other, a second admission track was initiated for international students at the ENS de la rue d'Ulm. The so-called *sélection internationale* is an opportunity for foreign students to enter an ENS in the last year of their bachelor's or the first year of their Master's program. The examination, which is composed of a written application and interviews, can be taken by students from foreign universities. However, this only provides access for a small number of students as only 25 to 30 applicants are accepted each year. The admitted students receive a scholarship of around €1000 for a duration of four years. At the end of their studies, they are awarded the ENS diploma, as well as a Master's degree, but they do not gain full *normalien/ne* status as a

fonctionnaire-stagiaire (trainee civil servant). The introduction of new admission paths led to the formation of other student groups in addition to the *normalien/nes*, who had passed the traditional *concours*. This affected the student microcosm as a whole, for example, in terms of the perceived status of national and international student groups (see Darchy-Koechlin and Draelants 2010; Darchy-Koechlin 2012).

Reconstruction of Institutional Habitus: Theoretical and Methodological Contexts

The analysis of the academic identity of the ENS is based on the interpretation of expert interviews with 23 professors and lecturers at the ENS de la rue d'Ulm and the ENS de Cachan. The interviews are designed in a "theory generating" manner (Bogner et al. 2005, p. 37f.) and primarily aim at generating an "institutional knowledge" (Meuser and Nagel 2005, p. 75); the experts are therefore considered less as individuals and more as representatives of the corresponding institution. Based on combination of a snowball and theoretical sampling (see Glaser and Strauss 1998), the interviewees were selected due to their representative functions within the colleges, mostly as members of the college leadership or of other associations and committees.

The data analysis was conducted using the documentary method (see Bohnsack 2010; Nohl 2012). Due to its methodological duplicity of "formulating" and "reflecting interpretation", this method allows explicit knowledge of the academic identity of these institutions to be identified with a special focus on the issue of internationalization; it also allows underlying implicit knowledge to be reconstructed (see also Polanyi 1958).

The research project positions itself in a theoretical dimension within research on elites based on the Bourdieusian theory of social reproduction and its further development (see Bourdieu 1989; Bourdieu and De Saint Martin 1978, 1987; Hartmann 2004; Darchy-Koechlin and Van Zanten 2005; Karabel 2005; Krüger and Helsper 2014; Van Zanten et al. 2015; Maxwell and Aggleton 2016). The work represents a continuation of the works of Pierre Bourdieu and colleagues on the French elite education system; it refers to key concepts such as 'field' and 'habitus', which are understood as heuristic elements and can be further developed and modified if required (see also Krüger 2000).

The concept of habitus is understood as institutional habitus. The elements of academic identity, such as the issue of internationalization and related aspects, are understood as elements of an institutional habitus. Academic identity focuses on the identity of scholarly organizations, which are considered as "social constructions fundamentally co-constituted by their institutional environment and the internal practices" (Dralents and Dumay 2011, p.4).

Academic identity is (re)produced by processes of social construction such as the distinction and formation of coherence processes. In order to analyze these processes and to reconstruct habitus configurations on a micro-sociological level, Bourdieusian theory was further developed with recourse to Ralf Bohnsack's (2010) sociology of knowledge (see also Krüger et al. 2016).

(Re)shaping Academic Identities of ENS: Processes of Distinction and Coherence Formation

The analysis of institutional habitus at the ENS de la rue d'Ulm and the ENS de Cachan identified different processes of distinction and coherence formation on different levels within this academic subfield. On the one hand, these processes play a decisive role in the (re)production of power relations in the subfield. On the other hand, they illustrate shifting forces and repositioning processes as they have a direct influence on the internal identity constructions at these institutions.

Processes of distinction and coherence formation – in this case regarding internationalization and related aspects – took place on four different levels within the academic field, namely the relationship of the ENS with

(1) other ENS,
(2) French universities,
(3) other *grandes écoles*, and
(4) international universities and higher education institutions.

Level 1: Écoles Normales Supérieures

The identity construction of the ENS de Cachan is frequently characterized by a distinction in relation to the ENS de la rue d'Ulm. This institution serves as a negative reference point regarding its orientation toward tradition and its strong closeness to the outside world:

> [. . .] so, a student who enters rue d'Ulm, well, he feels like he's entering the school of Aron, of Sartre, of Foucault, of Bourdieu, so he has quite a lot of weight to carry on his shoulders, it's like entering a kind of temple, and, here you do not enter a temple. (Monsieur Laval,[8] ENS Cachan)

The use of the metaphor "temple" emphasizes the seclusion from the outside world, an image constructed by the ENS de Cachan to illustrate a distancing from the identity construction of the ENS de la rue d'Ulm. The citation also shows that for a student, entering this college constitutes a "weight to carry on his shoulders." This is illustrated by the naming of famous people who attended the institution. The ENS de Cachan distinguishes itself from this image:

> Well here we are, we have very good students, we have people who have had, who are having very interesting careers and who will perhaps be the next Bourdieu, or the next Foucault, [. . .] but we don't have this weight, if you want, of the history. (Monsieur Laval, ENS Cachan)

Here the professor distances his institution from the "history" of the ENS de la rue d'Ulm, which has famous alumni. In his view, this history constitutes a "weight" which, in turn, is considered neither necessary nor particularly helpful to students developing "very interesting careers." Moreover, distancing the ENS de Cachan from the "temple" metaphor serves to emphasize the ENS de Cachan's openness to the outside world, also regarding research in industrial and economic areas.

In comparison to the other ENS, the specialization of the ENS de Cachan is referred to by the academics as the "practical sciences" (Monsieur Besand, ENS Cachan), which contribute to the concrete improvement of society in a global sense. This idea also influences the orientations of the academic staff regarding their students' education and the professional paths of their graduates. The professors and lecturers at the ENS de Cachan wish their students to quit the closed environment of the schools – as in the "temple" of the ENS de la rue d'Ulm – in order to become engaged in different societal fields on both a national and international level:

> We have students, for example, who build schools in Laos, in Madagascar, things like that. I like that. They are students who believe in certain things and who do not hesitate to invest time, especially to get active to do specific

> things. So yes, that is good. That is a *normalien*, okay. He is brilliant and at the same time he gives something back to society, he contributes to society. (Monsieur Monier, ENS Cachan)

This shows that the students of Cachan are expected not only to be "brilliant" in their disciplines, but to also have the capability to engage in a more international context and operate in international society.

By contrast, in the interviews with academic staff from the ENS de la rue d'Ulm, there are no processes of distinction or coherence formation related to the ENS de Cachan. In their identity construction, there is no necessity to refer to the other ENS; this indicates a hierarchic structure within the field of the ENS; the ENS de la rue d'Ulm considers itself to be at the top of this hierarchy in terms of reputation. This reflects Bourdieu's claim (1988, p.XIX) that the ENS de la rue d'Ulm is positioned at the "apex of the whole academic hierarchy." While the ENS de Cachan distinguishes itself from the other ENS by outlining its orientation towards applied sciences and international opening, the ENS de la rue d'Ulm does not refer to the ENS de Cachan in its identity construction.

Level 2: French Universities

Within the discourses on self-representation of both the ENS analyzed, there is a striking distinction with regard to French universities, which function mostly as a negative reference point. The first distinction is based on size; in terms of research and teaching, the ENS' small size facilitates a close proximity of students and research:

> Well, the École normale supérieure in fact offers a huge variety of disciplines, I can tell you, here you can find almost every single discipline, except for medicine, but with small student numbers, right, small student numbers, so you find a really close proximity between research and students. (Monsieur Muller, ENS Ulm)

In comparison to French universities, the limited size of the ENS is a recurring theme in the discourses on self-representation at both ENS. With a strong focus on interdisciplinarity, the objective of forming

"real researchers" (ENS Ulm 2015) is highlighted at both ENS, partly also with reference to the Humboldtian idea of the unity of research and teaching. Due to their size, French universities cannot offer this close proximity between students and researchers.

The fact that, as a member of Paris-Saclay, the ENS de Cachan in particular cooperates with French universities is not greatly discussed in the interviews with professors. Thus, it can be assumed that these cooperations do not significantly affect the identity constructions of the ENS, perhaps because they are not particularly strong. It is possible that this situation will change with the ENS de Cachan's planned move to the Paris-Saclay campus in 2018 (see Chapter 5 in this volume).

Furthermore, ENS are in a better financial position than universities, which has resulted in a second major distinction:

> We have many resources, we have huge financial resources, well I'd say we have much larger resources than universities [. . .] so why are my students paid almost 2000 euros a month? Well, 1600 euros a month? Well, because we are an institution of national repute, otherwise why would such inequality exist? (Monsieur Laval, ENS Cachan)

The distinction between the *grandes écoles* and universities is also manifest in the different levels of student status. As the traditional student population of the ENS admitted through the *concours,* the *normalien/nes* acquire national trainee civil servant status; they receive a salary for the four years of their studies and are required to commit themselves to working in the public sector for a six-year period after completing their studies. The status of *normalien/nes* at the ENS, which is defended by referring to the national importance of elite education at this institution, clearly differs from the status of university students and leads to forms of "inequality."

This distinction is also legitimized by an emphasis on the rigorousness of the ENS selection processes, which was often referred to in the interviews with academic staff. This was clearly distinguished from entry paths to universities: "the selection procedure is completely different to those at universities" (Monsieur Albert, ENS Ulm). This strategy is also reflected in the processes of coherence formation with other *grandes écoles* that have similar strict selection procedures.

Level 3: Grandes Écoles

When it comes to other *grandes écoles*, there are processes of coherence formation regarding the harsh selection procedures as well as processes of distinction. The latter particularly relates to the domain of research and teaching. In order to distinguish themselves from other *grandes écoles,* such as schools of engineering, on the one hand, the ENS focus on interdisciplinarity in both education and research; on the other hand, they refer to the proximity of teaching and research, as well as the goal of producing future researchers:

> Well, the difference to other *grandes écoles* is quite simple. The fact is that we form scientific researchers. Other *grandes écoles* don't do this. (Monsieur Poitier, ENS Ulm)

Other *grandes écoles* only specialize in one discipline and create competent specialists but fewer researchers because, among other things, they lack an interdisciplinary dimension; this is one of the preconditions for success in competitive international research. By contrast, at the ENS, it is emphasized that the majority of students achieve a doctorate and this largely distinguishes these institutions from other *grandes écoles* and universities.

This is also shown in the professors' discourses about their students' choice of school. One professor describes a student who passed "as one of the best in the math *concours*" at both l'Xand ENS de la rue d'Ulm; under pressure from his family, he chose to go to l'X:

> And the first day at the École polytechnique, he was very depressed because he discovered firstly that the École polytechnique was a military school. He was also very depressed because he was with French students who said, who told him, 'I will later on become a managing director of a big national company' et cetera, et cetera. And well, he came to us and said: 'I really want to do research, I will leave the École polytechnique, I want to come to you.' (Monsieur Muller, ENS Ulm)

The strong research orientation of the ENS, in comparison to other *grandes écoles* (in this case, l'X, a highly reputed *grande école* for engineering, which is under the supervision of the Ministry of Defense), is also manifest in the academics' views on education in these institutions and the future careers of their students/graduates. Attaining a high position in industry is a negative reference point in

terms of future career paths, which caused the student in the above-mentioned case to feel "very depressed".

Level 4: International Universities and Higher Education Institutions

It is striking that the following two processes can be identified: on the one hand, there is the distinction between ENS and universities (namely French universities), and on the other, there is the formation of coherence, particularly with top international universities and higher education establishments, which often function as positive reference points.

This can, for example, be seen in the area of research, in particular with regard to universities in Anglo-Saxon countries:

> Well, the École normale supérieure rue d'Ulm is in fact a big higher education establishment for research, so something that would be called, in fact, a research university in Anglo-Saxon countries. (Monsieur Muller, ENS Ulm)

Processes of coherence formation with higher education institutions on an international level also take place with regard to the selection dimensions. After introducing the ENS as selective institutions, one professor also refers to selective universities at an international level:

> […] But in England, there is a selection of the best students that go to Cambridge, to Oxford, to Yale, well to Yale, that's in the United States, but there is a selection. (Monsieur Poitier, ENS Ulm)

Here, the naming of renowned universities on an international scale can be identified as a means of emphasizing the formation of coherence with these institutions, which also have selection procedures to single out the "best students."

Parallel to the coherence formation processes with international universities, students admitted to the *grandes écoles* through alternative selection procedures are perceived differently from the *normalien/nes,* who hold a status of trainee civil servants; this applies, for example, to many of the international students:

> So obviously the *étudiants* arrive here, they will have contact with the *normaliens* for three years. They don't have a salary, they don't live

> here, they don't have any guarantees for the future; they have a different status, you see? (Monsieur Poitier, ENS Ulm)

In relation to references to the student population by academic staff, distinction processes can be identified between the traditional ENS student population (using the title *normalien/nes* for students who entered via the traditional *concours*) and other student groups, including international students, who entered the ENS via alternative selection procedures. The designation *étudiants* (students) is used to refer to these new student groups, which include international students; this term is not applied to the *normalien/nes*. The question of whether the differences between these two student populations also affect their career opportunities remains open; this aspect has not been taken into account in this study but is worthy of further consideration.

"An International Community of Normaliens": A Desirable Target or Dangerous Threat?

The analyzed processes of distinction and coherence formation within the field of the ENS and their relation to other fields in the national and international academic landscape have influenced the identity construction of each college.

Firstly, it is important to stress that, from an organizational standpoint, important traditional coherence and distinction lines are still in place in the field of ENS and in the ENS' relations to other subfields of French higher education institutions. At the same time, internationalization processes and their implications for French elite education institutions have led to shifting transformation processes, especially at an identity construction level.

International universities and higher education institutions, referred to above as level four, have gained relevance in relation to the identity construction of *grandes écoles* in the course of worldwide globalization processes, as shown in the analysis of two ENS.

The sharp distinction between ENS and universities which, until recently, prevailed at a national level (see Chapter 5 in this book), is gradually becoming blurred due to the formation of coherence with international universities. In this context, those critical of internationalization raise concerns about the serious threat to institutions' identities:

> So the École normale supérieure is in a situation where some actors say to themselves, the school needs to develop, to change, and the current trend that is followed and with which, for my part, I don't agree at all, this trend aims at transforming the École normale supérieure into a small university. (Monsieur Poitier, ENS Ulm)

At the same time, cooperations with national universities through the formation of larger research clusters (for example, the Université Paris-Saclay) are rarely mentioned in the interviews with professors and lecturers. This could be seen as an example of the persistence of traditional lines of distinction from French universities.

However, some academics already refer to the ENS as a "research university" (Monsieur Muller, ENS Ulm). Moreover, the clustering of higher education institutions brought into being by the French government to increase international competitiveness is evidence of a gradual blurring of the traditional distinctions between universities and *grandes écoles*; the establishment of the ComUE is an example of this.

A possible shift of the line of distinction concerning the limited size of the ENS compared to other French higher education and research institutions can be placed in the same context. The ENS is a member of several large research clusters (such as PSL research university and Université Paris-Saclay); if the importance of these clusters increases, this could lead to a loss of exclusivity in terms of the ENS' identity construction. When the ENS de Cachan moves to the Université Paris-Saclaycampus in 2018, the college may be faced with transformations in the traditional patterns of identity construction due to new power constellations arising between the institutions on their shared campus.

At the student/graduate level of the ENS, the blurring of the traditional distinction line between *grandes écoles* and universities and the formation of coherence with international universities causes conflicts, especially when it comes to the question of international students' status. On the one hand, there is a desire to create "an international community of *normaliens*":

> The feeling of belonging to a community of *normaliens* and of course, I personally, I would like it to be a feeling of belonging to an international community of *normaliens*, which includes the students from abroad, the boarding students from abroad who were at the school and not only former students. Well, I think we could develop the

> feeling of belonging to the École normale because, for instance, in my opinion it is not very well developed. (Madame Dupont, ENS Ulm)

The aim of including the international students in the *normalien/nes* community marks a shift in the traditional identity construction of a *normalien/ne,* who has the status of a trainee civil servant of the French state and is legitimized by the rigorous *concours* selection procedures. On the other hand, this reshaping of identity due to the emergence of new student populations, such as the international students admitted by alternative entrance procedures, undermines its meritocratic logic and also causes tensions between students, for example in terms of their status perception (see Darchy-Koechlin and Draelants 2010; Zymek 2014; Van Zanten and Maxwell 2015; Darchy-Koechlin et al. 2015). This is another example of a transformation of internal identity construction within the ENS caused by repositioning due to internationalization processes. Consequently, the development of the idea of "an international community of *normaliens*" could be a threat to the traditional identity construction of the ENS because as elite national institutions, they are strongly linked to the *concours* selection system.

All in all, the example of the ENS shows that the strong reference to the international level has led to shifting processes in the identity constructions of the traditionally strong anchoring of these institutions and their students/graduates to a national context; the process of coherence formation with international universities is an example of this. The attempts to respond to the new challenges which accompany internationalization processes and at the same time to hold on to traditional patterns of identity construction have caused ambiguity and contradictions within those constructions. As a result, these identities have been weakened, for example in the case of the traditional idea of the ENS' superiority within the French academic field. On a structural level, it remains to be seen to what extent these changes within the ENS' identity constructions will influence future power relations within this field and in relation to other institutions in the academic field.

Notes

1. A *concours* is a highly selective procedure comprising written exams and oral exams in front of a jury. The number of places on offer to those who pass is determined annually by the state before the exams begin.

2. transl. A *grande école* why not for me.
3. The Bologna process also challenged elite institutions of higher education. As a consequence, study programs had to be restructured in order to allow Master's degrees to be awarded by the *grandes écoles*, in some cases in cooperation with universities. At the same time, the elite institutions retained their particular status and were not integrated into the university system (see Van Zanten and Maxwell 2015).
4. The research project is entitled "French Elite Colleges in the Process of Internationalization. A Qualitative Study of the Écoles normales supérieures" [financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG) from December 1, 2013 to May 31, 2015]. It represents a secondary analysis of an extensive data corpus collected during a research stay at the Centre Maurice Halbwachs, ENS de la rue d'Ulm, in Paris between September 2010 and July 2011 in a different research context (e.g., Schippling 2012, 2013). Six student assistants worked on the project alongside the project director: Johannes Zimmermann, Maria Schmidt, Lydia Barthels, Tabea Tetzner, Wiebke Schramm, and Caroline Nolte. The research project is associated with the research group "Mechanisms of elite formation in the German educational system" (FOR 1612), Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg.
5. There are actually two additional ENS in France: the ENS de Lyon, which merged with the former ENS – Lettres et sciences humaines (ENS-LSH) in 2010 and offers study programs in natural sciences and humanities, and the recently founded ENS de Rennes, which was a branch of ENS de Cachan until 2013.
6. In addition, for most of the *grandes écoles*, due to their specialization in application, the research dimension had not previously been a central aspect (see Cytermann 2007). The strongly research-orientated ENS are an exception here.
7. The project director is responsible for all English translations. These were undertaken in collaboration with Johannes Zimmermann, Maria Schmidt, and Peter Walton. Walton was also responsible for proofreading.
8. Individuals' names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

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CHAPTER 16

Afterword: New Institutional, Inhabited Institutional, and a Cultural-Organizational Approach to Studying Elites and Higher Education

Amy J. Binder

Educational processes, including those at the level of elite higher education, have been at the center of sociological analysis since the earliest days of the discipline. Whether argued to be an institution leading to greater social interdependence and solidarity, such as in Durkheim's work; a site for reproducing material and ideological differences between society's two great classes, as in Marxian thought; or, as Weber argued, a key institution where universalistic assessments have the potential (but rarely the ultimate power) to replace status monopolization by elites, higher education has been a central focus of sociologists seeking to understand the role of elites in modern society. Generations of scholars have taken these themes and enriched them by adding sophisticated methodological tools, focusing on one or another level of education (primary, secondary, and post-secondary education), and comparing national and local systems to one other. The themes first articulated by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim endure into the

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twenty-first century, becoming ever more important as we move into being both a more profoundly "schooled society" (Baker 2014) and, in many developed nations, a more unequal one.

We see evidence of each of these thematic strands, with an especially strong Weberian thread, in the current edited volume, *Universities and the Production of Elites: Discourses, Policies, and Strategies of Excellence and Stratification in Higher Education*. Incorporating new institutional insights, as well as key concepts from Bourdieu and Foucault into their study of mostly European higher education systems and processes, the authors use organizational and cultural lenses to examine the relationship between international, regional, and state-level policy-making; stratified multi-campus systems and universities; and faculty and student statuses worldwide. They demonstrate how discourses and policies produced at the global level – such as promoting the notion that universities' main task is to produce knowledge for the good of economic development – influence elite formation in universities across all nations (see, for example, chapters by Peter, Esterhazy). At the next level down, contributors study the specific mechanisms used by state-level actors – whether through competitive funding flows, various assessments of "excellence," or the creation of new types of degree or student exchange programs – which change the hierarchical stratification of universities within a single nation, often with less than optimal or unintended consequences (see chapters by Paradeise, Hamann, and Isopahkala-Bouret). At another level down, the authors examine how the features of individual universities, through new programs or curricula, directly and indirectly shape the elite identity and pathways of campus stakeholders – for undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty in these institutions (see chapters by Mitterle, Friedman, Bloch, and Maesse). The volume, as a whole, provides essential reading on the synergies that build up these themes. The authors demonstrate that while there are cultural and structural similarities in higher education discourses and policies across nations, there is abundant evidence that elite status is not a fixed state that converges globally. Rather, there is critical variation in how action is carried out in national contexts (see chapters by Friedman, Courtois, and Soulas). No less important, at least for American readers, the volume is significant for being comparative within and across nations, mostly by looking at member states of the European Union, but also China and the United States, which provides a welcome corrective to the American centrism of many researchers studying higher education (Brint 2013).

In this afterword, I reflect on these chapters from the vantage point of having, myself, engaged in research that points to many of the same processes as the authors of this volume write about, albeit in the American context and with a tighter focus on the level of action on university campuses. My own method for studying the formation of elites and elite status is to take what I call a cultural-organizational approach, using comparative cases of universities to study how different campus environments shape actors' understandings of excellence and prestige, refinement and disposition, expected elite trajectories out of school, and appropriate style and action while in school. In my research, I am sensitive to macro-level phenomena affecting elite formation, such as cultural, social, and political trends and events in the world beyond the ivy-covered walls of the university; as well as to micro-level processes, such as the effects of actors' background characteristics on their ability to embrace and embody elite identities. But critical to a cultural-organizational approach is the focus on the *meso*, or organizational, level of universities, to show how campuses' unique cultural reputations and structural arrangements influence the ideas and possibilities for actors' choices on the ground. While I and most other scholars using the cultural-organizational approach have done so mainly to study elite formation among undergraduate students, the approach is valuable for analyzing the experiences of other higher education constituencies on campuses in different nations and in different times, including graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty (Granfield 1992; Lamont 2009); and for studying how university leaders and university system administrators respond to and compete in traditional and emerging hierarchical fields (Davis and Binder 2016; Stevens 2015; Scott 2015).

In the sections that follow, I first sketch in broad strokes the now-classic new institutional approach that a growing number of educational researchers use to study the origin and diffusion of elite practices and identities in educational settings. Then, aligned with the sensibilities of several contributors to this volume, I lay out several of the critiques that sociologists have leveled against new institutional theory – in particular, its advocates' emphasis on organizational isomorphism and their general neglect of power and interests within institutional fields. I propose that the relatively new "inhabited institutions" mode of organizational analysis (Hallett and Ventresca 2006a, 2006b; Hallett 2010; Binder 2007) is among the best alternatives for understanding the fit between logics governing higher education at the most macro-scale and organizational action at the level of regions, nations, and individual university campuses. Tying together a focus on local culture to new institutionalism's macro-cultural concerns, the inhabited institutions

approach takes everyday interactions seriously – interactions that include everything from organizational actors' cooperation, contestation, resistance, and even sometimes wholesale rejection of international, national, regional discourses and policies. Finally, I lay out the elements of the cultural-organizational approach that I and others have been developing to study individual universities' distinctive effects on shaping elites. This overarching conceptual framework – concerning global culture, national and regional variation, and specific universities' rich influence on elite actors – is characteristic of the chapters in the volume. I hope that articulating how these levels fit together is helpful for future studies of the highest tier of universities and the elites who are produced there.

Using New Institutional Theory to Understand the Global Production of Elites through Higher Education

New institutional theory, first advanced by Meyer and his colleagues in the 1970s and further developed by DiMaggio and Powell and many others in the 1980s, is a groundbreaking theory that points away from a purely rationalist basis of action in organizational behavior and toward the crucial role that meaning plays in the production and reproduction of organizational practices (Westenholz et al. 2006; Meyer and Rowan 1977). Institutions, in this view, are home to "patterns of meaning, values, and behavior" (Meyerson and Martin 1987, p.623), and the institutional environment is seen to be the ultimate guide for ideas and action in the organizational entities that are part of any given institutional field. New institutional theory suggests that organizations incorporate elements of the institutional environment into their practice for reasons that often have little to do with technical rationality and strict efficiency concerns, or with minimizing uncertainty of resources and information. Rather, because environments are uncertain and people's interests are ambiguous, organizations seek to incorporate these elements into their practice as a way to signal their cultural legitimacy in a broad meaning system (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Zucker 1988; Dobbin et al. 1993).

Under this model, national educational administrators and university leaders who adhere to new standards of excellence, introduce more competition between domestic universities, or bring their doctoral programs into greater conformity with the American model (as analyzed by contributors to this volume) do not do so primarily to carry out their technical tasks more

efficiently, but to participate in culturally legitimated action, or a set of "rationalized myths" (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Given such ceremonial action, a new institutional approach to elite formation might lead us to expect considerable organizational resemblances across the stratum of elite universities, due to these schools' shared position in the hierarchical system of relations within the education field (Bourdieu 1989; Meyer et al. 2007), and the role that elite institutions play in the social reproduction of a national and international elite (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). Most scholars studying this sector argue that as international bodies come to greater consensus, universities and multi-campus systems within nations will be forced to become ever more bureaucratic and rationalized toward the same goals vis-à-vis one another.

While new institutionalism deserves credit for departing from rationalist assumptions of technical efficiency, critics find the approach lacking in a few critical respects (Fine 1984, Hirsch and Lounsbury 1997, Hallett and Ventresca 2006a, 2006b; Binder 2007). New institutionalism can be culturally deterministic in its account of action – a sort of "their culture made them do it" – which can lead to perceiving local actors in organizations as both mindless and passive (Bloch, Mitterle, Paradeise, and Peter in their introduction to this volume). By prioritizing the institutional logics that get *carried into* organizations by script-following actors, new institutional theorists have a view of action that deprives people of generative creativity in their responses to their environments. Because they assume that coercive, mimetic, and normative forces are so strong that people in organizations have little choice but to adhere to these institutional scripts (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), they overlook those actors' multiple and local meanings, which then shape their practices (Hallett and Ventresca 2006b). Organizational members – such as decision-makers in universities or national education bodies – in the view of new institutionalism, are carriers of institutional scripts, not active adapters or creators of practice.

The recent "inhabited institutions" research stream in organizational theory reinvigorates new institutionalism by arguing that organizational practices are not merely the instantiation of international policies, where, for example, university administrators, faculty, and students seamlessly enact preconscious scripts. Rather, we should see organizational practices to be the results of people and groups making sense of, interpreting, adapting, and often resisting overarching institutional logics. People in local settings have interests of their own; they have pockets of power to subvert or, at the least, to modify international or national pronouncements. Logics are not purely top-down: real people, in real contexts, with consequential past experiences in their own

local environment, play with logics, question them, combine them with institutional logics from other domains, take what they can use from them, and make them fit their needs. These locally situated people engage not in automatic script following, but in what Mary Douglas called bricolage – combining and "recombining already available and legitimate concepts, scripts, models, and other cultural artifacts that they find around them in their institutional environment" (Campbell 1998, p.383; Douglas 1986). We must look to people's creativity at the local level, not just at the rules set at the macro level, to understand how organizations work. One question we should always ask is how organizational actors, such as university administrators or faculty, reshape the policies (or scripts) they are subjected to.

This means that although universities, in our example, exist in an external institutional environment relying increasingly on shared logics of corporatization, excellence, and the necessity of universities to produce workers for the knowledge society (see Hamann chapter), universities and their constituents respond in multiple ways to this external environment. A nation's or a university's inhabitants creatively blend institutional logics and local meanings, which emerge from their society's higher education traditions and structures, organizational goals, and interactional, on-the-ground decision making. Unintended consequences are the norm, not the exception (Isopahkala-Bouret and Paradeise, this volume). By looking carefully at these variable responses to the external environment, we have a better map for seeing how human agency is integrated into the organizational dynamics of universities.

Inhabited Institutions and the Cultural-Organizational Approach to Studying Elite Formation

The foundational insights of new institutionalism and, to a lesser extent, inhabited institutional theory have shaped the recent projects of many scholars studying the relationship between higher education and elite formation, although not all scholars refer to these theories by name. It may be more accurate to say that the renaissance in higher educational research – at least as we are joyfully witnessing in the United States today – has been moving in the *same direction* as inhabited institutionalism, mapping how institutional ideas are taken up by different college and university types, but never perfectly isomorphic with international or national models. A wide variety of fascinating work looking at the vocationalization of university educational degrees (Brint 2002), the marketization of academic research (Berman 2012), and the financialization of higher education (Eaton 2016;

Stevens and Gebre-Medhin 2016) – as they take place in different parts of the higher education field – have one eye on broad economic and political forces, and the other eye on local organizational decision-making, which leads to variations in ideology and practice.

There has also been a surge in research – of which Friedman's, Mitterle's, and Maesse's chapters in this volume are also examples – in which scholars investigate the formation of elite dispositions at a closer, campus level. My own research into the relationship between universities and elite formation has posed two separate questions: (1) How do different universities distinctively influence students' political temperaments, dispositions, and styles? and (2) How do highly selective college campuses shape students' ideas about elite careers? The publications that best encapsulate these two interests are, respectively, *Becoming Right: How Campuses Shape Young Conservatives* (Binder and Wood 2013), which is a comparative case study of conservative politics on one elite private university and one less selective public university; and an article published in the journal *Sociology of Education* titled "Career Funneling: How Elite Students Learn to Define and Desire 'Prestigious' Jobs" (Binder et al. 2016). In the latter, my co-authors and I again use the comparative case method but, in this case, to examine how two elite private universities – Harvard and Stanford Universities – shape students' ideas about high-status careers, and subsequently organizationally "funnel" nearly 50 percent of their graduates into just three occupational sectors: finance, consulting, and high technology. In each of these studies, I and my co-authors illustrate how the reputations of the respective universities endorse particular identities among students ("high status," "bound for success," "refined," "special," extraordinary"), but perhaps even more importantly, how these universities' unique organizational features – even the most mundane among them (such as forms of housing on campus, class-registration procedures, classroom size, student-faculty ratios, career services) – structure the daily lives of students and socialize them to think of themselves as certain types of people with certain types of trajectories (see the chapter by Nespor on how such organizational features are visualized and enable (self-) recognition as belonging to an elite institution). Sharing a campus with faculty who are perceived to be at the very top of their fields of expertise, living on campus "in a bubble" with virtually all of your classmates for all four years of your undergraduate career, being able to "shop" for classes that suit your particular interests and passions without interference from administrators, being recruited by alumni of your university for Wall Street jobs that select

only the "best of the best," imagining yourself to be working across the Congressional aisle or at the same global conference table with elites such as yourself in the not-so-distant future – these are the types of actual and imagined experiences on top-tier campuses that form elite habitus. We find compelling evidence for institutional isomorphism on university campuses at the same elite level.

Yet, although we find that students on these campuses, overall, similarly use boundaries to mark their differences from students at "ordinary" schools, elite campuses such as Harvard and Stanford are not merely interchangeable just because they sit atop the elite institutional field, as new institutionalism and a static Bourdieusian analysis would indicate (see also Maesse and Nespor this volume). While there are many similarities across private elite campuses, we know, too, that universities and university systems have distinctive "organizational sagas" (Clark 1972), which reputationally and practically separate them from their peer institutions. These organizational sagas may be built up from geographic proximity to specific parts of the labor force and political centers of power, different concentrations of undergraduate majors, unique extra-curricular configurations – all of which create local variation at the level of the university in shaping how students think of themselves as elite, whether as political actors or as people with certain future job trajectories in the cases I have studied. Yes, they think of themselves as one sort of person (elites) and not another (everyone else) in a broader sense, but the specific local culture of Harvard vs. Stanford matters as well in shaping their understandings of career prestige. Friedman (this volume) shows how elites in the UK and the United States may have many similarities, but what it means to be "elite" has a particularly British or American twist, which is organizationally produced (see also Warikoo 2016).

In both of my studies, I take a cultural-organizational approach to higher education, in which there are affinities with new institutionalism and its emphasis on culture and organization in the hierarchical American higher education system. However, my work has even stronger overlaps with inhabited institutional theory, which foregrounds actors' collective understandings in particular locations. Scholars using a cultural-organizational approach understand the university campus, or multi-campus system in which it is embedded, not so much as an organization that can simply inject ideas about what it means to use appropriate political styles or choose a high-status job. Rather, we see it as an organization that is a generative system of meaning and action through collective interaction, which fundamentally changes and

shapes actors' orientations toward the world (Meyer 1977; Kaufman and Feldman 2004). The larger institutional meaning system of elite higher education does matter – it "charters" students to have elite dispositions, after all (Meyer 1977; Persell and Cookson 1985) – but actors' dispositions on specific campuses are learned through their participation in shared understandings in meaningful contexts *on campus*. This learning is collective and interactional. Informal group settings and formal organizational arrangements – where students learn, live, debate, and search for jobs together – lend cultural support for leaning into the dominant style of their university, and considerable constraints against branching off into unendorsed styles or choices.

I am not the only scholar in the past decade to have written about the under-appreciated power of universities' cultural and organizational features to shape elites' ideas and practices. From a theoretical stance, Stevens et al. (2008) use the metaphor of "incubator" to describe universities' role in shaping students' thoughts and action, characterizing "higher education as a manufacturing process that produces particular kinds of selves and identities" (Stevens and Gebre-Medhin 2016, p.123). Other empirical scholarship that foregrounds the role of university cultural and organization arrangements demonstrates how specific educational settings have the power to shape and reshape students' overall sense of self and what it means to be meritorious (Khan 2011; Friedman this volume); their academic, extracurricular, and sexual activities (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Grigsby 2009; Stuber 2012); their political styles of engagement (Dodson 2014, Reyes 2015); their racial identities (Willie 2003) as well as the careers they wish to pursue (Granfield 1992; Beasley 2011; Rivera 2016). While American scholars mostly have used the incubator metaphor to study the role that universities play in shaping undergraduates' experiences and dispositions, it should not be limited to explaining college-age experiences. Authors of this book who write about administrators, faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows have joined forces with their American colleagues in this shared way of understanding the effects of specific higher education settings on the habits and choices of campus participants.

Conclusion

Foregrounding local settings of interaction and negotiation – and particularly the cultural meanings that are shared in them – clarifies the picture of how people, campuses, and national systems of higher education become and stay

elite. By looking at how actors are embedded in campus-level organizational structures, or regional or national multi-campus university systems, we see that broad cultural repertoires, in isolation, cannot fully explain on-the-ground action that varies from widely shared scripts. Nor can a purely Bourdieusian, habitus-oriented analysis, which foregrounds actors' socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. We must look to local settings of culture and structure, as well, for a complete picture of how elites are made.

As in the research findings demonstrated in this volume, all of these ideas taken together generate skepticism around the contention that university systems across the world become highly bureaucratized in a taken-for-granted way in response to international decrees, or that the formation of elites is similar at every elite institution. Universities are complex places; their inhabitants' uses of institutional logics and local meaning, personal interests and professional commitments, national histories and interactional, on-the-ground decision making, must be taken into consideration when we consider elite formation processes. Subject knowledge of particular places, combined with a deep appreciation for locally situated action and, finally, attention to macro-level forces are required for a full accounting of universities' role in producing elites. It is not easy to pull all of these pieces together in one empirical study to "see the whole elephant" – which is an excellent argument for publishing an edited volume containing the perspectives of many scholars, such as in this very fine book.

Writing an Afterword for this set of chapters has been a pleasurable, but also challenging, endeavor. The editors have commissioned wide-ranging chapters from a group of international scholars who write persuasively about global culture in specific case studies. Taken individually, we learn about varieties of marketization, excellence, and elite formation in a number of different countries. Taken together, they show that increasing stratification of higher education is a global phenomenon, but that actors in specific states and universities perceive and act on these trends differently. Unlike global convergence theory, the study of local contexts as they relate to elite formation – as Weber well knew – carries on.

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