World Society Theory and the Development of Irish Higher Education (1960-2010)

By

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of a PhD is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: _____ (Candidate)

Tom Doyle

ID No.: 57117705

Date: January 22nd 2014

Preface

The story presented in this thesis is mostly a positive one. It describes an education system, and the Irish state in which it is embedded, emerging from national isolation into the mainstream of world society. The account has close linkages with my own educational biography. I had the good fortune to leave primary school just as free second level schooling was introduced in 1967 and enter higher education at a time of rapid expansion of options and opportunity in the early 197Os. I also had the privilege of spending spent the last eleven years of my formal working life as Head of Development at the newly established Institute of Technology in Blanchardstown at a time when the idea of engagement between community and higher education was beginning to take hold. It was a period too when I witnessed at first hand the transformative power of higher education for society and individual people. Now, the acceptance of the idea of lifelong learning in higher education means that the completion of a doctoral thesis at this juncture of my career is unremarkable.

However, drafting a thesis at any age is an arduous task that cannot be completed without the support of others and I want to acknowledge all those helped me along the way. I will mention first my supervisors at Dublin City University, Dr John Connolly and Dr Anne Sinnott, whose thoughtful questions and advice guided me towards completion. My thanks goes too to those people who gave generously of their time to be interviewed and comment on my findings. A special thanks to Áine Ní Léime for help in proof reading the several drafts of this document. To the staff at the libraries of Dublin City University and the National University of Ireland Galway for their courtesy and helpfulness. To my former colleagues at the Institute of Technology in Blanchardstown, especially Mary Meany and Eileen Quinn for their practical help and encouragement. Not least, I want to thank all my family for their forbearance and support over this last five years including my cousins and neighbours Maureen and Maroun. Finally, I want to dedicate this thesis to my father Patrick Doyle (1915-1969).

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Abstract

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(1960-2010)

Thomas Doyle

This thesis examines the major changes which have occurred in Irish higher education over the last five decades using World Society theory as an analytical framework. In doing so, it provides an alternative perspective to the realist economic or critical discourses which currently dominate the literature on changes in this sector. The premise is that the transformation that has taken place in that sector - its rapid expansion and diversification, its increased centrality in a knowledge based economy and the deep changes in governance arrangements at state and organisational level - are better understood in the context of similar advances that have taken in place in higher education throughout the world over the same time period. World society theory posits that these global changes, and the diffusion of particular policies and organisational forms, is a consequence of emerging global structures and an increasingly rationalised world culture that impacts on all nation-states and social domains such as higher education. International organisations are a key element of these global structures and play a pivotal role in the creation of models that delineate actors, purpose and structure within particular social domains (Boli & Thomas, 1997).

The thesis assesses the degree to which Irish higher education has been shaped by that broader world culture and examines the interactions between actors in Irish higher education and two agencies involved in forming global models of higher education, namely the European Union and the OECD. The study extends over a period of five decades which allows for an analysis of the co-evolution of models promoted by these agencies and the structural changes taking place in Irish higher education. The impact of change is examined at the multiple levels of state, system and individual institute so as to assess the broad cultural effects suggested by World Society theory.

The study finds a strong and increasing convergence between such global models and Irish higher education policies, and the belief systems informing them. It also identifies some persistent differences around structure and organisational practices. From a theoretical perspective, these findings appear to support World Society theory's assumption of organisations being shaped by global social and cultural forces. The findings also contribute to the discussion concerning societal context and organisational heterogeneity (Hasse & Krücken, 2008) and the need to span the boundaries, that exist within sociological institutionalism, between the macro-perspective of World Society theory and the meso-perspective of inter-organisational or field theory.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The idea of an educational system which would automatically sort out everyone according to his native capacities is unattainable in practice; and if we made it our chief aim, would disorganize society and debase education. It would disorganize society by substituting for classes, elites of brains, or perhaps, only of sharp wits. (T.S. Elliot 1968, p. 177 cited in Ramirez 2006 p. 228)

A period of reflection in Irish Higher Education

The overall objective of this thesis is to examine the development of higher education[1] in Ireland over the last five decades in the context of global growth and transformation of this sector in the same period. In particular, it sets out to assess the extent to which global models of higher education have influenced higher education policy making and its implementation at sector and organisational level in Ireland.

The thesis coincides with a significant time of change in the landscape of Irish higher education. Since the late 1960s, there has been continued state support for the expansion of the Irish system of higher education. From a low base and a late start, enrolments have risen to a point where Ireland's participation rate now ranks amongst the highest in all OECD countries; in 1960, 5% of the school leaving age cohort progressed to higher education; by 1980, this figure had grown to 20% and it increased to 65% in 2010 (Department of Education and Skills, 2011; McCoy & Smyth, 2011). The economic benefits of this expansion in terms of the supply of skilled graduates, the attraction of foreign direct investment and the development of indigenous export-orientated business are widely acknowledged (O'Carroll, Harmon, & Farrell, 2006). However, during the final years of the last decade the Irish government began a reappraisal of its higher education policies, an assessment that was given added urgency by an economic crisis

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[1] The term 'higher education' is used throughout this document to characterise the systems of higher education that include universities and other providers, existing at national and global level (Teichler, 2008, p. 356). Within the literature, there is a frequent use of the term 'university' or 'university system' that implicitly applies to all types of institution. The term 'tertiary education' is favoured by the OECD and is used to describe all types of provision of education above second level, including professional development programmes (OECD, 1998).The terms higher education and universities are used interchangeably to describe higher education systems unless otherwise specified; tertiary education is used when quoting from OECD documents. Individual entities within systems are referred to as higher education institutes (HEIs).

that occurred during that period and that placed even further demands on higher education. Ireland still has a very young population and the demand for higher education places is expected to continue to grow despite the depleted resources available to government. There is also a high expectation from government for higher education to provide the skills and research knowledge that can support job creation in the economy. On the supply side, there is a perception that the system had become fragmented and inefficient, that more diversity of provision was required and the means of ensuring quality of teaching and research needed to be improved, (Department of Education and Skills, 2011).

Following a prolonged period of consultation with various stakeholders, the Irish government accepted a report in 2011 from an expert group outlining a national strategy for the future development of the sector until 2030 (Department of Education and Skills, 2011). The report predicts that capacity will double over the next twenty years with most of the growth coming from mature, overseas and postgraduate enrolments. Higher education is also expected to play its role in government plans for economic recovery through expansion of knowledge-based industry and service sectors. The general recommendations in the report are for more flexibility in provision, improvements in the quality of teaching and research and more effective engagement with other social and economic interests. Structural changes designed to reduce the number of HEIs and changes in the funding model are suggested as a means of achieving these objectives. Presently, a reconfiguration of the higher education system is underway. HEIs have been asked to re-examine their own strategic plans in light of the findings and recommendations contained in the national strategy document. The Irish Higher Education Authority[2] (HEA) has made a proposal to the Minister for Education and Skills for a restructuring of the higher education system that will include the formation of at least three new technological universities; a limited form of performance-based funding will be introduced and changes will be made designed to improve the internal governance arrangements of HEIs (HEA, 2013b).

As will be discussed, there seems to be a global agenda for the future development of higher education with the general purpose of making it more inclusive, more efficient and more embedded in the social and economic development of states and regions. Looking back over the last five decades, higher education worldwide has been transformed beyond recognition from the exclusive and protected institution that existed in T.S. Elliot's time to one that, despite his

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[2] The Higher Education Authority is the statutory planning and policy development body for higher education and research in Ireland. www.hea.ie

negative prediction, successfully accommodates an ever increasing and diverse student population. At national and international level, higher education has moved centre stage to be regarded as a key participant in a global knowledge economy. Higher education institutes are now regarded as a source of ideas and knowledge to feed innovation and as the provider of human capital needed for organisations of all sorts. In pursuit of this role, individual HEIs increasingly compete globally for status and funding. The way in which HEIs are organised and managed has also changed with the introduction of professional management practices and more involvement by external stakeholders in the governance of these organisations.

This introductory chapter briefly reviews these global trends, the differing discussions on the effects that these changes have had on higher education and the theoretical frameworks, predominantly economic, that have been used to explain them. A case is made for the use of an alternative sociological framework, namely World Society Theory (hereafter WS theory). The theory has been applied extensively to comparative studies of education at school level (Spring, 2008; Schriewer, 2012), but less so to the field of higher education. The purported strength of the theory is its ability to simultaneously explain local changes in a global context and the resultant effects at global, national and organisational level. For this reason, it is used as a theoretical frame in which to analyse the development of Irish higher education within a global context and to consider the impact of those developments at state, system and HEI levels. Finally, the expected significance of the conclusions of the thesis in terms of their contribution to the application of WS theory and to comparative education research will be outlined.

Global Trends in Higher Education

The scope and depth of changes that have taken place in higher education over the last half century have been described in terms of an academic revolution (UNESCO, 2009). All aspects of higher education have been affected; its societal role, the number and profile of students participating in higher education, the curricula and teaching methods deployed to serve these students, the global context in which it operates and related mobility of knowledge, academic staff and students, the persistent inequalities of access, the financing and governance of higher education and the growth of the private sector (including online providers) are the more common areas of discussion in the literature. The changes and consequences are summarised under three main headings: expansion and diversification of HEIs and activities, organisational governance, and interrelationships with society.

Expansion and Diversification

Expansion and diversification are the most evident of the transformations which have taken place in higher education with most of the growth occurring in the second half of the last century (see Figure 1.1). Although universities comprise some of the oldest forms of organisation, most have only come into existence since 1945 (Ramirez, 2006). The second area of expansion has been in student enrolment. In the last century, the numbers participating grew two hundredfold from 0.5m in 1900 to 100m in 2000 or 20% of the eligible age cohort (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). By 2007, this had grown by over half to 150.6m or 26% of the eligible age cohort (UNESCO, 2009). Expansion has been uneven with the largest growth in numbers within upper and middle income countries. Nevertheless, the predicted future trend is irreversibly upward and is global in character; expansion will occur at a faster rate with a regional shift in global dominance in enrolments from North America and Europe to East Asia and the Pacific (Coldron, 2012).
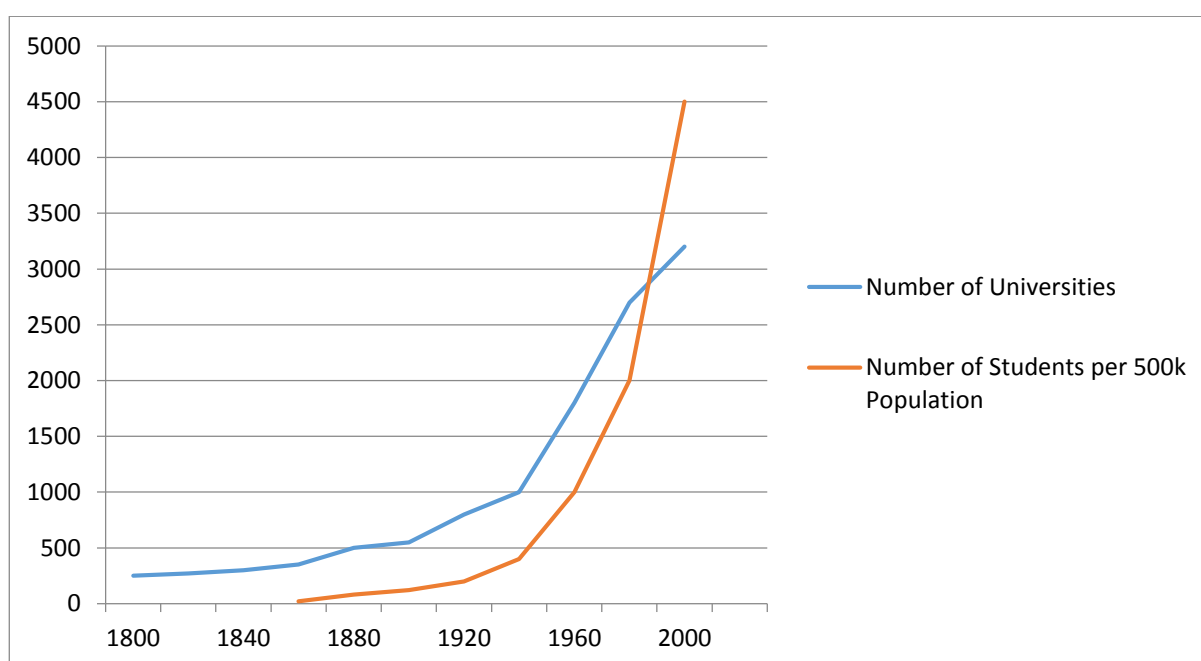
Figure 1.1 Growth in number of universities and post-secondary enrolments 1800-2000. Source (Meyer et al. 2007)

The shift from elite towards universal provision, or massification of higher education, has led inevitably to qualitative changes, mainly a diversification in institutional and student profiles, in the type and range of course offered and in the ways they are delivered.

Types of Higher Education Institution. The early years of massification saw the introduction and rapid expansion of alternative providers apart from universities, for example, Polytechnics in the UK, University Institutes of Technology in France, Fachonschulen in Germany. This was

followed by a move towards more unified systems as happened in the UK (Scott, 1995) and Australia (Meek, 1991) but with significant vertical differentiation in institutional ranking or status combined with horizontal differentiation in the type of programmes offered (Teichler, 2008). Private sector involvement in higher education is also rapidly growing, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe ,Latin America and in East Asia; some thirty percent of the world's student population were reported as being enrolled in private institutions in 2009 (UNESCO, 2009).

Student Profile. This change is most obviously discernible if we consider the increased enrolment of women even in disciplines once dominated by male students (Bradley & Ramirez, 1996; Ramirez & Wopitka, 2001). Women are now expected to make up the majority of students in future decades but there has also been an increase in diversity in the age, ethnicity, intellectual interests and social background of students (UNESCO, 2009).

Teaching and Learning. The increased diversity of the student population has encouraged changes in teaching methods and delivery. More part-time programmes for those seeking professional development, online delivery and assessment and modular course structures are now common even in the more traditional universities (Trow, 2005). The recent surge in the number of mass online open courses (MOOCs) is a case in point (Scientific American, 2013).

Curricula. One of the main outcomes of expansion and diversification has been a proliferation of course offerings. An Irish example illustrates this trend; the number of course choices available to a third-level entrant in Ireland in 1977 through its central applications office was 69 from six institutions. In 2011, by contrast, students faced a dizzying choice of 1286 courses delivered from 43 institutions (CAO, 2011). More courses are now professionally or vocationally orientated and the newer institutions in particular have inclined towards these ''practical arts'' (Bri02). Within the disciplines, most growth has been in the social sciences with less attention being given proportionately to the humanities (Frank & Gabler, 2006), although it is interesting to note that in the virtual world of MOOCs the Arts and Humanities are holding their own with 28 percent of courses offered being in this category (Scientific American, 2013). Increased attention is also given to the natural sciences but here too, there is a global shift towards the more practical and interactive disciplines of physics, chemistry and biology and a decline in the more passive and observation based sciences such as zoology, botany and astronomy (Gabler & Frank, 2005).

Governance of HEIs

Expansion and diversification have also occurred within universities. As student enrolments and curricula have expanded, so, have faculty numbers. Gabler and Frank compared faculty size in a global sample of universities between the periods 1935-1955 and 1975-1995; the mean figure in the first period was 270; this rose to 711 in the second (2005, p. 199). Equally significant, is the growth in numbers of non-academic staff and the ''wave of managerialism that has washed over universities globally in this period'' (Frank & Meyer, 2007a, p. 21). A whole array of non-academic posts has been created in areas such as public affairs, human resources, facilities management, financial control, fundraising, information technology, marketing, and various student services. A study by Rhoades and Sporn on management modes in U.S. and European universities detects a trend towards *decentring* of faculty in terms of numbers and power (2002, p. 26 original italics); in the United States, universities move to a model that ''depends on the growth of full-time managerial professionals, doubling in size as the proportion of academics who are part-time [also] doubles'' (ibid). In Europe, the management mode is observed as moving away from the collegial model of professors as administrators to a more permanent and central administrative structure. A more recent global survey of faculty, in the journal *Academe*, confirms the perception among academics that increased powers of decision making has been taken by Chief Officers and administrators, the feeling being most strongly held by faculty members in the United States (Cummings & Finkelstein, 2009).

Mission statements and strategic plans are now an accepted part of university vocabulary with the mission statement serving as the ''executive summary of the goals of institutional management'' (Scott, 1995, p. 61). In making these public commitments HEIs are interpreted by some to be buying into the concept of management by objective and accepting the role of accountable decision makers (Krücken & Meier, 2006). Universities seek managerial autonomy to ''shape their strategies, choose their priorities in teaching and research, allocate their resources, profile their curricula, and set their criteria for acceptance of professors and students'' (European University Association, 2001, cited in Krücken and Meier, 2006 p.247). National and transnational policy makers, in turn, promote internal governance mechanisms which are sufficiently flexible and responsive to their policy signals and accountability requirements (OECD, 2008; EU Ccmmission 2011).

Relationship with Society

The demands of the state and other stakeholders on universities are indicative of the many changes that have taken place in the scope and nature of interrelationships between higher education and society. Frank and Meyer give an eloquent description:

> The university's interrelationships with society have grown enormously. Over the Modern and now post-Modern periods, first slowly, and then with growing rapidity, new bridges have multiplied, leading from society into the formerly insular Ivory Tower. In increasing numbers, as a result, various political, economic, and cultural entities - many once barred from the premises - have been allowed (even invited) to penetrate the university's old walls, in some cases becoming direct university partners and stakeholders with claims on the university's autonomy. (Frank & Meyer, 2007a, p. 22)

The nature of these interrelationships will be a recurring theme of discussion throughout this thesis but three points made in the quotation are worth highlighting at this juncture, namely the pace of change, its pervasiveness and the reciprocal nature of this transformation. Firstly, much of this opening up of higher education has occurred recently, especially in Ireland, and the demand from policymakers is for more intensification of these linkages despite the strain that current societal demands are placing on higher education institutions. Secondly, these demands are multiple and diverse in nature and are not only economic - although much of the literature concentrates on the economic dimension - especially that section that is critical of these developments. As Frank and Meyer point out, university research and teaching expertise is now sought over a broad range of social domains - to inform public policies, improve business practices, enhance family life, deliver better kindergarten education , conserve ethnic cultures and histories or design more environmentally friendly sanitation facilities for developing countries. Thirdly, while this intensification of contact is sometimes conceived as some sort of societal invasion of the university, it can equally be argued that what we are witnessing is the deeper penetration of the university into society - the socialisation of science has been coupled with the scientisation of society (Drori, Ramirez, & Schofer, 2003; Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons, 2001). [3]

Government, and increasingly, transnational institutions oversee this increased level of interaction. Where once, they were almost disinterested actors, these agencies now adopt a ''steering'' (OECD, 2008, p. 67; Ferlie, Musselin, & Andresani, 2008, p. 352) or ''evaluative'' (Neave, 1988, p. 7) role in the governance of higher education. The former descriptor refers to interventions by the state to direct higher education at sectoral and institute levels towards meeting societal needs for research and education outputs. Mechanisms deployed for this purpose include selective and competitive funding for particular research and education programmes or expansionary projects, and policy formation on system structure and diversity.

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[3] This point will be expanded on in the following chapter.

In Europe, national policies are directed or augmented by the Bologna process[4] and EU Commission polices for the modernisation of higher education within the community (EU Commission, 2006; EU Council 2011; HEA, 2013). The rise of the so-called evaluative state stems from demands for more accountability from higher education (and other state-funded activities) to legitimate state and other stakeholder resource allocation (Neave, 1988). A notable shift is the reduction in reliance on, or trust in professional integrity or standards of staff towards more political and overt forms of monitoring of organisational performance (Trow, 1996; Huisman & Currie, 2004).The trend is evidenced in the proliferation of quality assurance agencies and regulatory mechanisms such as accreditation of programmes and course providers and ranking of universities. Some of the effects include the emergence of a European regulatory field of management education based on such accreditation and ranking schemes (Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson, & Wedlin, 2006), the increased linking of funding to research evaluation (Genua & Martin, 2003) or the importing of service quality metrics into higher education settings (Abdullah, 2005). Transnational initiatives are playing an increasing role in Europe, with the increasing application of a European Qualifications Framework and external quality evaluations by HEIs (EU Commission, 2012, pp. 60-71).

Last, and not least, there is the changed relationship between the university and student. Since the 1960s, the status of student access to the university has evolved from being a privilege or opportunity arising from birth to a right or entitlement for those with certain qualifications or financial resources to the present situation where attendance at college is considered an obligation or taken for granted pathway for the middle and upper classes in all western countries (Trow, 2005). Student based funding systems in Western countries have spawned a whole higher education marketing industry and sub-profession within universities around enrolment management and college marketing with the objective of attracting this student cohort from national and increasingly international sources (Molesworth, Scullion, & Nixon, 2011; Hemlsey-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

Within the university and at policy-making level, the student learning experience is now a priority issue (Department of Education and Skills, 2011). In some cases, traditional lectures are being replaced or supplemented by new and more active pedagogic approaches, for

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[4] The Bologna Process refers to a series of European intergovernmental meetings designed to oversee a reform processes in signatory states' higher education systems that began in 1999. The three overarching objectives of the Bologna process are the introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate), improved quality assurance and mutual recognition of qualifications and periods of study http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/bologna_en.htm

example, linking teaching and research through the use of inquiry - based learning (Healy, 2005). Courses have moved from being rigid structures to modular and flexible, the emphasis shifting from achieving academic standards to ''value added'' and learning outcomes (Trow, 2005, p. 65). The student career is changing too. Most students still transfer from school and stay until completion of a degree but there is an increasing amount of delayed entry, drop-out, part-time engagement and re-entry for professional or personal development (ibid). Catering to the needs of students as individuals extends beyond the classroom. Much of the increased input of non-academic staff is taken up in the area of student supports and services ranging from accommodation needs, to provision of sports facilities, counselling, childcare or careers advice (ICOS, 2013).

Interpreting the Change

Two opposing perspectives on the above changes are currently debated in the literature. The first is a frame of analysis and related discourse that is broadly positive but questions whether the changes have gone far enough; the latter point being particularly evident in policy talk at national and international levels (OECD, 2008; Department of Education and Skills, 2011). The other takes a more negative and critical view. It is a stance adopted by some scholars in university departments of education or public policy e.g. Giroux (2007), Lynch (2006), Kirp (2003) or Reich (2004) but also by commentators outside of academia e.g. Washburn (2005).

The former interpretation proposes that the expansion and restructuring of higher education is an example of a sector strategically responding to changes in the external social and economic environment in both national (Scott, 1995) and global (Scott, 1998; Weber & Dunderstadt, 2008) settings. The recent expansion of global markets for knowledge and education has presented HEIs with the opportunity (or challenge) of playing a more central and immediate role in this new knowledge economy; higher education is an institution whose ''time has come'' (Brennan, 2012, p. 195). Current forms of knowledge production which are more dispersed, increasingly interactive and focussed on more short-term application to market or end use can place universities at the hub of knowledge or learning networks involved in continuing education, innovation or policy formation (Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons, 2001). These conditions have led, according to this interpretation, to the steady emergence of *entrepreneurial* universities; more modern and flexible organisations that have adapted in innovative ways to these changing circumstances and responded positively to state and EU policy initiatives aimed at greater involvement by higher education in meeting the economic and other requirements of this new kind of society (Clark, 1998; Rinne & Koivula, 2005; Williams & Kitaev, 2005; Meira Soares & Amaral, 1999). The form and rate of development of entrepreneurial universities vary

according to national context and organisational history but tend to have some common elements (Clark, 1998): a strengthened steering core of management, specialist units that allow for effective interaction with external stakeholders in areas such as technology transfer; continuing education or fundraising; a diversified funding base including third stream income from teaching, research, consultancy or other applications of forms of academic knowledge; a committed ''academic heartland''(p.7); working with central steering groups and overall an organisational culture that embraces change. The concept of student as customer (if not consumer) is defended by Barnett (2011), who contends that this role suggests active participation on the part of the student and a duty of care on the part of the teacher not just for the student as learner but also for the student as person, with a resultant positive pedagogic outcome in terms of student motivation.

The implications of this line of argument is that the expansion and restructuring of higher education that has taken place is beneficial, but incomplete. There are still too few universities in the developing world (Altbach, 2004); not enough universities are of the entrepreneurial type just described (OECD, 2008). Women are not sufficiently represented in the physical sciences (Ramirez & Wopitka, 2001). There may even be a questioning of the capacity of the modern university to keep pace with the rate of social change and consideration of alternative models of provision which might better meet those needs (Frank & Meyer, 2007a).

The critical perspective argues that changes in the world economic order have diminished the role of nation-states and of national higher education systems. The restructuring of knowledge production and education displaces the primary role of public higher education and makes it subservient to market needs - the university is an institution whose ''time has passed'' and whose previous core mission of preserving national culture and identity has been destroyed (Meyer & Rowan, 2006). Colleges and universities are shifting from being independent producers and disseminators of knowledge for the public good to being actors locked into ''an organisational network'' (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 12) or ''triple helix'' (Etzkowitz & Lyesdesdorff, 2000) comprising state, market and higher education whose central, and almost exclusive, role is to drive innovation in this new knowledge-based economy. Apart from the loss of autonomy and the dilution of its public role, such close linkages with the market may present other hazards including compromised research agendas or output, the downgrading of teaching and the erosion of humanities; in effect, the ''search for truth is rivalled by a search for revenues'' (Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004, p. 4). Nor is it clear that the economic benefits from such innovation are being distributed evenly, with evidence of increasing income disparity between those from within and those excluded from higher education systems (Goldin & Katz,

2008). The role of state and international agencies is seen as advancing neo-liberal tenets of knowledge as a private and exploitable resource. Olsen traces the use of the terminology around the ''knowledge economy'' in industrial policy discussions to a series of reports published by the OECD and World Bank in the late 1990s in which education is portrayed as a ''massively undervalued form of knowledge capital'' (Olsen, 2005, p. 331). Critics identify a common and incremental progression of these ideas over recent decades in policy statements, commissioned reports and legislation aimed at reform or modernising of higher education in New Zealand (Roberts, 2004), the UK (Lowrie & Willmott, 2006) or parts of the United States (Harbour, 2006). The common agenda is seen as the reduction of state support, the expansion of privatisation in either funding or provision, the commercialisation of research, increasing quality control by state oversight agencies, and ultimately ''enabling consumer choice in a higher education marketplace'' (Ward, 2012, p. 155). Such student consumerism according to critics, has negative pedagogic effects, promoting passive learning and threatening academic standards (Naidoo, Shankar, & Veer, 2011); the learning process is transformed ''from being to having, from a learning experience of challenge, risk and potential transformation to one where we mistake such experiences as skills to acquire, or things to possess'' (Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion, 2009, p. 284).

Current Theoretical Explanations and their Limitations

While these interpretations differ fundamentally from an ideological stance, they share a common set of functionalist assumptions around higher education and society (Frank & Meyer, 2007a). Society is regarded as a collective entity which functions through a system of interdependent roles; modern society and especially the new ''knowledge society'' is one of increasing differentiation and complexity and is thus dependent on the knowledge emanating from higher education. The university's role is to provide the specialised research and training needed to allow society to adapt to this rapid social and technological change (Trow, 2005). Following this logic, an OECD report suggests that the rapid expansion of higher education in recent decades has been due to the proliferation of democratic or independent states in the post-war period willing to invest in education to build and maintain those democracies, coupled with the growth of the public sector and industrial economies which increased the demand for more white-collar and highly technically skilled workers respectively (OECD, 2008).

So, expansion is a question of supply and demand, and the prevailing theoretical framework in which higher education is analysed becomes that of the market (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Teixera et al. 2004). The array of changes happening and their opposing normative evaluations, are discussed in terms of the marketisation of higher education (Jongbloed, 2003; Lowrie &

Hemsley-Brown, 2011; Molesworth, Scullion, & Nixon, 2011), with process and effect often conflated, resulting in a literature on the topic described as ''incoherent, even inchoate, and [lacking the]…theoretical models that reflect upon the particular context of HE'' (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006, p. 316). The debate revolves around the ''role of the market'' in higher education (HEPI, 2007, p. 1). National systems of higher education are characterised within a triangular set of power relationships between academia, the state and the market with market influences predominating in more modern systems (Clark, 1983; Jongbloed, 2003). If one accepts this marketing paradigm, or the idea of higher education as having shifted from being one of a social institution to an industry (Gumport, 2000), then higher education can be regarded as an activity whose societal impact is amenable to analysis in the same way as any other industry. Theories of industrial and welfare economics (Barr, 2004; Dill, 2004) may be used to address such issues as the nature and scope of government intervention in the higher education sector. Cost sharing of higher education is discussed in terms of the relative public and private benefits accrued. Resources are apportioned in a way that yields the optimum allocative efficiency from the system. Equity of access to higher education becomes less about open entry and more about ensuring that the most able students can attend, regardless of social background.

Marketisation, in this context, is presented as a deliberate policy initiative or experiment by governments aimed at creating the conditions that will maximise the social and economic benefits of expenditure on higher education (Teixera et al., 2004). These conditions are brought about, according to this stance, by strong organisational leadership and a policy environment that encourages autonomy and enterprise in individual HEIs. State polices which ''make a market for and of higher education'' (Ward, 2012, p. 156) are intended to encourage these changes in the structure and conduct of higher education at system and organisational level. It is acknowledged that markets in higher education are not purely competitive, and therefore may be unpredictable in how they respond to state intervention and that these policies are as yet experimental. Still, the argument is that such policies should lead to improved allocative efficiency through the optimum use of resources (including a more sustainable balance of public/private funding) and sufficiently differentiated provision of teaching and research; the effects should be maximum participation and engagement at system level and more strategic, responsive and resilient HEIs (Barr, 2004; Teixeira et al, 2006).

Framework of Rules and Norms

Market Structure

Conduct

Performance

State/ Public Policies
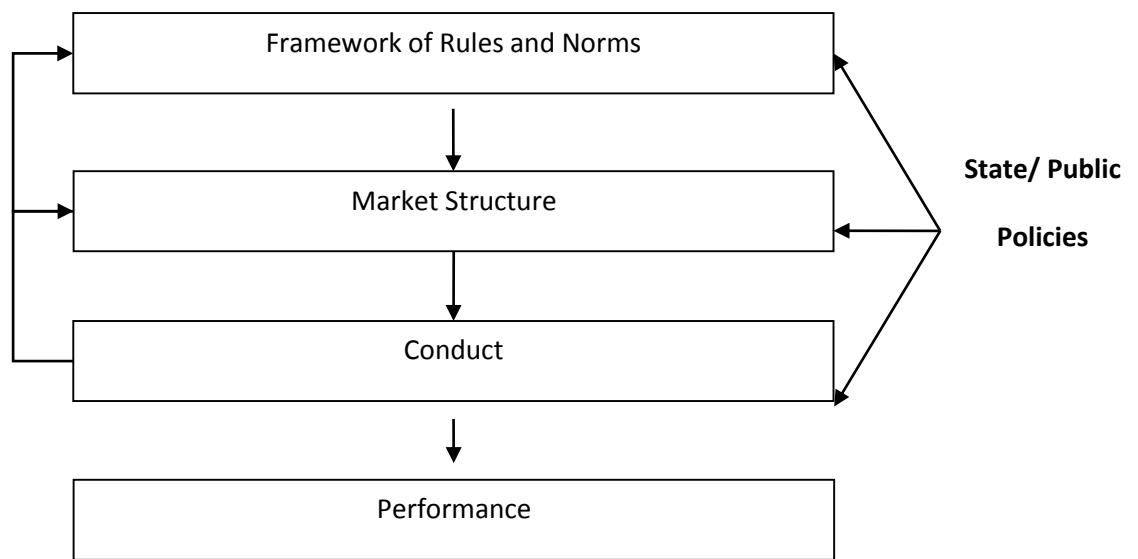
Figure 1.2 Structure, Conduct, Performance Model *Source* (Dill, 2004)

Those who are critical of recent developments reject the role of the market, and favour the preservation of higher education as a public entity. They argue that the use of marketing concepts are inappropriate in an educational context which cannot, or should not, be described in terms of exchange or consumption of goods or services (Hursh, 2005; Reich, 2009; Harbour, 2006). They contend that the negative effects of such an approach are the commodification of knowledge and qualifications, commercially compromised research, undermining of the public role of higher education and increased inequity in standards and access. Marginson describes the limitations of the case as follows:

> On one hand the shiny new market juggernaut is described in vivid detail. On the other, the notions of ''public'' dissolve into rather tired platitudes, exhortations and sentiment, like *The Way We Were* without the visuals…The problem with this argument is that while much of it is plausible, it is merely descriptive, and a schematic description in the face of a highly complex problem.....There is no coherence between problem and solution…[for] it is clear that the university is shaped simultaneously by (1) its own varying, inner capacity for self-alteration; (2) the field of higher education; and (3) other networks and interests in which it is implicated. Theorizations of the university must take all of this into account. (Marginson S. , 2006, pp. 46-7)

Marginson & Rhoades (2002) and Frank & Meyer (2007a) make similar criticisms of the above functionalist analyses of change, regardless of the normative interpretations. Frank and Meyer claim that the analyses fall short empirically by failing to explain four dominant features of modern higher education. The first is the persistence and global spread of the university in its traditional form. One would expect that in highly differentiated societies and education markets the university would be significantly displaced by other forms of education and training. In fact,

the evidence is to the contrary with many of the alternatives that were established in the early years of expansion being reconstituted as universities (Morphew & Huisman, 2002; Neave, 1979). The second is the lack of direct linkage between the growth of higher education and economic conditions; for example, the surge of growth during the 1960s far outpaced any global economic indicators at the time which casts doubt on the notion of demand driven expansion (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). Thirdly, if universities were serving very different local societal or market needs then one would expect much more heterogeneity in both the location and nature of expansion. Instead, one sees expansion in all types of countries and a strong similarity in the outcomes of curriculum restructuring (Frank & Gabler, 2006). Lastly, the authors point to the lack of clear evidence on the link between university expansion and economic growth (Schofer, Ramirez, & Meyer, 2000) or the university's ability to improve an individual's actual job performance as distinct from its ability to enhance job prospects through certification (Collins, 1971), which weakens the argument around higher education's functional role of growing economies through transmission of skills.

Marginson and Rhoades' (2002) main criticism is that the analyses neglect or underestimate the globalisation processes that are occurring in higher education and their diverse effects at national and local levels . Specifically, they claim that this literature ''lacks a framework for conceptualising agencies and processes that extend beyond the nation state''(p.285) - and therefore fails to identify the causal factors of common global changes and the role of intergovernmental agencies in influencing this process or the way in which national policies reflect local vs. global influences[5]. While noting the global spread of standardised educational models, it should also be possible to perceive the ''persistent peculiarities of higher educational systems and distinct national political options'' (Teichler, 1996, p. 251) . In relation to activities within the nation state, they contend that the market based analyses provide limited insights into the complexities of the interaction between state and HEIs or the mechanisms through which state policies influence higher education provision or the ways in which particular interest groups, agencies, or even influential individuals, can direct policy. Policy analyses should be capable of drilling down to consider the activities of professionals and institutions. Attention needs to be given too as to how local actors, in turn, operate within international settings and influence policy making at that level.

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[5] This omission has been partly addressed by the more recent emergence of a substantial literature on these global dynamics in higher education- see for example, Marginson & van der Wende (2007), Bassett & Maldonado-Maldonado (2009), Amaral & Neave (2009) or Shahjahan (2012). The topic is addressed in detail in Chapter 4.

An Alternative Theoretical Framework

These limitations have particular relevance to the work of a thesis which seeks to understand how Irish higher education has developed within a particular global context and the role of various actors in that process. The arguments outlined in the previous section suggest that any theoretical framework to explain the changes that have occurred in higher education in recent decades must be capable of three tasks. Firstly, it must be able to explain how these change processes are enacted concurrently, at global, national and organisational levels. Secondly, it must theorise higher education and its relationship with society in a way that transcends these levels and thirdly it must be able to define and theorise the role of the main actors involved in these change processes - international organisations, nation states and individual HEIs. This requires, according to Frank and Meyer (2007a), that we re-conceptualise both society and the university and then rethink the nature of the changes that have occurred in higher education. Or as expressed by Shahjahan (2012), higher education policy research must move beyond both methodological nationalism and higher educationalism. The implication is that that higher education policy processes are now layered ''across local, national and global policy spaces'' (p.399) and that we must look beyond higher education to more global events and rationales that are affecting society generally in explaining the transformations that are occurring within higher education. If one extricates oneself temporarily from thinking about the particular history of the development of higher education in Ireland (and eschews methodological nationalism), or about the special character of higher education (and moves beyond higher educationalism), then one rethinks the changes that have happened in higher education in terms of a general organisational change process occurring in a global context. This leads to the literature on organisational change and on institutional theory which is becoming an increasingly influential approach to understanding organisations and organisational change (Greenwood et al., 2008) and particularly on that branch of institutional theory that addresses change in a global setting (Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006; Drori G. S., 2008) or World Society theory.

Drori (2008) presents WS theory as a theoretical framework in which to conduct globalisation studies as an alternative to the predominant functionalist neo-liberal or modernist and world systems theories. Both describe globalisation in terms of economic exchange and the expansion of interdependencies and transactions across the world, but they differ radically on the interpretation of its effects. Modernist thinking regards such expansion as something positive and as a necessary part of the development of a global economy which will lead to progress for

all nations. World systems theorists see these arrangements as a postcolonial substitution for the exploitation and domination of weaker countries by more powerful economies. The debate regarding whether current global processes are leading to progress for the many or to accumulation by the few or whether it will result in a closing or widening of the wealth divide, reaches an impasse with each side drawing on contradictory empirical findings to justify its case. The competing arguments echo those surrounding the so-called marketisation of higher education and its current role in society. The impasse, according to Drori, is caused by the fact that both theories are functionalist and conceive of the emerging global economy in structural terms with rational actors, with different level of power and interests, controlling the mechanisms of these structures. The argument centres on ''whose rationality'' and ''who is served by this rationality'' rather than on the nature or source of this rationality (p.452).

  WS theory, in contrast, approaches the changes that have occurred at global level primarily in cultural terms. Globalisation is the development and enactment of a world culture. Culture in this context goes beyond the general understanding of the term as values or knowledge that explain behaviour or decisions; it is a complex set of rules and beliefs or models that shape states, organisations and individual identities in modern society (Meyer et al. 1997). The origin and nature of these cultural influences and the manner in which they impact on various actors in society will be discussed in detail in the following chapter; a summary of the theory is set out here.

The aftermath of the Second World War and the preceding economic depression resulted in a general disillusionment regarding the ability of competing nation states to properly direct world affairs. A general sense of global interdependence and an aspiration for individual human rights emerged expressed initially by the formation of world bodies like the United Nations and similar organisations. However, these bodies had very limited authority to control or govern the various actors in this emerging world society; it was effectively a ''stateless world polity'' (Meyer, 2010, p. 6). Meyer compares the situation to that which pertained in the emerging and relatively stateless United States, as observed by Tocqueville in the early nineteenth century, in which government was substituted by people forming associations - in the absence of state-like authority the idea arises ''that people and groups must take the responsibility'' (Meyer, 2010, p. 6) international non-governmental bodies established over the last half century, to advance those ideals of global interdependence, progress and individual human rights, is illustrative of this phenomenon (Boli & Thomas, 1997). Parallel developments have taken place in the world scientific community and in other professions (Drori, Ramirez, & Schofer, 2003). A dominant characteristic of these bodies is the diminution of associated power or self-interest which is

common to other social actors. Meyer and Jepperson (2000, p. 107) describe this ability to act disinterestedly in the interest of others as ''otherhood'' and suggest that much of the authority of these people and groups derives from this disinterestedness. These people interact with actors in society - nation-states, organisations and people – in a way that defines their actorhood. They do so by drawing on the scientised and universal principles that are increasingly applied to all areas of social life and which rationalise how a whole range of social activities should be conducted and by whom. This is the basis of the rationalised global models that effectively constitute actorhood in all social domains. Actors in modern society are bestowed with strong agentic capacity, particularly the individual, but it is an *authorised agency* based on the rationalised principles from which these global models are derived (Meyer & Jepperson, 2000). Actorhood now becomes a role or identity which is scripted by this structure or model - organisations are expected to be rational and purposive with particular socially conferred rights and responsibilities, as are individuals and nation-states.

However, the disconnect between actor identity and practice is a well-known sociological phenomenon; individual's actions don't always follow stated values; organisations structures and activities are often at odds and states often devise policies to which they cannot adhere (Brunnson & Alder, 2002). The variation in adoption and implementation of global models of higher education at national level (Teichler, 1996) was noted previously and will be expanded on later. WS theory suggests that this divergence or *decoupling* may be due to a difference between the nature of adoption of actorhood or identity and associated practices; implemented practice often follows from policy adoption, but not always.

WS theory argues that the wider provision of mass school education, and more recently of higher education, has played a pivotal role in the modern social order described above; it is both an instance and locus of the rationalised models which affect education and other social domains (Meyer, 2007, p. 267). It is an instance in the sense that global models of education have emerged that have impacted in very similar ways and across a wide range of nations in areas such as curricula taught, enrolment patterns and the organisation of education provision (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992; Schofer & Meyer, 2005). It is the locus because the rationalised rule systems, that form such models, are based on scientised principles that are ''in good part created in, and instilled in individuals by formal education'' (Meyer, 2007, p. 267).

The homogenous nature of higher education is evident by the relative ease with which student and staff exchange and collaborative research is taking place across the globe. The primary interest of this thesis is in explaining the common direction of change that has taken place in

higher education in recent decades and the degree to which those changes have impacted on the development of Irish higher education at policy, system and institute levels. WS theory has the potential to meet all the theoretical criteria set out at the beginning of this section and to address the limitations of the economic accounts of those changes. Firstly, if actor behaviour is determined by a pervasive global culture or model, then it offers a possible explanation as to how changes are enacted concurrently and at multiple levels. Heterogeneity or local divergences from global models may be explained in terms of decoupling of policy adoption and actual practice. Secondly, it theorises higher education in a dual capacity; as a set of actors constituted by a global model and as the home of the scientific principles and knowledge on which such models are based. In this way it offers an alternative perspective on the increased centrality of higher education in the so-called knowledge society. Thirdly, it distinguishes between those actors – nation-states and HEIs – whose agency is derived from such models and the role of ''others''- national and international policy organisations, consultants, transnational governance units – involved in the creation and diffusion of rationalised rule systems for higher education. In order to understand what is happening in higher education one needs to look beyond the interactions of those particular actors and focus on the creation, content and implementation of the models that they are enacting. Therefore, applying WS theory to an Irish higher education setting provides a feasible alternative perspective from which to analyse the changes that have occurred in Irish higher education. It avoids the pitfalls of methodological nationalism, on which most current studies of Irish higher education systems are based, which concentrate on interactions between local actors and can underestimate the influence of global models on local situations. It also addresses the drawbacks of higher educationalism, prevalent in the comparative education literature, which overemphasises the special character of higher education and tends to overlook the broader interactions and dependencies between higher education and society (Brennan, 2008; Shahjahan, 2012).

The development of higher education in Ireland is a particularly interesting case to explore in relation to WS theory. Ireland was one of the first colonised nations to gain independence[6] from Britain in the early years of the last century and in subsequent decades Irish governments were particularly conscious and protective of that status. The decision to maintain neutrality during the Second World War was motivated, in part, by a desire to nurture that sense of statehood (Ferriter, 2010). That statehood was also expressed by active participation in new global organisations such as the UN and the OECD set up in the post-war years and in 1973 Ireland

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[6] It is worth pointing out that this was more the perception outside Ireland than within where the Treaty settlement with Britain in 1921 was regarded as only a partial attainment of independence, at best as a stepping stone to full sovereignty.

acceded to the then European Economic Community. The Irish economy is small and largely export based and therefore very susceptible to global economic trends and politics. Much of the foreign investment that underpins the economy is of American origin and Ireland has a strong association to the United States through these economic interactions and family ties from emigration to America over many generations. The history and geographic location of Ireland have made it a society that is influenced by ideas and norms from both Anglo-American and European origins and the development of many of its political and social institutions show evidence of these influences (Lee, 1989). In the case of higher education Ireland came late to the massification of higher education that took place in Western states in the decades following World War 2. When it did eventually expand its higher education system in the early 1970s it looked externally to global models, and for direction from international organisations, in deciding how to shape this new system.

Research Objectives

Against that background, the objectives of this thesis are to assess the degree to which Irish higher education has been shaped by that broader world culture, to examine the interactions between agencies involved in forming global models of higher education and to consider their impact on Irish policy makers and Irish HEIs. From a theoretical perspective the objectives are to assess the strengths and limitations of WS theory in explaining change that occurs in response to global models in a local social domain, such as higher education, and to gain further insights on the mechanisms of penetration of such models into local situations.

Taking these objectives into account, the study will focus on three dimensions of the changes which have taken place:

- The *history of* change assessing how ideas, policies and linkages with world culture changed with time - the period of the study extends over five decades from 1960 to 2010. It was chosen after considering the significant events that have occurred in this phase of rapid expansion and change in higher education, both internationally and in Ireland.
- The *process* of change looking at the mechanisms of diffusion of global models particularly those deployed by international bodies
- The *impact* of change in world models on the structure and functioning of Irish higher education.

It will look at change at three levels:

- International or global, looking at how such world models have been created and diffused by international bodies involved in higher education policy making

- Nation state and the way in which Irish agencies have interacted with these bodies

- Organisational level and the ways in which the organisation and governance of individual HEIs have changed in line with these global and national shifts.

It is intended that the findings of this thesis will add new knowledge to the history of policy formation on higher education in Ireland. It will add to both WS theory and to the comparative education literatures and will contribute further to the close relationship that exists between these fields (Baker & Wiseman, 2006). In the area of WS theory, it will address the research gaps identified by Meyer (Meyer, 2010) on work to be done on the mechanisms of penetration of cultural models and by Drori (2008) around the conceptualisation of sectors such as higher education as embedded in both national and global environments. It will also contribute to the comparative research agenda on higher education on the connections between contemporary societal change and the changes occurring within higher education and how national, regional and local contexts determine the characteristics of modern higher education systems in Europe and more widely (Brennan, 2008; Shahjahan, 2012).

In this chapter I have given an overview of the global changes which have taken place in higher education and the various interpretations and theoretical explanations of what is happening in this sector. WS theory is proposed as an alternative theoretical framework in which to analyse these changes and more specifically to examine how these global changes impact at local level which is the main concern of this thesis. In the next chapter I elaborate on the main tenets of WS theory, how it has been applied to the study of changes in higher education at a global level and its possible application to the study of the impact of global models at nation-state and organisational levels.

Chapter 2   World Society Theory and Higher Education

What forces push one nation after another to adopt various neo-liberal policies in higher education, such as introducing tuition? What agencies and mechanisms have led to the introduction of similar quality assurance efforts and increasingly common degree structures from one national system to the next? The field needs to enrich our understanding of global political and economic forces that shape national higher education systems, and the global dimensions and influences of those national states and higher education systems themselves. (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002, p. 285)

What is most remarkable about world culture in our own time…is its organization, rationalization, and ubiquity…its increasing irresistibleness, as more and more people find it ever more imperative to plug into world culture, actualize world-cultural models and principles, and find meaning and purpose in activities that are structured and governed by world-cultural constructs. (Boli J. , 2005, p. 387)

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, the transformations that have taken place in higher education in recent decades, and their global diffusion, need to be explained through a theoretical frame that addresses organisational change in that context. WS theory is a stream of sociological institutionalism that concentrates on studies of social change in the global or transnational spheres. It proposes that much recent global change and the diffusion of particular policies and organisational forms is a consequence of emerging global structures and an increasingly rationalised world culture in the post war years. This chapter expands on the origins and applications of this theory and discusses its use in the analysis of change in higher education at global, national and organisational level. It outlines the research agenda that is advanced in this literature and how the objectives of this thesis are shaped in part, by that agenda.

World Society Theory

Origins - Sociological Institutionalism and Organisations

WS theory is a foundational theory within sociological institutionalism developed by John W Meyer and his collaborators over the last four decades (Drori G. S., 2008; Meyer et al. 1997; Krucken & Drori, 2009). The term sociological, or neo-institutionalism, is used to distinguish it from other "institutionalisms" which emerged at around the same period of the late 1970s. Institutional perspectives generally redirect the balance of attention away from social actors

towards the social context or environment in attempting to explain social action; however the relative balance between actors and environment and the nature of interaction between them varies considerably across the different perspectives. Scott (2008) provides an ''omnibus'' definition of institutions which draws on each of these varying emphases as comprising ''the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that together with associated activities and resources provide stability and meaning to social life'' (p.48).

The focus of economic and political institutionalisms is on institution building – when and why strong individual actors create (or dispose of) institutional arrangements or practices. The new institutional economists saw the primary function of institutions as providing trustworthy and efficient frameworks for the conduct of economic exchange (Coase, 1983; 1991; North, 1989). This description of their function represents them as being reflective of the needs of individuals and organisations, enabling them to adapt to the problems of opportunism or asymmetry of information that exists in modern economies. In a similar vein, political institutions are expected to create stability and reduce uncertainty. Specifically, political institutions are frameworks of rules, procedures and arrangements designed to enhance decision making and encourage bipartisanship in political life – the so called positive theory of institutions (Shepsle, 1989). Historical institutionalism emphasises the path dependency of institutional development and social action; the history of organisations define their trajectory and limits choice of possibilities for action by actors (Peirson & Skocpol, 2002).

Sociological institutionalism goes furthest in restricting the role of the actor (Jepperson, 1991). It draws on a phenomenological position in social science advanced by theorists such as Schutz (1932) and Berger and Luckmann (1966) which places emphasis on shared knowledge and belief systems in shaping human behaviour; social action is influenced less by objective norms and rule systems and more by ''common definitions of the situation and shared strategies of action'' (Scott W. , 2008, p. 40). Actors are constrained and enabled by socially constructed conventions and routines - or institutions - which enable or constrain behaviour of social actors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991); constrained in the sense that social action is limited to those options which will confer legitimacy and, enabled by that legitimacy, to access resources and to function within this institutional environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Actors may respond rationally to such institutional contexts by adhering to its regulatory or normative elements e.g. following procedures or adhering to implicit codes of conduct within an organisational field. However, the dominant theme within sociological institutionalism is the phenomenological perspective that actors of modern society are seen as not just being influenced by the wider institutional context

or environment but as ''constructed in and by it''. Organisations are not just members of an organisational field but are defined by it as are the roles of individuals who make up the organisation. In a more general sense, the modern rational organisation is the product of a modern rational society. Modern nation-states are the product of a modern world polity. Actorhood now becomes a role or identity which is scripted by this institutional structure - organisations are expected to be rational and purposive with particular socially conferred rights and responsibilities, as are individuals and nation-states.

 The nature of such institutionalised contexts, how they come about, develop and change is of fundamental importance to what is happening within society as is the study of institutional *effects* i.e. those effects or events that are attributable primarily to institutions. Institutional *explanations* concentrate on such institutional effects; institutional *theories* are those that feature institutional explanations; and to complete this line of reasoning, *Institutionalism* is ''a theoretical strategy that features institutional theories and seeks to develop and apply them'' (Jepperson, 1991, p. 153). According to Jepperson, when compared to other social theories, institutionalism is most often applied to situations where a) ''the social objects under investigation are thought to be complex social products, reflecting context-specific rules and interactions'' and b) the level of analysis is of a ''high order or structuralist, focussing on multiple organisational and sector levels and their relationships'' (ibid).

The social or historical background to the development of these theories has been the reconstruction of societies around emerging nation states in the last half century, the proliferation of organisations in both public and private domains, along with the increasing individualisation of society (Jepperson, 2002). Theorising and research has responded accordingly. Nation states are seen as embedded in a world polity and culture (Meyer et al. 1997). Organisations are embedded in national and/or global institutional environments (Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006; Scott W. , 2008). People are seen as enacting modern doctrines of individualisation mostly global in origin but with national variation (Frank & Meyer, 2002). In each case, the research points to the features and behaviours being constructions of institutionalised environments rather than pre-existing or originating from outside these social systems.

Applying this logic specifically to organisations, institutional theory digresses from mainstream explanations of organisational proliferation and change that have taken place in recent decades as being an inevitable outcome of progress and increasing complexity in society. It adds an

additional dimension to theories that regard organisations as deeply interdependent with social and cultural environments (Scott W. , 2003). Pfeffer and Salancnik (1978) emphasised the external political and social resources that organizations depend on and how they adapt to minimise such dependencies and improve chances of survival. Organisational ecologists (Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Carrol & Hannon, 2000) explain changes in the composition of organisation populations as caused by environmental selection processes which give advantage to some organisational forms and weaken others. Sociological institutional theorists go further and perceive organisations as being *of,* or embedded in, the environment and being formed from the institutionalised norms, beliefs or schema which pertain in various social situations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). These effects are particularly visible in organisations like universities that have diffuse goals or lack specific technologies to achieve organisational goals. Under these conditions of relative uncertainty, organisations gain legitimacy by adhering to logics of appropriateness (March & Olsen, 1989) or adopting particular models of actorhood (Meyer, 2010); this results in such organisations appearing to look more like each other particularly in respect of formal structures and procedures.

That institutional context can be studied at a number of levels - global, societal, organisational field or populations, organisations or their sub-units (Scott W. , 2008, p. 89). Two perspectives dominate - those of organisational fields and a macro-sociological or world society perspective (Hasse & Krücken, Systems Theory, Societal Contexts and Organisational Hetrogenity, 2008). The inter-organisational view sees organisational creation and behaviour as being bound closely to other organisations and actors in their field. Actions of organisations are guided by, or are reflective of, common perspectives arrived at by members of the field. An organisation's conception of itself, its sense of identity, its legitimacy with other members, depends on its relationship with this institutional environment (Wooten & Hofffman, 2008). Empirical work on organisational fields initially concentrated on the institutional forces and governance structures which induced isomorphism and compliance among members (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991); more recently the focus has shifted to how fields emerge, form and change and the heterogeneity that exists within them (Fligstien and McAdam 2012; Scott W. , 2008; Wooten & Hofffman, 2008). WS theory sees organisations and organisational fields shaped by cultural forces in a perceived global society (Meyer et al. 1997; Meyer, 2010). The research emphasis is on how such forms or models of organisation emerge, diffuse and evolve at transnational, national, and local levels and the role of international government and nongovernmental organisations in this process (Drori G. S., 2008).

The development of higher education in a national setting could be examined from either perspective. The issues from a field perspective would centre on how the field was transformed through this expansion. It would address the activities of field incumbents and challengers in this process and examine the role of state and internal governance units in fashioning and maintaining stability within the field, and most critically the formation of a shared meaning and collective identity or ''meaning project'' of the field (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 92). In the case of higher education this meaning project centres on its social and economic role and interaction with neighbouring fields at both national and transnational level. In that way, the field of Irish higher education can be envisaged as ''nested in a [transnational] institutional context'' (Djelic & Quack, 2008, p. 318) or ''embedded in a [global] macro environment'' (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 203). As discussed previously, Irish social institutions, including higher education, are very open to external influence and my initial studies on the development of Irish education indicated that the dominant influence in shaping the meaning project of the new expanded field came from policies and ideas originating from outside of the state, and this seems to be increasingly the case. National developments, including power struggles for resources between various actors, still influence the detail of governance arrangements. However the comparative education literature shows, that since the 1980s, the main ideas or cultural influences which are forming national education appear to be increasingly global in character (Ball, 1998). It is for these reasons that the more macro-sociological or world society perspective is taken in this thesis.

Elements of WS Theory - A Rationalised World Culture

The institutional perspective of global structure dynamics differs fundamentally from functionalist descriptions - see diagrams taken from Meyer et al. (1997). The realist perspective in Figure 2.1 shows nation-states as unique collective actors, a product or aggregate of its constituent elements, interacting with other states in a global context. Change is initiated in a linear process by mobilisation of individual and self-interested actors who seek to change system organisational arrangements by pressurising national or global agencies who eventually codify and implement them.

On the other hand, WS theory (Figure 2.2) envisages the global setting not as an aggregate of entities but as a unifying enactment of a prevailing world culture that shapes and empowers nation states and its sub units. The locus of change is simultaneously at global and local level and each is driven by that prevailing culture. An important consequence of this interpretation is that institutionalised models can impact on the practice of individuals or organisations regardless of policy adoption by states.
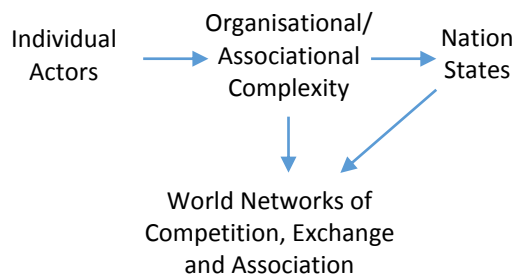
Figure 2.1 World as Aggregate of Actors *Source* (Meyer J. W., Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997)
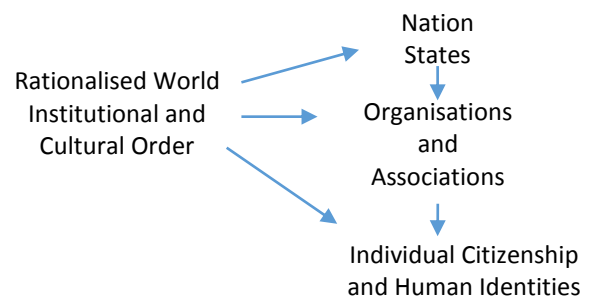
Figure 2.2 World as Enactment of Culture *Source* (Meyer J. W., Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997)

World culture is a subtle concept. It is pervasive but not omnipresent, no more than aspects of national culture that are evident or present in all regions or social sectors of a particular country. A general indicator of world culture is the dramatic increase in the number of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) devoted to advancement of issues considered important in world culture (Boli & Thomas, 1997), or more specifically, the UN observances which give formal pledge of a calendar period to a specific world issue e.g. International Women's Day (Drori G. S., 2005; UN, 2013). Boli (2005, p. 385) presents the workings of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as an example. Its role in mediating international trade agreements is well known but this role is underpinned by features or principles that are universally accepted. For instance, that the WTO is an ''intergovernmental organisation'', that it is a ''deliberative forum'', that is charged with promoting ''global collective good'', that it is a ''formal organisation'' with a clear purpose and governance and that its function is to mediate between ''competing interests''. All the phrases in quotations are examples of generally accepted world cultural concepts that shape the meaning and operations of the WTO and its members. What these concepts have in common is they ''are treated as if they were globally valid'' (ibid.p.386); they may even be contested but that enhances rather than detracts from their global character.

Boli points to contemporary trends in world culture as being its expansion in scope and application, its organisation by national and international entities and its increasing rationalisation. The last trend is deemed to be the most significant phenomenon;

> The expansion of logics of control, systematization, measurement, and instrumental efficiency, with concomitant professionalization and certification processes expanding the rationalized identities of individuals and organizations, is so ubiquitous as to be my first choice as the most striking trend in world culture. (Boli J. , Contemporary Developments in World Culture, 2005, p. 388)

Global institutionalists attribute this increased rationalisation to a scientisation of society which has intensified in the post-world war two years (Drori & Meyer, 2006). The trend is evident in the growth of national science policies and agencies, increased R&D activity in both the private and public sectors and the intrusion of scientific methods or concepts into previously non-scientific arenas e.g. forensics in policing, the expanded use of science in sports or even parenting (ibid.)**.** An equal and opposite effect is the increased socialisation of science with increasing involvement of society in orientating both the direction and application of scientific discoveries. The case of university based research was mentioned in the previous chapter where there is increased pressure on HEIs to produce outputs which are closer to social or commercial use (Clark, 1998; Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons, 2001; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). This utility of science suggests an obvious reason for its expansion but world society theorists propose a grander explanation for its rapid growth and penetration into most areas of social life in recent decades (Drori & Meyer, 2006). The post second world war transformation of global society away from closed and competitive nationalism, and some of its harmful scientific accomplishments, and towards ideologies celebrating economic progress and individual freedom exposed the need for a new world order. The scale of the task was beyond even the more powerful individual states and it was obvious that no global version of the previous nation state would be possible. The structural deficit was met, in part, by states' engagement with civic society and the emergence of a wide range of INGOs to advance these new ideologies (Boli & Thomas, World culture in the world polity: A century of international non-governmental organisation, 1997; Boli J. , Contemporary Developments in World Culture, 2005). In this ''stateless society'' some alternative basis for rule-like social order was required, something ''akin to a religion'' (Drori & Meyer, 2006, p. 56). In the absence of international regulatory structure, Drori et al. (2003) argue that an emerging world society drew on a faith in modern science to derive natural laws as a basis of progress. In this way, scientisation feeds into two central and related features of modern world culture and organisations – rationalisation and actorhood (Drori & Meyer, 2006).

Rationalisation in institutional terms is defined as ''the structuring of everyday life within standardised impersonal rules that constitute social organisation as a means to collective purpose'' (Meyer et al, 1987 quoted in Drori, 2008 p.452). Science drives such standardisation. The common pursuit of all scientific endeavours is to seek regularity in the world, be it social or natural. It illuminates a ''fatalistic world of opaque terrors'', displacing such uncertainty or mystery with clear statements of risk (Drori & Meyer, 2006, p. 57). It does all this in a way that is articulate and understandable, producing models, formulae and principles that gain universal

status and applicability. In a similar fashion, the application of scientific principles to wider domains like engineering, management, education or economic planning gives rise to standard models which are applied in a global context. This process is supported by intensive data collection and analysis at organisational, national and international levels. The result is an increasing standardisation of products, of management processes through systems like ISO 9000, and advocacy of best practice in a whole range of economic or social domains such as innovation, education or social welfare.

Actors and Others

This rationalism can create and categorise various types of human actorhood (Drori & Meyer, 2006). Institutionalism challenges the realist view of actors - nation-states, organisations or individuals- as being free agents and bounded and rational and instead talks of the modern actor being an *''authorised agent''* for various interests'' (Meyer & Jepperson, 2000, p. 100 original emphasis); they ''become agents for themselves, true , but under condition that they are also agents for and under constructed rationalised and universalistic standards'' (p. 117). The concept derives from the old Christian notion of people acting under God's authority or will which is extended to prevailing cultures of modern society; ''one must see modern individuals , organisations and states as taking up standardised technologies of authorised agentic authority , derived from an elaborate Christian and then post-Christian culture'' (ibid).

Science also has the capacity to categorise different types of actors. Just as the biological sciences can create the concept of ''endangered species'', social studies can define and empower particular categories of persons; adult learners, professionals, and all sorts of ethnic groups. (Drori & Meyer, 2006). To illustrate, Meyer et al. (1997) invite us to consider the situation if an unknown society were to be ''discovered'', and what changes we would expect to happen to that society to enable it to join the present world community - the role the state would adopt, the activities it would be expected to engage in, the rights and responsibilities we would expect its citizens to enjoy, how its older people and any minorities should be treated, how its health and education system would be run, the statistics it would collect and how it would regulate economic transactions. All of these changes would be made easier because of the existence of models of actorhood for all of these entities. A ''purposive nation-state actor would be constructed to take formal responsibility for such matters, even under the most unlikely social and economic circumstances'' setting goals for their management and monitoring achievement (ibid p. 154). Sociological institutionalism treats individuals in the same light; their actorhood in society is highly constructed and scripted. The argument is that the modern

phenomenon of individualism is not based on people increasingly organising their own life experience but originates from a collective creation of a new doctrine of individualism by various bodies of professionals of religious and secular background (Jepperson, 2002; Frank & Meyer, 2002). This public theory of individualism is evolving in all social domains; political, which places increased emphasis of responsibilities of citizenship, economic, involving the promotion of the individual consumer and religious /cultural where more attention is given to the private self.

An important consequence of this individual autonomy and rationalised culture is that it confers on actors the ''legitimated capacity to use their agency in the pursuit of collective goods'' (Meyer, 2008, p. 799) and that includes the creation and advancement of global models of actorhood in all sorts of social domains. Sometimes, individual actors can take on this role when they become representative of success or associated with particular global models e.g. Richard Branson as an entrepreneur, Japanese firms as exemplars of Total Quality in the 1980s or the Swedish welfare state model; examples in the field of education are how the Finnish state is now portrayed by the OECD as a model provider of public schooling (Rinne, Kallo, & Hokka, 2004) or how Stanford University is recognised as the originator of effective polices for licensing and technology transfer in HEIs (Colyvas & Powell, 2006). Meyer and Jepperson (2000, p. 106) deploy the old Meadian concept of ''others'' to describe actors who step outside their own individual interest in this manner or whose own actorhood is centred on advising other societal actors. When it comes to institution building and diffusion, the most active of these ''others'' are the professions, the scientific community and INGOs whose stated goals are to advance the particular global models of progress and justice (Boli & Thomas, 1997).

Diffusion of Global Models

Institutional theorists place emphasis on the cultural linkages between such entities and societal actors in the elaboration and diffusion of global models and less on the relational factors which are normally used to explain diffusion processes (Strang & Meyer, 1993). Diffusion of models is shaped and accelerated by ''culturally analysed similarities among actors'' and by ''theorised accounts of actors and practices'' (p. 487). Their argument in relation to cultural linkages is that where actors are seen as falling in to the same category, diffusion should be rapid (p.490) or models are more likely to flow if they clearly identify a particular social category or type of actor to whom they apply. For instance, the activities of international organisations are said to create a common identity among member states and their civil servants that aids diffusion processes

(Porter & Webb, 2007). Theorisation of the role of these categories and the practices they should adopt is the other half of the diffusion process. The same authors define theorisation as ''the self-conscious development and specification of abstract categories and the formulation of patterned relationships such as chains of cause and effect'' (Strang and Meyer, 1993, p. 493). An important first stage in the theorisation process of such new institutionalised models is the specification of existing ''organisational failings''; the new model can then be justified as an innovation that will provide ''a solution or treatment'' for the identified deficiencies (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996, p. 183). Adoption or diffusion of the new model will depend on all of these elements of institutional change - the specification of failings, framing of a new model and identification by particular groupings who can implement this new model.

Strang and Meyer (1993) contend that diffusion becomes more rapid when cultural categories or models are informed by theories of higher level complexity or abstraction such as the elaborate diffusion of the modern concepts of nation-state or individual. A slightly less abstract example might be the theorisation by the OECD in the 1960s, of education as the residual factor in economic development that linked investment in education with progress in national states and was widely adopted at that time (Papadopoulos, 2011). The ''diffusion-generating power'' of theoretical models depends on the extent to which they are institutionalised, or built into standardised and authorative accounts of action, by legitimate bodies like the OECD or the scientific community and the degree of support received from other kinds of actors such as state agencies or corporate actors (Strang & Meyer, 1993, p. 495).

While theorisation can operate at the local level, WS theory is mostly concerned with how globally available models are used in the construction of new social arrangements within nation-states (Strang & Meyer, 1993). This in turn leads one to examine the role of the ''theorists'' involved in the creation of the mechanisms used to encourage their adoption. Studies on the rapid growth of non-governmental organisations (Boli & Thomas, 1997) and the emergence of transnational governance systems (Djelic & Sahlin-Anderson, 2006) in the last half century is indicative of this activity. All kinds of social and economic domains are included in this process – the development of a global accreditation system for business education (Moon & Wotipka, 2006), the adoption of ISO 9000 management standards (Mendel, 2006), state planning (Hwang, 2006) or, as we shall discuss later, the rationalisation of university governance systems (Ramirez, 2006a). The diffuse system of support for such models is reflected in the looseness of enforcement mechanisms. Various agencies combine coercive and soft law strategies from which we see transnational governance systems in the making (Djelic & Sahlin-Anderson, 2006). Soft law refers to those mechanisms which fall short of compulsory legislation

and range from use of persuasive policy statements to creation of accreditation and ranking systems (Morth, 2006; Jacobsson & Sahlin-Anderson, 2006). Examples from the field of higher education are the implementation of a common qualifications framework across Europe in accordance with the provisions of the Bologna Declaration (Keeling, 2006) and the emergence of a regulatory field of management education around accreditation and ranking systems for this activity in Europe (Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson, & Wedlin, 2006).

Institutional theory proposes that convergence and isomorphism are the dominant outcomes of interaction with these influences as actors strive to conform or adapt to the new legitimate script or model (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). The process of change reinforces the institutionalisation process e.g. the more universities that adopt an entrepreneurial model of management the more that form of management becomes institutionalised and is increasingly difficult to resist. Divergence is partly explained by the decoupling argument where ceremonial commitment to the globalised model or nominal structuration is observed. Organisational policies and plans may be disconnected from workplace practice, and the constitutions and laws of nation-states can prove to be token.

 According to institutional theory, this is an inevitable feature in the adoption of any external cultural model (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). One argument is that such models tend to be idealised, reflecting global cultural norms or thinking and tend to ''defocus individual variability'' (Strang & Meyer, 1993, p. 500) so local factors such as national polity type, size of organisation or likely economic impact on a sector can affect the particular way in which models are that this divergence or *decoupling* is absorbed or translated (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008). Another suggests that decoupling is due to a difference between the nature of adoption of actorhood or identity and associated practices; ''they penetrate local situations through different processes and at different rates'' (Meyer, 2010, p. 14). Implemented practice often does not automatically follow from policy adoption and vice versa; the rise in female enrolment in higher education, which happened universally regardless of policy adoption by particular countries, is presented as a case in point (Bradley & Ramirez, 1996). Such ''glocalisation'' (Robertson, 1992, p. 173) is to be expected but with actors adhering to the ''main dimensions'' of cultural models so as to maintain legitimacy (Meyer, 2000, p. 233).

It should be noted that this emphasis on isomorphism is partly contested both within organisational institutionalism and in the comparative education literature. Organisational field studies give greater weight to strategic responses by particular sectors (Hoffman, 1999) or individual organisations (Oliver, 1991) and in the comparative education literature there is a questioning as to whether the loose coupling argument is more a descriptor or *explandum*,

rather than a valid *explanation* of divergence and heterogeneity of response to global education models (Schriewer, 2012).

An Expansion of Organising and Organisations

Rationalisation and the increased pressures for actorhood described above creates a world society, according to Meyer et al., that calls for organisational mobilisation at lower levels, that undermines older forms of organisation previously attached to nation-states and that empowers individuals, and new organisations as collectives of such individuals, to address the issues identified by this rationalised society (Meyer, Drori, & Hwang, 2006). The call for mobilisation arises from the emergence of more and more rationalised fields around the issues which emerge in this world society which must be managed or resolved and for which particular cultural categories of actorhood are advanced to achieve this task. This, coupled with an increased expansion of people's social horizon to global levels, has resulted in the emergence of a world polity which is ''expansive, heterogeneous in form, concerned with many substantive issues, dynamic, loosely organised and highly decentralised'' (Drori G. S., 2008, p. 462). It is expansive in terms of the rapid growth of all types of international organisation - for profit, not-for profit, governmental or non-governmental. This diverse proliferation has given rise to a highly heterogeneous network of organisations addressing a wide range of social, economic and world development issues.

The scientisation of society demands that this be done ''in a rational manner through purposive action by purposive actors'' (Drori & Meyer, 2006, p. 67). Thus, the modern organisation is an actor, not an instrument (Brunsson & Sahlin- Anderson, 2000). It differs radically from classic bureaucracy which was an instrument of an external entity - mainly the nation state. Instead, it is an entity endowed with its own voice and identity and a legal persona which makes it accountable for its actions and outputs. Organisations are transforming into ones which are described by Meyer et al. (2006) as:

Sovereign - in the sense that they are granted the agency to make and pursue organisational goals. Ownership and management are separated. Autonomy is given in return for accountability.

Clearly bounded - by stated goals, contracts, mission or data which clearly define the limits of its actorhood thus dispersing confusion or conflicts in its role

Rational - within this assigned actorhood organisations set their own vision, mission and goals and put resources and procedures in place in pursuit of these goals. Both are tracked and monitored to measure effectiveness.

Structured - with an elaborate differentiation of tasks and professional personnel dedicated to various undertakings.

Less bureaucratic and anonymous - relying more on the ''incorporation of persons as individuals into the workings of the organisation'' (p.45). People are more visible in all types of organisational media. Strong reliance is placed on the skills and commitment of the individual to organisational goals and spirit. Likewise, people are increasingly incorporated in decision making structures with less use of hierarchical forms.

The universalism of this organisational form arises from the rational nature of world culture and its institutionalisation and diffusion is extensive. It can be, and increasingly is, applied to any type of organisation private or public. Traditional organisations such as health and education providers, once dominated by professionals, are rationalised, organised and expected to be administered as individual purposive actors. It can be, and is, applied in any type of society, whose government is expected to be made up of transparent agencies overseeing well managed public services and supporting an efficient business sector (Meyer, Drori, & Hwang, 2006; Brunsson & Sahlin- Anderson, 2000).

Application to the Study of Expansion and Changes in Higher Education

Explaining Expansion and Change

There is now a significant body of empirical work exploring the connection between the above description of a world culture and polity and the diffusion of particular organisational models at state and local levels - see Drori (2008) for an overview of the research agenda. Analysis has tended to focus on four areas: the development of world culture and models; the association of national policies or characteristics with this culture; the related weakening association of structures and policies with national characteristics; and the extent and nature of decoupling between adopted national policies and structures and their actual implementation (Schneiberg & Clemens, 2006). Less attention has been given to the origin of world models, which have been taken as a given and more to the extent and nature of diffusion of these models and to the nature of divergence or heterogeneity of response to these models. Early empirical work in WS theory looked at the global expansion of mass education in the post-world war II years in an attempt to explain some anomalies that existed within this field (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992). Expansion occurred in all countries irrespective of stage of economic development with a high degree of isomorphism in terms of curricula and school management systems. It occurred at a period of increased status and power of nation states which display strong similarity of form but great divergence or inequity in economic and social conditions (Jepperson, 2002). The expectation was that there would be the same divergence in terms of educational content and

delivery instead of the commonality that was observed. The interpretation was that education systems were being constructed for a commonly imagined rather than an actual society. This would be in keeping with institutional thinking around people constantly theorising and enacting models of society. In this instance, models reflected common aspirations and principles for education in this newly imagined society that were articulated through world institutions and increased global contact (Meyer et al. 1977; Meyer & Hannan, 1979).

The evidence and ideas were further studied and consolidated and an institutional explanation of education expansion was proposed in terms of the expression or enactment of nation-state identity or actorhood (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992; Ramirez, 2006, p. 125). Becoming a nation-state involved adhering to rationalising models of nation-statehood that had evolved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and one of the more important of those models emphasised the role of education in nation-state building and for individual development of citizenship. The authority and influence of these models increased during this period leading to expansion and standardisation of education systems while at the same time the influence of local economic, political and social factors on national education policies declined. Initially, these models were transmitted from core or former colonising nations to the periphery but more recently diffusion has been facilitated by international organisations, professional associations and educational experts. A significant finding was that the likelihood that a national education system would attune to such world models, and change with them, is dependent on the degree of linkage with such world bodies and experts.

More recent analyses of the development of higher education attempt to explain the expansion and changes that have occurred in terms of the displacement of the previously more isolated and nationalistic model of higher education and of the central role that higher education plays in the continuation and diversification of the rational world culture discussed previously (Frank & Meyer, 2006). WS theory proposes that higher education is advanced by, and advances, the development of that rationalised world culture.

The contention is that higher education expansion occurred, not as a direct result of economic growth and demand for graduates but from a shift in within world culture to the now generally accepted notion of education as a source of individual development and human capital for society (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). This perception did not always pertain. In the early stages of expansion in the United States, critical references were made to ''the diploma disease'' or the ''overeducated American'' or in wry observations about how there seemed to be ''no salvation outside of higher education'' (Dore, 1976; Freeman, 1976; Shils, 1971). Such thinking was based

on a concept of higher education bounded within nation states and with a limited set of available roles for those emerging from higher education. The cognitive shift in favour of an expanded higher education is attributed to the main changes in post-world war II world society discussed in previous sections. The shift to individualism and expanded human rights led to the notion of unlimited potential and capacity of persons and the right to develop that ability; one of the effects was the emergence of social movements which pressed for greater inclusion of previously under-represented groups in higher education. The increasing scientisation of society meant that the knowledge and output of HEIs, in both the natural and social sciences, became increasingly relevant to the practical lives of individuals and organisations; notions of such knowledge being of purely academic interest began to wane. And, as in the case of mass education, increasingly empowered nation-states committed to socio-economic progress began to see higher education as the means to achieve that progress; investment in education systems would serve as the source of economic growth rather than as a reaction to it. Overall, the combination of the rationalisation of world culture and the empowered actorhood of nation states and individuals ensured that higher education expansion became part of a global model of society and dispelled any notions of over-education or restriction to access (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). The global shift towards parity of gender balance in participation is another instance of the influence of this changed world culture (Bradley & Ramirez, 1996), even in the more elite universities such as Oxford (Soares, 1999) and, albeit at a slower and more sporadic rate, in previously male dominated subject areas (Ramirez & Wopitka, 2001; Maria & Bradley, 2002).

The effect at organisational level is twofold; firstly in expansion and diversification of curricula offered and of faculty to teach these new disciplines and secondly in the way in which universities are governed. The expansion of curricula is described as the incorporation of ''more and more kinds of cultural materials'' into the university from this diversified and scientised world society (Frank & Meyer, 2006, p. 21). Particular attention is drawn to the absorption and application of the social sciences by HEIs which is attributed to the increased scientisation of all social domains and evidence of more active engagement by higher education in this rationalised society (Drori & Moon, 2006; Frank & Gabler, 2006). As discussed earlier, active engagement in a rationalised world society requires that it be done in a ''rational manner through purposive action by purposive actors'' (Drori & Meyer, 2006, p. 67). Thus, an essential feature of the current global model is that higher education institutions adopt the same rationalised form as other contemporary organisations, encompassing a clear identity, articulated goals and governance systems designed to account for its actions and outputs (Krücken & Meier, 2006; Ramirez, 2006a).

The fundamental property of this global model of higher education, therefore, is its *social embeddedness* in contrast to the isolated or *socially buffered* institution of the past (Ramirez, 2006). The knowledge created in higher education is now framed as relevant and beneficial by an increasing range of social partners and organisations, many operating at a global level (Frank & Meyer, 2006). Research informs and is informed by national and global societal issues and interest groups. Multidisciplinary and multinational teams engage in such research. The graduates of higher education become the researchers, professionals and other actors in society who articulate new research areas, form new social movements or create new organisational (Meyer et al. 1997) higher education and a wide range of other social domains (Meyer, 2010). A virtuous cycle of innovation ensues, powered by the enhanced actorhood given to such people and HEIs themselves. In this way, higher education, along with other knowledge producers, plays a critical role in the so-called knowledge society (Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons, 2001).

Global vs. Local Change

As with WS theory in general, the case for the existence of global models for higher education and the role played by the professions and international bodies in creation and diffusion of such models is largely uncontested. This fact is increasingly recognised in the growing literature dealing with the issue - see for example, Varia (2004), Krücken et al. (2006), Marginson & van der Wende (2007), Bassett & Maldonado-Maldonado (2009), Amaral & Neave (2009) or Shahjahan (2012). The general perception is that international organisations do play a pivotal role in constructing and spreading ''particular visions of higher education'', (Shahjahan, 2012, p. 386) or defining ''the appropriate (effective and efficient) and legitimate form of higher education in the global age'' (Vaira, 2004, p. 488). The same literature examines the mechanisms deployed in diffusing this particular model and a common theme is the use of soft law or governance methods by various agencies and most intensely by the OECD (Jakobi & Martens, 2010; Basset & Maldonado, 2009) and the European Commission (Spr).

However, the enactment of this emerging global model of higher education is not seen as being uniform or without difficulty (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). There appears to be a global-local axis that is regularly referred to in the titles of the studies of globalisation of higher education; ''growing commonalities vs. persistent national differences'' (Ramirez, 2006), ''thinking globally, acting locally'' (Basset & Maldonado, 2009), ''between global trends and national traditions'' (Krücken, Kosmutzky, & Torka, 2006), ''beyond nation states... a glonacal agency heuristic'' (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002), ''nationalisation, localisation, globalisation in Finish higher education'' (Valimaa, 2004). The extensive treatment implies a complex set of factors involved including the historical traditions of the institutions and national systems (Ramirez, 2006; Kyvik,

2004; Krücken G. , 2003; Deem, 2001), the resistance of teaching and research activities - which are indeterminate in outcome - to standardisation processes (Musselin, 2006) and the shifting balance between national and transnational policy making networks (Dale, 2006; Krücken, Kosmutzky, & Torka, 2006). HEIs, with the exception perhaps of those involved in distance or e-learning activities, or with a very high proportion of international students, still function mainly within national boundaries and for the most part, serve local, regional and national interests. Divergence can be observed especially in structural and governance related matters which tend to reflect the political realities of each nation state (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, & Schofer, 2007) and /or the history of the institution (Ramirez, 2006). As an example of the latter, consider the different development pathways taken by the five entrepreneurial universities across Europe, studied by Clark (1998), or the variation in the adoption of Bologna process reforms in different European states (Witte, 2006). The outcome therefore is a spectrum of convergence at national, sector and organisational level; strong change programmes in the UK may be explained in part by the majoritarian political system there compared to slower change processes in the Netherlands (Theisens, 2004), the emergence of an organisational field of management education in Europe encompassing uniform accreditation and ranking systems (Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson, & Wedlin, 2001; 2006) and highly variable adoption of accountability type practices at individual institutional level in European universities (Huisman & Currie, 2004). Those involved in transnational governance are aware of these factors, which perhaps explains why responsibility for implementing the modernisation programme in Europe's universities is placed primarily at member state and institutional levels (EU Commission, 2011).

Any explanation of the change processes in higher education should be able to address the issue of how these trends play out at both global and local levels. Accounts in the comparative education literature of the European experience, and the differential response to the Bologna Declaration and other modernisation initiatives, fall into two categories. The first set attributes the variance to differing political or strategic responses to European Commission policies by local actors, especially higher education institutions and national ministries and the power play between these actors; see for example studies by Kyvik (2004), Theissens & Enders (2006) and Witte (2006). Analyses by other authors (Beerkens, 2008; Dale, 2006; 2010; Gornitzka et al. 2007) focus more on a European or transnational context and outcomes. From this perspective, the variance is due to different rates of transition from nation-state to a new European education field or space which would be, as Dale describes it, ''distinct both in terms of its scope and functions from the individual and aggregated scope and functions of existing Member State education sectors'' (Dale, 2006, p. 44). The latter is closer to the WS theorists' account that

accept that higher education is located in both a national and global institutional framework but argue that transnational standardisation processes such as Bologna and world ranking systems are having increasing effect and that the national character of higher education is beginning to recede (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, & Schofer, 2007). Ramirez argues that the trend is towards isomorphism for the following reasons (2006a, p. 244). Firstly, the concept of the socially embedded or entrepreneurial university is strongly identified with America, and American institutions have dominated world culture in the last two decades. The core elements of this model - accountability, inclusiveness, organisational flexibility - are in tune with the neo-liberal marketisation philosophies, also emanating from America, which have come to dominate Western politics. Political and social institutions are expected to prove their worth and ''not be buffered from external scrutiny'' (Ramirez, 2006a, p. 244); in such an environment it is difficult to see how the older more restrictive model of the university can maintain legitimacy. Secondly, following Strang and Meyer's (1993) logic, this modern model of higher education playing a central role in the new knowledge economy, has become the object of much positive theorisation in all quarters but most noticeably in discourses from international bodies like the EU Commission, the OECD, the World Bank and UNESCO a process which will continue to support diffusion at nation-state and organisational levels. Lastly, as more universities adopt this model a ''dense global network'' is emerging which reinforces this logic and makes it difficult for more traditional universities to resist (Ramirez, 2006a, p. 244). The latter are presented as exclusive and the modern university as one which serves all; popular and political support is more likely to go to the socially embedded model.

Summary and Research Issues

The core contention of WS theory is that cultural models define and legitimate agendas for local action by nation-states and other national and local actors in virtually all social domains including education. The existence of such institutionalised models helps explain structural isomorphism in these domains despite the wide variance in national priorities, traditions and resources. WS theory suggests that the global character of the changes we have seen in higher education in the post-war years is due to the emergence of a rationalised world culture which advances the possibility of universal socio-economic progress and individual human rights and in which the provision of mass, and now higher education, is seen as a primary means of attaining these goals; education is regarded as a prime source of social and economic progress rather than the outcome of demands arising from such progress (Meyer & Schofer, 2007). An open and inclusive model of higher education was adopted in those decades by liberal national societies which embraced the ideas of expanded individuality, first in the United States and then

in a recovering Europe. It was increasingly supported in a world polity committed to progress and the expansion of human rights and the concept of ''education for all'' became part of the discourse of international organisations who acted as carriers for these ideas (Chabbot, 2002). Previous arguments about the hazards of over-education or elitist views on the role of universities have been dismissed. The result of these developments has been the world wide adoption of this open and inclusive model of higher education, by all nation states that are committed to social progress and individual rights; this has led to the scale and extent of expansion described previously (Schofer & Meyer, 2005).

The changing character and functioning of higher education is attributed by WS theorists to another trend in world society; that is to its increased scientisation and rationalisation. The effect has been an opening of access to knowledge created in the university and a general diversification of the knowledge areas that it has become involved with, especially in the practical and social sciences - higher education and our rationalised knowledge society have become the twin ''institutions of modernity'' (Frank & Meyer, 2006, p. 19). This mutual engagement with society is accompanied by expectations that the university itself functions as a contemporary rational organisation; one that is accountable, responsive, clearly identifiable and transparent in its operations.

The above account is an effort to explain the global expansion and structural reforms of higher education and the convergence that has taken place in redirecting the role of higher education, the curricula it delivers and how it is organised and governed. However, higher education systems still operate within particular national polities which have particular expectations of their higher education institutions. While knowledge production is a global enterprise, its economic application tends to be local (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, & Schofer, 2007). Likewise, governance arrangements for systems and individual institutions tend to reflect the nature of that polity in terms of the level of state control and the historical traditions of their institutions. Thus, higher education should be seen as nested in a broader national and global institutional environment and change is best analysed in this multi-level environment (Figure 2.3)

Meyer et al. (2007) suggest the following lines of research:

- Analysis of the engagement of national systems with world and regional education models with a view to creating a set of indicators that might gauge that linkage

- Assessing how such linkages or contact with world polity change with time
- Analysing how models are enacted, or not, at system or institution level
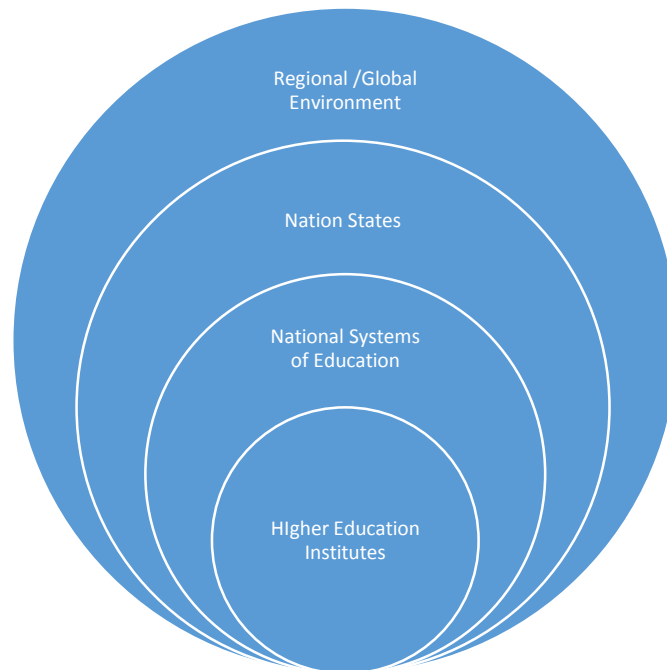
Figure 2.3 Institutional Environments of Higher Education

It is within that framework that the analysis of the changes that have taken place in Irish higher education is being carried out in this thesis. It examines how Irish higher education policy making has interacted with agencies advancing this global model, how that interaction has evolved with time and assesses the impact of that interaction on Irish higher education at system and organisational level.

To conclude, in this chapter I have outlined the main tenets of WS theory and how they may be applied to the study of current changes in global models of higher education and the consequences for development of higher education systems in particular nation-states.   An elaboration of the research objectives and the methodology to be used to examine these issues in an Irish context is described in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Introduction

Previous chapters reviewed the changes that have taken place in higher education, the contrasting interpretations of these changes and the theoretical positions used to explain them. For the reasons outlined, WS theory is being used to examine and analyse the complexities of the transformation that have taken place in higher education in Ireland over the last five decades, the timing and the process of change and its impact at system and organisational level.

The underlying sociological institutionalism of WS theory is based on the philosophical stance of a reality that is a social construct. That reality involves the collective experience of people creating institutions, sets of complex rules or internalised beliefs that determine social action rather than individual or actor centred choice. However, a critical point to note is that institutions exist not only as internalised beliefs but also as ''external frameworks''; as such they cannot be initially understood by introspection but must first be experienced as external realities and then internalised by social participants, (Scott W. , 2008, p. 40). This implies the existence of externally observable phenomena or evidence of the existence of institutions beyond individual or subjective interpretations. Examples include verbal utterances or statements, written commentary or statements, rituals or cultural artefacts; institutional forces are complex both in makeup and mode of impact but are ''identifiable in their manifestation and measurable in their behaviour and effects'' (Scott W. , 2008, p. 215). In the case of this thesis, there is a strong reliance on the interpretation of policy documents as models or scripts for action by individuals and organisations involved in higher education. Thus the overall methodological approach taken is interpretive but it also draws on objective data as evidence of the existence of the institutionalised models which shape individual or organisational behaviour and explains why, methodologically, the theory has been pursued with ''standard procedures'' (Meyer, 2008, p. 800). It also serves as an example of the use of a ''subtle realism'', an intermediary approach to conducting social research within the opposing subjective-objective philosophical debate (Hammersley, 1992, p. 50).

Research Objectives and Design

The overall research objectives are to assess the degree to which Irish higher education has been shaped by a broader world culture, to examine the interactions between agencies

involved in forming global models of higher education and to consider their impact on Irish policy makers and Irish HEIs.

Specifically, the research addresses the following questions:

- What role have international agencies such as the EU and OECD played in the creation and diffusion of the global models of higher education?
- What are the main features of the current model and how has it evolved?
- What influence have such models had on the development of Irish state policies on higher education?
- To what extent have changes in world models shaped change at HEI level, in the areas of organisational role and governance?
- Where convergence with such models is observable, by what mechanism(s) have such changes taken place?
- Where divergence is observable, what are the factors that have led to it?

From a theoretical perspective the objectives are to:
- Assess the strengths and limitations of WS theory in analysing changes in a social domain such as higher education in a national context
- Provide further insights into the mechanisms of institutionalisation of ideas at national state level through the adoption of global models.

The analysis of change in a national context presents a research challenge. Most empirical work on WS theory or the macro-sociological strand of new institutionalism tends to focus on consolidation of global issues or models, and cross-national diffusion (Drori G. S., 2008). Moreover, the emphasis is on isomorphism or homogeneity rather than on trying to account for heterogeneity or for what happens in particular national contexts (Schneiberg & Clemens, 2006; Hasse & Krücken, 2008). Previous studies analysing evidence of conformity by nation states with world models have tended to use indirect research strategies (Schneiberg & Clemens, 2006, p. 198), including the following:

Use of Imputed Effects - the effect of world culture on national policies is imputed by observing the absence of a link between some social form or practice and national policies, coupled with increased isomorphism across nation states and/or a marked inflection in the rate of adoption of the practice at a particular point in time. The rapid massification of higher education in the post-war years is a case in point where expansion was observed to occur in a wide range of nation-states and local economic or social circumstances (Schofer & Meyer, 2005).

Association with Global Events - developments in national strategies or policies are measured against global events such as the formation of international organisations like the UN Commission for Human Rights in 1946 or the promulgation of particular norms or world vision such as the declaration of Education for All at the World Educational Forum in Dakar in the year 2000.

Level of Global Linkage - measured by membership and participation in international organisations, ratification of global treaties or ties to prior adopters of a particular global model. Membership of the EU is an obvious example of a willingness by states to embrace certain norms. The failure by certain states to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on Global warming might be an indicator of non-conformance with a prevailing world view on environmental management.

Period Specific Strategies - demonstrate that the effects of global versus nation-level factors shift across time periods; the focus of analysis is on the periods before and after the emergence of a global order with effects of national variables or factors diminishing after such an emergence. An example is the effect that the consolidation of a global order after 1945 had on nation state structures and policies including those relating to education provision (Meyer J. W., Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997)

Schneiberg and Clemens (2006) note a relative lack of attention to research on the construction of world culture and the politics of establishing particular global models or sets of legitimating rules, and also point to the lack of any in-depth analysis of the consequences, anticipated or not, of adherence to these institutional constructs. Both of these matters are significant in discussing the way in which global models of higher education are formed, diffused and implemented in national contexts such as Ireland. Similarly, Djelic and Quack point to the need for appropriate research designs to ''better consider the nested hierarchy of institutional contexts'' (2008, p. 318), to analyse the interactions between national and transnational institutions and to track the co-evolution of institutions at each level.

As well as addressing these identified deficits in existing analyses, this study builds on and adapts strategies used in previous studies, particularly the global linkage and period specific kind, by focussing on the changing character of culture as evidenced by the evolution of policies, discourses or models of action in particular social domains. It also examines the level and nature of exposure of the nation state and its sub actors to these ideas through an intensification of contact with carriers of these models, and looks at the evidence of adoption of ideas as indicated by the co-evolution of structures or institutions at national and local levels.

In this way, the research assesses the linkages between the field of Irish higher education and global models by conducting an analysis of policy making which

- tracks changes in proposed models for higher education and the main themes contained in policy statements of global and regional international agencies over the period of the study
- examines theoretically and empirically the mechanisms used by these international agencies in developing and disseminating these policy statements and the reported level of convergence with such models
- analyses patterns and types of change or significant policy shifts in higher education in Ireland and their correlation with global models
- analyses any changes in the method of policy making, and policy implementation at system level
- studies changes at the level of individual HEIs in order to establish how academic orientation and governance systems have evolved in comparison to changing global models of higher education over the period of the study

The research design is intended to create a structure, or matrix of analysis, that reflects the multi- level nature of change suggested by Djelic and Quack (2008) and the methodological approaches discussed in Schneiberg & Clemens (2006). Therefore at each level of analysis, there is a study of: 1) the history or evolution of policy ideas, 2) the mechanisms or processes used to develop and implement ideas and how they have evolved, and 3) the reported effects or impact of these changing ideas (see Table 3.1). Findings showing a high degree of isomorphism, within and between levels, and showing consistent effects over time imply the influence of a common model or source of change.

Methodology by Level of Analysis

The research methodology to be applied to each level of analysis, the source of data to be used and the method of data sourcing are now described.

Promotion of Global Models by International Organisations

Research focus. This section of the study is based on the assumption that international bodies act as carriers for world cultural norms within the domain of higher education and that the main instruments of ideational influence are the published policies and discourses issued by these organisations (Boli & Thomas, 1997; Finnemore, 1993; Ervik, Kildal, & Nilssen, 2009). The OECD is the global agency studied because of its increasing significance in this policy area (Basset & Maldonado, 2009). Its three volume report *Tertiary Education in a Knowledge Society*

Table 3. 1 Research Design

Level of Analysis	History	Process	Effects or Impact
Creation of global models by International Organisations.	Evolution of policy making on higher education since 1960.	Method of policy formation and dissemination to member states.	Rate of adoption of policies at national level. Reported effects on policies and policy making.
Irish Higher Education Policy Making.	Evolution of policy making and legislation in higher education.	Interactions with international agencies and national actors. Method of policy formation and dissemination.	Convergence of policy content with global models. System level changes in curricula and governance.
Irish Higher Education Institutes.	Organisational History /Trajectory.	Interaction with local, national and international actors.	Changes in academic orientation and organisational governance.

(OECD, 2008c) and the widespread use of its *Education Indicators at a Glance* as an international benchmark of sector performance are examples of that influence. Regional international interest concentrates on the role of the European Commission in directing higher education policies, especially in the period following the Bologna Declaration in 1999.

Data Sources and Methodology. The methodology involves an analysis and interpretation of the policy documents issued by the EU and OECD organisations and of recent studies on the operation and impact of these organisations through the lens of WS theory. EU documentation examined includes all policy statements and declarations relating to higher education which have been issued by both the EU Commission and the Council of Education Ministers since 1960. A notable development in relation to EU policy making has been the intensification of this activity over the last decade; an EU Commission webpage lists 22 documents relating to policy development, or action programmes, on higher education reform issued since the year 2000 (EU Commission, 2013c); this is in itself a significant empirical observation. A similar increase has occurred in policy documents and reports emanating from the OECD; an added feature of this documentation is its depth and level of prescriptiveness, particularly in the previously mentioned *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society* issued in 2008.

Table 3.2 Research Issues and Data Sources on Role of International Organisations in Higher Education Policy Making

Level of Analysis	History	Process	Effects or Impact
Generation and effect of institutional models on higher education by OECD and EU.	Research Issues		
	Evolution of policy making on higher education since 1960.	Method of policy formation and dissemination to member states.	Rate of adoption of policies at national level. Type of effects on policies and policy making.
	Data Sources		
	Policy documents on higher education accessed in chronological order. Published organisation history.	Literature on policy making processes by the EU and the OECD in higher education and other social areas.	Implementation reports from the EU or the OECD. Literature on general impact of OECD/ EU on national policies.

The analysis of policy documents seeks to identify the development of ideas around the core policy issues of the role, funding and governance of higher education. Also, as interest in the workings of these organisations grows, there is a growing literature on the policy making processes employed by these organisations, and their impact on nation states (Ball, 1998; Basset & Maldonado, 2009; Dale & Robertson, 2002; Kidal, 2003; Krücken, Kosmutzky, & Torka, 2006; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Martens & Jakobi , 2010). This literature is studied with a view to identifying how policy making processes have evolved and to comparing the methods of policy diffusion that are deployed by each organisation.

 Policy-making at this level is regarded mainly as a form of persuasion or ideational influence and policy documents are intended to raise new policy issues or to reframe existing ones (Saarinen, 2008). Ervik et al. (2009, pp. 7-10) outline three approaches to tracing the ideational influence of international organisations; all three are used in this section of the analysis with a particular focus on the third. The first is to establish a direct correlation between ideas and specific policy implementation or changes; this is not always possible as changes can be contingent on other factors. The second approach seeks a lower level of proof by looking for congruence of ideas e.g. the presence of, or reference to, international organisational documents, or common stances in policy documents. The third approach, called ''process tracing'' (p.8), involves a detailed analysis of the policy making process; how particular actors present ideas, how they interact, and how various institutions constrain or enable certain actors

during this process. Analysing policy discourses thus implies ''addressing ideas, actors and institutions, and their interaction'' (p. 10); and this is the approach that is contained within the research design for this section of the project (see Table 3.1).

Irish Higher Education Policy Making

Research Focus. The subjects of research in this section are policy-makers and policy making processes on higher education in Ireland. As with the previous section, analysing policy discourses involves addressing ideas, actors and institutions, and their interaction (Table 3.3). The history of policy making focussed on significant shifts in policy making or legislation, as being reflective of institutional change or attitudes to higher education and the evolution of the structuration of this policy field as the number of actors and interest groups increased with time. Processes and implementation were analysed in order to define the steering mechanisms used by the Irish state to direct higher education policy.

Data Sources and Methodology. Again, the main sources of data were policy documents and legislation downloaded or retrieved from library archives and, as with international documentation, the majority date from the last two decades as the level of policy making intensified in this period. Statistical data on changes in the main metrics for higher education, enrolments, curricula, research activity and expenditure are sourced from funding agency reports. Newspaper archives are a source of contemporary commentary on policy issues. Policies, at this level, are interpreted using Gornitzka's definition of policies being ''public statements of objectives and the instruments that will be used to achieve them'' (1999, p. 14). This reflects the role of the nation state in making policy decisions and enacting legislation to support them. The focus of analysis is on the core issues of the role, funding and governance of Irish higher education, and the ways in which they were influenced by EU and OECD policy discourses over the period of the study. As was the case with international organisations, reference is made to historical monographs or other texts. There are a limited number of studies on Irish higher education policy-making. For the period up to 2000, there are three books dealing specifically with Irish higher education – see Elliot (2006), Osborne, (1996) and White, (2001) - the last being the most commonly cited. Some sections within texts on general education policy, (Clancy, The Evolution of Policy in Third Level Education, 1989; Walsh, 2009), and articles by O'Buachalla (1984; 1992) and O'Sullivan (1992b) also deal with this period. Some scholars have written specifically on the impact of the OECD on policy making in the 1960s, most notably Murray (2007) and O'Sullivan (1992a).

Table 3.3 Research Issues and Data Sources on Irish Higher Education Policy Making

Level of Analysis	History	Process	Effects or Impact
	Research Issues		
Irish Higher Education Policy Making	Key policy shifts in state discourses and legislation on higher education over the period of the study.	Interactions with national and international policy actors. Method of policy formation and dissemination.	Convergence of policy content with global models. Policy implementation and outcomes at system level.
	Data Sources		
	Policy documents and legislation on higher education accessed in chronological order. Published histories. Newspaper archives.	Published reports. Literature on the evolving role of the state in higher education policy making. Interviews with policy actors and experts.	Content of policy and legislation. Implementation of key elements of model- role of higher education, its funding and governance.

More recent studies, such as those by Hazelcorn and Massaro (2011) and Kenny et al. (2009), examine policy making in a more global perspective. Critical commentary portrays the prioritisation of human capital formation in Irish higher education as being connected with the growth of marketisation and neo-liberal policies (Holborow, 2012; Lynch, 2006). The above documentary sources are supplemented by interviews with three staff members in policy-making units in the Department of Education and Skills and the Higher Education Authority (See Appendix A for a list of interviewees). The purpose of the interviews is to obtain factual information which is absent from, or unclear, in published sources (Mason, 2002) and to establish the level of awareness of the ideas contained in EU and OECD policy documentation. The objectives of the interviews and topic guide are listed in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Objectives and Indicative Questions for Interviews with Policy Makers

Objectives	Interview Topic Guide
Obtain information on policy making capacity	• Staffing? Numbers? Profile? Use of external experts?
Elaborate on policy making processes including networking arrangements with national and international actors and awareness of these policy models	• Use of ''evidence based approach''? • Main bodies of theory/evidence on which policies are based? • Mechanism of policy formation – standard methodology or varied? • Interaction with national actors in higher education policy networks? • Interaction with international policy making agencies? EU? OECD? Other?
Obtain organisation's own assessment of the impact of its policies on higher education strategies and practice	• Ideas represented in national strategy report? • In HEI strategies? • In government decisions? • In higher education institution practice? • Relative influence - past and present?

Higher Education Institutes

Research Focus. The purpose of this section is to assess the degree to which HEIs have responded to the demand for changes in governance and management at local level. An analysis was made of the individual HEIs against contemporary models of organisational governance, around identity, hierarchy, rationality and status of individuals discussed in the previous chapter, (Brunsson & Sahlin- Anderson, 2000; Meyer, Drori, & Hwang, 2006; Musselin, 2006). The primary objective, from an institutional theory perspective is to assess the extent to which this model has been adopted or internalised at organisational and managerial level rather than to make a quantitative assessment of its adoption across the sector as a whole. The extent to which the organisational model has been internalised as a package (Brunsson & Sahlin- Anderson, 2000) is regarded as evidence of such internalisation, rather than mimetic or coercive adoption of certain elements of the model e.g. production of strategic plans or publication of key performance metrics. A second indicator is the discourse used by senior managers in describing the organisational structures and objectives. For these reasons, a qualitative case study of two universities rather than a quantitative study across the sector was carried out so as to obtain more nuanced and in-depth information in relation to all of these factors.

Table 3.5 Research Issues and Data Sources on Irish Higher Education Institutes

Level of Analysis	History	Process	Effects or Impact
Irish Higher Education Institutions	Research Issues		
	Organisational history, traditions, trajectory.	Interaction with local, national and international actors.	Changes in academic orientation and institutional governance.
	Data Sources		
	Published external and internal documents: calendars, President's Reports, published histories.	Published internal and external reports. Interviews with four senior administrators two in each university.	Published internal and external reports. Interviews with senior administrators.

Data Sources and Methodology. Two universities with very different origins are selected as case studies, one traditional, the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) and one new, Dublin City University (DCU). NUIG was founded as one of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland[7] in 1845 and its history and development are closely linked with the city of Galway and the western region of Ireland in which it is located. The current student population is about 17,000. By contrast, Dublin City University is one of four universities located in the greater Dublin region[8] and along with the University of Limerick is one of the two new universities that grew out of the National Institutes of Higher Education of the 1980s. From the outset, it emphasised its linkages with business and other sectors of the community and sought to extend participation by a number of means including the use of distance education programmes (NIHE Dublin, 1982). Its current student population is approximately 11,000.

Documentary data comprises material from university sources such as calendars, President's reports and websites, and externally published reports by state funding or quality assurance agencies. Quantitative analysis was completed on key organisational statistics such as student

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[7] The three Queens Colleges were located in Belfast, Cork and Galway
[8] The other universities are Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and the National University of Ireland Maynooth.

enrolments, level of funding, faculty and administrative staff numbers and research activity as indicators of organisational expansion and structural change.

Table 3.4 Objectives and Indicative Questions for Interviews with Management Staff in Higher Education Institutes

Interview Objective	Interview Topic Guide
Obtain information and views on how sovereignty and identity of Institution have changed over period of study.	• Key elements of present identity? What's different? • Rationale for any identity changes e.g. logo change? • How relations with local community have evolved? • Nature and level of linkages with national and transnational policy making bodies?
Obtain information and views on hierarchy, structuration, and decision making processes, past and present.	• Changed relationships between Governing Authority, President and Academic Council? • Reasons for expansion of non-academic functions? • Significance of changed decision making process? • How institution compares its structure with that of other HEI's. • Has autonomy expanded or declined? • Future trends in organisational arrangements?
Obtain information and views on use of data for strategic planning and quality assurance purposes.	• Mechanisms of strategic planning? • Perceived benefits? Limitations? Attitude of staff? • Experience of participation in ranking schemes? • Experience of participation in national quality assurance schemes? • Attitude to publication of key performance indicators as envisaged in HEA strategic dialogue process?
Obtain information and views on changed relationship between the institution and student.	• Why / why not, student charter? • Attitude to concept of student as consumer? • Value of marketing investment by institution? • Experience with student centred learning programmes? • Plans for use of online or other individualised teaching techniques?

Changes were also analysed to identify the changes in organisational structures and decision making processes over the period and the types of interaction engaged in by the universities at local, national and international level. This included interviews with senior administrative staff in each institution in order to clarify, or add to, information from documentary sources and to assess the interviewees' interpretation of these organisational characteristics. Examples of interview objectives and indicative questions are listed in Table 3.4. All interviews were conducted in accordance with the Dublin City University code of ethics.[9]

The primary concern in devising the methodology described in previous sections has been to enhance the validity of the research by providing sufficient evidence linked to the theoretical framework and the research questions presented in this thesis (Hammersley, 1992, pp. 70-71).

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[9] see http://www.dcu.ie/ethics/ethics-committees.shtml

At each level of the research there is a strong reliance on published texts as the primary data source. The profile of the type of texts accessed is given in Table 3.7; in total, almost 100 texts were referred to.

From a methodological point of view, these documents are interpreted in terms of their source of production and social purpose (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Policy documents from transnational agencies are published mainly for their ideational influence, as a means of agenda setting and framing of policy issues (Jacobsson & Sahlin-Anderson, 2006; Saarinen, 2008). National government policies and legislation are seen as more immediate statement of objectives and instruments to achieve them (Gornitzka, 1999). Strategic plans from universities may be regarded as statements of how individual HEIs '' interrelate with their organisational environment'' in the present (Frølich et al. 2013 p.80). The timing of the publication of the texts, or the archival nature of the material is also of significance in that the texts provide historical insights into government or agency thinking at the time and allow for the analysis of the evolution of thinking by those actors (see Reay and Hinings, 2005). Finally, there is the nature and status of the documents. In the case of official texts they are generally carefully drafted following extensive consultation with other stakeholders; in this way they are rich sources of data on prevalent thinking within national or transnational fields. Similarly, strategic statements of HEIs can be interpreted as the output of a strategising activity involving '' strong intra-organisational bottom- up processes'' and '' a broad group of intra-organisational members'' (Frølich et al. 2013 p. 85). In summary, analysis of this volume of documentation, its multiple sources, its chronological sequencing and its representative status allows for a comparative and historical analysis to be made in addition to the present oriented study through interviews with current actors. Interviews are conducted with three policy makers. The objective was to assess engagement with present day policies and gain additional insights into current policy making practices. Interviews were conducted and transcribed[10] and written output on the use of interview material was sent to participants to validate both the accuracy and interpretation of data.

This chapter has described the methodology, and its rationale, for the empirical work described in the following three chapters. The first of those chapters deals with how policy models for higher education have evolved in a European and global context, and advanced by the EU Commission and the OECD respectively.

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[10] The average duration of interviews was 90mins.

Table 3.5 Profile of Texts Analysed in Study

Source	Type of Material	Representative Documents
EU	Policy communications from the European Council and European Commission since 1990 the role of higher education.	*Bologna Declaration* EHEA (1999) *Towards a European Research Area (ERA)* (COM 2000/6) (2000 *The Role of Universities in the Europe of Knowledge* (COM 2003/58 final) (2003) *Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy* COM(2005) 152 final *Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems* COM (2011) 567 final
OECD	Thematic reviews, Reports, Country Studies.	*Investing in Education* (1965) *Redefining Tertiary Education* (1998) *Review of National Policies in Education: Higher Education in Ireland (Examiners Report).* (2004) *Tertiary Education in the Knowledge Society* (2008)
Irish Government Departments and Policy Making Agencies	Policy texts and legislation dating from 1965 to 2011.	*Commission on Higher Education Report* (1967) *Charting our Future-White Paper on Education* (1995) *Universities Act* (1997) *Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation* (2006) *Building Ireland's Smart Economy- A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal* (2008) *National Strategy for Higher Education* (2011)
Universities	Strategic statements, print and web-based reports.	*Annual Report of Dublin City University for the period October 1989- September 1990.* *Transforming Lives and Societies - Strategic Plan 2012 -2017. Dublin City University.* *University College Galway President's Report for the year 1970/71.* *Plean Staritéiseach OÉ Gaillimh: NUI Galway Strategic Plan. 2009.*

Chapter 4 Creation and Diffusion of Models of Higher Education - The Role of the EU and the OECD

> No single European country is large enough or strong enough to step into the knowledge era by itself. Given the scale of operations of our global competitors, it is not logical or efficient for any individual EU member to go it alone. The challenge is global; the response has to be European. Only if Europe plays as a team will we regain the lead in the world knowledge league…Of course it is important to uphold the principle of subsidiarity: education and research policies are, and will remain, mainly national responsibilities. However, you will agree that there is a lot we can do together. Education, research, and the drive towards innovation are textbook cases in which the European whole is larger than the sum of its national parts. The most compelling example is the drive to establish genuine European areas in higher education, research, and innovation. (Extract of speech delivered by the President of the EU Commission, José Manuel Barroso, on 21 February 2007 quoted in Dale 2007, p.27)

Introduction

In previous chapters, it was discussed in general terms how cultural models define and legitimate agendas for action by nation-states and other national and local actors in virtually all social domains including education. WS theorists describe a model of higher education, in keeping with contemporary world culture, that is open and accountable, embedded in society, organisationally flexible and broadly inclusive. A second discussion dealt with the pivotal role that international and transnational organisations play as both creators and carriers of such models and how they employ various regulatory and soft law mechanisms to encourage their adoption at both nation state and organisational level.

The European Commission and the OECD in particular have played a significant role in the development of Irish higher education. The above quotation from the President of the European Commission is evidence of how that body links economic progress in Europe with the pooling of knowledge resources in a European higher education and research area. The OECD has been influential in education policy making in Ireland since the 1960s (Walsh, 2009). This chapter examines the higher education policy output of the two international organisations since that period. In line with the methodology and theoretical framework discussed in the previous chapter the evolution of their thinking on higher education as published in policy documentation, or other communications, is tracked over the period. Current policy texts are

summarised according to core themes for comparative purposes. This is done to establish the degree of commonality between the stances each organisation takes on higher education. This will be used later as a benchmark to establish the extent of policy convergence with national policies in Ireland. The core themes address how each organisation frames the problems or current institutional deficiencies in higher education, how each views its future role, and their respective positions on the governance and funding arrangements for higher education. Secondly, the resources and mechanisms deployed by both organisations to disseminate their ideas and prescriptions for higher education will be discussed in terms of the institutional diffusion processes discussed in the previous chapter. Lastly, evidence on the general impact of EU and OECD policies on higher education policies at national level will be reviewed.

Evolution of Higher Education Policies and Policy Making in the EU

In order to understand the European Union (EU) and its impact on social domains such as education, it is important to comprehend both its organisational structures and the institutionalised value system on which these structures rest. In these sections, I trace the evolution of policies and ideas on higher education within the EU and the parallel development of arrangements and structures in which these ideas are formed and disseminated. In order to do so, I draw on policy documents and communications from the European Commission (hereafter referred to as the Commission) and the EU Council of Prime Ministers (hereafter referred to as the Council). Reference will be made also to an increasing literature on the role of the EU in the field of higher education. It is not intended to be a comprehensive history of higher education policy making since the formation of the EU - see Corbett (2005) or Tzortzis (2007) for fuller accounts. Instead, its purpose is to identify the main phases or shifts in ideas and the accompanying trends in policy-making processes. An overview of those main phases is presented in Table 4.1. Two trends are apparent from this summary. The first is an evolution of policy thinking towards the more open, flexible, and socially embedded model of higher education and the framing of that model within a European context. The second is the intensification of policy making and the elaboration of structures to advance that model.

Policy Evolution

While vocational training was identified as an area of Community action in the Treaty of Rome in 1957, education was not formally recognised as an area of European Union competency until the Maastricht Treaty which established the European Community in 1992 (EU Council, 1992).

That competency was clearly circumscribed in terms of its acting in a supporting role. Article 126 of the treaty stated that the Community:

> Shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging co-operation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity. (EU Council, 1992)

The supremacy of the nation state in policy making was reinforced in the treaty by the concept of *subsidiarity* which prevented the Commission taking actions (except in areas within its exclusive competence) unless it could demonstrate that such action would be more effective than any taken at regional, national or local level. Given this limited competence and restrictions, there are few legal agreements which pertain to higher education. An exception is the series of Directives on mutual recognition of professional qualifications which have obvious implications for higher education in terms of course content and assessment needed to gain such credentials (Admission Officers and Credentials Evaluators, 2004). Another is the European Court of Justice ruling in the Gravier case of 1985 that deemed higher education to be vocational in nature and subject to single market principles (Gravier vs. City of Liege, 1985). This judgement prevented nation states from discriminating in their provision in any way as between their own citizens and those from other member states, including charging of tuition fees.

However, the rules and programmes which the EU developed in the 1970s and 80s were signals of its commitment to European ideals with its advocacy of wider access to higher education, of greater mobility between member states, and building connections with the emerging democracies in central and eastern Europe. The European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) began a programme in 1977 for exchange of students between and by its 26th anniversary reached the milestone of 3 million student exchanges completed (EU Commission, 2013f). A trans-European mobility programme TEMPUS was launched in 1990 and a programme for the promotion of European languages (LINQUA) in the same year.The increased mobility of students exposed the need for some common system of credit allocation for courses attended by students in partner institutions in different parts of Europe; a pilot Europan Credit Transfer Scheme was launched in 1989 and became one of the foundations for future quality assurance and course accreditaton systems. The other long term effects of these, and subsequent programmes, were to develop networks of contact among HEIs and between these institutes and the Commission. Such interconnections would in future aid in the acceptance of policy ideas around the Bologna and Lisbon agendas for European higher education reform in the followng decades.

Table 4.1 Evolution of EU Policies on Higher Education *Source* Produced by author drawing on published policy texts from European Commission

Period and Milestones in EU	Actions in Relation to Higher Education	Significant Policy or Programmes Statements	Policy Themes
1950s - 1970s Treaty of Rome 1957 (Establishes EEC absorbing the preceding European Coal and Steel Community)	Policy primacy with member states - role of EEC to provide guidance. Vocational training mentioned as a support to economic and industrial activities. Council of Ministers of Education meets for first time in 1971. Centre for Vocational Education and Training (Cedefop) established in 1974.	First Directive on Education Policy in 1976 with intent of developing education as part of general social policy. No specific statement on higher education. Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education, meeting within the Council, of 9 February 1976 encourages increased contacts between education systems. First Joint Action Programme for higher education institution.	Identifying common interests in the field of higher education and the gradual creation of a Community competence (Pollak, 1994).
1980s Single European Act 1986	Beginning of information gathering process with establishment of *Eurydice* in 1980. More emphasis on mutual recognition of qualifications to assist labour market mobility.	Intense period of programme formation, COMETT (1985) ERASMUS (1987), ECTS 1989), TEMPUS (1990), LINQUA (1990).	Engagement with sub national actors. Expand context and role of higher education - economic, social, cultural and intellectual. Promotion of student and staff exchange programmes.
1990s Maastricht Treaty 1992 (EC changes to EU)	The treaty was aimed at developing the European dimension in education, at promoting the mobility and collaboration of students and teachers and at encouraging the recognition of qualifications. Separate Directorate-General (DG) for Education and Culture set up. White Paper on *Growth, Competitiveness and Employment* places education at centre of new 'information society'. 1996 named Year of Lifelong Learning.	• *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community* COM(91) 341 final (1991) EC Memo on Higher Ed 1991 • *White Paper on Education and Training: Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society* (1995) • *Sorbonne Declaration* (1998) • *Council Recommendation of 24 September 1998 on European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education* (98/561/EC) (1998) • *Bologna Declaration* EHEA (1999)	Meet the challenges of globalisation, the emergence of an information society and the rapid growth of science and technology with more open, inclusive and engaged higher education systems. Establish a ''**European Higher Education Area**'' (EHEA). Facilitate mobility and exchange within this area by increased convergence of learning processes (tuning of curricula and a three-cycle degree structure) and outcomes (qualifications framework, generic descriptors, study credits). Establish a QA network which would encourage and monitor compliance with these standards.

Table 4.1 Continued			
Period and Milestones in EU	**Actions in Relation to Higher Education**	**Significant Policy or Programmes Statements**	**Policy Themes**
2000- Lisbon Council Meeting 2000 (Set the economic goal of making Europe the' most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world')	Turning point. Strong shift to a European educational policy. Council of Education Ministers urged ''to undertake a general reflection on the concrete future objectives of education systems, focusing on common concerns and priorities while respecting national diversity'' (EU Council, 2000). Objectives set in *Education and Training 2010'* focus on quality, accessibility and openness of systems. **Open Method of Coordination** (OMC) applied to education policy. Increased attention given to higher education. Setting up of European Research Area and linking its development to that of European Higher Education Area (Keeling, 2006). Consolidation of all programmes under Life Long Learning. **European Institute of Innovation and Technology** established in 2008 to provide operational model of innovation from interaction of higher education and research.	• *Towards a European Research Area (ERA)* (COM 2000/6) (2000) • *Education & Training 2010* (2003) • *The Role of Universities in the Europe of Knowledge* (COM 2003/58 final) (2003) • *Realising the European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals* (2005) • *Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy* COM(2005) 152 final • *Modernising universities for Europe's competitiveness in a global knowledge economy* – Council Resolution November 2007 • *The internationalisation of higher education* –Conclusions of Council (2010) • *Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems* COM (2011) 567 final	Increase **involvement of universities in national , European and global society**: ' breaking down barriers' , more sharing of knowledge with society , stronger linkages with industry, developing the right mix of skills for the labour market, , more dialogue with all stakeholders , increased mobility between HEIs within Europe. Increased international profile of EHEA and ERA. The **university as an organisation**: more autonomy and accountability with attendant improvements in internal governance and management capacity. More flexibility at institute and system level to allow for increased inter- and trans disciplinarity. More transparency and equivalence of processes and outputs through participation in quality assurance systems at national and European level. More competitive in attracting students, staff and funding. **Paying for higher education**: reducing the funding deficit and making funding work more effectively in universities; cost-sharing by students should be considered in context of actual efficiency and equity of systems.

The Bologna and Lisbon agendas strongly advocate the more open and flexible model of higher education discussed in previous chapters and the EU Commission has become more central in advancing these reforms throughout Europe (EU Commission, 2013c). However, it is worth pointing out that, prior to this period, changes leading to the adoption of this model were already progressing at member state and organisational level. The changes were commented on in detail in a series of articles by Guy Neave in the *European Journal of Education* (Neave, 1985; 1986; 1988; 1990). He describes the period from 1975 to 1985 as one of consolidation or reflection when HEIs and policy makers , emerging from a phase of rapid quantitative change in nation states, began to think in more qualitative terms about the meaning project of higher education, its mission, how it relates to society, about who decides what that mission should be, and how it should be funded (Neave, 1985). Already, the relationship with industry was changing; with its ''penetration into the disciplinary domain'' (Neave, 1988, p. 8) as industries looked to higher education institutions to provide the technical and managerial staff for the emerging world industries in information technologies (Neave,1986 p.118). A shift of interest from equality, or societal welfare, to quality, or efficiency in provision saw the ''rise of the evaluative state'' which now saw its role as one of steering higher education systems towards national priorities; growth would be expenditure-led rather than demand-led , the needs of the market would take precedence over those of the individual. The roll back of the state involved increased regionalisation and decentralisation of governance. Intermediary agencies were being tasked with overseeing the realisation of state objectives in the areas of quality, curriculum reform, research priorities and funding. In relation to the latter, more competitive mechanisms were being introduced in relation to the financing of both education and research programmes. Universities were being urged to adopt new forms of organisational leadership and to review internal governance systems so that they might prosper in this newly competitive environment (ibid, p. 16).

The overall purpose of these measures was to prepare higher education for the market (Neave, 1990). The articles describe the shift that had taken place in the changing role of higher education in relation to the labour market; from one which concentrated on graduate occupations in the professions and the public sector to an increasing supply to the non-protected sector where relevance and quality of provision take on a different meaning. In more general terms, meeting market needs means satisfying the need for knowledge and its benefits, through teaching or research, from individual students, organisations or sectors. The transformation which had to take place in higher education was from occupying a position as an ''extension of a planned economy'' to one in which it must be ''autonomously responsive to the market'' (Neave, 1990, p. 111) . More importantly, Neave acknowledges that many of the

changes described were in the context of the nation state and that the preparation for markets was beginning to shift from national to ''that other market'' namely the EU (Neave, 1990, p. 118).

A European Commission study of national reform programmes for the period came to a similar conclusion (Eurydice, 2000). It showed strong convergence around legislative interventions on system governance, placing limits on student financing, promotion of more interaction between higher education and the economy, promotion of economic relevance of programmes including curriculum changes, widening of participation and changes in course delivery methods and encouraging increased mobility of staff and students (see Table 7.1, p.176). Structurally, the general trend was for countries to upgrade vocational programmes, integrate specialised institutions such as teacher training colleges into universities and develop and administer a unified higher education sector within a binary system (Kyvik, 2004). There were some divergent trends; the UK and Sweden created or maintained a unitary system; Ireland abolished student fees; changes in universities in Germany, France and Austria were slow to happen and state and academic control remained strong (Eurydice, 2000); but the general picture is one of convergence towards a common policy framwork.

In the absence of concerted action between member states, the report attributes the likely cause of this convergence to being a by-product of the increasingly harmonised economic policies being pursued in the interest of achieving monetary union at the time, particularly in the case of measures linked to widening participation, funding, and governance reforms. Reforms around degree structures, transferability of qualifications, mobility and internationalisation, were attributed to ''deliberate cooperation between the countries concerned'' (p. 175). Neither of these explanations is fully convincing. The first overlooks the fact that similar reforms were taking place in many nation states outside the EU – including the EFTA[11] countries included in the study which were not subject to such economic harmonisation. The second argument probably underestimates the European dimension and the influence of EU funded mobility, research and other joint action programmes on HEIs and their national administrators. EU policy making and influence moved beyond ''the exchange of memoranda between Brussels-based desk officials'' to assume a more central role in the administrative and strategic concerns of these national actors (Neave, 1995, p. 318). The establishment of

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[11] The European Free Trade Area states are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. They are not members of the EU but are parties to the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement with the Union.

International Offices in universities and Departments of Education around that time is a case in point.

At a European level, the Maastricht treaty clearly included education as part of the European integration project albeit circumscribed by the subsidiarity clause. Administrative effect was given to this interest with the creation of a separate Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC). A Memorandum on Higher Education issued in 1991, placed higher education within the general framework of basic and post compulsory education and their role in human resource development and the achievement of ''Community objectives''. It spoke of the economic role of higher education especially the value of research but also alluded to its cultural contribution in advancing European integration by:

> not only…safeguarding and developing European cultural heritage, but also… ensuring that this heritage is transmitted and shared more widely among citizens and across the boundaries of Member States. In this way it helps cultivate a European affiliation which can cohabit with national and regional alliances. (EU Commission, 1991, p. 40).

 The Commission's 1993 White Paper *'Growth ,Competitiveness, Employment'* put greater emphasis on the economic role of higher education in ''raising the stock of human capital'' (p. 133) stressing the need for improved participation and linkages with business and continuing education. The subsequent White Paper on education and training, *Teaching and Learning-Towards a Learning Society*, set out to ''provide an analysis'' and to ''put forward guidelines for action'' in the field of education and training, that would realise these objectives (EU Commission, 1995, p. 1). It also set out an agenda for the following designated year of Life Long Learning. This was an early indication of the role of the Commission in advancing institutional change through the use of tactics common to international organisations; problem identification, agenda setting and the use of designated calendar periods [12] to advance certain cultural concepts (Shahjahan, 2012; Drori G. S., 2005). However, histories of the period indicate a tension between nation states and the Commission's ambition in policy making and this partly explains the exclusion of the Commission from the preliminary stages of the Bologna process (Martens & Wolf, 2009).

The Bologna Declaration originated as an initiative on higher education reform drafted by the Ministers of Education from France , Italy, Germany and the UK and was signed at the Sorbonne in 1998 (EU Commission, 1998). The declaration invited other European nations to join the

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[12] There are over 200 calendar periods designated by the UN to contribute to the achievement of the purposes of the UN Charter and promote awareness of and action on important political, social, cultural, humanitarian or human rights issues. http://www.un.org/en/events/observances

process and this duly occurred the following year when 29 states became signatories to an expanded document at Bologna University in 1999. The Directors of Education Ministries in the EU and the European Rectors Conference (now the European Universities Association) drafted the Bologna Declaration (EU Commission, 2000). Its stated aim was to enhance the employability and mobility of its citizens and to improve the international competitiveness of European higher education. A common framework of readable and comparable degrees would enhance mobility and employability at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in all countries, the adoption of the ECTS credit system, the development of a European approach to quality assurance and the elimination of any remaining obstacles to staff or student mobility and exchange (EU Commission, 2000). A second intention was to make European higher education more attractive and to allow it to compete more effectively for students, funding and prestige in a global setting.

Implementation structures were also agreed. Work already being done on the objectives at institutional, national or European level would be coordinated. Biennial meetings were convened to review progress, the first in Prague in 2001. The objectives also became a standard item on the agenda on all future Council of Education Ministers meetings. It was not until that first review meeting that the EU Commission was invited to become a full member. The result was that the Commission took on the coordination role of convening meetings, resourcing follow up and preparatory groups and studies relating to the process and thereby gained significant influence on the direction and priorities of the process (Keeling, 2006; Martens, et al. 2004). Again, we see how the Commission adopted particular powers to advance certain ideas or policy stances and to initiate particular discourses at Council or member state levels.

A second policy strand affecting higher education arose from a common perception by governments that Europe needed the capability to compete more effectively in the global knowledge economy. With this objective in mind, the Council of Heads of State and Government, attending a special meeting in Lisbon in 2000, pledged to work towards making the EU the most ''dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world'' by 2010 (EU Council, 2000). At the time the euro currency had been successfully launched and the single market was delivering tangible benefits. Enlargement of the Union could extend those benefits. However, some general weaknesses were identified including an underdeveloped services sector and communications infrastructure and skills shortages in information technologies. The communication set out a number of social, economic and infrastructural reforms to address these weaknesses and advance the overall objective. The communication included a proposal for a European Area of Research and Innovation that involved the creation of an internal market

in research requiring a fundamental restructuring of national and transnational research policies and practice (EU Commission, 2000).

The Council recognised that an expanding membership, and the complexity of these tasks, would make it difficult to devise a set of rules to implement them in a way that would be acceptable or operable in all member states. It devised a soft law mechanism of implementation which it termed the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) to allow for implementation in a way that would accommodate national diversity (Morth, 2006). The manner in which this soft law mechanism was applied to the development of higher education will be discussed in more detail later, but the most immediate effect was an intensification of interaction between the Commission and nation states in devising educational policies. At a material level, the increased funding for research programmes such as Framework Programme 7, launched with a budget of €50bn in 2005, and the establishment of a European Research Funding Council provided very welcome funding opportunities for European universities and enhanced the legitimacy of the Commission in this field. The Commission in turn, began to use that legitimacy to advocate substantial reform of institutional and research management through policy documents such as *The Role of Universities in the Europe of Knowledge* (EU Commission, 2003) and *Mobilising the Brainpower of Europe* (EU Commission , 2005) calling for significant changes in curricula and arrangements for governance and finance.

This confluence of the Bologna Declaration and the so-called Lisbon agenda is generally regarded as a turning point in the involvement of the European Commission in higher education (Keeling, 2006). The intensification in policy making is evident in Table 4.1 but only the major documents are listed there. In fact, 22 policy statements and reports on higher education reform dating since the year 2000 are listed on the Commission website and these do not include the stocktaking and other reports issued in conjunction with the Bologna process (EU Commission, 2013c). The general theme of this reform agenda is towards a more open and socially embedded higher education system, actively involved in the knowledge economy, professionally managed and funded in a way that that will allow it to compete globally for talent and other resources. The context in which higher education is seen to operate has evolved from being primarily national as in the early European treaties, or even European as emphasised in the Maastricht agreement, to its current global standing as described in the Commission communication   *European Higher Education in the World* (EU Ccommission 2013d)*.*

Overall, we see a trend towards the open and flexible model of higher education described by WS theory. New models of actorhood have gradually developed for both member states and HEIs and are increasingly and more explicitly articulated in policy statements. The role of member states is to steer national stystems towards this open model and to encourage autonomy in individual HEIs. HEIs are expected to move from being an agent of the state to entities possessing organisational actorhood and with it the characteristics of a contemporary organisation (Brunsson & Sahlin- Anderson, 2000). At the same time, the EU Commisson takes on the role of ''otherhood' and develops a framework in which policy ideas are formed and can be implemented at national level. The question then is how such models are created within the EU and the ''mechanisms of penetration'' of such models of actorhood down to nation-state and organisational level (Meyer, 2010, p. 12) .

Evolution of Policy Making

WS theory envisions Europe as part of the continuing globalisation of world culture; the EU can be seen as ''an especially intense form of an elaborating global system '' driven by its history in the first half of the last century'' (Meyer, 2009, p. 350). The cultural materials that make up the world polity, according to Meyer, are of the same character as those that inform the European project and include a commitment to individual human rights, a belief in socio-economic development and the market and a scientised understanding of the social and physical environment. The European agenda is to advance these global ideals through a process of ''Europeanisation'' which may not necessarily be in tune with the ''unique and particularistic historical identities [of its member states]'' (ibid. p352). This outward and forward looking stance was advocated from the outset of the European project. Winston Churchill, the wartime Prime Minister of Britain, spoke of the need for a unity in Europe that would require ''an act of faith in the European family and an act of oblivion against all the crimes and follies of the past'' (Churchill, 1998). Jean Monnet, the French diplomat regarded as being one of the chief architects of European integration, described how Europe was becoming ''an open society looking to the future replacing a defensive one regretting the past'' (Monnet, 1962).

From the outset, the challenge facing the European project was deciding how to advance these ideals. The EU, like the world polity of which it is a part, is organisationally a relatively weak actor relying on the strength of a network of state and private actors to deliberate and deliver on its political agenda (Meyer, 2009). The way in which this governance structure operates and impacts on member states is a core element of the Europeanisation process (Radaelli, 2004). The same author provides a definition of Europeanisation as being:

Processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ''ways of doing things'' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated into the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies. (Radaelli, 2001, p. 108)

The definition closely resembles Scott's ''three pillar'' model of institutional diffusion comprising a combination of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive processes (Scott W. , 2008, pp. 132-140). The governance weakness described above including political considerations that restrict its competency in certain domains and the increased scale and complexity of the union have meant that the EU has had to rely increasingly on structures based on normative or cultural diffusion and less on regulative control (Radaelli C. M., 2000). Institutional structures within the EU comprise a combination of supranational and intergovernmental bodies that deploy a dual system of *government* and *governance* type authority to develop and effect EU policies (Morth, 2006; Tzortzis, 2007). Government type authority or hard law is exercised through the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice who deploy this so-called community method to issue Treaties, Directives, Regulations or interpretations of these instruments to enforce EU rules. This was the dominant model in the incipient community. Member states identified areas of ''common action'' with ''common rules which each member committed to respect and common institutions to watch over the implementation of these rules'' (Monnet, 1962, p. 205). However, as membership expanded, the increased number and complexity of areas of common action made it increasingly difficult to devise common rules that would be acceptable in all member states. This has led to a shift towards a governance type authority or soft law mechanisms in which ''European institutions stimulate policy transfer by catalysing isomorphic processes'' (Morth, 2006, p. 132); enforcement is by joint action, multilateral surveillance or peer pressure instead of legal sanction.

The previously mentioned, Open Method of Coordination (OMC) as set out in the Lisbon Council Communication is an example of such a process that involves the following elements:

- fixing the guidelines for the EU combined with the specific timetables for achieving the goals
- establishing quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks against the best in the world
- translating these European guidelines into national and regional educational policies and
- providing periodic monitoring, evaluation and peer review as mutual learning processes

(EU Council, 2000, p. 10)

World Cultural ideas of…..

Individual Human Rights

Socio Economic Development and the market

A scientised understanding of social and physical Environments

Inform actors in …..

Supranational Bodies

- European Commission
- European Parliament
- European Court of Justice

Intergovernmental Bodies

- European Council
- Councils of Ministers
- Bologna Follow Up Meetings

Who exercise authority through systems of …

Governance such as the Open Method of Coordination

and

Government or Community Method of Legislating

Producing …

Policy Statements and Reports

Joint Action Programmes

Treaties and Other Legal Instruments

Resulting in varying types of national impact…

Convergence of policy discourses

Policy coordination with other Member states

Change of national policy and /or law

The output of these diverse mechanisms of governance is a combination of hard and soft regulation comprising; 1) Treaties and other legal instruments, 2) Joint Actions or Programmes and 3) Policy Ideas or Agendas (Tzortzis, 2007; Morth, 2006). To varying degrees, these are adopted or assimilated by member states resulting in a number of effects classified by Martens and Jakobi[13] (2010) as:

1. *Policy Change* - where interaction by nation-state in any of the above outputs impact on ''the selection, orientation or implementation of a specific national policy'' (p.15) e.g. legislation on higher education governance or programme accreditation.

2. *Policy Coordination* - increased interactions and sharing of goals among member states in a particular policy domain e.g. coordination mechanisms to advance common lifelong learning policies (Jakobi, 2009).

3. *Policy Convergence* - where member state's policies in particular become similar over time due to common adoption EU models e.g. use of common quality assurance procedures and qualifications frameworks.

As mentioned previously, the legal instruments are the least significant in discussing the role of the EU in education due mainly to the primary responsibility of nation states in this area, as clearly expressed in Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty. Directives on mutual recognition of qualifications, and the subsequent Bologna process, have given the Commission some input into course design and quality assurance systems but attempts to regulate for these activities on a European level have been resisted by member-states (Gornitzka, 2009). In the area of research and innovation there has been a more significant development with the legal establishment in 2008 of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (hereafter referred to as the EIT) , whose function is to enhance innovation through stronger linkages between business, education and research (EU Council, 2008); although here too, the European universities opposed the granting of degree awarding powers to the EIT (Dale, 2010). Instead, it must confer awards through collaborative arrangements with universities or ''EIT label'' particular programmes in accordance with criteria which meet its innovation agenda (EIT, 2013).

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[13] The typology described is used in the context of the impact of policy making by another international organisation, the OECD, but is equally applicable in describing the effects of EU rules, programmes and policies. The roles of the two organisations are compared at the end of the chapter.

The second output of these interactions is a series of joint actions or programmes which are coordinated and funded by the permanent European Commission[14] and designed to advance particular policy objectives in relation to higher education. The *Action Programme in the Field of Education* of 1976 and the launching of several Community action programmes in the 1980s - most notably the ERASMUS mobility structure - provided the Commission with a foothold in higher education policy making by creating and funding a permanent administrative network to oversee these programmes (Gornitzka, 2009). The various programmes were restructured under the Socrates umbrella in 1995 which ran over two programmes until it was subsumed into the current Life-Long Learning Programme (2007-2013). As the programmes expanded, so did the administrative networks supporting them. Representatives from national ministries formed comitology committees[15]responsible for the development of programme profile, implementation procedures and budget approval. Administration of the programmes was devolved to national agencies who dealt with the Commission and with local higher education providers. The latter in turn, created their own internal administrative structures to process these transactions and form mobility partnerships with other higher education institutions in qualifying states. The overall effect has been to create ''permanent administrative attention to the European dimension'' in higher education at Commission, national ministry and sub-national levels (Gornitzka, 2009, p. 121).

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[14] ''EU Commission'' can be used to refer to the 28 individual Commissioners elected on a five year term by the EU Council or the permanent executive body whose function is to propose new laws to Parliament and the Council, manage the EU's budget, enforce EU law and represent the EU internationally, for example, in world trade negotiations- http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission/

[15] The "comitology" procedure is a process of dialogue with national administrations before adopting implementing measures, through committees chaired by the Commission. The Commission ensures that measures reflect, as far as possible, the situation in each of the countries concerned. (Glossary http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/comitology_en.htm)
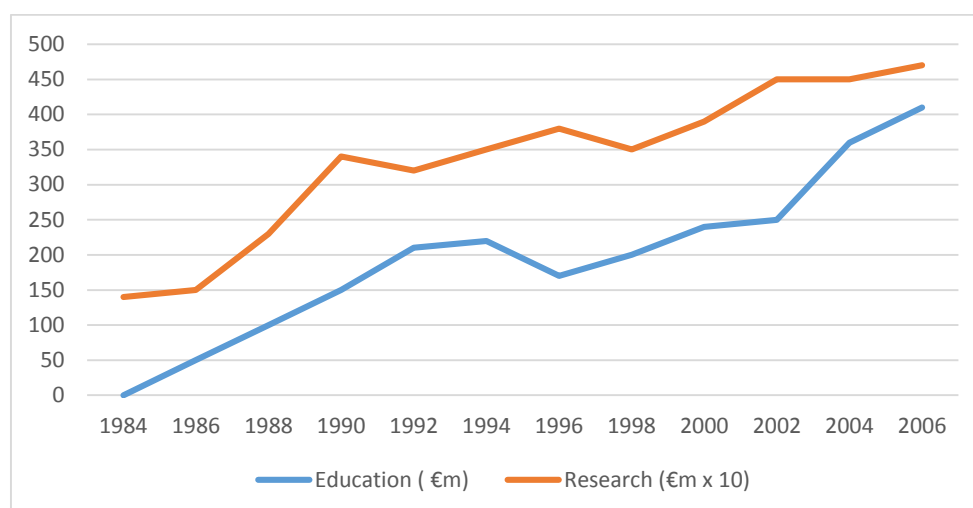
Figure 4.2 Growth in Research and Education Programme Funding by EU Commission 1984-2006 *Source* **(Beerkens, 2008)**

Parallel administrative networks have developed around EU funded research programmes. The first framework programme was launched in 1984 -1988 with a budget of €3.75 billion (Artis & Nixson, 2007); the eighth programme, branded as Horizon 2020, commences in 2014 and has a budget of €80 billion (EU Commission, 2013a). The growth of influence of the Commission is quantified in Figure 4.2 showing the steady rise of research and education budgets over the last three decades. In relation to research, the proportion of total EU budget spent on Framework Programmes has risen from 2.41% in 1984 for FP1 to 4.39% in 2002 for FP6 (Beerkens, 2008, p. 415) and a reported 12% in the case of Horizon 2020[16]. The increasing budget has resulted in a commensurate growth of interest and participation by European universities in these programmes and, in contrast to the workings of the decentralised mobility programmes, has also resulted in an intensification of direct contact between HEIs and the Commission (Keeling, 2006).

So far we see an increasing level of intervention by the EU in higher education through resource inputs, creation of organisational networks and a minor level of regulation. The case presented by the Commission in 2005 for such intervention is interesting given the EU's origin as a coal and steel community and the prominence of its subsequent common agricultural policy. In its communication *Mobilising the Brain Power of Europe,* it makes the following statement:

> Higher education is not just the sum of its education, training and research activities. It is also a fundamental economic and social sector in its own right, in need of resources for redeployment. The EU has supported the conversion process of sectors like the steel industry or agriculture; it

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[16] The Horizon 2020 programme will absorb eighty of the €960 billion Commission budget for the next five years http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-23062291

> now faces the imperative to modernise its "knowledge industry" and in particular its universities. (EU Commission , 2005, p. 11)

The language is drawn from the field of industrial economics and the interventions discussed are of the mechanistic type designed to regulate any market. However Europeanisation extends beyond market intervention to the assimilation of EU ideals and politics. To an increasing degree, the Commission is relying on a process of ideational influence to implement this agenda (Radaelli, 2001) and the production of reports and policy texts forms the third, and expanding, element of EU governance processes. The purpose of these policy texts is to persuade national ministries and other actors of the validity of the ideas informing their content and to take action to implement them (Saarinen, 2008).

As in the case of legislative or programmatic initiatives, the Commission is supported in the task of policy making by expert groups drawn from national ministries, representative bodies of main stakeholders and independent consultants (Gornitzka, 2009). A typical example of such a consultative process was the Liege Convention on the *Europe of Knowledge 2020* and the role of university based research and innovation in achieving that vision. Policy making is also informed by data and insights provided by information networks such as Eurydice, the OECD (see below), and an increasingly professionalised field of comparative research on European higher education; see for example the work of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers [17] and a number of university based centres (Teichler, 2005). Together these groupings form, in WS theory terms, the ''rationalised others'' or 'epistemic communities'' that advise nation-states and other actors about their purpose and strategies (Meyer et al. 1997, p. 162). The resultant policy texts serve as the ''theorized accounts of actors and practices'' (Strang & Meyer, 1993, p. 487) that prescribe courses of action for the main actors in higher education governance and management. The methods employed to create and disseminate these policies - consultation, mutual monitoring, peer review - assist in the construction of ''cultural categories'' (ibid p. 492) or groups who identify strongly with a particular social domain and the issues affecting it. Together, according to Strang and Meyer the creation of theorised models of actors and practice and its identification with particular groupings greatly assist in the diffusion of new institutional arrangements.

An important first stage in the theorisation process of such new institutionalised models is the specification of existing ''organisational failings''; the new model can then be justified as an innovation that will provide ''a solution or treatment'' for the identified deficiencies (Tolbert &

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[17] CHER http://www.uni-kassel.de/incher/CHER/Welcome.html

Zucker, 1996, p. 183). Adoption or diffusion of the new model will depend on all of these elements of institutional change - the specification of failings, framing of a new model and identification by particular groupings who can implement this new model. Each is evident in the mechanisms and outputs of EU policy making, particularly since the beginning of the last decade when the EU embarked on its modernisation agenda for higher education in pursuit of the objectives set out at the Lisbon Council summit.

Specification of Deficiencies in Present Arrangements

The following is the opening paragraph of an overview of European higher education taken from the Commission's *Education and Training* webpage:

> Europe has around 4000 higher education institutions, with over 19 million students and 1.5 million staff. Some European universities are among the best in the world, but, overall, potential is not being fully realised. Curricula are not always up to date, not enough young people go to university, and not enough adults have ever attended university. European universities often lack the management tools and funding to match their ambitions. (EU Commission, 2013)

Earlier communications from the European Council (EU Council 2011) and the Commission (EU Commission, 2011) on the modernisation of Europe's higher education system are equally explicit as to what they think the challenges member states and institutions are facing. Despite a decade of reform under the Bologna process and an EU modernisation agenda, considerable problems are said to persist, according to the Council, in relation to the international competitiveness of European higher education and its ability to sufficiently impact on economic development. The potential of European HEIs to fulfil their role in society and contribute to Europe's prosperity remains underexploited; Europe is lagging behind in the global competition for knowledge and talent, while emerging economies are rapidly increasing their investment in higher education (EU Council 2011).

An elaboration of these criticisms, taken from recent policy texts, is presented in Table 4.2. The Commission depicts a higher education sector which compares unfavourably with global competitors, in terms of both participation rates and research performance. These deficiencies according to the Commission, are caused or exacerbated by underfunding, over-regulation by the state, insularity and a tendency to mediocrity and uniformity within systems (EU Commission , 2005). The communications reiterate that member states have the authority and means to make the necessary reforms to address many of these problems.

Table 4.2 Deficiencies in European Higher Education Identified by EU Commission

System Competitiveness
The problem with competitiveness is illustrated by Europe's poor performance on current world rankings and difficulties in internationalisation of its educational and research activities. Just 200 of Europe's 4000 higher education institutions are included in the top 500, and only 3 in the top 20. According to the Commission, reforms are required in all the key areas in order to 'maximise the contribution of Europe's higher education systems to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' (EU Commission, 2011, p. 3).

Widening Participation
While 35% of all jobs in the EU will require high-level qualifications by 2020, only 26% of the workforce currently has a higher education qualification (EU Commission, 2011). HEIs are still catering mainly to the needs of standard students and fail to open up to other types of learning and learners such as the provision of retraining opportunities to those in the workforce (EU06p. 3).

Quality and Relevance of Provision
The Commission states that the basic skills needs of the knowledge economy are not being sufficiently addressed. At a higher level the EU lags behind in the share of researchers in the total labour force: 6 per 100, compared to 9 in the US and 11 in Japan.

Linkages between education, research and business
The Commission assessment of higher education in this context is unequivocal; ''the capacity of higher education institutions to integrate research results and innovative practice into the educational offer, and to exploit the potential for marketable products and services, remains weak'' (EU Commission, 2011, p. 7). In 2006, the Commission referred to a ''lack of openness to the business community'' and contended that many European universities 'still underestimate the benefits of sharing knowledge with the economy and society' (EU06p. 4).

Global Linkages or Internationalisation
For a variety of reasons, European universities are losing the competition for talented academics and students and miss out on 'fast changing research agendas' and the opportunity to generate the 'critical mass, excellence and flexibility necessary to succeed' (EU06p. 4).

System Finance and Management
The starting point of the Commission is that investment in higher education in Europe is too low: 1.3% of GDP on average, compared with 2.7% in the US and 1.5% in Japan (EU Commission, 2011, p. 8). The target set as part of the Lisbon agenda was that the EU should increase that figure to at least 2% of GDP from both public and private sources (EU06p. 7) which is unlikely to be met given the present fiscal difficulties facing EU member states. A dual funding problem exists for both research and education. The 2006 document reported an average gap in resources for both activities of €10k per student per year when compared with US universities. Member states are criticised for trying to ''preserve universities as national institutions'' micromanaging them in a way that imposes excessive uniformity and restricts them from taking their own strategic direction (EU06p. 4).

However, they also point out that the responses required ''transcend national borders'' and that ''European cooperation has a valuable contribution to make in terms of funding support, evidence based policy analysis and an exchange of best practice'' (EU Council, 2011, p. C 372/38; EU Commission, 2011, p. 3).

Dale (2006) asserts that the underlying logic of these criticisms is that the achievement of the Lisbon objectives can *only* be met at the level of Community as a whole, and not at member state level, and that this is the basis of EU presence in policy making for higher education. In short, it provides the EU with the legitimacy to present alternative models. The same argument is made in the extract of the speech from the President of the Commission quoted at the head of this chapter, although expressed in more positive terms.

Presenting an Alternative Model

The model the EU currently presents has evolved considerably since its first comprehensive statement in the 1991 *Memorandum on Higher Education* which, among other things, described European higher education as a vehicle for the transmission of European cultural heritage. The way in which European higher education is currently portrayed is based on a different set of values, more in keeping with world society themes of progress and global perspective. Europe is presented as a region that is ''economically powerful, internationally significant, with a well-educated, technologically innovative population that is open to working with the world'' (Keeling, 2006, p. 213); with a higher education system that is ''smart, inclusive and sustainable'' (EU Commission, 2011, p. 15) and ''attractive to the international academic world' (EU Council, 2010, p. C 135/12). These policy texts offer an invitation to universities to engage in the construction of a better Europe – "investing more and better in the modernisation and quality of universities is a direct investment in the future of Europe and Europeans'' (EU Commission , 2005, p. 2). A union which was founded on agreements on coal and steel is now the Europe of Knowledge and universities are seen as playing a ''crucial role'' in building it (EU Council, 2011).

The ''blueprint'' suggested is the knowledge triangle and universities are expected to be active at each of its vertices of research, education and innovation and the EIT presented as the model organisation showing how this should happen. Its website describes its function as acting as ''an education, research and innovation operator…a catalyst for reform by inspiring change in existing institutions…where researchers will work side by side with leading businesses in the development and exploitation of cutting-edge knowledge and research thereby enhancing research and innovation management skills generally'' (EIT, 2013a)**.** In this way, the EIT will ''bridge the innovation gap between the EU and its major competitors by promoting further the

integration of the three sides of the knowledge triangle in a mutually supportive manner and providing a world-class innovation-oriented critical mass at the EU level'' (EIT, 2013a).

This kind of application of knowledge, according to the Commission, requires a degree of partnership between universities and society which has not existed before. The communication on *The Role of the University in the Europe of Knowledge presents* the issue as follows:

> After remaining a comparatively isolated universe for a very long period, both in relation to society and to the rest of the world, with funding guaranteed and a status protected by respect for their autonomy, European universities have gone through the second half of the 20th century without really calling into question the role or the nature of what they should be contributing to society…..[it] prompts the fundamental question: can the European universities, as they are and are organised now, hope in the future to retain their place in society and in the world? (EU Commission, 2003, p. 22)

The implication is that universities in Europe are not the socially embedded entities described in global models nor are they organised in such a way that would enable this to happen. Therefore it is not surprising that improving governance is one of the three ''core elements'' of the modernisation agenda[18] (EU Commission , 2005, p. 5)**.** It gives no definition of governance apart from there being a general need for ''better system and institutional management'' (ibid p.8). The general impression from the policy texts is that HEIs ''are construed by the Commission [to be] organisations like any other'' (Keeling, 2006, p. 209) or at least there is an expectation that they would become so. Thus, according to the Commission, universities should have sufficient autonomy to set their own strategic priorities, to acquire and manage facilities, decide curricula with national and EHEA frameworks, recruit and reward staff and project their own identity and image (EU Commission , 2005, p. 8). Achieving such autonomy requires a leadership team with sufficient authority and management capacity; ''investment in **professional management** can provide [that] strategic vision and leadership while allowing teachers and researchers the academic freedom to concentrate on their core task'' (EU06p. 9 original emphasis). Universities should also ''accept full *institutional* accountability to society at large for their results'' (EU06p. 5 original italics). Ensuring such accountability requires an external system of quality assurance; in Europe this should be done through a ''network of QA agencies dedicated to particular regions, countries or disciplines and agreeing on some basic criteria to facilitate cross-recognition of quality seals throughout the Union'' (EU Commission , 2005, p. 8). The role of member states and agencies in charge of higher education is to encourage such governance systems. They should guide the sector as a whole through a framework of rules, policy

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[18] International attractiveness and funding are the other core parts of the modernisation agenda

objectives and funding mechanisms linked to performance and competition (EU06; EU Council, 2011).

The organisational changes sought by the Commission correspond to those which institutional theorists claim are being universally installed in all previously unorganised domains of the public sector (Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006). This involves the construction of a clear identity and autonomy by such organisations and the creation of a hierarchical management structure and rational systems that includes the setting and monitoring of their own organisational goals and objectives (Brunsson & Sahlin-Anderson 2000; Krücken & Meier, 2006; Musselin, 2006). Again the EIT is presented as the exemplar or flagship that ''will disseminate new organisational and governance models'' (EU Commission, 2006b, p. 7). The EIT came into existence in 2008 and the website description of its present organisational makeup - see Figure 4.3 and the linked organogram - reflects many of the above organisational characteristics including a modern identity, flexibility , clear vision and structures, rational strategic planning and recognition of the contribution of individuals to the institutional mission. From the start, one of the firmer elements of the proposal was to produce a university and research culture in which ''selection as well as career is based on competition, paying for performance is not a taboo, and engaging in business is seen positively as an important learning opportunity in a researcher's curriculum'' (EU Commission, 2006, p. 5).

In order to foster new ideas and inspire innovation, the EIT combines expertise with a vision. Decisions can be taken striking the right balance between accountability and flexibility. This is a result of the EIT's light two-level structure, which combines an efficient governance structure with a solid management team and a decentralised operational array of partnerships (the Knowledge and Innovation Communities), drawing upon Europe's most excellent innovation actors.

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and its operations are managed by the Director. Our director Jose Manuel Leceta, started his first term of office on 1 July 2011.

The Director reports to a fully independent Governing Board comprising of a balance of high-calibre professionals from business and academic backgrounds and chaired by Alexander von Gabain; who started his three year mandate on 15 September 2011. The role of the EIT Governing Board is to provide strategic guidance to the EIT and it is also responsible to select, evaluate and support the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

Figure 4. 3 Organisational Character of the European Institute of Technology. *Source* **Organisation Website**

Funding should be used to leverage university reform towards this organisational model. It recommends that HEIs be funded more ''for what they do than for what they are'' or funding ''on relevant outputs rather than inputs''; for instance labour market success might be used as one indicator of organisational performance and recognised in any funding mechanism (EU06p. 8). HEIs should also be encouraged to seek alternative methods and sources of funding.

The Commission is conscious of the sovereignty of member states in deciding fees and grants policies. However it offers the opinion that student support schemes tend to be insufficient to ensure equal access and attainment and that this includes systems where free tuition fees apply. It advises that '**member states should therefore critically examine their current mix of student fees and support schemes in the light of their actual efficiency and equity'** (EU06p. 7 original emphasis)**.** Each state must strike the right balance between core, competitive and outcome-based funding but the Commission is forthright on where it thinks further investment ought to be directed:

> Additional funding should primarily provide incentives and means to those universities (they exist in every system) and to those groups/individuals (they exist in each university) that are willing and able to innovate, reform and deliver high quality in teaching, research and services. This requires more competition-based funding in research and more output-related funding in education. (EU Commission , 2005, p. 9)

In the same way, both the Council and Commission see the use of EU funding as a means of modernising higher education at a European level. The proposed strategy involves the leverage of funding mechanisms towards this goal; ''EU instruments and policies - particularly in education, research, employment, entrepreneurship, migration and cohesion - work together effectively to support the modernisation of higher education'' (EU Commission, 2011, p. 10).

In sum, the alternative model portrays higher education as playing a central and urgent role in supporting growth and jobs. The Commission presents an agenda for modernisation of higher education in pursuit of that objective that includes the transformation of the organisation of higher education at both system and organisational level.

Identification with the alternative model

Combining the above texts on the use of funding as a lever for reform, and the description of higher education as an economic sector which must undergo a modernisation process suggests that the mechanisms to bring about that conversion rely heavily on realist tools of resource dependence or coercion rather than the voluntaristic acceptance of ''models of actorhood'' suggested in institutional theory (Meyer, 2010, p. 12). However, a closer look at the means of

policy formation and dissemination processes involving use of the OMC, gives more weight to the importance of ideational influence in advancing this alternative model of higher education. Dale (2006, pp. 39-44) presents an insightful overview of the process. Drawing on case studies which examine the application of OMC to employment strategy (Offe, 2003), and the use of ICT in education (Tsatasaroni & Zografou, 2004), he makes the following observations:

- OMC is a learning process involving experimentation and innovation which begins with unlearning of existing institutional patterns.
- It is less concerned with the diffusion or exchange of best practices gleaned from member states but more so with the creation of new definitions and roles - a European framework or definition of what is best practice.
- This European character is more important than the precise definition of the model or best practice.
- An important by-product of the process is that it demonstrates Commission competence in a particular policy area.
- Progress is made not by means of policy transfer but by consensual, non-binding, joint problem identification.
- A central feature of the process is that it always includes Europe in this identification. Gradually a collective identification of European problems emerges which overrides or parallels the issues at national level. New problems are identified or old (national) ones are reframed by shifting their scale.
- The power of the Commission therefore is its ability to shape how deficiencies at national level are framed in a European context and thereby strongly influence the model prescribed to address those deficiencies.

One can see here many elements of WS theory's approach to diffusion processes; deinstitutionalisation of existing arrangements or meanings, the Commission presenting itself as a legitimate other in advancing models of change, and collective action in creating new institutional meanings and definitions of actorhood for participants based on these models (Meyer, 2010). As a practice, OMC has created a new political space in which new models of European education can be addressed in a collective way; it has enhanced the role of national ministries and other actors within that space; it gives continuity of attention to the modernisation agenda and serves to integrate the objectives of Bologna and Lisbon into a wider perspective of European higher education; moreover it has helped displace the rather limited concept of mobility as the key element of EU involvement in higher education (Gornitzka A. , 2006). The separate country specific plans, which form part of the OMC process, accommodate diversity and flexibility in policy adoption in a way that minimises the appearance of sovereignty

loss and of political resistance to the adoption of the particular EU objective. In another way, it allows member states to engage in ''symbolic politics'' or initiatives around which all EU states can take action such as the Europe of Knowledge or the concept of Lifelong Learning in the field of education (Schafer, 2004, p. 15).

However, there is also evidence that the degree to which the OMC methodology has been taken up has varied and is dependent on a number of factors including prior institutional arrangements, the level of commitment of national ministries and the catalytic role played by the commission in coordination of OMC activities (de Ruiter, 2010). Some authors (Gornitzka, 2005; 2006; Radaelli, 2008; Schafer, 2004) point to the limitations of the OMC and its ability to deliver on the Europeanisation project. Gornitzka's (2005) review of the application of the OMC to R&D and education policies describes OMC processes as being still ''under construction'' but more advanced in the field of R&D (p.33). A study in 2006 by the same author reports strong diffusion and adoption of EU guidelines, and the use of comparative indictors, the creation of a substantial work organisation behind the OMC by the Directorate General for Education and Culture but that a degree of experimentation still existed around procedures to be followed in this ''new political space,' (Gornitzka A. , 2006, p. 51). Veiga and Amaral (2009) argue that the OMC is inherently flawed in the implementation of Bologna education policies because it cannot allow for the level of coordination required for implementation of a policy process at multiple national and local levels and is particularly incapable of taking into account the multitude of interests and objectives that exist among HEIs. The contention seems to be supported by Radaelli who reports that ''open co-ordination processes have not generated considerable amounts of horizontal and bottom-up learning'' (2008, p. 251).

Despite these imperfections, OMC remains an important and effective source of ideational influence and there is validity in the alternative interpretation that these supposed defects are intrinsic characteristics of any soft law mechanism or diffusion process. The case is put strongly by Schafer, who argues that OMC is just another form of the technique of multi-lateral surveillance which the OECD had already developed as a mechanism to advance its policies, and that governments willingly engage with such soft law precisely because it increases their ''strategic room for manoeuvre'' in how they engage with OMC processes (2004, p. 15). The institutional theory explanation is that this behaviour is an example of decoupling where member states can commit to policy adoption but delay or modify policy implementation. It could occur because certain elements of European models may be inconsistent with local practices, requirements or cost structures which could explain the variance in funding arrangements of higher education across Europe (CHEPS, 2010a). A second explanation is that

institutionalised models can be highly idealised or internally inconsistent making them difficult to actualise (Strang & Meyer, 1993). For example Dale reminds us that the so called Lisbon agenda is not unitary but is made up of at least five discourses, each with separate, and perhaps conflicting, implications for higher education; they are ''competitive'', 'the knowledge based economy'' ,''sustainable growth'', ''more and better jobs'' and ''social cohesion'' (2006, p. 30). Different states will prioritise these elements in accordance with local needs as well as EU prescriptions on how these goals should be achieved. This brings us to the general discussion on the impact of EU higher education policies on member states.

Impact of Policies

Previous sections have outlined the way in which the role of the EU in higher education evolved from observer of national policy making in the 1970s and 1980s to a supportive role in the provision of funding for mobility and collaborative research in the 1990s and the initial stages of the Bologna reform process. Since the turn of the present century, these passive roles have been replaced by a much more interventionist form of coordination and policy commentary by the EU Commission. A process of soft regulation using the OMC has been intensified in the pursuit of the goals of the EHEA and ERA. A new European body, the EIT, has also been established to advance these objectives and to serve as a model for how research, education and innovation activities should coalesce in a modern European university. Multiple texts have been issued describing how that modernisation should come about and the tone of these texts has become increasingly critical of (Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2013)ogress in relation to the modernisation agenda (EU Commission, 2011; EU Commission, 2013c). Member states are now urged to adopt and implement a series of specific measures in relation to system differentiation, governance and funding. The degree to which member states have engaged with this modernisation process is being more widely addressed in the comparative education literature (Amaral & Neave, 2009; Basset & Maldonado, 2009; Beerkens, 2008; Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2013; Dale, 2006; Gornitzka et al. 2007; Keeling, 2006; Krücken, Kosmutzky, & Torka, 2006; Rinne, 2008). Three types of study can be distinguished in a review of this literature - studies on effects at state level, comparative studies on different EU members and a pan European or top-down perspective on the impact of these policies.

Country studies on the degree to which member states and their higher education systems have engaged with this modernisation agenda, vary in their conclusions. Examples from Portugal (Teixeira, Amaral, & Rosa, 2003), Spain (Perotti, 2007) , and Finland (Rinne, 2008) are illustrative. Teixeira et al. (2003) attribute the wider use of market based mechanisms in Portuguese higher education to the influence at an early stage of the World Bank and OECD and

later the EU but suggest that change may have had as much to do with the national drive to make higher education more economically responsive. State agencies may have been using supranational policies to justify or legitimate their own actions. Perotti (2007) concludes that the Bologna process resulted in changes around degree structure that would most likely not have occurred otherwise but attributes other changes (or resistance to change) to the unique demographics and regional variations within Spain. However, in the case of Finland, Rinne contends that there is ''a dominant far-reaching consensus [that] education is at heart integrating a supranational pressure to change, which is inevitable and without alternative [and] to which it just has to adapt'' (Rinne, 2008, p. 677). The author points to a range of changes that have taken place in Finnish higher education that comply with the European modernisation agenda including implementation of new degree and credit transfer systems in line with Bologna requirements, the establishment of quality assurance and auditing bodies, the application of NPM practices to Finnish HEIs and a review of the long held policy of free public education at all levels in Finland.

Comparative studies dealing with changes in a number of states offer a broader perspective and offer some insights into how heterogeneity of response occurs. A comparison of changes in higher education between England and the Netherlands (Theissens & Enders, 2006) showed variation in the rate of change, the locus of the change and effects of change at sectoral level. The rate of change was faster in the English system; this is explained by centralised state control in that country. So whereas quality assurance measures were introduced quickly at national level, within England the locus of reform tended to be at university or academic levels and was slow to happen. Different HEIs responded differently depending on their position prior to change; universities in the Netherlands were positively disposed to policies designed to increase autonomy whereas their English equivalents saw their government's policy as reducing their independence. Likewise, those HEIs providing vocational education were seen to benefit more from the introduction of the common degree structure. England and the Netherlands, along with France and Germany, also feature in the research by Witte (2006) on the degree of change which had occurred in each of the four countries in response to the Bologna process. The thesis also examines the factors which influenced the direction and level of that change. Again, varying degrees of convergence are found. Weak convergence existed around institutional types with strong variation ranging from a unitary hierarchical structure in England to a strong binary system in Germany - see also Kyvik (2004). The study observed medium convergence in quality assurance systems and changes in degree structure but not all changes could be conceptualised as being part of the Bologna process, particularly in England. Witte's interpretation of variation is that what she terms ''perceptions of the international context'' are influential but not the

dominant factor in explaining the degree of institutional change that occur. The centrality of the National Ministry in the process and the preferences or interests of national actors are equally if not more important (ibid p. 527).

However, a study of higher education reform policies across eight European countries found no consistent link between political-administrative structures and reform implementation (Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2013). In relation to policy ideas, a survey on the uptake and familiarity of actors across Europe with the Bologna process revealed a diversity of interpretation depending on the level of actor with academics focussing on pedagogic aspects and state administrators on organisational dimensions; there was very weak perception at all levels of the connection between Bologna and achievement of the EHEA. It is possible that the effect of the Bologna and Lisbon policies may only have been to aid or accelerate reforms that were already in train at national level (Amaral & Neave, 2009) and that achievement of the EHEA were aspirational. Alternatively, it is possible that diffusion of models, of the scale involved in the European higher education and research areas (EHERA), is as Meyer (2010) suggests, a gradual and iterative process. Either way, the studies reveal the limitation of examining the diffusion as a top-down process through which policies are filtered by member-states.

The third perspective points to a more active participation by all European actors in the creation and adoption of the new model. Beerkens (2008), Dale (2006; 2007; 2010) , Gornitzka et al (2007) and Keeling (2006) discuss reform happening in the context of a new Europe of Knowledge, the purpose of which is to serve the broader institutional agenda of European integration. The shift in emphasis is described by Keeling as being from the production of Europeans envisaged by the signatories to the Bologna Declaration to the production of a new Europe contained in the current version of Lisbon agenda - cited in (Dale, 2007, p. 39). The outcome of these changes according to Dale is ''the construction of a new, and possibly parallel…*sector* [of higher education]'' (2010, p. 4 orignal emphasis) - and a changed meaning of the modern university - ''the university summoned up in the introduction of the Bologna Declaration is not the university that will be attached to the European Institute of Technology' (ibid). Beerkens (2008) provides rich data on how this changed landscape has come about through increased interaction between various actors and the Commission. The growth of research funding from the Commission has led to an intensification of research collaboration across the EU as evidenced by the growth in the number of co-authored articles (Figure 4.4) and cross national linkages in research projects (Figure 4.5); a commensurate expansion has taken place in the number of academic associations and of academic journals supporting this collaborative research. The growth in the number of organisations involved in higher education

research represented by the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER) has already been mentioned. The EHERA has also given rise to the growth of various representative organisations and interest groups associated with higher education and research activities (Figure 4. 6). Institutional networks of HEIs have developed around organisational characteristics such as location in the Universities of Capital Cities UNICA, innovation in the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU), history or tradition as in the Coimbra Group, research excellence in the League of Research Universities in Europe (LERU) or alternative institutional type in the European Association of Higher Education Institutions (EURASHE).

Such developments, according to Beerkens, have resulted in the emergence   of a ''transnational society'' within the EU who share an interest in the ''further integration and institutionalisation of the EHERA'' (2008, p.418). Examples of that commitment include the central role played by the European Universities Association (EUA) in the production of trend reports for the Bologna process (EUA, 2013) and the involvement of other representative groups such as the European Students Union. Similarly, interaction between European universities and regulators in the development of their own accreditation process for management education has led to the emergence of a European regulatory field in that sector (Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson, & Wedlin, 2006).

Gornitzka et al. (2007) argue that these dynamics represent the ''search for a new pact'' between the university and society and that understanding these dynamics requires that we ''consider the more complex ecology of processes and determinants in which the European University is currently embedded'' (p. 6). Dale's analysis (2010, p. 6) closely resembles the institutional version of European governance processes discussed earlier as shown in Figure 4.1. He draws on Hollingsworth's (2003) analysis of socio-economic sectors capped by institutions based on norms, values, rules and conventions. In the case of higher education he suggests that we might expect the   ''sector to be shaped – but not determined – by the Europe of Knowledge as the key institution of the EHEA and the ERA, within the limits of their formal discretion, as providing the institutional arrangements, and the individual institutions responding to, and setting limits to, the achievement of these arrangements'' (Dale, 2010, p. 6).
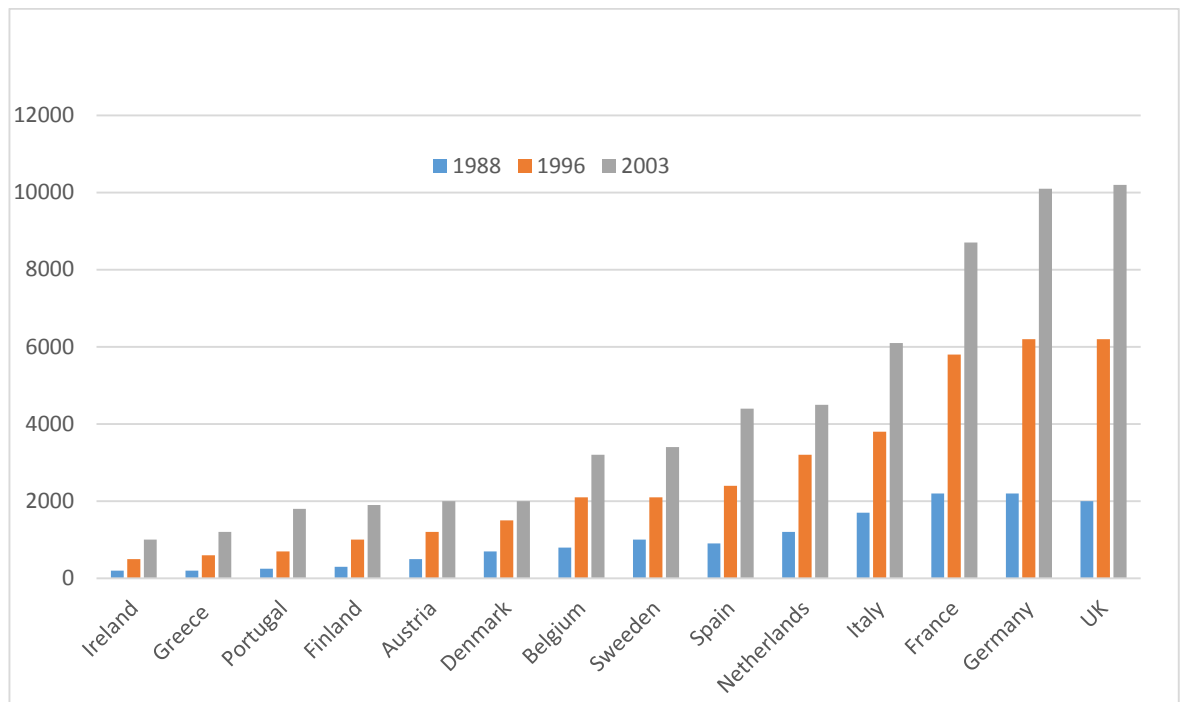
Figure 4.4 Growth in Number of European Co-Authored Research Articles *Source* **National Science Foundation, (2006) in Beerkens, (2008)**
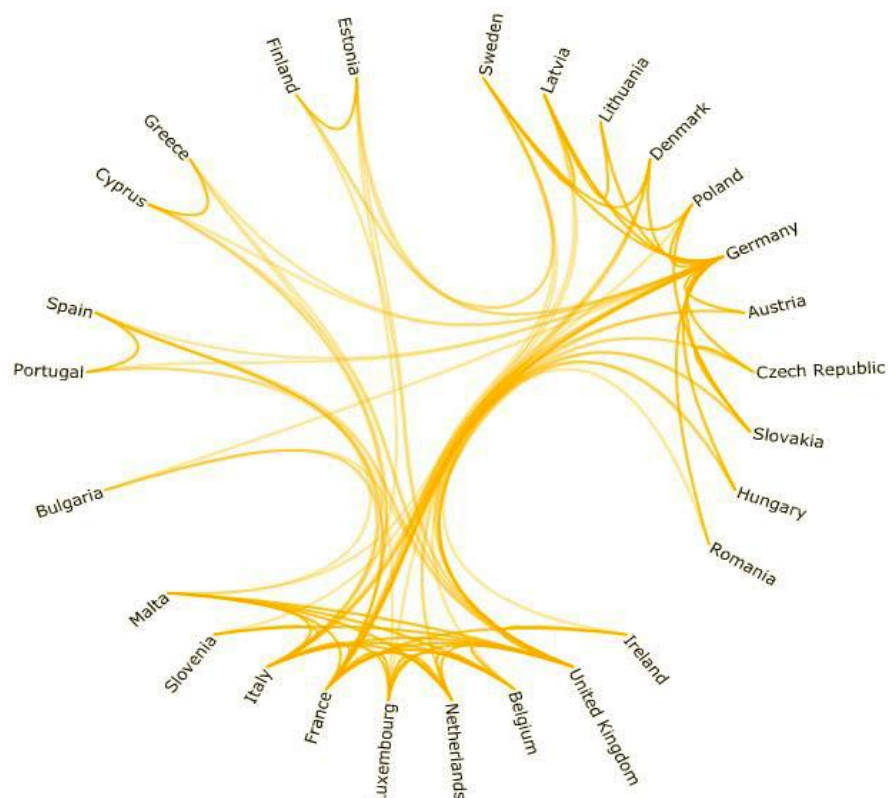
Figure 4.5 EU-27 Cross-National Links in Research, 2005-2009 *Source* **(Thomson-Reuters, 2010, p. 24)**
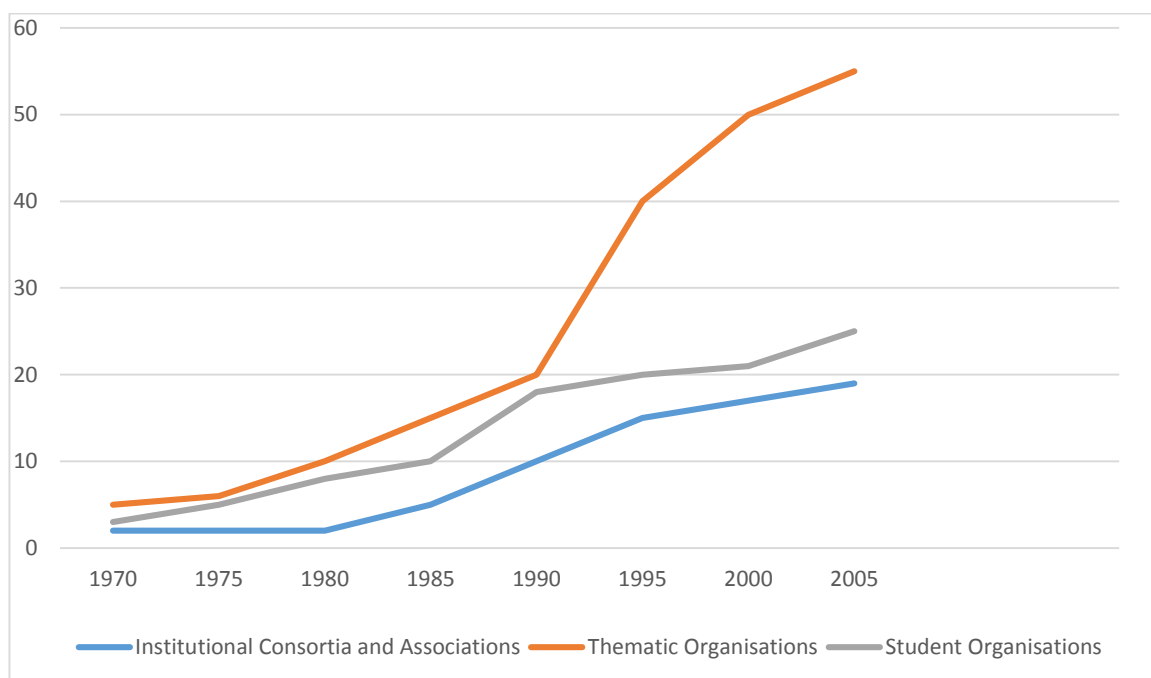
Figure 4.6 Growth of Higher Education Representative Organisations and Interest Groups in the EHERA *Source*
(Beerkens, 2008)

(Thematic groups focus on specific allegiances or interests e.g. religion, some aspect of university management or academic discipline)

This new European education space would be, as Dale (2006, p. 29) describes it, ''distinct both in terms of its scope and functions from the individual and aggregated scope and functions of existing Member State education sectors''. It would be distinct because it would be based on a new cultural model or set of values that would transcend those on which national sectors are currently based.

What emerges from the above sets of analyses is that, as we pass from national to cross-national and to European perspectives, we move closer to a WS theory account of institutional change in higher education. On the one hand, the institutional context of higher education at national level can be regarded as that of an organisational field in which individual state regulation and local norms play a significant part (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991); some mimetic adoption of global models or practice occurs but varies according to local circumstances. By contrast a WS theory account, see Figure 4.7, frames its analysis within an institutional context that is dominated by the cultural concept of a ''Europe of Knowledge'' that advances a particular model or type of actorhood for higher education. The Commission and other European agencies perform the role of others who act as carriers of this model (Meyer, 2010)

and articulate this model through policy statements and policy making processes such as OMC and an expanding network of actors involved in the development of the EHERA. The outcome of that diffusion process is the emergence of a new European field of higher education whose mission or ''meaning project'' (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 94) is centred on advancing the concept of a Europe of Knowledge and the associated ideals of European integration. A second observation is that diffusion processes of this magnitude take time. This might explain how country studies which focussed on present or short term adoption policies gave more weight to national factors in determining policy adoption. Longer term perspective by Beerkens (2008) and others reveal a stronger European dimension at work. Finally, this top down description of change may underestimate the iterative nature of this process. As Dale (2010a) has pointed out, one of the glaring omissions of the studies of education reform in recent decades is an analysis of the impact of all these actions *on Europe.* One doesn't know therefore, how the dynamics of an emerging field of higher education could affect perceptions of knowledge and the Europe of Knowledge. Secondly, one has to consider that any perspectives on the Europe of Knowledge and its model of higher education are set in a global context and are influenced by models created at that level. In short, in looking for a meaning project for any emerging field one must look beyond the immediate context and ultimately towards what is happening in world society.

This brings us to a discussion of the role of another international organisation which, as will be demonstrated in the following section, has been central to discourses relating to the role of higher education in a knowledge society at a global level.

A concept which is designed to advance the ideals of European integration...

The Europe of Knowledge

Is being advanced through the twin institutional arrangements of…

Bologna and EHEA

Lisbon and the ERA

Commission as Coordinator

Articulated through policies and ideas contained in texts such as ...

The Role of Universities in the Europe of Knowledge

Towards a European Research Area

Enacted through organisational structures and programmes such as…

European Qualifications Framework

Accreditation Systems

Life- Long Learning

European Institute of Innovation and Technology

European Research Council

Horizon 2020

That are engaging member states, HEIs and their stakeholders resulting in**…**

An emerging Field of European Higher Education
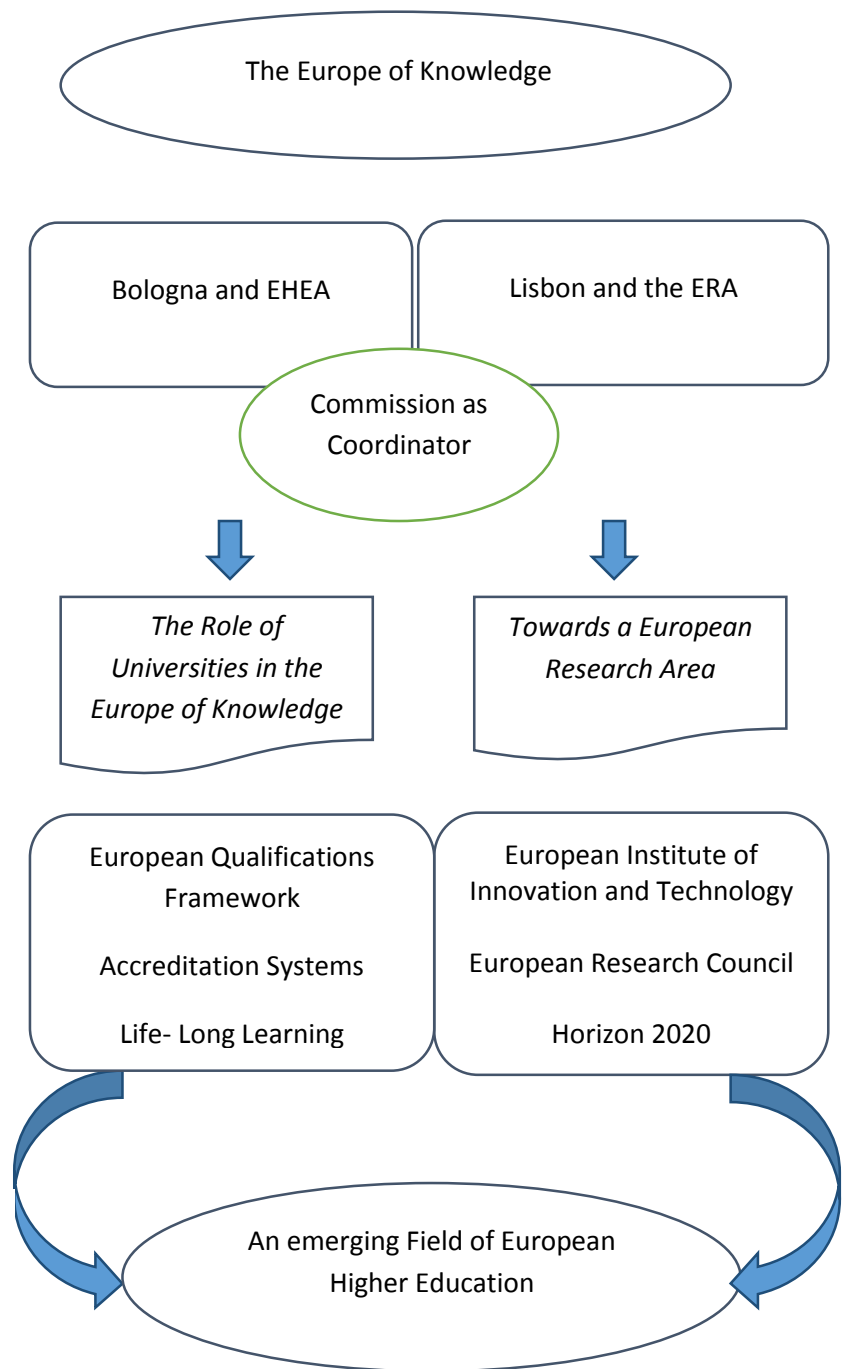
Figure 4.7 Institutional Change in European Higher Education. *Source* **Author based on analyses in (Beerkens, 2008; Dale, 2010; Gornitzka, Maassen, Olsen, & Stensaker, 2007)**

The OECD and Higher Education

The OECD and its functions fit easily with Meyer's description of the type of social structures that emerged in the post-second world war era that was inhabited by organisations that were ''conspicuous for their absence of claimed selves and interests'' and for ''their claimed agencies for such universal or highly collective goods as world peace, the environment or models of economic growth'' (2010, p. 6). In the absence of a world government, or stateless world society, the role of such organisations was to advance these collective goals and the social authority or legitimacy of these organisations derives from their ''disinterested reflection of transcending purposes [and] not their own interests'' (ibid.).

The promotion of particular models of economic growth was, and still is, the central role of the OECD; it currently defines itself as a unique forum of industrialised countries on economic and social policy whose mission is ''to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world'' (OECD, 2012). It was established in 1961 as an offshoot of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) which had been previously formed by the US and Canadian governments to oversee Marshall Aid expenditures in the 1950s. Its reincarnation and renaming was due in part to the formation of the new EEC and partly to an increased interest by the organisation in the factors affecting economic growth and development (Eide, 1990), and in particular the ''social dimensions of economic growth'' (Papadopoulos, 2011, p. 85). Increasingly the organisation came to regard education as one of the most critical of those social dimensions and currently, the OECD is one of the most influential international organisations in the field of educational policy formation and dissemination (Amaral & Neave, 2009a; Henry, Rizvi, & Taylor, 2001; Rinne, Kallo, & Hokka, 2004). Originally its member states comprised 18 European countries in addition to the US and Canada; now it has 34 member states from all of the major global regions. Its website profile claims that it works closely with the so-called BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) and that since 1960 a protocol has allowed European Commission representatives to ''work alongside Members in the preparation of texts and participate in discussions on the OECD's work programme and strategies, and [be] involved in the work of the entire Organisation and its different bodies'' (OECD, 2012). All of these connections have made it possible for the OECD to present itself as a global organisation, which makes a clear distinction between it and the EU among education policy makers.

In its early years, its economic philosophy was Keynesian with a strong emphasis on the role of the State in driving economic development and educational investment was seen in that context. There is general consensus that its economic thinking took on a more neoliberal perspective in the 1980's with education increasingly being seen as being an element of the public sector which must be continually monitored and assessed to ensure it meets market needs (Amaral & Neave, 2009a; Henry, Rizvi, & Taylor, The OECD, Globalisation and Education Policy, 2001; Porter & Webb, 2007; Rinne, Kallo, & Hokka, 2004). Various reasons are suggested for the shift in economic thinking. Porter and Webb point to the findings of the McCracken Report (McCracken et al, 1977) that was ''seen as an authoritative analysis of the problem of stagflation, and helped shift shared understandings of appropriate policy norms in the OECD in favour of more market-friendly policies'' (2007, p. 7). Amaral and Neave's (2009a) analysis suggests that the shift is a product of internal politics which directed all education policies towards a liberal agenda, and external factors (notably the fall of communism) which involved the organisation in what was effectively a second reconstruction of market economies within Europe. The explanation of a former Director, Malcolm Skillbeck, is probably the most in keeping with sociological institutionalist thinking of organisations embedded in, or being of, the environments in which they function. He suggests that the leaning of the organisation towards neo liberalism was "because these tendencies prevail in the world of which it is an inextricable part. Yes, it is a think tank but, as with all our thoughts, those of the OECD are embedded in the life worlds and cultural settings of its members" (quoted in Ward, 2012 p.114).

The interactions between the OECD and its members, the outputs of these interactions in terms of policy statements and models and the way in which these impact on nation-states are explored in this section. As with the discussion on the EU, I start with a brief history of policy evolution over the last four decades and show how policies have changed in response to developments of those global cultural settings.

Policy Evolution

Rinne et al. (2004, p. 462) trace the evolution of general education policy in the OECD over four phases. The 1960s encompassed The *Cold War and 'Big Science'* phases in which policies were influenced by the ideas of Theodor Schultze (1961) on the need for economies to invest in human capital as much as real capital. The organisation sought to convince its member states to review their education policies. Added impetus was given by the cold war politics pertaining at the time and the so-called ''sputnik shock'' which prompted the US in particular to reassess the role of science in curricula at all educational levels (Eide, 1990). These ideas came together in the celebrated ''Washington Conference'' *Investment in Education and Economic Growth* of 1961.

The Chairman's opening address spoke of how ''the prize of progress [would] fall to the countries and social systems which succeeded in developing their human resources'' and referred to the ''claim by the Head of the Soviet State that [its] system [could] more effectively do this'' (OECD, 1961). The conference proceedings addressed the need for change and more investment in curricula, in teacher training, in assessment and in scientific research at higher level institutions. Irish delegates from the Departments of Finance and Education attended this conference and their involvement was to have significant consequences, as we shall discuss later.

The 1970s were marked by the promotion of social equity and access to education and the need for recurrent education to address some of the social problems caused by the economic downturn of the time. The ideas were in line with the prevailing Keynesian economic theories and with the ideas of statist type administrations like Norway who applied them (Eide, 1990). However, the 1980s began a ''searching and fumbling phase'' when the organisation struggled to address the economic and social problems caused by economic restructuring in western states (Rinne, 2008, p. 668). The issue of quality of education began to take on added importance and the need for more research and data on the performance of educational systems and institutions. In the area of higher education, the policy debate concentrated on four main issues relating to access to higher education; the changing relationship between higher education and working life, new patterns of authority in higher education and problems of financing and redeployment of resources (OECD, 1983).

These policies were to evolve from the 1990s onwards into the current ''Economics of Education and Quality Monitoring Phase'' except that the economic theories were now neo-liberal and the OECD has taken on the role of evaluator of the quality of education and learning in its member countries (Rinne, 2008, p. 669). The transformation coincided with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the active involvement of the OECD in the construction of market economic structures in eastern European states, a widening membership of the OECD and pressure from the United States and the United Kingdom for greater attention to the quality agenda (Amaral & Neave, 2009a; Rinne, 2008).

Jackobi and Martens (2010) describe this change as a significant shift in policy and practice, contrasting the earlier decades as ones in which the OECD mainly produced discursive contributions to education policy, and the 1990s when the organisation extended its activities to conducting reviews and producing reliable data which has led to the OECD becoming such an influential actor in this field; the OECD, today ''not only defines the problem but offers the

solution'' (ibid. p171). However other authors point to the shift of ideology as being the more important with the content and approach to policy formation in education being primarily influenced by a neo-liberal global economic agenda (Amaral & Neave, 2009a; Henry, Rizvi, & Taylor, 2001). Central to that agenda is the change in its perception of knowledge and its role in the economy and society (Ward, 2012; Olsen & Peters, 2005). In the early decades knowledge and education were for the public good to be harnessed for the general benefit of the state and national interests. A marked shift is detected   in its influential policy document The *Knowledge Based Economy*   (OECD, 1996) which Olsen and Peters credit with introducing the concept into policy discourses at this level. The document draws on the new growth theories of economists such as Paul Romner (1990) which link national economic growth with the ability to generate new ideas rather than the production of more goods. Therefore, the ''stock of human knowledge determines the rate of growth'' and as such ''market incentives… play an essential role in the process whereby new knowledge is translated into goods with practical value'' (Romer, quoted in Ward, 2012, p. 141). Knowledge and technology were no longer just important external influences on economic growth but direct inputs' (Olsen & Peters, 2005). Thus, the OECD document suggests that maximising the benefit of knowledge for economic use might require states ''to modify or reject the idea that science is a public good'' (Ward, 2012, p. 142) . If the role of knowledge were to be a source of innovation in the market place then the function of the state would be to create the conditions to make that happen. The state-centric planning model that the OECD advocated in post-world war two years should be replaced by a triple helix of state, industry and academia designed to coordinate knowledge production and innovation activities (Etzkowitz & Lyesdesdorff, 2000; Ward, 2012). Any new model of higher education, therefore, must address how higher education would occupy this enhanced role, and what its relationship with state and industry would be.

The shift of thinking in relation to higher education became evident with the publication of *Redefining Tertiary Education* (OECD, 1998)*. The document reframes (and renames) higher education in the context of a rapidly expanding global economy and changes in expectations of educational attainment; it pointed to a diverse demand especially for what it called the first years type programmes i.e. degree or sub degree course. Demand was described as expanding to the point of universalism where almost all school leavers, and an increasing number of returning adults, expect access to some form of higher education. A decade later, the three volume set *Tertiary Education and the Knowledge Society* (hereafter referred to as TEKS) refers to the ''challenges facing higher education'' in the context of globalisation, the development of knowledge based economies and the consequent demands on HEIs (OECD, 2008 p. 57). Listed

among those challenges are the continued relevance of the role of tertiary education in research and education, the sourcing, use and level of funding required and how governance needs to be improved at system and institutional level. Other issues raised are constraints on public funding and the continued expansion and diversification of educational needs (ibid). Largely, it is the same set of deficiencies around higher education advanced by the EU Commission (see Table 4.1) which is unsurprising given the strong overlap of membership between the two bodies.

The alternative model suggested by the OECD in the TEKS document also shows strong similarity in content around the core policy issues of higher education's role, governance and funding (see Table 4.3). Both agencies emphasise its role as a source of quality learning and innovation to meet the needs of individuals and an expanding knowledge economy; both advocate governance reform which assigns greater autonomy and accountability to HEIs and both recommend diversification of funding sources, including greater cost-sharing by students if needed.

What is different, is the level of detail provided in the TEKS document on the policy prescriptions and changes in practice to address the deficiencies, and the amount of consideration given to how these can be implemented by member countries - a section giving an analysis and recommendations on funding strategies alone runs to eighty pages. The difference highlights a variance in the dynamics or ''modes''of soft regulation processes deployed by the OECD compared to the EU in devising and promoting policies on higher education (Jacobsson & Sahlin-Anderson, 2006, p. 253).

Policy Making Processes at the OECD

Despite its significant impact on the formation of economic and social policies worldwide not much has been published on how it operates or the mechanisms it uses to disseminate and promote its policies. Some insights are given by existing (Schuller & Vincent-Lencrin, 2009) and former (Papadopoulos, 2011) staff. Its role in policy formation has been examined by political scientists (Porter & Webb, 2007; Martens & Jakobi , 2010) and more critically by educationalists (Basset & Maldonado, 2009; Henry, Rizvi, & Taylor, 2001; Rinne, Kallo, & Hokka, 2004).

Papadopoulos describes the main elements of the policy making processes that existed during his tenure at the OECD (Papadopoulos, 2011). It began with identifying in advance the major issues that might affect education; the issues might be ahead of national development or thinking but ''not so far as to be unrealistic or irrelevant'' (Papadopoulos, 2011, p. 86). In the

second stage of this process the issues would be placed within a ''structure policy framework'' from which would emerge a number of questions which in turn would be subject to a ''dialectal process of Secretariat and country thinking, including a strong dose of advice from experts'' (ibid). Planning and problem solution would be based on ''solid and objective analysis…bringing to bear the collective experience of member countries'' but the results of these analyses would be ''followed up according to national circumstances'' including local interests and capacity (ibid p. 87).

The framework to support this work included a Centre for Education Research and Innovation (CERI) set up in 1968 and an Education Committee established in 1970. More recently, a programme for Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) with its own publication channels[19] and policy fora includes membership from HEIs; eight universities from Ireland are members. The main output of the OECD comprises national reviews of education policies - one of the first to be completed was in Ireland in 1965. These are thematic reviews which carry out comparative or cross country analyses on certain policy issues and sets of statistics on educational system performance and characteristics, the best known of which is *Education at a Glance.* All of these activities are contained within a Directorate of Education one of 16 departments in a Secretariat employing over 2,500 people (OECD, 2012). Martens and Jakobi (2010) summarise this process of operation or governance under three headings 1) idea generation, 2) policy evaluation and 3) data collection. Porter and Web (2007) identify the same activities and use a constructivist approach to explain them.

 Idea production through discourses

The OECD is a regular producer of discourses with over 250 publications per year (Martens & Jakobi , 2010). One of the main effects of these discourses, as we discussed earlier in relation to policy texts produced both by the OECD and by the EU Commission, is to frame particular social facts or issues in a manner that leads one to seeing these issues as political problems which must be resolved or to highlighting current system deficiencies.

Thus, OECD policy ideas are elaborated in a range of publications and supported by various data sets (see below) to the point that they may ''trigger policy change because they provide alternative theories that are seen to be more appropriate'' (Beyler, 2004 quoted in Martens and Jakobi 2010, p. 10).This logic of appropriateness is expanded on by Porter and Webb (2007). An appropriate policy adoption is not one which merely serves national interests; it must also be

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[19] One of those channels was the journal *Higher Education Management and Policy* 1997-2012

appropriate ''for states which seek to identify themselves as modern, liberal, market-friendly, and efficient'' (ibid p. 5). These explanations echo the WS theory's account of institutional diffusion including theorisation of alternatives to existing arrangements (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996), of how nation states engage with international organisational principles so as to be seen as compliant with models of nation statehood (Meyer et al. 1997), and the contention that diffused models must be in keeping with current world cultural values if they are to be successfully adopted (Strang & Meyer, 1993).

I have already discussed the level of detail and the prescriptive tone of recent OECD policy texts on higher education. They are also characterised by the fact that most of the recommendations contained in the reports such as TEKS are directed at state administrators as opposed to the EU documents which seem to be aimed at wider audience. In the case of the OECD, the steering or rule making role of the state is primary, particularly in the area of system governance and funding. The comprehensiveness and complexity of the TEKS review, according to Amaral and Neave (2009a) , effectively makes it an action programme to be realised by member countries and their institutions in the medium term and the scale and depth of that programme clearly differentiates the OECD from other international bodies involved in higher education policy making. This suggests a high level of confidence by the OECD in the accuracy of its analysis of the problem concerned and in its reputation as a legitimate source of solutions. It appears to enjoy a high level of credibility with its member state clients. It is possible that the source of that legitimacy, and identity by the member states with the OECD, arises from the mechanisms used to prepare these reports through a process of peer reviews and data collection.

Policy evaluation through peer review

Two forms of review are conducted. National policy reviews such as those conducted in Ireland in 1965 and 1991 examine overall operation of a country's education system using criteria agreed with state authorities. Thematic reviews are comparative studies on policy themes conducted in a cross section of countries; the TEKS report arose out of such as study in 24 countries - see the organisation's website for details (OECD, 2013a).This collaborative approach to policy making and the role of the OECD as an identity defining organisation became apparent from the outset. The first Secretary General of the OECD, Thorkil Kristensen, stated that one of the prime objectives of the new organisation was to ''develop a common value system at the level of civil servants in the OECD countries that should form the basis for consensually shared definitions of problems and solutions in the economic policy making'' (Martens & Jakobi , 2010, p. 3).

Table 4.3 Comparison of EU and OECD Policies on Role, Governance and Funding of Higher Education. *Source* **Produced by author drawing on cited policy texts**

Policy	EU	OECD
Role of Higher Education	Mobilising the brainpower of Europe means ''widening access to higher education…helping individuals to achieve their potential and making lifelong learning a reality'' (EU Commission , 2005). A modern higher education system is ''smart, inclusive and sustainable'' (EU Commission, 2011, p. 15) and ''attractive to the international academic world'' (EU Council, 2010, p. C 135/12). The Union is now the Europe of Knowledge and universities are seen as playing a ''crucial role'' in building it through the provision of ''high quality, sustainable and relevant education and research'' and ''strengthening the knowledge triangle between education, research and innovation''; universities now ''have a third mission linking institutions and the business sector, including at regional level'' (EU Council, 2011).	Expansion of higher education is justified to ''serve the needs of the increasing number of individuals who see a value in higher education and the societal and economic benefits it brings''. (OECD, 1998 , p. 101). Role of higher education as part of research and innovation system; building of knowledge bases (primarily through research), creation of capabilities (through teaching and research training), diffusion of knowledge (through interactions with knowledge users), and the maintenance of knowledge (inter-generational storage and transmission of knowledge through codification, libraries, databases, etc.). (OECD, 2008 a, p. 133)
Governance	Universities should have sufficient autonomy to set their own strategic priorities, to acquire and manage facilities, decide curricula within EHEA guidelines, recruit and reward staff and project their own identity and image (EU Commission , 2005, p. 8). Investment in ''**professional management** can provide [that] strategic vision and leadership while allowing teachers and researchers the academic freedom to concentrate on their core task'' (EU06p. 9 original emphasis).Universities should also ''accept full *institutional* accountability to society at large for their results'' (EU06p. 5 original emphasis). Member states should guide the sector as whole through a framework of rules, policy objectives and funding mechanisms linked to performance and competition (EU06; EU Council, 2011).	State governance practices must be developed ''drawing on national traditions and models'' under three broad headings: 1) articulating a vision for the system, 2) establishing appropriate policy instruments to achieve that vision, and 3) monitoring system performance. (OECD, 2008, p. 67)**.** In turn, ''governance arrangements within TEIs allow external/national policy impulses –in the form of regulations, incentives or control mechanisms – to trigger adequate responses by TEIs'' (ibid. p. 121). More attention must be given by TEIs to strengthening of institutional leadership, redefinition of academic and student role in governance and accountability to external stakeholders (ibid. pp.122-125).
Funding	Investment in higher education in Europe should increase to be at least 2% of GDP from both public and private sources (EU06p. 7). Member states should look to alternative methods and sources of funding. Universities to be funded more ''for what they do than for what they are'' or funding 'on relevant outputs rather than inputs' (EU06p. 8). Additional funding should primarily provide ''incentives and means to those universities (they exist in every system) and to those groups/individuals (they exist in each university) that are willing and able to innovate, reform and deliver high quality in teaching, research and services''. This requires more competition-based funding in research and more output-related funding in education' (EU Commission , 2005, p. 9)**. 'Member states should critically examine their current mix of student fees and support schemes in the light of their actual efficiency and equity'** (EU06p. 7 original emphasis)	Funding strategies should be aligned with achievement of national objectives e.g. by making funding consistent with system goals e.g. quality, inclusiveness, and building institutional capacity. The formula used to assess funding requirements of institutions should be related to both input and output indicators and including these strategically targeted components. The principle of cost-sharing should be applied e.g. by providing public subsidies to higher education regardless of sector of provision and charging student fees especially in the case where limited public funding could jeopardise quality of provision or supports to disadvantaged entrants. Funding should include a comprehensive student support system that facilitates access by reducing the liquidity constraints faced by students, with two major components: an income contingent loan system complemented with a scheme of means-tested grants (OECD, 2008, pp. 163-242).

This collegiality is most evident in the process of policy evaluation through peer review. The process can best be described in the OECD'S own terms as '' the systematic examination and assessment of the performance of a state by other states, with the ultimate goal of helping the reviewed state improve its policy making, adopt best practices, and comply with established standards and principles'' (Porter and Webb, 2007, p. 6).

The criteria against which policies are assessed are set by the secretariat and are informed by general good practice being currently advocated and the general ''liberalisation vocation'' of the organisation (ibid). Findings are presented and discussed with governments who have the power to edit but often do not exercise that veto even where the draft is critical of its performance. During the process of peer review different policy options can be explored and changes recommended based on the shared experience of other member states. The process of peer review relies on mutual professional trust between those conducting the review and the member states. Its power to influence fellow policy makers or general public opinion depends critically on the OECD's identity as ''an unbiased expert source of knowledge and advice'' (Porter & Webb, 2007, p. 9). Thus, policy change comes about through a process of persuasion and debate rather than negotiation: '' [the] peer review process is a cultural phenomenon… that leads to the development of a new frame of mind,'' (ibid). In the language of institutional theory, change is based more on achieving a common cultural-cognitive position rather than reliance on coercion or setting of norms or standards which must be complied with.

Data Generation and Dissemination

The publication of comparative statistical reports and analyses of national education systems is probably the activity for which the OECD is best known in the field of education and is closely connected to the mechanisms previously discussed. The OECD's reputation is linked to its ability to carry out large scale quantitative analyses and to produce comparative data sets and indicators that may be used as benchmarks of policy effectiveness or as the basis of new policy solutions (Martens & Jakobi , 2010). The performance reports appear in the form of rankings and can create status competition among participating states, often triggering public debate about the educational policies and practice of the 'star performers '; the result is a peer pressure to conform to what is considered best practice (Martens & Jakobi , 2010; Rinne, Kallo, & Hokka, 2004). The debates that arise around the findings of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) surveys in primary education[20] and general system characteristics in Education *at a Glance* surveys are an example of this phenomenon.

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[20] Plans to create a similar assessment scheme at higher level – Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO)- are at a feasibility study stage; the focus will be on HEIs and will not allow for comparisons at national level (OECD, 2013)

However, there is additional significance, from an institutional theory perspective, to these processes. National ministries cooperate (in the case of PISA studies) or actively contribute (in the case of the comparative surveys) and this has similar effects to peer reviews in creating a common identity among member states and civil servants and aiding the diffusion of common perceptions of educational issues. There is also a resulting shift in role for the various actors involved. Martens and Wolf (2009) show how the PISA project originated from strategic intervention by certain member states who put pressure on the OECD to initiate this type of comparative study to advance their own domestic policy agendas in higher education[21]. The unintended consequence has been to strengthen the status of the OECD as an initiator of policy making and diminish the role of nation states in that function. A similar outcome has occurred in relation to the Bologna process which began as an intergovernmental initiative to advance domestic reform, evolved into a Europeanisation project coordinated mainly by the EU commission. The above processes of policy making are summarised in Figure 4.8. The parallels with policy making processes in Europe are apparent and can be interpreted using WS theory in the same way.

Again the institutional context is dominated by a cultural concept, global economic growth and equity society based on '' the values of democracy based on rule of law and human rights, and adherence to open and transparent market-economy principles'' (OECD, 2011a) .The OECD can also be seen as advancing its model of higher education through a complex set of soft governance mechanisms. The extent of resources and expertise available to the OECD, within its own secretariat and from member states, helps explain the volume and level of detail contained within its policy and data output. Its global focus is indicated by its increased production of thematic reports drawing on countries within and outside its membership, and the enlarged range of comparative data it publishes in relation to education. However, unlike the EU it has no ambitions to create some supranational structure or field of higher education. Its policy target is very much at national level and most of the policy prescriptions are expected to be enacted by member governments.

Impact of Policies

The most obvious impact is where the selection or implementation of a specific national policy change is directly influenced by OECD proposals (Martens & Jakobi , 2010). Rinne et al. link many of the policy changes that have occurred in education in Finland in recent decades directly

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[21] The proposal was backed most strongly by the United States and France and is reported to have met with strong opposition at the time from CERI staff who believed it was 'unprofessional to try and quantify such indicators, that it would oversimplify and misrepresent the OECD education systems, and that it would be rejected by the [then] 24 four member states whose common interests they were charged to serve' (Moutsios, 2009, p. 475)

to recommendations contained in OECD national reviews of the Finnish system, and describe how that country has attained ''model pupil'' status in implementing OECD education policies (2004, p. 495).

The following chapter will discuss a similar scale of effect of an OECD review on the Irish education system in the 1960s. Such direct effects are more likely when OECD prescriptions already resonate with existing national politics and institutions; administrators devise and articulate national policies by 'feeding off' the policy texts and comparative data produced by the OECD (Armingeon & Beyeler, 2004; Shahjahan, 2012, p. 393). Again, this resonates with institutional descriptions of diffusion that highlight successful theorisation of alternatives to existing arrangements and the need for such alternatives to comply with prevailing world cultural values. The general picture in relation to country compliance with OECD education policies, according to Jakobi and Teltemann (2011), is one of strong convergence around some policy indicators, and among some countries, but there is no clear or overall pattern. The expectation that convergence is more likely to occur around more high level or abstract policy goals as predicted by Strang and Meyer (1993) is only partially confirmed. Scandinavian countries seem to pursue their own policy options particularly in relation to the public funding of education (Jakobi & Teltemann, 2011). What is less visible, but probably more significant, are the transnational effects of increased coordination and convergence of education policies among OECD members as intensification of contact among policy makers and the use of common data and research sources leads to a shared definition of policy problems and convergence towards particular solutions (Moutsios, 2009; Rinne, Kallo, & Hokka, 2004)[22].

The increasing use of thematic reviews by the OECD to prepare policies on areas such as higher education or lifelong learning policies (Jakobi, 2009) is an example of this type of activity. The quotation from the foreword of the TEKS reports is informative:

> OECD work helps countries to learn from one another. It can also highlight issues and explore policy options that may be difficult to raise in national debates. Both of these elements clearly underpin this report and the work behind it. The active engagement of Member and Partner economies has been crucial to the process. The 24 participating countries committed substantial resources and opened their tertiary education policies to external review and debate. This collaborative approach enabled countries to learn more about themselves and to add to the broader knowledge base by sharing evidence (OECD, 2008, p. 3).

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[22] Both papers point to the hazards of power asymmetry in setting the agenda for education policy (80% of the OECD budget comes from G8 countries) and the risk of outsourcing of policy making by states with very limited domestic policy making capacity.

OECD vision of ...

Global Economic Growth and Equity

Directorate

Informs internal departments and external policy making networks...

IMHE | Education Committee | CERI

Who engage in multilateral and mutually supporting actions such as...

Policy Evaluation | Transmission of Ideas | Data Collection and Production

To create ...

Country, Thematic Reviews | Policy Reports | Foresight Reports | Data

Resulting in varying degrees of...

Policy Change | Policy Coordination | Policy Convergence

Figure 4.8 OECD Governance Mechanisms and Outcomes. *Source* **Adapted from Martens and Jakobi (2010)**

One aspect that is difficult to ascertain is the crossover between EU and OECD policy making in higher education. There is a long history of collaboration between the OECD and the Commission. A Supplementary Protocol to the founding convention agreed that the European Commission should take part in the work of the OECD and, according to the organisation's website, Commission representatives work alongside Members in the preparation of texts, participate in discussions on the OECD's work programme and strategies, and are involved in the work of the entire organisation and its different bodies (OECD, 2013b). The EU economy is the subject of constant OECD analysis with a separate webpage dedicated to the output (OECD, 2013c). The description in this chapter of higher education policy making by both bodies shows

strong parallels in their concentration on the global significance of higher education, their diagnoses of the problems and challenges facing the sector and the content of policy solutions to meet those challenges.

Of course, each organisation operates with a very different purpose and intent. The OECD is essentially a think-tank that relies on the quality of its advice to persuade member states to adopt its policies; for the EU the measure of success is the degree to which member states commit to the common project of European integration. Despite these differences, the EU and OECD share the common goal of advancing an emerging global model of higher education described as open and inclusive, socially embedded and flexibly organised, which is keeping with a more rationalised and inclusive world culture (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, & Schofer, 2007). The setting in which this model is to operate is clearly global. For the OECD the context is an expanding global economy driven by knowledge based industries. Increasingly, the OECD is networking on these issues beyond its membership and with a range of other IOs including the EU (Ougaard, 2010). In the case of the EU, the repeatedly stated aim of modernisation of higher education is to enable Europe to compete effectively in this global economy (EU Commission, 2013e). Movement towards this common vision of higher education has been a gradual process from lack of interest to passive analyst, to both organizations' active participation in policy making and monitoring.

However, as Drori (2008) has pointed out, globalisation is a dual process and the generation of world cultural models is only half the story. The mechanisms through which such models permeate into the consciousness and actions of nation states, organisations and individuals is the other aspect that must be addressed. Again, a commonality is observed in the expanded structuration within both bodies around policy making and data collection on higher education and the intensification of these activities of over the last decade. Each has built up its own expertise and by various means has created a dense network of contacts with national ministries, representative organisations and individual HEIs. The result has been an increased capacity to articulate and objectify this new institutional model of higher education and the creation of conditions where these actors increasingly identify with this changed perspective. Both organisations rely on soft governance regulation to advance their policy ideas. The modes vary with the OECD more active in monitoring and agenda-setting, relying on its expertise as a source of authority whereas the EU also has the capacity for rule-setting and organisation of actors around the common policy agenda of the EHERA.

The literature dealing with the impact of OECD and EU higher education policies on nation states show varying degrees of adoption of policies. From a WS theory perspective, the limited

progress in this process is explained as the inevitable decoupling that occurs in most histories of institutionalisation. This is less important than the ongoing development of the model at a transnational level and the active participation of nation states and other actors in this process. In the case of the EU, there is a trend towards Europeanisation and is of more significance than the level of compliance with detailed policy recommendations. Thus, Amaral and Neave talk of the ''weasel words'' deployed by the Commission to talk up the degree of compliance with Bologna across Europe and emphasise the emergence of a European dimension to higher education (Amaral & Neave, 2009). While the OECD does not have the capability or the interest in developing such supranational structures it is equally committed to the development of education in a global context and is actively involved in agenda setting and policy making at that level (Ougaard, 2010).

This involvement by national governments in transnational policy making does not diminish their role in the governance of local higher education systems. Both the EU and the OECD place great emphasis on the function of nation-states in the steering of systems towards the global model described in this chapter (EU06; OECD, 2008). The state has to some extent become a 'regulated regulator' (Jacobsson, 2006, p. 205) or the caretaker for policies originating from outside its own legislature and this applies increasingly to the field of higher education. The next chapter examines how the role and actions in relation to higher education of one nation-state, namely Ireland, have been influenced by the changing model of higher education and its interactions with the international organisations that promote it.

Chapter 5 Impact on Irish Policy Making

''There were no real ideas until the OECD project'' (Dr Patrick Hillery, Minister for Education in Ireland from 1959 to 1965, quoted in Walsh 2004, p. 114)

''The IMD[23] ranks Ireland as third in the world in terms of attitudes and values and second in terms of openness to foreign ideas''. (Department of An Taoiseach, 2008, p. 29)

''Somehow the idea has taken root in Government agencies, and maybe also in the public mind, that our higher education system is underperforming and that this can be solved by a dose of public sector bureaucracy'' (Ferdinand Von Prondzynski, former President of Dublin City University, Von Prondzynski, 2013)

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the methods of soft governance deployed by the OECD and the EU that lead to the emergence of particular policy solutions or models. However, the mere appearance of these models does not ensure their adoption; this depends on the degree to which they are institutionalised at the level of the nation state (Strang & Meyer, 1993, p. 495); diffusion also requires support from other actors such as state bodies, educational establishments and academia.

This chapter assesses the degree to which such models have become institutionalised in Ireland by exploring the main policy shifts or phases that have occurred in Irish higher education since 1960 and the degree to which they may have been influenced by policy models promoted by the EU and OECD. Mechanisms of any ideational influence which may have led to these changes are explored, with particular reference to engagement by various stakeholders in the multilateral or policy coordination, such as the OMC, discussed in the previous chapter. Data analysed includes reports from such policy making forums, interviews with policy makers and academic commentary on the effect of these changes on higher education policy and policy making.

Evolution of policy making in Irish Higher Education

As mentioned previously, there is a relatively limited literature on the history of policy making in Irish higher education. There are a number of texts dealing with the period from the 1960s to 2000 (Elliot, 2006; Osborne, 1996; White, 2001); some sections within texts on general education policy, (Clancy, The Evolution of Policy in Third Level Education, 1989; Walsh, 2009),

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[23] Institute of Management Development Business School Switzerland http://www.imd.org/

and articles by O'Buachalla (1984; 1992) and O'Sullivan (1992b) also deal with this period. In the last two decades, there has been a proliferation of policy commentary from various government departments and external agencies (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2). From these sources, I identify the following phases in the development of policies on Irish higher education during that period:

1. *Emergence and Growth of the Binary System* - the major expansion and diversification that occurred during the 1970s and 1980s through the creation of a binary system of HEIs comprising universities and regional technological colleges, along with supporting administrative structures.
2. *Increased investment and intervention by the state in the 1990s* – the expansion of the research infrastructure in Irish higher education with an accompanying governance system to direct and monitor financing.
3. *Higher education as part of the knowledge economy, 2000 to date* – the aligning of the structure and governance of the system with the needs of a knowledge based economy.

In the following sections, I describe the policy-thinking that underpinned these phases of development and discuss any connection with EU or OECD policies, or other global influences, that were active during the period in question.

Emergence and Growth of Binary System (1965-1990)

Early Policy Making

Prior to the 1970s only two Universities existed in Ireland ; the University of Dublin with its single constituent college Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and the National University of Ireland with constituent colleges in Dublin, Cork and Galway. The other elements of the system were teacher training colleges run under the auspices of the two main churches and professional technical colleges administered by local vocational education committees. Attendance at universities was less than two per cent of the college entering age. During this period, the state had very much a ''hands off'' approach in dealing with the university sector. Until 1956, funding came directly by way of a grant from the Department of Finance. Responsibility was then transferred to the Department of Education in order to manage the funding for the development of a new campus in one of the Dublin based universities. Initially, the Department of Education merely subsumed that grant, giving role playing no active part in either policy making or administration of the colleges (White, 2001; Elliot, 2006).

The policy vacuum was filled in the mid-1960s with the publication of five major reports on education and science policy. The first report came from the Commission on Higher Education, set up by the government with very broad terms of reference dealing with the future role,

structure and governance of the system (Murray, 2007). The Commission's membership was composed of representatives from church, state, academia and business; there was some representation from UK academic experts but it was primarily a local forum. It commenced its work in October 1960 and submitted its report in February 1967. The second report was an OECD country review (the first to be conducted by that organisation) of the Irish education system whose main purpose was to forecast the skills requirements of the economy and the capacity of the education system to meet those requirements. While the team conducting the review was composed of Irish civil servants and academics, the review was conducted under the direction of the OECD secretariat employing a prescribed OECD methodology. It commenced its study in 1962 and submitted its report in 1965 (OECD, 1965; O'Sullivan 1992a). A parallel report, *Science in Irish Economic Development,* was prepared by the same core team of researchers and focussed on the scientific labour requirements needed for future economic growth. In September 1961, the Department of Education, at the behest of the Department of Industry and Commerce, appointed a committee to inquire into the need for, and training of, technicians in Irish industry (White, 2001). In 1962, another OECD country review, focussing specifically on technician education, got under way and completed its work in 1964 (OECD, 1964). Its findings led to the setting up of a Steering Committee on Technical Education which was tasked with establishing the first of Ireland's Regional Technical Colleges in 1968.

The Commission on Higher Education's exhaustive report took seven years to complete and its findings, mostly dismal, were largely ignored by the government- see Table 5.1 for summary. Irish higher education was far from excellent and blatantly inequitable (Osborne, 1996). The findings of the Commission had little impact on government decision making and it was generally perceived that the strategy contained in the report was intended to insulate the existing universities from the growing demand for higher education so as to preserve their elite status and autonomy (White, 2001). However, the quantitative data and recommendations contained in the report provide a useful baseline from which to compare subsequent developments, particularly within the university sector (Elliot, 2006).

Policy Actions and Influence of the OECD

In contrast to the Commission of Higher Education report, the OECD reports had significant and lasting effects on state policies and investment decisions in science and education and their impact has been the subject of extensive analysis and commentary by Irish academics (Clancy, 1989; Elliot I. , 2006; Lee J. , 1990; O'Sullivan, 1992a; Walsh, 2009; White, 2001; O' Buachalla, 1996).

Table 5.1 Summary of Findings of the Commission on Higher Education 1967

Terms of Reference	To inquire into university, professional, technological and higher education generally, with special reference to:
	  a) The general organisation and administration of education at these levels;
	  b) The nature and extent of the provisions to be made for such education
	  c) The machinery for the making of academic and administrative appointments to the staffs of the Universities and University Colleges; and
	  d) The provision of courses of higher education through Irish

Main Findings	Generally critical of the system and its piecemeal development. ''The general picture of university studies is one of increasing student numbers, insufficient staff and inadequate facilities and accommodation ''(p 104).
On the Role of Higher Education and System Structure	The closing comments of the report called for investment in ''human talent'' rather than human capital; higher education was ''a means by which individuals fulfil themselves'' and ''no less a precondition of social and economic progress'' (p.860). In relation to the functioning of higher education it recommended that no additional universities should be established and that expansion for demand be achieved by increased investment in the existing university colleges and establishment of ''New Colleges'' one in the capital city of Dublin and other in the provincial city Limerick where local pressure groups were campaigning for the establishment of a university. The training of technicians should be primary function of the vocational education system. It considered adult education to be ''marginal to our terms of reference'' (p76) pointing out that ''part-time university degree programmes raise problems of principle and organisation'' (ibid); it suggested that the New Colleges might devise a new approach to these challenges
On Governance and Quality of Provision	In relation to governance matters the report recommended the establishment of a permanent Commission for Higher Education, the abolition of the National University of Ireland and the strengthening of its constituent colleges. Legislation would be passed to regulate the governance of these independent colleges and TCD. Governing bodies would be composed of internal and external appointees who would have the power to direct policy making and make appointment of President and academic staff. A Council of Irish Universities would be given legal status. Parallel arrangements would be made for governance of the New Colleges who would be governed by a ''college board'' (p522) constituted in similar fashion to the governing body of a university. Academic matters in all types of institution would be overseen by an Academic Board. A Technological Authority would be established to 'promote and assist technological training and research' (p.857). In its closing comments it stressed its central concern that standards in universities be improved and safeguarded. It sensibly concluded that defence of degree standards by college representatives could not be reconciled with evidence of staff shortages, excessive teaching loads and inadequate accommodation and facilities. Its emphasis on process driven quality informed other recommendations including degree duration (four years for university , three for the New Colleges) raised entry level for students, lowering of staff student ratios, reduced teaching load for university teachers (max. 50%) and elimination of overcrowding.
On Funding	Capital and current funding for this raising of standards and increased access would come mainly from state investment but with some cost sharing by students through the retention of tuition fees. It recommended that alleviation from any hardship that fees might cause be addressed by a combination of ''scholarships for talented students, loans for qualifying students and grants for the economically needy'' (p. 787)

I summarise the main findings and outcomes of the reports and then return to the discussion of their significance, particularly in relation the effects on Irish higher education and education policy making.

The *Investment in Education* research team avoided a detailed examination of the university sector lest it interfere with the work of the Commission on Higher Education which was deliberating at the same time. The *Investment in Education* team identified major problems around participation, output and efficiency of delivery that applied across the education system. In relation to higher education, it noted gross inequalities in rates of participation from lower social classes and from those outside the main cities and pointed to a severe shortfall of graduates in technical subject areas (Osborne, 1996). The technician report focussed on the need for technical human resource planning and a more active involvement of industry in that process (OECD, 1964). It recommended the expansion of technical education based on maths and physical science subjects at second and advanced levels. Such expansion which would require the establishment of regional technical colleges. In fact, the Minister of Education committed the government to the establishment of these colleges while the review was still in progress (White, 2001). The Steering Committee on Technical Education (1967) delivered on that commitment. It met, deliberated and produced its proposals and building plans in the period between September 1966 to April 1967 (White, 2001).

The consequences of this series of reports were soon to become apparent. The first five Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) were completed in 1970. By the end of the decade, nine RTCs had been put in place and were attracting significant student numbers incentivised in part by generous student grants channelled by the Irish Department of Education from the European Social Fund's[24] budget for vocational training (White, 2001). Programmes at the existing technological colleges in Cork and Dublin were expanded. A ''new college'' the National Institute of Higher Education was established in Limerick in 1970. In 1980, a new NIHE was established in Dublin with an emphasis on technological and business subjects similar to its Limerick predecessor. The universities did not remain static and responded to state agency encouragement to improve skills levels in the economy, particularly in the area of information technology. A central element of industrial policy at the time was to use an expanding supply of educated labour with business and technical skills as a means of attracting mobile capital investment (White, 2001). Ireland's Industrial Development Authority capitalised on this asset, and on Ireland's membership in the newly formed Single European Market, by creating a series

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[24] This fund originated from the then European Economic Community. Ireland joined in 1973.

of iconic advertisements in the late 1980's carrying the slogan ''We're the Young Europeans''
(see Figure 5.1)

Figure 5.1 The Young European's Advertisement to Attract Foreign Direct Investment into Ireland in the 1980s.
Source **Industrial Development Authority Ireland**

The state set up a second layer of governance comprising intermediary bodies to interact
directly with higher education institutions. The first, the Higher Education Authority (HEA), was
legally established in 1971 as an intermediary agency between the state and universities
(Department of Education, 1971). It was given the dual role of acting as advisor to the
government on the performance and development of higher education and was given

discretionary powers in disbursing government grants to individual institutions. In later years, it would seek to take a more interventionist role in directing the higher education system.
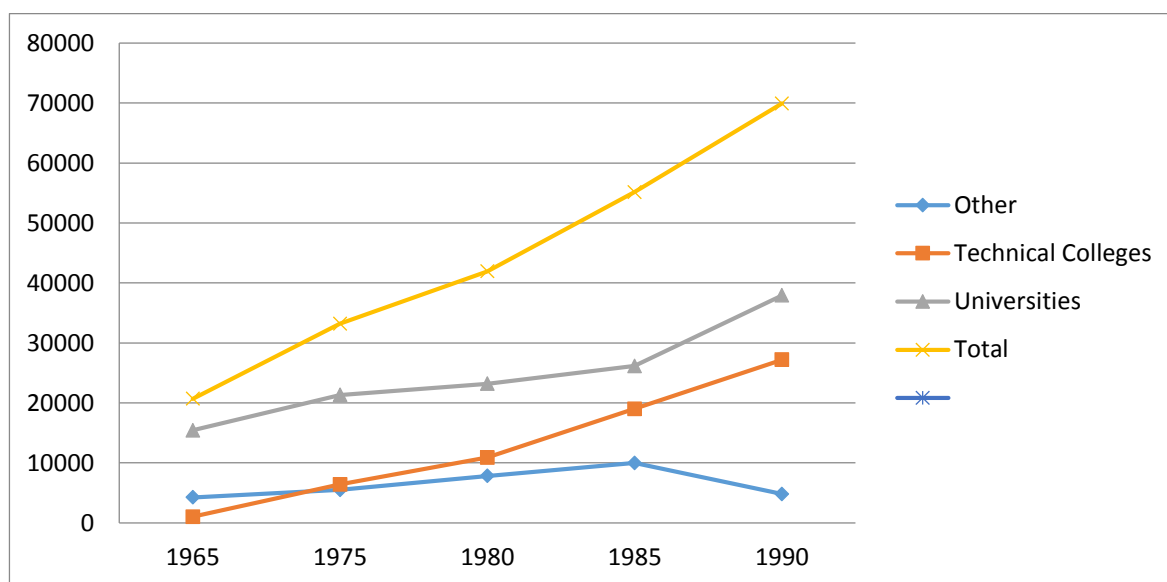
The National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) was established in 1972 (Department of Education, 1972). It was modelled on its British equivalent and served the same purpose namely the accreditation of awards in the emerging technological sector.

The period in question was one of construction and expansion of a higher education system following on developments that had already occurred in many other Western states. There has been considerable academic commentary dealing with the external influences on the policy changes that occurred at the time, and the consequent modernising effects on education and Irish society. The period marked the transition of Ireland from a rural based to an industrial economy; one in which the acquisition of educational credentials began to ''replace the familial inheritance of property as the key determinant of life chances'' (Murray, 2007, p. 20).

The OECD reports are widely held to have played a catalytic role in initiating these changes but also to have had lasting institutional effects on higher education and its various participants (O'Sullivan, 1992a; O' Buachalla, 1996; Murray, 2007). O'Sullivan perceived the report to have confronted the existing insular paradigms of Irish education policy by replacing personal development with human capital formation as the primary policy aim of the educational system. The conclusion resonates closely with WS theory which links expansion of higher education at the time to a similar paradigm shift of thinking of education as a cause or source of

social and economic growth as distinct from a response to such development; hence the development of human capital ideologies in economics but also the notion that expanded individual capability would inevitably lead to social equity and progress (Meyer & Schofer, 2007). The other question from an institutional theory perspective is the timing of this change; why did this change in institutional context occur then and not in previous decades when expansion of education was well underway in other parts of Europe?

Higher education was an area of public life that was largely ignored by policy makers prior to this time. There may be practical reasons for this. Universities operated under charters or legislation which preceded an independent Irish state and which granted the colleges a great deal of autonomy. Few of the officials at the Department had a college education and may have felt unqualified to direct these institutions (White, 2001). White suggests too that there was particular suspicion between Fianna Fáil led administrations and academia at University College Dublin which was considered sympathetic to its rival opposition party, and former Civil War adversary, Fine Gael[25] ; this may have led to a lack of interest or commitment to addressing the issue on the part of senior officials. Other histories of the time point to a more general malaise to explain this apathy. The historian Joe Lee (1990, p. 562) describes the absence of any ''market for ideas'' among decision makers prior to this period. He refers to Basil Chubb's [26] description of how policies were formed; ''few enquiries of any depth were made into social or economic problems…social services and new legislation tended to follow *mutatis mutandis* the existing British pattern'' (ibid). And on the paucity of new ideas, he observes; ''neither public servants (politician or professional) nor universities provided new ideas, and there were few attempts to observe and adapt the experience of other countries other than the United Kingdom'' (Chubb, 1982, p. 22).

Lee absolves policy makers from blame for the lack of serious thought given to the relationship between higher education and social change.   If they were to be criticised, it was for failing to ''employ first-class minds to think systematically about the role of higher education in society.'' He further points to an ''almost total dearth of serious thinking about higher education among higher educationalists'' (1990, p. 364). The proposals of the Commission on higher education for ''new colleges'' and more investment in ''old colleges'' were hardly inspirational. The cause of this insularity is not entirely clear. The structure and mechanisms of the Irish civil service were

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[25] Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael are the two main political parties in Ireland and occupy roughly centre left and centre right positions respectively.

[26] Regarded as the 'Father of Political Science in Ireland' (see obituary in Irish Times 11/05/2002 http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/assets/pdfs/basilchubb-1.pdf).

inherited from Britain at the time of independence and there was relatively little introduction of personnel with new ideas introduced at senior level (Lee, 1990). The Devlin report (an Inquiry into the Public service found that there was a lack of any policy making processes or supports (Devlin, 1970).

O'Buachalla's analysis (1996), published around the thirtieth anniversary of the report, focuses on the contextual changes that occurred to make way for the ideas contained in the OECD report. He points to the general climate of expectancy that existed at a time when the government urgently needed to address the economic stagnation of the previous decade and the debilitating emigration that it had caused. Politically, a new head of government, Seán Lemass, had replaced Éamon de Valera who had held office for the previous 16 years. Lemass was recognised internationally as a force for change in Ireland, a leader who wished to see Ireland become more outward in its social and economic policies (Figure 5. 3).

Figure 5.1 Time Magazine Cover of the Taoiseach Seán Lemass July 1963

Lemass installed a young ambitious Minister for Education who was not overawed by the sensitivities of religious and nationalist interests and who felt it as his duty to take the initiative in this policy domain. Similarly, there was increased interest in education in civil society as a number of leading academics, opposition political parties and media raised the profile of the debate on access to education (O' Buachalla, 1996). Probably the most important factor was the engagement of the Department of Finance with the project. The Department was at that time committed to the type of economic planning favoured by the OECD. Its *Second Programme for Economic Expansion* spoke of investment in education in language very much in keeping with OECD vocabulary of the time:

> Since our wealth lies ultimately with the people, the aim of educational policy must be to realise their full potential as human persons. Better education and training will lead to continued economic expansion...the economic returns from investment in education will be as high in the long-run as those from investment in physical capital. (Department of Finance, 1963, p. 13)

According to O'Sullivan (1992a), the OECD report conferred authority and legitimacy on any subsequent policy decisions by officials and the commitment of the state to invest in education swayed the opinion of teachers and parents in favour the reforms. The context of the origin of the report is important too. As noted previously the report was commissioned as part of the *Education Investment and Planning Programme* (EIPP) which grew out of the Washington Conference organised by the OECD to address the issue of economic growth and investment in education (OECD, 1961). O'Buachalla (1996) reminds us that other countries participating in the EIPP, ''responding to the socio-economic demand and the developing egalitarianism that characterised the re-building of Europe had [already] …experienced dramatic expansion of education in the immediate post war period'' (p.13). Ireland was now embracing these world values albeit belatedly. Schofer and Meyer (2005) suggest a reason for such late adoption in terms of institutional theory. They contend that an effect of strong institutional ideas is that countries respond to the pressures of world models more than to their own history. If a country's history, as in the case of Ireland, means that they do not adhere to such models, then they are likely to eventually re-align themselves with these ideas. Thus, countries with low rates of higher education expansion in given periods tend to have ''corrective higher rates in subsequent periods'' (p. 905).

There were also longer lasting institutional effects of the report. O'Buachalla talks of the ''slow process of changing political, administrative, and social attitudes [that] began with the absorption by various interest groups and political parties of the inescapable logic of the report'' (1996, p. 18). Also of interest, from an institutional theory perspective, is the effect that the report had on the process of policy making. The systematic way in which the report was researched and presented would set a precedent; ''in both content and methodology [the report] constituted a new departure …bearing little similarity to most of its predecessors and offering a new model to all its successors'' (O' Buachalla, 1996, p. 17). The research team of five comprised two economists, a statistician and two civil servants. O'Sullivan (1992a) notes that economists had become regarded as educational authorities and dislodged other pedagogues in Irish society from this role. The comments are in keeping with Lee's general analysis (1990, p. 572). He describes the Department of Finance's old style of policy making as being ''more

doctrinal than intellectual, more visceral than cerebral'' and recorded how this deficiency was being addressed by the establishment of specialist institutes in various policy domains such as the Institute of Industrial Research, the Agricultural Research Institute and the Economic and Social Research Institute. Thus, we see a rationalisation of policy making and the emergence of a range of organisations with the sense of purpose and resources required for that task which WS theory describes as happening in all social domains (Meyer, Drori, & Hwang, 2006). The intensification of that structuration process would be a feature of the next two decades in higher education policy making.

Increased Investment and Intervention by the State in the 1990s

Policy Discourses

The 1990s began with strong criticism contained in the OECD's second national review of education in Ireland (OECD, 1991) regarding the Department of Education's capacity to make policy. The main purpose of the report was to comment on teacher training and education, but, in doing so, it commented on the ''innate conservatism'' of the Department, its lack of ''a purposeful central authority having the political will, the administrative capacity, and the requisite financial resources to formulate or implement reforms'' and its susceptibility to ''powerful interest groups outside of government'' (OECD, 1991, p. 38). It recommended that the Department ''shed what amount to largely managerial functions [and] concentrate on higher level administration and policy orientated tasks [as a] measure that has been adopted in several OECD countries in recent years'' (OECD, 1991, p. 41). The Department acknowledged the criticism in a subsequent White Paper suggesting that the massive expansion of all sectors of the system had resulted in a preoccupation with its day to day running. It admitted that the Department had been ''unable to give the amount of attention needed to policy analysis, policy development, strategic planning and evaluation of outcomes which should be its main concern'' (Department of Education and Science, 1995, p. 19).

Perhaps in response to this negative comparison, the Department became more active in policy formulation with a Green Paper[27] entitled *Education for a Changing World* published in 1992 and the follow on White Paper in 1995 *Charting our Education Future* (Department of Education and Science 1992, 1995). It also became more involved in the workings of higher education as evidenced by the introduction of new legislation on governance and quality assurance, changes in funding mechanisms and interaction with a wider range of state agencies and external

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[27] A Green Paper is a policy document issued by governments to stimulate discussion and encourage stakeholder engagement with a topic. It is often followed by a White Paper proposing particular legislative or budgetary actions by the state.

stakeholders in policy making (see Table 5.2 for an overview of policy reports and legislation). This trend may have followed a similar pattern of government behaviour in other European states where expansion had already occurred (Neave, 1985)**.** Neave describes that pattern as a shift from ''quantitative to qualitative interest'' (p.122) or from a primary concern with expansion or quantity of higher education to an interest in the quality and efficiency of provision as well as   in analysing the role that higher education was playing in society.

An analysis of the policy documents of the period shows that the content had shifted from a purely national focus to one with an increasing emphasis on the European and global dimension. The significant financial support to the Irish education system from the European Social and Structural Funds at the time may have motivated this. The Department's present position, as stated on its website, is that the dual purpose of engagement at EU level is to ensure that ''Ireland gets the greatest benefit possible from EU funding'' and that '' Irish policies are informed by EU best practice'' (Department of Education and Skills, 2013). However, the policy documents from this period seem to show a strong identification with EU policies and ideals which goes beyond this pragmatism.

An excerpt from the foreword to the 1992 Green Paper by the then Minister points to international influences on the thinking of officials who constructed the document:

> Throughout the developed world at present, including the OECD countries, there is a widespread consensus on the need for a radical reappraisal of traditional approaches to education policies, to take account of the complexities of modern living and the extension of education to all and for a longer period of life. Ireland cannot stand apart from these developments. (Department of Education and Science, 1992)

Both the Green and White Papers placed considerable emphasis on the global dimension of education policy devoting complete chapters to Irish education within the European Union. Extensive reference is made throughout the White Paper to the European dimension and it exhibits a strong commitment to engagement with EU policy making, stating that the ''framework for the development of education outlined in this White Paper, embraces confidently the European ideal… **Ireland will continue to contribute fully to education initiatives within the European Union''** (p.216 original emphasis). On the use of EU structural funds the document states that ''there is firm alignment between EU supported initiatives and national policy priorities'' (ibid). On educational philosophy, it proposes that the aim of education should be to '' [develop] a sense of individual responsibility to oneself and to the different dimensions of community - to the family, to local and work communities, to the State, and to the European Union'' (p. 8).

Table 5.2 Overview of Policy Reports and Legislation on Irish Higher Education in the 1990s

Policy or Legal Text	Author	Key Points and Recommendations
Review of National Policies for Education – Ireland 1991	OECD	Neglect of policy formation role of Department of Education highlighted. Report criticised the department for its ''innate conservatism'', its lack of ''a purposeful central authority having the political will, the administrative capacity, and requisite financial resources to formulate or implement reforms'' (p38).
Education for a Changing World -Green Paper on Education (1992)	Department of Education and Science	Comprehensive review of all main policy issues in higher education; governance, funding and economic role. Executive role of college presidents to be extended. Independent quality assurance. Funding linked to effectiveness. External representation on HEA. Full chapter on role of Irish education within European Union.
A Time for Change: Industrial Policies for the 1990's (1992)	Industrial Policy Review Group	Argued that a crucial element of our competiveness is a skilled and technically competent workforce and education system geared to producing such human capital; the report strongly criticised the existing system (including the newly formed technological colleges) as being overly academic.
Report of National Education Convention 1994	National Convention Secretariat	Consultative body. Convened by Department at the request of the academic community. Addressed all issues raised in Green Paper. Generally in agreement but suggested greater emphasis on national dimension of education Chapter on international context urges central unit for dissemination of information on 'activities and schemes of EU and OECD' (p130).
RTC Acts 1992	Department of Education	Granted autonomy to individual institutions. No longer reported to local Vocational Education Committees. Set out governance structure which included extensive external representation on governing bodies.
'Making Knowledge Work for Us' (1995)	STIAC	Main finding was that Ireland was very much in the ''laggard' category in terms of R&D activity (p. 37) and it recommended increased investment over a prolonged period in both industrial and university research and innovation. Colleges would receive increased funding as they prioritised STI priorities and the needs of industry in allocation of research resources.
Charting our Future-White Paper on Education 1995	Department of Education	Encouraged more industry engagement, more efforts to widen participation, quality control and maintenance of a binary system with regional colleges (but to be rebranded 'Regional Institutes of Technology'). Quality audits to be developed under the auspices of HEA. Included a proposal to abolish third level fees as a means of increasing participation rates.
Shaping our Future-A Strategy for Enterprise in Ireland in the 21st Century (1996)	Forfas (Industrial policy agency)	Outlined the international trends in education and advised that Ireland would have to keep up with these developments. Specifically it stipulated that the level of state support to higher education institutions should be linked to the scale of interaction with the enterprise sector; third level institutions would need to be more industry focussed, not just in research but also in course design.
Universities Act 1997	Department of Education	Replaced 1908 Act. Addressed arrangements dealing with governance, financing, and administration and staffing of universities. Generally preserved autonomy of institutions.
Technology Foresight Ireland An Irish Council for Science Technology and Innovation ICSTI Overview (1999)	ICTSI	Identified information and communications, biotechnology, medical systems and nanotechnology as technologies to be developed if Ireland were to compete in knowledge based global economy. To do this, the knowledge framework needs to be constructed. Report depicts this framework as *knowledge pyramid* - where industry, the higher education sector, Government and society are the four interlinked faces forming a partnership at all levels' (p.5 original emphasis).
Qualifications (Education And Training) Act, 1999	Department of Education and Science	NECA replaced by new Higher Education and Training Awards Council with more extensive remit for quality assurance and accreditation.
National Development Plan 2000-2006 (1999)	Department of Finance	Department commits €2.47bn to investment in R&D of which €698bn earmarked for HEIs.

A planned review should include ''**the further expansion of the European Studies Project''** (p.222 original emphasis). The curriculum in schools should take account of ''the rapid social, scientific and technological change which is taking place, and of Ireland's position in the European Union and in the wider world'(p.20) Reference to the OECD is less extensive. The 1989 OECD report *Education and Economy in a Changing Society* is mentioned in the context of the development of vocational education (p.79) but most references are to comparator data from *Education at a Glance* e.g. on the low score for science achievement among thirteen year olds (p.23). The document elaborates on the Department's role in compiling such data for the OECD and the EU and how it regards this activity as essential to its own policy making (p.203). The document describes the differing relationships between the Department and the two international bodies:

> In the international context, the Department of Education will deal directly with the European Union on issues of European education policy and European funded programmes and with the OECD in the development of international and education comparators. (Department of Education and Science, 1995, p. 193)

The sense of nation- state identity, or commitment to the ideals of nation-statehood (Meyer et al. 1997), with which officials engage in these activities is evident in the following quote:

> [A] partnership ethos, as well as a sense of national confidence in the value and strength of the Irish education system, informs Ireland's contribution and full participation in international education activities within the European Union, in other international organisations and in the wider world. (Department of Education and Science, 1995, p. 214)

A second feature of policy making in this decade is the increased input by stakeholders, international experts, and agencies outside of the Department. In the period between the publication of the Green and White papers, the Department sponsored a National Convention on Education led by academics which explored many of the issues raised in the Green Paper (Department of Education and Science, 1992). Interestingly, the then Head of the Education Department at the OECD, Malcolm Skilbeck, acted as one of three international consultants to the forum. Reports by an Industry Review Group (The Culliton Report) and the Science Technology and Innovation Advisory Council fed into the White Paper in the areas of vocational training and university research respectively (Industrial Policy Review Group, 1992; Science Technology and Innovation Advisory Council, 1995) and see Table 5.1 for a summary. The Convention's influence on the White Paper is evident in the equal emphasis placed on the principles and rights of education and its utilitarian function in economic development which was stressed in the earlier Culliton Report - see also (White, 2001, pp. 101-102).

Nevertheless, the White Paper did elaborate on the role that higher education plays in leadership of economic development and on the need for more accountability in terms of use of funds, quality of provision and equity in enrolment policies. As regards funding, the document presented a proposal to abolish third level fees for undergraduate programmes as a priority action (p.241). The need for a new legislative framework for universities dealing with governance arrangements was also referred to taking into account the ''growing public demand for more accountability in [all] publicly funded institutions'' (p. 92). The Higher Education Authority would be strengthened, and would assume responsibility for all publicly funded HEIs and develop quality audit framework for those institutions. More modern organisation and management systems would be put in place in the Regional Technical Colleges. The document advocated the maintenance of the binary structure and warned against ''academic drift'', the idea that the Regional Technical colleges would become more like universities. The text acknowledged the role of private colleges in the sector and recommended a code of practice for their operation. In the area of research it opted to continue with the block grant for teaching and research in universities but to include some incentivised element for research funding.

The latter proposal was developed more extensively in two other influential reports on innovation policy and higher education - *Shaping our Future* and the *Technology Foresight Report* - published by the newly established industrial policy unit recommended in the Culliton Report (Forfas, 1996; 1999). Between them, the reports identified the areas where investment in science and technology might take place and suggested an infrastructure for the direction and oversight of innovation activities. Strong linkages between state, industry and academia were seen as key to these developments. There was blunt criticism from one of the panels involved in drafting the technology foresight report on the state of innovation in Ireland:

> The science and technological infrastructure in Ireland, by international standards, is second-rate...There are no world class universities (an Oxford, an MIT, a Pasteur Institute) or relevant Centres of Excellence which the sector can call on if new technologies have to be developed and implemented. This is compounded further by university-industry co-operation being superficial, short-term and underfunded. (Technology Foresight Ireland, 1999, p. 58)

A report commissioned by the HEA on the organisation and funding of research in Irish universities supported this opinion. It cited poor planning and quality assurance of research activities in comparison with their European equivalents; sourcing of funding tended to be opportunistic rather than strategic relying on EU framework programmes and small amounts of contracted research from industrial clients (Circa Group Europe, 1996). The result was that research objectives relied more on EU and private sector influence than on national policies.

Legislative Response

The state responded to these and other criticisms of the system. Legislative interventions included the passing of the Universities Act in l997 to deal with governance of that sector. The Act set out the objects and functions of a university, the structure and role of its governing bodies, staffing arrangements, composition and role of academic councils and sections relating to property, finance and reporting. In relation to accountability, the legislation obliged the management of those organisations to prepare strategic plans for approval by their governing bodies and to submit them to the HEA and the Minister. Similar procedures applied to the production of quality assurance procedures for teaching and research. External representation on university governing bodies (with the exception of TCD) was prescribed. The HEA took on an overseeing role for these plans and procedures. The legislation intended to balance these accountability measures by recognising also the academic freedom of universities and the institutional identity of each university. The universities felt the balance leaned too much in favour of the state in the early drafts (Pollack, 1997). During its passage through the legislature, the Bill was vehemently opposed by university nominees in the Irish Senate as an attack on university freedom and autonomy but was eventually passed, after many appeasing amendments, in May 1997 (Walsh, 2009; White, 2001).

In the area of quality assurance, the Qualifications Act of 1999 replaced the former NCEA with a new accreditation body called the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and laid down guidelines for achievement of university status. Unit cost based funding was introduced by the HEA in the early 1990s with the clear objective of establishing more transparency and accountability over expenditure within universities and separating funding streams by faculty and activity. It also placed a modest demand on universities to raise 5% of gross income from external sources. In doing so, it was following the model implemented in the UK and suggested in the OECD policy document on higher education funding at the time (Osborne, 1996).

Tuition fees were abolished for full time undergraduate courses in 1995 with the intent of widening participation despite significant criticism from within the sector and certain sections of the media (Cullen, 1995). The Minister defended the measure arguing that it offered the simplest route to widening participation, not least because of the symbolism involved - ''Abolishing college fees will have tremendous psychological impact. [Higher] education will be seen as a right not as a privilege'' (ibid). However, this cultural perception of higher education had already taken root in Irish society in the previous decade; if the primary intent of the measure was to bring about this psychological effect, then it was mistimed. In any event,

succeeding governments would gradually erode this concession by increasing the registration fees charged to students and the argument about who should pay college fees is now purely an economic one.

Investment Response

A more lasting intervention came about in response to the innovation agenda. A resurgent economy allowed an Irish government, for the first time, to make a substantial investment in R&D with the aim of taking Ireland's research base up to or beyond EU and OECD norms (White, 2001). An administrative infrastructure to direct and oversee future funding was put in place. Two research councils were established one for science, engineering and technology (IRCSET) and one for humanities and social sciences (IRCHSS). In response to the findings of the foresight group, a new organisation Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) was established which focussed investment on basic research in the areas identified by the group. The first Programme for Research in Third Level Institutes (PRTLI) was launched in 1999 with a budget of Ir£162m (c. €205m) with the aim of modernising facilities and improving other research resources. The universities won the lion's share of this tranche of funding, a pattern that would persist in all future cycles of the programme (HEA, 2003). A new National Development Plan committed the state to investment of €2.47bn in R&D representing a fivefold increase in the sum allocated in the previous national plan. The government allocated a sum of €698m to the higher education sector to facilitate ''a major capital investment programme to develop the R&D physical infrastructure on the third level institutions in line with national strategic priorities'' (Department of Finance, p. 130). The stated objective was to strengthen the research and science capability of our education institutions that in turn would ''facilitate collaborative efforts with industry to ensure an R&D culture in all sectors of the economy'' (ibid).

The net effect of all these policy actions was to rank Ireland as first among EU countries in 1997 for the percentage of population with a higher education qualification. Ireland's figure was 36.2 per cent against an EU average of 20.4 per cent (White, 2001, p. 248). A participation rate of 39.9 per cent in 1995 was just below the OECD mean (OECD, 1995). The upgrading of the NIHEs in 1989 reversed the differential in growth trend between university and non-university sectors. However, the proportion of students in the non-university sector (41% in 1995) remained high by international standards – see White, 2001 and Figure 5.4. In relation to research, there was a recognition by the state that it lagged comparator states in terms of expenditure and committed to closing that gap. The decision by the state to dramatically increase expenditure in this area would result in a transformation of higher education R&D (HERD) in the following decade.
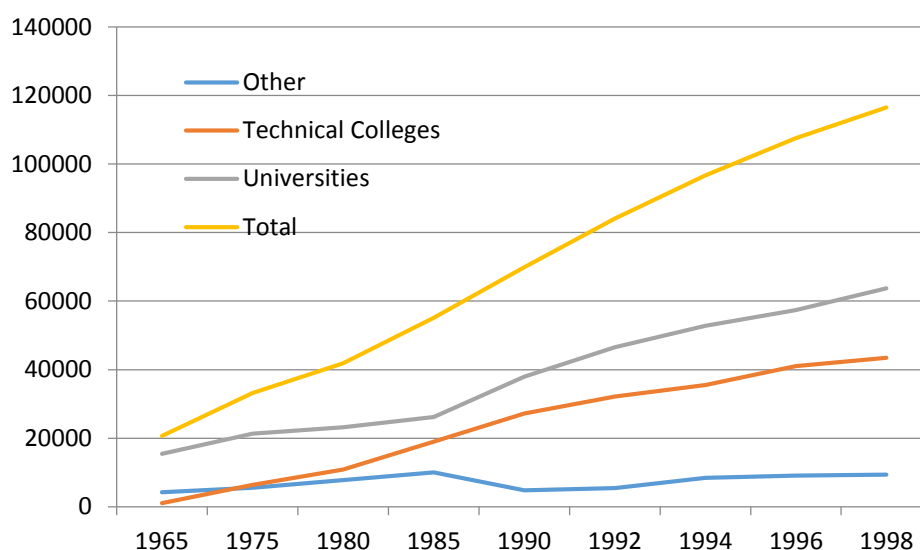
Overall, the policy rhetoric during the 1990s echoed that in OECD and EU texts around the connection between the development of ''knowledge based capital'' in order to facilitate the evolution of a ''knowledge-based economy'' (National Development Plan 2000-2006 p. 128). A shift is observed in the institutional context of Irish higher education towards a more European and global model. New roles emerge for both HEIs and the state within this new context, both domestically and, increasingly, in a European setting. The role of higher education as a source of human *and* knowledge capital would dominate developments over the next decade. The role of the state would be to steer higher education towards that goal.

Higher Education as Part of the Knowledge Economy 2000-2010

Policy Discourses

A summary of the main policy texts for this period is presented in Table 5.2. The similarity between the content of these texts and their EU and OECD counterparts is striking. The major theme is the role that higher education must play in the new knowledge economy and the reforms that must take place to allow that objective to be fully realised. The goal is expressed with most urgency in *Building Ireland's Smart Economy* (Department of An Taoiseach, 2008), a document emanating from the office of the head of government following the banking collapse

of the same year. The text details a strategy for economic renewal which centres on making Ireland ''an innovation island'' which would be ''an attractive home for innovative multinationals, while also being a highly attractive incubation environment for the best entrepreneurs from Ireland and overseas'' (p.13). This innovative space would be constructed from ''Ireland's significant multinational presence and [its] stock of highly skilled workers and higher education institutions'' (ibid).

This and other texts list the same obstacles to achieving that potential that were elaborated on in the OECD and EU documents discussed in the previous chapter i.e. weak linkages between higher education and the actors in the economy, outdated governance and quality assurance systems and over reliance on the state for funding. The problems are stated explicitly or implied in the remedial actions which must be taken - examples are highlighted in bold in Table 5.3. An OECD review of the system, carried out in 2004, pointed out that over 90% of the expansion has been generated from the 18 to 20 year old cohort and that ''widening participation and the encouragement of mature students to enter tertiary education have not been given such emphasis'' (OECD, 2004, p. 8).Universities ''need to be more outward looking'' (Skillbeck, 2001, p. 11). Irish higher education is ''not adequately meeting the needs of Irish companies'' (Enterprise Strategy Group); an ''engagement with the wider society'' is required (Department of Education and Skills, 2011, p. 74). On funding, the common recommendation is for institutions to ''seek to diversify funding sources'' (Skillbeck, 2001, p. 14). The examiners from the OECD reached the conclusion that ''a policy to charge fees to students pursuing first degrees should be re-introduced'' (2004, p. 56). The National strategy puts the case ''for an increased contribution from students towards the costs of higher education'' (Str11p. 112). On governance, the sector must ''reposition itself as a strong system'' (Skillbeck, 2001, p. 13). There is a need ''for greater coherence among all the relevant players'', (Forfas, 2004, p. 90) and for changes made ''to strengthen system coherence, mission diversity and overall performance'' (Str11p. 106). The OECD argued that ''tertiary education needs to be seen as a unity'' (2004, p. 9); the system should ''respond both to the diversity of interests, talents and inclinations of young people but also to the demands of the labour market and the economy for a range, rather than a single set, of qualifications '' (p. 20). At organisational level, HEIs need to ''define missions and strategies'' (Skillbeck, 2001, p. 13). The ''structures and management [of HEIs]…are inadequate to meet the complex demands of society'' (Forfas, 2004, p. 75). The quality of ''teaching, scholarship and external engagement of academic staff must be continuously reviewed in all institutions as part of a robust performance management framework'' (Department of Education and Skills, 2011, p. 11).

Table 5.3 Overview of Main Policy Statements on Irish Higher Education 2000-2011

Policy Document	Produced By	Key Points and Recommendations
Lifelong Learning White Paper on Adult Education 2000	Department of Education and Science	Paper recognised that adult education was the last area of mass education to be developed in Ireland. Higher education performed particularly badly with **participation levels by mature students that were among the lowest of the OECD countries (p.36)**. Target set for **mature student representation in higher education of 15% by 2005 (p.60)**. Fees were not to be abolished but recommended that grants scheme be extended to part –time students who were financially disadvantaged. Paper urged the development of **partnerships/consortia of education/training and industry interests (p.128)** to deliver work based learning programmes and the **accreditation of prior learning (p.132)** whether formal or experiential.
The University Challenged- A review of international trends and issues Skillbeck for HEA/Conference of Heads of Irish Universities (2001)	CHIU (Now the Irish Universities Association)	Continuing democratic **quest for cohesion, justice and equity in social arrangements (p.10)** and for more enriching and inclusive cultures**.** University is at **the centre of a vast network** of intellectual, social, economic, cultural relationships increasingly **global in their reach** (**p 11**) The formal role of the university is in question and needs to be redefined to take account of rapid changes in the framework of knowledge, in the policy environment and in the multitudinous tasks the institutions are assuming. **Role of university in society**, public support, resources, student/staff profile. **Universities are now expected to (p11):** • Be **more outward looking** partners in the development of the learning society; • Provide **leadership and service** at local, regional, national and global levels; • Demonstrate ability to obtain new and **additional sources of revenue**. **Organisationally universities must (p.13):** • **Reposition themselves** as a strong system not just a collection of separate, individual institutions ...In strengthening their collective capabilities and action, to rethink the balance between competition for resources and co-operation for impact • **Define missions and strategies** to achieve greater strength in an increasingly competitive international higher education market; • **Appraise the quality of their teaching,** research and service roles and set standards including **international benchmarks** for their continuing development • Make **efficiency gains,** more effectively manage themselves to achieve performance targets in teaching and research, and be publicly accountable and transparent

Policy Text	Produced By	Key Points and Recommendations
Building Ireland's Knowledge Economy (2004)	Forfas	R&D performance in the higher education and public sectors should increase from €422 million in 2001 (0.4% GNP) to €1.1 billion in 2010 or 0.8% GNP. Higher education to continue to **access international sources of funding (p.21)**, especially the European Framework. Anticipated number of researchers needed to be 6,400. Make Ireland a highly **attractive environment for high quality researchers (p.28)** and research careers ensure effective and rapid exploitation of research generated in higher education. A cohesive partnership across the higher education sector needed to maximise **technology transfer to industry (p.16)**. In a European context, Ireland should rapidly progress the **implementation of the Bologna Process (p.29).**
Reviews Of National Policies For Education: Higher Education In Ireland (2004)	OECD	Panel accepted government objective to improve higher education in Ireland...'as **part of the wider EU objective (p.5)** for becoming the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy and society, as agreed in Lisbon (2000) but weak international agenda means Ireland is **failing to attract research students from overseas (p. 9)** who could contribute to the research agenda. Investment in education to redress. Lifelong learning, widening participation and the **encouragement of mature students to enter tertiary education have not been given such emphasis (p.8)**. Higher education needs to support and even create innovative indigenous enterprise. **Expenditure on total education system ranks only 25th out of 30 OECD countries (p.13),** 8th out of 26 for investment in higher education. Excessive reliance on state funding (only 4.4% fees from international students) and under investment in R&D from business and industry. Find more sustainable funding and strengthen linkage to national strategic goals. **A policy to charge fees to students pursuing first degrees should be re-introduced (p.56)** and a common funding model for all students full and part time. Tertiary education **needs to be seen as a unity (p.9).** Have single governing authority with machinery to prevent mission drift in either direction. **More autonomy** for IOT's balanced by **tough accountability (p.21)** mechanisms. **Remove salary restrictions to attract overseas talent (p24)**. Strong binary approach recommended Central authority with **strong external representation (p 42).** A national strategic agenda for change in the third sector of education and most importantly, the **alignment of such a strategic agenda with policies for investment and funding (p.44).** New Tertiary Education Authority is mandated to publish **annual digests of statistics covering all tertiary education institutions (p.52)**.
Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006	Department Enterprise Trade and Employment	The higher education **system acknowledges the challenges it faces (p.26)** in meeting the demands of the knowledge society. A **need for reform and modernisation (p.32)** to meet those challenges. Needs to increase research capacity, quality and output, invest in doctoral and postdoctoral levels of teaching, and **bette**r **manage the research environment (p.34)**. At third level need to **enhance quality** and focus on widening participation and lifelong learning.

		Table 5.3 Continued
Policy Text	**Produced By**	**Key Points and Recommendations**
Transforming Ireland - National Development Plan 2007-2013 (2007)	Department of Finance	Higher Education features under two priorities in the plan Priority 8, Enterprise, Science and Innovation. €3.5bn committed to PRTLI, SFI, Research Councils and TSRI and Priority 9 Human Capital... €13bn investment infrastructure higher education development and SIF. Investment is linked to achievement of **five strategic goals (p201):** I. To **widen participation** and **increase student and graduate numbers** at third level II. To reform and **modernise** programme delivery; III. To achieve **world-class quality** in higher education; IV. To advance institutional and **structural reform** at third level; and V. To **reform the public funding framework** to ensure that institutional strategies pursued by Higher Education institutions are **aligned with national priorities**.
Building Ireland's Smart Economy- A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal (2008)	Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister)	Key action area was to create an '**innovation island' (p.12)** building on Ireland's significant multinational presence and Ireland's stock of highly-skilled workers and higher education institutions. Actions to achieve included: • pursuing **new organisational mergers (p.15)** and alliances that can advance performance through more effective concentration of expertise and investment • priority to be given to **flexible learning (p.76)** and initiatives that can be targeted at up-skilling people in the workforce • re-thinking the future institutional roles and organisational relationships in higher education to enable the Irish system to reach **new levels of research and innovation performance (p.75)** • restructuring the higher education system will be a priority with a **new higher education strategy (p.76)** • existing full-time further and higher education open to applications from unemployed persons • the **attraction of a number of world-class established names in research areas (p.75)**
National Strategy for Higher Education (2011)	Strategy Group Appointed by Department of Education and Skills	Three core roles of higher education – teaching and learning, research, and engagement **Provide a high quality student experience (p.11).** Informed by up-to-date research and facilitated by a high-quality learning environment. More investment in facilities for teaching and learning. Student feedback. More student support. **Parity between research and teaching (p.54)** Quality framework with **metrics (p.61).** On research**....**increased investment and better **rewards and mobility for researchers (p.72),** and better quality PhD programmes. HEIs must **become more active agents in knowledge transfer (p.38).** Engagement with wider society**...** mobility, exchange, market research, internationalisation**. Institutional strategies (p.14)** to be developed. **System coherence (p.91)...**consolidated IOT's can apply for status of Technological Universities. **Critical mass in research.** To compete for international funds and properly support knowledge based enterprises. **Sustainable equitable funding (p.110)...** for fair access and linked to income. On funding**...** more autonomy**.** Less exchequer input. **Individual contribution to cost of provision (p.112)** by students**.** Quality of teaching, scholarship and external engagement activities of all academic staff must be continuously reviewed as part of **a robust performance management framework (p.11).**

Policy Actions

In general, government or agency decisions and actions were informed by these views. The investment in the research capacity of higher education institutions continued to grow through the decade at least up until 2008 according to the biennial Forfas HERD survey (2010, p. 5).

Table 5.4 Investment in Higher Education R&D 2002-2008. Source Forfas (2010) and OECD, Main Science and Technology Indicators, June 2012

Research Performance Indicator	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
Expenditure on HERD	€322m	€492m	€601m	€750m	€708m
HERD expenditure as a % of GNP	0.30	0.39	0.39	0.48	0.54
Ireland's rank among 25 OECD countries	12th	12th	11th	7th	14th
Total researchers (FTE) in HE sector	2,695	4,151	4,689	6,174	5,729
Researchers per 1000 labour force - Ireland's rank among 26 OECD countries	9th	10th	13th	9th	15th

The main beneficiaries of the increase in funding were the universities who accounted for 90% of the total HERD spending in 2008. The main provider of funding was the state. Direct government funding tripled since 2002 to a total €405 million in 2008 representing 83% of all funding on HERD. Irish and foreign businesses, EU public funding and contributions from private individuals and philanthropists made up the remaining 17% (Forfas, 2010). A plan to coordinate this funding as proposed in the SSTI report was put in place (Department Enterprise Trade and Employment, 2006). Two groups were established: the Higher Education Research Group, and Technology Ireland comprising representatives of key departments, agencies and other research related bodies. They were given responsibility for ensuring coherence of approach and funding, for ensuring a good fit between investments and for linking HEI, sectoral and enterprise research in addition to having oversight of technology assessment and priority setting mechanisms.

The effect of these investments has been a greatly improved infrastructure and an influx of researchers into Ireland. Higher education now forms 80% of basic research activity in Ireland (OECD, 2011). Relative research performance, as measured by Ireland's ranking on the Thompson ISI measurement for citations, has improved from 27th to 17th place among the EU 29 member-states (CHEPS, 2010a). In 2008, the number of PhD students graduating exceeded 1000

for the first time. The HEA press release at the time declared how a ''decade ago 514 PhD students [had] graduated from our higher education institutions'' and how '' the increasing the number of PhD graduates (the ''knowledge workers'' of the future) was identified by the Government as essential to meeting the strategic goal of making Ireland a knowledge economy and a world centre for learning and research'' (HEA 2013). The state has encouraged innovation partnerships between HEIs and the state business support agency, Enterprise Ireland, involving joint running of campus based incubation units and business support programmes. State funding research programmes through Science Foundation Ireland and the Industrial Development Authority also incentivise industry- academic linkages in research in areas of high potential economic value.

In the area of education provision, full time student enrolments in all HEIs has continued to increase with a slight surge at the conclusion of the decade perhaps due to the economic downturn and lack of alternative employment options for school leavers (Figure 5.5).
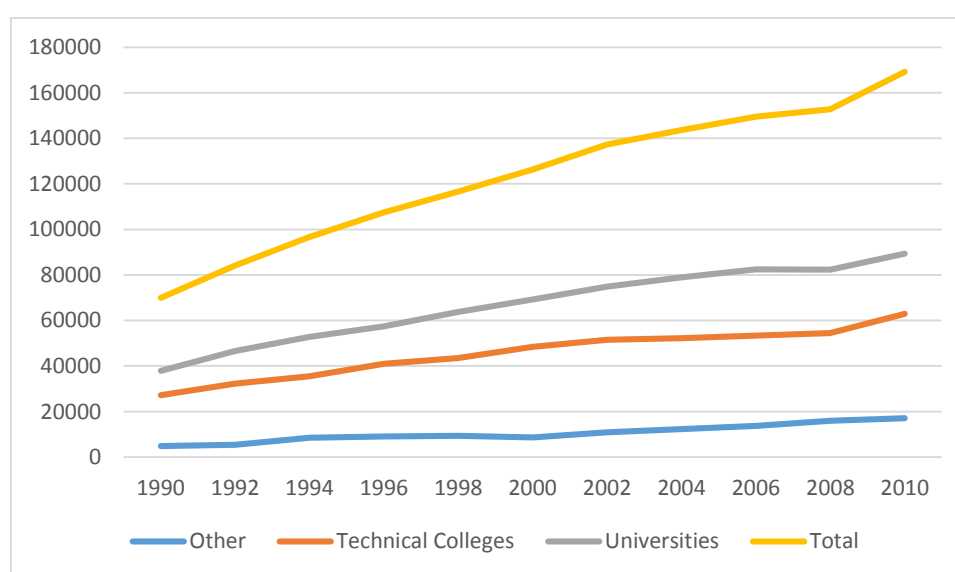
Figure 5.3 Growth in Full Time Student Enrolments 1990 -2010 (Department of Education and Skills, 2013c)

 The expansion in teaching activity is reflected in the increased capital expenditure in infrastructure (Table 5.5). While tuition fees were not reintroduced *per se* the steady increase in registration fees gradually eroded the concession made in 1995 (Tinsley, 2009). In 2006, a multi-annual Strategic Innovation Fund, amounting to €510m over 7 years was launched (HEA, 2006). The idea of the fund was to encourage new approaches to improving quality of teaching and research, access and governance within the sector. Funding was awarded on a competitive basis

and usually to regionally- based collaborative projects. The programme ran for two cycles but was discontinued due to budgetary cutbacks. In 2009, Ireland suffered the biggest cutback in public expenditure on education within the EHEA area, with a drop of 34.6% from the previous year (EU Commission, 2010).

Table 5.5 Growth in Capital Expenditure on Higher Education 2004-2009. (Expenditure split 54% on undergraduate, 46% on research infrastructure).Source (Department of Finance, 2010, p. 45)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Higher Education Capital Expenditure (€m)	97	91	116	147	155	200

Governance and quality assurance controls were also strengthened. In the area of quality assurance Ireland largely complied with the objectives set out in in the Bologna process (EU Commission, 2010). An Irish Universities Quality Board was established in 2002 and co-funded by the HEA and subscriptions from the seven Irish universities. The newly formed HETAC was more directly involved in quality assurance in the non-university sector. A National Framework of Qualifications was introduced in 2003 that closely resembled its European equivalent; mapping qualifications on a graded system of levels 1-10 specifying learning outcomes and competencies at each level. At the end of the decade, the government decided to consolidate the administration and development of that qualifications framework with the quality assurance activities of the agencies mentioned above into one organisation. This objective was realised with the legal establishment of a new agency called Qualifications and Quality Ireland in 2012 (Department of Education and Skills, 2012). This has resulted in a more active approach to quality assessment. The IUQB has been subsumed by QQI and the Act requires that universities consult with QQI in relation to their quality assurance procedures (Department of Education and Skills, 2012, p. 24).

The HEA assumed responsibility for all publicly funded HEIs in 2006. The Institutes of Technology Act brought the reporting relationships between the Institutes and the HEA into line with those that existed between the HEA and the universities (Department of Education and Science, 2006). The Act provided greater organisational autonomy, improved governance and a statutory guarantee of academic freedom for the Institutes. As with the universities, the legislation obliged the management of those organisations to prepare strategic plans for approval by their governing bodies and submit them to the HEA and the Minister. A more output and performance orientated unit cost funding model was also introduced into that

sector, replacing the previous historical funding system. Another influencing factor on this reemphasis on state control on financing has been the incidence, in recent years, of a number of governance failures in state agencies, (see for example report from Comptroller and Auditor General, 2013) which has led to much closer scrutiny of due process by funding bodies like the HEA. The HEA, for its part, has updated its codes of governance for HEIs and is actively engaged in their implementation with college managements (HEA, 2012). Detailed financial reports are expected to be included in the strategic plans and performance feedback prepared by HEIs.

Finally, much of the policy effort of the HEA in recent years has gone into structural reform of the system in order to address the issues of system coherence or system unity raised in the OECD and National Strategy Group reports respectively. The HEA has encouraged network formation between HEIs, initially through the funding schemes which included collaboration as a condition. The Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLI) and the Strategic Innovation Fund, and more recently the inclusion of regional clusters and mergers as part of the national strategy for higher education all serve as examples (HEA, 2013b).

National and Transnational Policy Making

A notable feature of policy making during the last two decades has been the expansion of activity from agencies outside of the Department of Education with the involvement of a wider range of local stakeholders and increased engagement with transnational policy making. At a national level, representative bodies of the HEIs, staff and student groups, industrial development agencies and other government departments are all making a contribution to policy making. Internationally, government departments and their agencies increasingly engage with a transnational governance system advancing the aims of the Bologna and Lisbon agendas (see Table 5.5).

Until recent years, the development of a policy making regime around higher education in Ireland has been uneven and fragmented. The OECD reports of the 1960s marked a watershed in terms of a new evidence based approach to policy making in Irish education (O' Buachalla, 1996). As mentioned previously, the reports were drafted by Irish civil servants but followed the OECD methodology of data assembly, collective review with subjects and final presentation. One of the main recommendations of the *Investing in Education* report was the establishment of a development unit with the Department of Education that would be responsible for future data collection and policy making (OECD, 1965).

Table 5.6 Higher Education Policy Making Organisations in Ireland. Produced by author drawing on information held on organisation websites and discussions with officials.

Government Department	State Agencies and Policy Remit in relation to higher education	Agency links with Stakeholders in Ireland	Linkages with International Organisations
Department of Education and Skills Primary Funding Source for Higher Education Sets National Priorities for the Sector	**Higher Education Authority** Statutory funding authority for HEIs and advisory body to the Minister for Education and Skills in relation to the higher education sector. • Guiding role in implementation of National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 • Aim is to develop a sector that contributes to the advancement of society through empowered, dynamic, entrepreneurial, well-resourced and autonomous higher education institutions	All higher education institutions and • Employer groups • Academic staff associations and unions • Parents groups • Representatives of other education sectors	Special section in the department manages relations with European Union, Council of Europe, OECD and UNESCO. It also has responsibility for policy development and co-ordination in the promotion of Ireland as a centre for international education. The HEA acts as national agency for the EU LLL programme, is the national Contact Point for the Tempus Programme and provides the national Structure for Erasmus Mundus. It also has a role in furthering the aims of the Bologna process.
	Quality and Qualifications Ireland Responsible for: • Development of QA systems to international standards • Development of a qualifications framework that underpins this quality assurance and facilitates educational aims such as progression, access and lifelong learning • External review of quality systems in HEIs	All higher education institutions and • Industrial representatives on course design and accreditation bodies • Other education and training providers	Member of European Network of Quality Assurance (ENQA)
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Major source of research funding Advocate for Industry-HEI Linkages	**Forfas** Policy advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation. Inputs on higher education focus on • advice on future skills needs in the economy • research and innovation strategies • engagement of higher education with business • internationalisation of higher education	Primary relationship with 'sister agencies' • Industrial Development Authority responsible for attracting FDI into Ireland • Enterprise Ireland – agency charged with developing indigenous business • Science Foundation Ireland –body charged with delivering on Science Technology and Innovation agenda	The Department commits itself to: • achieve its strategic goals and help make Europe the most competitive economy in the world with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion • to create a more liberal world trade and investment environment Forfas is the main supplier of data to Eurostat and OECD on R&D activity in Ireland. Active member of *Consilium* the Commission body charged with overseeing the development of the European Research Area.

The recommendation was acted on and the new unit played an active role in the establishment of the regional technical colleges (White, 2001) but was, within a decade, absorbed into the operational side of the Department's activities (Interviewee 1). This fact was highlighted by the OECD in its country review of 1991 and acknowledged by the Department in the White Paper of 1995 (OECD, 1991; Department of Education and Science, 1995). The problem was slow to resolve itself if one takes at face value the criticisms contained in the Cromien Report of 2000 which again depicted a department overwhelmed with administrative tasks and struggling to make time for policy formulation (Department of Education and Science, 2000). A restructuring of the Department following that report saw the setting up of a higher education policy unit and an international section to deal with international organisations like the EU and the OECD.

Policy making on education seems to have evolved into an image of the evidence based or scientised systems, deployed by these international organisations (Drori & Meyer, 2006) , including extensive consultation, surveys and benchmarking against national or international practice and thematic reviews of key issues facing the sector (HEA, 2013a). The research ethos seems to be present at the highest level; speaking on national radio on the issue of student retention, the present Minister for Education and Skills made the following statement:

> …some really good research has been done in the Department of Education and Skills and we are matching that now with other data that the ESRI[28] and others have produced…you get better policy instruments if you have good evidence based research that tells you facts rather than confirms hunches or simply plays to people's prejudices; that if we approach something with the sort of statistical tools that we now have and try to examine what actually is happening and then find out why it is happening and stand back and see how can we intervene to correct a distortion that we don't particularly like… (Quinn, 2013)

And as in Europe, there has been an expansion in the number of interested bodies engaged with policy making, supporting the WS theory account of how organisational proliferate to advance the rationalised agendas deriving from this type of research (Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006) . The HEA has a particular remit in advising the Minister on higher education policy. The state's relationship with the HEA has been uneven; initially the Department of Education was very careful to assert the independence of the Authority but in time became concerned that the Authority had become captive to the interests of the universities (Osborne, 1996). The Authority was limited too, in its role, in that it did not have full administrative control of the technological sector of higher education which remained under Department control until 2006. The universities, for their part, feared that the HEA would be an instrument of government and threaten their autonomy but,

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[28] Economic and Social Research Institute

overall, it succeeded in those early decades in maintaining its independence from both state and institutional interference (Clancy, 1989). Its remit remains intact despite the considerable reorganisation of government agencies which has taken place in response to the economic crisis in Ireland.

Increasingly another government department, Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is having a significant impact on the direction of higher education policy. Since the 1990s, its policy making body Forfas has pursued a consistent agenda in advocating stronger links between business and HEIs. It has advocated increased investment in research and monitors activity in that area.

The intensification of policy making networks and organising at national level is accompanied by parallel developments in transnational arenas. The linkages between government departments and policy making agencies and the EU is summarised in Table 5.6. Irish officials play an active role in the multilateral processes set up by the Commission to the EHERA agenda including the OMC and, as explained below, this activity has had a direct impact on current policy making and implementation. Such policy borrowing can be explained, in part, by Ireland's status within Europe as a ''latecomer'' to mass higher education. Many of the issues facing policy makers in Ireland have been already been encountered in other states and this gives them the ''opportunity to navigate through the different responses'' to particular issues in formulating their own polices (Interview 1). For similar reasons, the OECD is held in very high regard by officials as a source of expert advice and a barometer to measure system performance in Ireland; its more global span of expertise is particularly valued (Interviewees 1 and 2). Officials engage actively in OECD thematic groups and reviews and pay close attention to the data published by that organisation. Thus, we see an increased embeddedness of Irish state policy making in a transnational setting leading, in intuitionalist terminology, to a changed actorhood or script of action; the state is no longer the principal rule maker but also a rule-follower and an active participant in creating a new transnational regulatory order (Jacobsson, 2006).

The outcome is a policy agenda and set of investment priorities for higher education that closely resemble those enunciated by the EU under its modernisation agenda and by the OECD's depiction of how higher education might function best in a global knowledge economy. The current policy issues which the HEA lists on its website are a transition to a knowledge economy, lifelong learning, quality assurance and meeting the skills need of the economy (HEA, 2013). These are closely in line with many of the objectives of the modernisation agenda listed on the EU Commission website i.e. increasing graduate numbers, improving the quality and relevance of learning, equipping graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations, strengthening the "knowledge triangle", linking education, research and business and

creating effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence (EU Commission, 2013). The review of policy actions demonstrates a high degree of convergence with these policy prescriptions. Ireland has followed the Bologna process closely in developing its own quality assurance infrastructure as has been shown in trends reports by the EUA. It embraced the Lisbon agenda as a platform on which to build its research and innovation capacity (Department Enterprise Trade and Employment, 2006). It lags other OECD states in relation to participation by mature students but it has acknowledged that fact in its policy discourses. Current efforts to restructure the system are driven by the policy objectives of diversity and inclusiveness contained in current EU and OECD policy texts.

The similarity in policy agenda and prescriptions seem to extend beyond policy borrowing or mimetic diffusion (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Rather it would appear that policy making is being increasingly made *within an EU context* and using the OECD *as a point of reference.* Some extracts from the policy texts listed in Table 5.3 serve to illustrate. In the foreword to the National Development Plan, 2006-2013 the Taoiseach makes the following statement:

> This Plan will…reinforce Ireland's position on the global stage. International developments such as the continued expansion of the European Union, globalisation and the rise of major new economies mean that we must constantly pay attention to the international competitiveness of our economy and indeed to the high regard in which this country is held by many other nations. Many of the measures envisaged under this Plan will be critical to maintaining and improving Ireland's position as a well-respected, openly trading, economy and society. (Department of Finance, 2007, p. 10)

And more specifically in relation to higher education, and the use of Strategic Innovation Funds, the plan states:

> …the achievement of world class quality in higher education has been identified as one of the primary challenges for European higher education...The objectives and priorities of the Fund reflect and support the reform and modernisation agenda that is being pursued at both a national and a European level. (Department of Finance, 2007, pp. 204-5)

It refers to the OECD review on higher education as a source of guidance on how such reforms might be realised:

> This Report is the catalyst for the major reform and modernisation agenda being undertaken in the Universities and Third Level Institutions…The Government approved the broad reform agenda outlined by the OECD. This in turn has been used as a basis for extensive consultation and policy formulation that will drive the reform agenda throughout the sector. (Department of Finance, 2007, p. 201)

In *Building Ireland's Smart Economy* the goal of developing Ireland's research capacity is clearly set out within the context of the Lisbon agenda:

> Growing research capability is a core component of the European Union's drive under the Lisbon Agenda to become the most competitive and dynamic, knowledge-driven economy in the World. Ireland has fully embraced that challenge in acknowledging the important role of Government in addressing market failures associated with research and development. (Department of An Taoiseach, 2008, p. 68)

Fifteen references are made to various OECD indicators ranging from the growth of export goods (p.71) to broadband penetration (p. 96) to numbers of early stage entrepreneurs (p.30) or maths and science attainment in schools (p.31). In the *Review of Higher Education*, the OECD examiners explain how the review was set in the context of the Irish Governments strategic objective of:

> Placing its higher education system in the top rank of OECD in terms of both quality and levels of participation and by the priority to create a world class research, development and innovation capacity and infrastructure in Ireland as part of the wider EU objective for becoming the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy and society, as agreed in Lisbon.
>
> (OECD, 2004, p. 5)

The National Strategy report refers to Ireland's commitment to the Bologna process:

> Ireland is regarded as a leader in the advancement and implementation of the Bologna Declaration and its higher education structures and national guiding principles resonate well with the values of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and social equity highlighted in the Bologna Declaration and in subsequent communiqués. (Department of Education and Skills, 2011, p. 28)

This type of policy learning is an intrinsic part of the soft governance processes described in the previous chapter and serve to illustrate how international organisations act as carriers of institutional change. However, just as in the domestic case, there is a harder and more realist dimension to interactions between Irish government departments and the EU. As a consequence of the banking crisis in Europe, the Fiscal Stability Treaty of March 2012 set strict and enforceable fiscal limits on government deficits and debt levels and empowered the Commission to put in place a system of economic coordination to overcome the crisis and address perceived shortcomings in the current growth model (EU Council, 2012). The stated objective is to make Europe ''a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy'' (EU Commission 2013).

The multilateral surveillance of OMC is now supplemented by a centralised system of annual economic policy coordination called the European Semester in which the targets of *Europe 2020* are translated into national goals and reform programmes. These are monitored continuously by the Commission, which then provides national governments with recommendations for the next cycle, see Figure 5.6. Overall EU targets of relevance to higher education are 3% of GDP expenditure on R&D and 40% of 30-34 year-olds completing third level education; these are translated into national goals for Ireland of 2% and 60% respectively (EU Commission 2013). The process could be described as soft governance with a hard edge.

c

Similar dynamics are evident in the introduction of some performance based funding as part of system governance which emerged from the recent national strategic planning process. An overview of the process is depicted in Figure 5.7. The process is described as *strategic dialogue* between the state and HEIs. The consultation or dialogue process began in 2009 with the appointment of the Strategy Group. The members of the strategy group were carefully selected by the Department, on the basis of their expertise and ability to address the issues contained in the terms of reference (Str11). Apart from the Union of Students, representative organisations were not included and there was a deliberate decision made to appoint a significant number of people from outside the sector including the Chairperson (Interview 3).

However the process began with an open invitation for submissions and input from various stakeholders in setting national priorities for higher education. Those submitting were asked to identify the three most significant changes that they would wish to see made to Irish higher education and the barriers or obstacles which they would identify to the achievement of those objectives; over 100 submissions were received (HEA, 2013).

The Strategy Group delivered its final report in January 2011 and it set out certain high level objectives for Irish higher education including:

- Increased participation, equality of access and lifelong learning in higher education;
- Excellent teaching and learning and quality of the student experience and opportunities;
- High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation;
- Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community and embedded knowledge exchange and
- Enhanced internationalisation

(HEA, 2013b, p. 5)

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The HEA has been made accountable for achievement of these national outcomes by ensuring that there is alignment between national and institutional objectives – see copy of communication between the Minister and the Chairman of the HEA in Appendix B and the framework of national objectives set out by the Department (Department of Education and Skills, 2013a). The HEA has approached that task in two ways. Firstly, it embarked on a consultation process with all HEIs in order make proposals to the Minister on the restructuring of the system through the setting up of regional clusters, the merger of some institutes and the establishment of some technological universities; that process was completed in April 2013.

The second initiative involved the launch of the strategic dialogue process in July 2013 - see Figure 5.7 - with the following aims:

- To demonstrate how each institution is making its distinctive contribution to key national expectations of higher education;
- To support institutions' efforts to improve their own performance through better strategic planning and management, particularly with regard to the increasingly competitive global environment in which our institutions operate;
- To demonstrate how institutions are performing against the objectives set out in their own strategic plans;
- To enhance the accountability of higher education in respect of the very significant public funding allocated annually. (HEA, 2013c)

Overall the intention of the process of strategic dialogue is to ensure that HEIs are fully aware of national priorities and to provide ''continuous feedback'' to the HEA and the Department on institutional and sector performance (Interviewee 3). The process is one of soft governance in terms of mutual agreement of goals and monitoring systems; but it is partly coercive in that funding is linked to participation in the process. This coercive element might be an example of what officials describe as a ''reclaiming of the role of the state'' to rebalance what was seen as excessive devolution of decision making during the period of social partnership in previous decades (Interview 3). This shift has been driven also by the immediate need to control tightly public expenditure in all sectors in the wake of the recent economic collapse in Ireland. Overall, there are two interesting aspects to this process; the first is its origin or model on which it is based and the second is the assumptions on which it is based.

Department of Education and Skills

Reports on System Performance against National Priorities

Sets out Government Priorities for Higher Education

Higher Education Authority

Report on achievement of performance indicators agreed in compact with HEA

Allocates part funding based on an agreed strategic compact addressing national and regional objectives

Higher Education Institutes

Regional Partners

Develop strategic plans following:
- Internal academic debate
- Dialogue with HEA
- Dialogue with regional and international Partners

International Partners

Figure 5.7 Strategic Dialogue Process in Irish Higher Education. Prepared by author based on HEA report to Minister of Education and Skills (HEA, 2013b)

The initiative to establish a national strategy group came from the Department arising from its concern about the future sustainability of higher education given the difficult financial circumstances of the state and the anticipated rise in demand for provision. This policy priority was reflected in the brief to the Strategy Group to examine at the ''effectiveness of use of current resources…the potential for rationalisation or change to maximise the use of those resources and how any additional resource requirements can be met having particular regard to the difficult budgetary and economic climate that is in prospect in the medium term'' (Str11p. 128). Another concern of the Department was the maintenance of diversity of provision which was a major theme in the OECD 2004 review of the Irish higher education system (Interviewees 2 and 3). Officials looked to other states, including Hong Kong, for models of system governance that appeared to be

successful in achieving these policy goals. Within the OMC process the EU Commission was promoting its *U-Map* system of measuring and managing diversity through a process of strategic planning that involved detailed profiling of institutions - see details in Vught (2008) and Vught & Westerheijden (2010). The model was adopted by Norway and Sweden (although not in its entirety); Irish officials conversed with their counterparts in these states on the workings of the system and in turn adapted it for Irish conditions (Interviewee 3). In sum, a soft governance mechanism devised to address a broader European policy agenda was selectively adapted and implemented by individual member states.

The second aspect relates to the assumed roles of the main actors in this process. The HEA's vision is for a higher education system comprising ''empowered, dynamic, entrepreneurial, well-resourced and autonomous higher education institutions'' (HEA, 2013). The assumption, on the part of state agencies, is that individual HEIs are capable of interpreting national objectives and that they can make a distinct contribution to them. It is assumed also that they can engage in strategic dialogue with both national and international actors in devising organisational strategies and that they have the capacity to implement such strategies. Institutional theorists explain this role in terms of devolved actorhood from the state to individual actors in areas such as national planning or strategic development of sectors (Hwang, 2006). The decline in the number of national development plans published is cited as evidence of this change but, taking education as an example, the decline ''undermines neither the institutional importance of education nor the role of the state in education'' (Hwang, 2006, p. 83). The issue is the locus of planning or actorhood. According to WS theory, in a modern rationalised society the general assumption is that individuals and organisations have the resources and capacity to plan; the role of the state, in those circumstances, is to provide the framework or steering mechanisms which will align this devolved planning with national priorities or objectives.

Summary and Analysis

This changing role of the state and its interactions with other actors involved in higher education at national and transnational level are the central themes of this chapter. Over the period of the study the Irish state has moved from being merely a provider of funding of £3m to two universities (Commission for Higher Education, 1967) to playing a pivotal role in a complex organisational field of providers and users of higher education and a state budget of €1.3bn. At the outset of this study, according to the quote at the heading of this chapter, a Minister of Education admitted that The Department of Education lacked any ideas on how to administer this field until the OECD came along and gave its analysis; the present Minister extols the virtues of Departmental policy makers' ability to provide evidence based research on which future policy decisions can be made. Elaborate

mechanisms are put in place to devise such policies and monitor implementation in comparison with best practice in Europe and elsewhere.

This description resonates with WS theory on the role and self-perception of the modern nation state being formed by the current world polity (Meyer et al. 1997). The particular features that come to mind are the strong sense of identity and purpose of nation states that are formed by a global society, the way in which such states are shaped by world models of nation state actorhood, how they adopt similar policies and practices contained within these models, the ''valiant efforts'' that nation states make to adhere to such policies and the ''expansive structuration'' that takes place ''largely in standardised ways'' around such policy domains (Meyer et al. 1997, p. 152). In the early sections of this chapter we saw how Ireland's identity as a state gradually opened to a more global perspective, a process that was accelerated considerably by accession to membership of European Community in 1973. Increasingly, Irish officials identified with the modern perception of the state as both a ''national and transnational rule maker'' (Jacobsson, 2006, p. 212).

In the field of higher education Ireland has invested considerable efforts in creating the more inclusive and socially embedded higher education system endorsed in world models for this institution (Meyer et al. 2007). The analysis also shows that to a large degree the policy agenda for higher education in Ireland has followed the same themes contained in the EU and OECD texts that promote this model. The process has been a gradual one, and is still ongoing, but its effects are visible in terms of structuration at two levels. The first is evident in the expansion of the field of education and its shift towards a more economic purpose in line with global trends. The second form of structuration revolves around the type of governance and policy making structures, at national and increasingly at EU level that allocate resources and set the rules, in the broadest sense of this term, for this expanded field of higher education.

Over the period of the study, Irish higher education has followed global trends of massification, although somewhat belatedly, moving towards a universal system of provision. Its role has shifted from one that was predominantly based on personal development or preparation for elite professions in the period prior to the introduction of the binary system, to one more concerned with the transmission of skills and creation of human capital in the 1980s and 1990s. More recently, higher education policy is following the global trend of more diversity and a lifelong learning agenda to enable as wide a population as possible to adapt to the needs of the new knowledge economy (Trow, 2005). The evolution of system structure has also followed global trends moving from a unitary form to a binary one and, as is likely, then towards a single but horizontally diverse system, if the current restructuring sees the emergence of a number of

technological universities replacing the existing Institutes of Technology (Kyvik, 2004; Scott, 1995). The story of the growth of Irish higher education fits well the explanation of global expansion put forward by Schofer and Meyer (2005). Wider access to higher education has become part of the global model of society and education because of a common commitment to socio-economic progress by nation-states and a belief in education as a means to achieve that progress. The expansion of higher education and the form it takes is not a functional consequence of economic growth but is based on the acceptance of the concept of education as a source of such growth. Ireland has fully embraced that concept if one is to accept the repeated commitments made to investment in higher education contained in the policy texts reviewed in this chapter.

This rational model of education is actively promoted by international organisations such as the EU and the OECD and higher education has expanded more rapidly in states that have close links with such international organisations (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). As mentioned previously, countries with low rates of higher-educational expansion in given periods tend to have corrective higher rates in subsequent periods (ibid. p. 905). In the case of Ireland, this correction took place in the 1970s and continued through the following decades to the point where it ranks first in the EU (EU Commission, 2013d) and fifth in the OECD in relation to tertiary attainment[29] (OECD, 2012a). Since then, the most constant feature of policy making in Ireland during this period has been the unquestioning faith in education based on a belief that ''people are our primary national resource'' (Interview 1). For this reason, the likelihood is that state commitment to the growth of higher education will continue for the foreseeable future.

This expansion has involved the creation of an extensive organisational framework around the planning, delivery and monitoring of higher education. New higher education institutes, quality assurance agencies, funding bodies and policy making groups have emerged. Much of the proliferation of organisations in the last two decades has occurred as a by-product of structuration in the EU around higher education policy discussed in the previous chapter. As in the EU, policy making has become fragmented with different state departments involved in education policy; the almost joint involvement the Education and Enterprise Departments in education policy-making in Ireland is reflective of the parallel Bologna and Lisbon agendas being played out within the EU. The manner in which members of this field interact and in particular their relationship with the state is the second major transformation that has taken place.

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[29] The rankings are for 30-64 year olds in the case of the EU and 25-64 year olds in the OECD comparison. The lower OECD rankings for older age groups – 11th and 20th for 25 -64 and 55-64 year-olds respectively – is evidence of the catch-up that has taken place.

Overall, the Irish state has followed the international trend of moving from disinterested or passive provider to one of active steering of the system. At the outset of the period of study, there were only two universities governed by charters derived from legislation which predated the formation of the Irish state. The charters defined the character of the universities and protected their academic autonomy. The creation of a binary system in the 1970s resulted in a dual governance regime with the universities continuing to operate with a considerable degree of autonomy under the guidance of the HEA while the technological sector operated under the direct control of the Department of Education and relied on the state agency to accredit its courses. The trend over the last two decades has been towards more homogenous governance arrangements for a number of reasons.

Firstly, there has been a convergence of legislative and administrative arrangements; the Institute of Technology Act 2006 borrowed many of the provisions of the 1997 Universities Act and both sectors are now administered by the HEA under a common funding model. Secondly, the effect of the Bologna process on the Irish quality assurance regime means that all HEIs operate within a common qualifications framework; the Quality and Qualifications Act of 2012 copper fastened the situation by setting up a single quality assurance body to oversee all education providers. In this way, the Irish state has used the Bologna process to advance its own aims in relation to quality assurance in higher education. Thirdly the state has made major investments in research in a way that has incentivised HEIs to move towards further engagement with business and other social actors. Finally, the proposed structural changes in the systems will likely result in mergers of institutes of technology into larger organisational units and the accreditation of some of these merged units as technological universities. The criteria set out for the accreditation of technological universities are very much based on the current policy model for higher education (HEA, 2012). There is also upwards political pressure from representative bodies and individual institutes to advance this process of convergence (IOTI, 2010; WIT, 2010); the recent reconfiguration allows for three technological universities to be formed but it remains to be seen what degree of autonomy will be afforded them if and when they are established (HEA, 2013b).

However, there is a wider transnational governance system that surpasses these local structural and legislative arrangements. The thinking underlying this soft governance process is a belief, among functionaries at both levels, in the centrality of higher education in the success of any knowledge based economy. There is also dissatisfaction with the present level of engagement of higher education in this new role - see quotation from Ferdinand Von Prondzynski at the head of this chapter. Similar deficiencies are implied about state systems in EU and OECD discourses.

Nevertheless, the soft governance mechanisms deployed, of monitoring, organisation, and agenda-setting (Jacobsson & Sahlin-Anderson, 2006), to advance these ideas rely ultimately on the commitment of local actors to implement them. Institutional theorists explain this change of role in terms of devolved actorhood from the state to organisation and individuals in areas such as national planning (Hwang, 2006) or of scripted states that take on certain functions in this transnational governance system (Jacobsson, 2006). The general assumption is that in a modern rationalised society individuals and organisations are endowed with the resources and capacity to plan. Thus, states take on the role of transposing and enforcing transnational rules or policy ideas into local situations. Secondly, the mechanisms it deploys at local level can mirror those that exist in that transnational space. In that way, we see a process of strategic dialogue deployed in order to advance national policy objectives in Ireland which derived from interactions within the OMC process and is based on the principles of multilateral monitoring contained within that process. As with governance systems at transnational level, this system relies on the autonomy and commitment of local actors – in this case HEIs – to implement the policy objective.

Taking an overall view of these developments, one might sense an incipient ''settlement'' in the field of Irish higher education (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 88); or the ''end of the beginning'' as described by one official (Interviewee 2). The essential elements of that settlement encompass a common understanding or meaning project of higher education as outlined in the national strategy, that meets national needs and accords with global models of how a higher education system should function, clarity on the role of the main actors within the field of higher education, including the state, and an agreed system of governance around strategic dialogue that defines the nature of interaction between these actors. However any such settlement may be short lived. As we saw in Chapter 4, the ''beginning'' may be the emergence of a European field of higher education whose contours are not yet defined; how Irish HEIs and regulators are relating to that emerging field remains to be determined.

Chapter 6 Turning the University into an Organisation

For the past twenty years, changes in the size and scope of universities internationally, coupled with changed attitudes to and expectations for public sector and publicly-funded activities in nearly every country have necessitated review of their operations by long-established institutions. Such reviews have taken account of the advances in knowledge in relation to organisations, their governance and management. Irish universities are similarly involved in an on-going review of the operations and governance as they cope with the effects of massification of their student intake and a broadening of the range of their activities in response to the expectations of society, extending beyond their traditional functions of teaching, research and scholarship - Preface to Deloitte and Touche Consultants Report on governance arrangements in Irish higher education. (HEA, 1997, p. 1)

Introduction

WS theory describes the changed model for higher education in terms of its inclusiveness, its social usefulness and its organisational flexibility; the old model was socially buffered, the new is socially embedded (Ramirez 2006, 2006a). An inclusive university is open to a greater number and diversity of student and global trends show a huge expansion on both fronts. Its diversity extends also to its understanding of what counts as knowledge or what is socially useful. Universities have responded to the needs of society by expanding into technical subject areas and occupational degrees that may be thought of as the practical arts (Brint, 2002) or into business education (Moon & Wotipka, 2006) or women's studies (Wotipka & Ramirez, 2004). External engagement with business and non-profit organisations has intensified and the research agenda of academic departments is increasingly influenced by a combination of these interactions and funding body priorities (Etzkowitz & Lyesdesdorff, 2000). Organisational flexibility is needed to cope with these many changes as the above quotation, from the preface to a HEA study on university governance study, implies.

The quotation also refers to changes in governance and management practice that were occurring at the time and the expectation that publicly funded bodies should follow this trend. WS theory explains these changes in the context of the transformations in world society that we discussed in Chapter 2; an expanded rationalised and scientised environment, the diminution of the power of the nation state and the absence of any replacement world state, the emergence of universal rationalities or models of actorhood in all social domains and the empowerment of individuals with certain rights and capacities. This amounts to a cultural system that encourages and facilitates ''coordinated, collaborative and rational human action'' that leads not only to the proliferation of organisations, but also to a different contemporary conception of what an organisation is (Meyer, Drori, & Hwang, 2006, p. 40). The fundamental change between this modern organisation and the classic bureaucracy which it increasingly replaces, is the nature of its

sovereignty: the modern organisation is an actor rather than the passive instrument of an external actor. It may have external stakeholders to whom it is accountable but it is the organisation itself that is held accountable and to whom responsibility and decision making powers are devolved (Brunsson & Sahlin- Anderson, 2000). They describe the essential characteristics of this modern organisational form as having; a) a strong identity or sense of sovereignty with a clear understanding of its goals, b) a visible structure and hierarchy with which to accomplish these and c) a rational approach to setting organisational direction and resource management. The description by Meyer et al. (2006) of the contemporary organisation broadly agrees with this analysis and also points to the trend of people as individuals being incorporated into organisations; modern organisations give recognition to individuals as playing meaningful roles as persons and afford them the necessary rights and responsibilities to participate in organisational decision making and activities. The features of this archetypal organisation, as described in these articles, are summarised in Table 6.1.

Turning a university into such an organisational actor has been one of the mainstays of the modernisation of the university worldwide, as systems move away from the state-centred or academic run institutions of the past (Krücken & Meier, 2006; Rhoades & Sporn, 2002). This is happening regardless of their histories, traditions or self-proclaimed special status (Musselin, 2006). Universities, like all other professional organisations, are now expected to be organised and administered as purposive actors (Meyer, Drori, & Hwang, 2006); ''the rationalisation of universities has become the bottom line'' (Ramirez, 2006a, p. 243).

In the previous chapter, I discussed how a governance framework around higher education in Ireland has evolved, comprising an updated body of legislation dealing with governance and quality assurance matters for all higher education institutions, a national strategy which sets out a model for system and institutional performance and a process of strategic dialogue that provides feedback on system functioning. That strategic dialogue process is built on the assumption of an individual higher education institution's capacity to plan strategically and create its own contribution to a diverse higher education system; in other words, to behave like the contemporary organisation described above.

Table 6.1 Characteristics of the Contemporary Organisation. *Source* (Brunsson & Sahlin-Anderson 2000; Meyer, Drori, & Hwang, 2006)

Concept	Organisational Characteristic
Organisational Identity and Sovereignty	• Sets own boundaries and organisational goals • Represents its own interests and/or assign other actors to do so • Enjoys autonomy in the control of resources – finance, staff, physical • Enters freely into internal and external contractual arrangements including alliances with other organisations • Defines and projects its own corporate identity • Has a sense of being special – purpose, competency, history and/or location
Hierarchy and Structuration	• Has authoritative centre that coordinates and directs organisational activities • A board gives general direction to an executive with responsibilities for achieving organisational goals • Chief Officer given responsibility and freedom to lead • Goals are differentiated and professional managers recruited on the basis of experience and skills in meeting such organisational goals • Internal groups or teams are guided primarily by organisational policies
Rationality	• Individual organisation (rather than sector, or society) is the subject for rational analysis; organisation sets goals and is accountable for them. • Goals are simplified and prioritised • Tracks progress on goals and deployment of resources, and uses results in decision-making • Critical activities are identified and standardised • Metrics of performance made available to investors and stakeholders
Incorporation of Individual Persons	• Assumes person is capable and identifies with the organisation • Individual performance is based on this assumption rather than compliance with rigid rules • Respects the rights and responsibilities of individuals • Achievements are acknowledged at individual and organisational level • Diversity is valued

In this chapter, the focus is on individual higher education institutions; tracing the way in which they have been shaped by this changed institutional environment and the degree to which they have moved towards the organisational model described in Table 6.1. As explained in Chapter 3, the primary interest in this issue, from a WS theory perspective, is to assess the extent to which this sense of organisational actorhood has been defined by this rationalised institutional context

and been adopted or internalised at organisational and managerial level rather than to make a quantitative assessment of its adoption across the sector as a whole. Evidence of this internalisation is the extent to which the organisational model had been taken on as a package (Brunsson & Sahlin- Anderson, 2000) , rather than mimetic or coercive adoption of certain elements e.g. production of strategic plans or publication of key performance metrics. A second indicator would be the discourse used by senior managers or contained in organisational documentation to describe organisational structures and objectives and the degree to which it made references to the main elements of this organisational form. In order to provide this evidence, data is derived from two universities rather than a quantitative study across the sector so as to arrive at a more nuanced and in-depth assessment of all of these factors.

Two Irish universities with very different origins are selected, the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) and Dublin City University (DCU). NUIG was founded as one of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland [30] in 1845 with the aim of delivering the 'benefits of a non-denominational university education outside of Dublin to young middle-class men of promise'' (Ó Tuathaigh, 1999, p. 15); one of the political objectives behind the establishment of the colleges was to convince a moderate nationalist middle class of the possibility of equality of opportunity under the Union with Great Britain. For most of the last century, its development has been closely linked with the city of Galway and the western region of Ireland in which it is located and it had a statutory role in the promotion of the Irish language and culture. That cultural element remains, but as we shall see later, the university's self-perception has changed into being a national institution with an increasing international reach. The current student population is about 17,000.

By contrast, DCU is the youngest of the Irish universities, having achieved that status in 1989. It grew out of the National Institute of Higher Education in Dublin one of the two new colleges that the Commission for Higher Education had recommended be established in Dublin and Limerick to cater for the needs of an expanding student population including adult learners, and in the areas of business and applied sciences (Commission for Higher Education, 1967). From the outset, it emphasised its linkages with business and other sectors of the community and sought to extend participation by a number of means including the use of distance education programmes (NIHE Dublin, 1982). Youth and inventiveness are still very much part of the university's self-image; it draws attention in all its material to its ranking among the top 50 young universities worldwide and it is a member of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities. DCU is one of four

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[30]The three Queens Colleges were located in Belfast, Cork and Galway

universities located in the greater Dublin region[31] and its present student population is approximately 11,000.

Drawing on archival material, published documents, information from the websites of the universities and interviews with senior administrative staff I describe the development of the organisational character of each of the universities using the template contained in Table 6.1 so as to assess convergence with this contemporary organisational model. I will conclude by comparing the significant changes that have occurred in both universities using the WS theory account of organisational change.

The National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG)

Boundaries, Identity and Sovereignty

Both archival documents and interviews position NUIG as an organisation that was restricted for much of its history but has expanded its boundaries considerably in the last two decades. The 1970 university calendar places strong emphasis on the remit of the College as a member of the National University of Ireland and on its legal obligations in promoting the Irish language under the terms of the University College Galway Act of 1929. The President's report for the same year complains of the level of funding received from the state; it makes comparison with an equivalent sized university in the UK at the time, the University of Hull, which received a grant in aid from the UK government that was three times the amount granted to the university from the Irish state (UCG, 1971). The report talks of ''steady progress'' in research despite ''the meagre resources available'' (ibid. p.2). In fact, by today's standards, research activity in the college was practically non-existent; only 18 PhD students were registered and only one publication from NUIG is cited on the web of science for that year. The steady increase in investment by the state in higher education and the changes in governance arrangements discussed in the previous chapter have greatly added to the autonomy and capacity of the university. Over the period of the study NUIG has expanded its student population by a factor of five, its staffing by a factor of ten and has more than doubled its campus size (UCG, 1971; NUIG, 2012). Most of that expansion has taken place since 1990 - see Figures 6.1 and Tables 6.1 and 6.2. The core faculties of Arts, Celtic Studies, Medicine, Law, Science and Engineering that existed in 1970 are still in place but have been expanded into additional subject areas such as public policy, social sciences, women's studies, nursing and other health

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[31] The other universities are Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and the National University of Ireland Maynooth.

sciences[32]. Five research institutes operate on campus. Three are active in the technological areas of biomedical sciences, digital enterprises and marine energy. The others are concerned with the public policy areas of life course studies and societal change and also with the arts and humanities, such as the Huston Film School[33]. The number of PhD students rose from 18 in 1970 to 867 in 2010 (UCG, 1971; HEA, 2012) and research publications have increased proportionally (Table 6.2).

Research applications extend from areas of global interest- such as genome sequencing of the pigeon pea as a staple crop in developing countries, to the use of web tools to enhance access to U.S. government data or the development of a new drug to treat myelofibrosis – to local investigations on the employment potential of the creative arts or the social effects of ageing in rural communities (NUIG, 2012). Technology transfer activity in 2011 included 19 industrial licensing agreements and 26 R&D contracts with an industry contribution of more than €25,000 (NUIG, 2012). Total research income in 2011 was €58m sourced competitively from both national and European funding agencies and from commissions from NGOs and other organisations.

General funding sources have also expanded; in 1970 the President reported a recurrent income of around one million pounds of which £840,705 came from state grants (UCG, 1971); the total present income is €222m of which €53m comes in the form of a state grant the balance from a combination of research funding and fee income from postgraduate and international students (NUIG, 2012). The transition is from an organisation that was totally dependent on the state to one which is now more capable of setting its own boundaries in terms of its position within the field of Irish higher education, and as an internationally recognised university.

Interviews with senior administrators reveal a clear understanding of the nature and degree of autonomy under which the university operates in the current state governance system. There is a belief that the strategic dialogue process still leaves NUIG with ''ample scope to develop as we wish'' and ''a lot of room to be self-led, to be ambitious, to be-self envisioning'' (Interviewees 6 and 7). There is an understanding of the motivation underlying the state's current demands for better governance in the financial sector and some public bodies. There is no evidence of nostalgia for the era when the university ''was left to its own devices'' (Interviewee 7) which is regarded as a period of neglect and chronic lack of resources- see for example the highly unfavourable comparison made between funding of the college and an equivalent university in the UK in the Presidents Report for

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[32] A more detailed breakdown of College/School/Department structure is on http://www.nuigalway.ie/colleges-and-schools/

[33] A full list of research institutes, centres and units is available at http://www.nuigalway.ie/our-research/listings/research-centres-institutes-and-units.html

1970 (UCG, 1971). The transition from an organisation whose self-perception was of dependency to one with a clear sense of independence and autonomy is evident.

The university has exercised that strategic autonomy in the expansion of its teaching and research activities as outlined above and also in the alliances and networks it has formed at regional and international level. It plans to play a central role in the workings of a regional cluster of higher education institutions in the west of Ireland[34]. In 2010 it formed a strategic alliance with the University of Limerick the stated objective of which is to:

> ..better support the social and economic development of our wider region by combining the strengths of the two Universities so as to increase the quantity and quality of our collaborative research and teaching, to further develop industrial, business and other partnerships, to ensure the most effective use of our combined resources, and to enhance the international standing of both Universities. (NUIG-UL Alliance, 2010)

As will be seen, such enhancement of international standing is one the main themes in the university's strategic plan, and a key differentiator in the development of the university's identity over the last forty years. The President's report of 1970 makes little mention of interaction with external agencies apart from some visiting lectures by its academic staff (UCG, 1971).
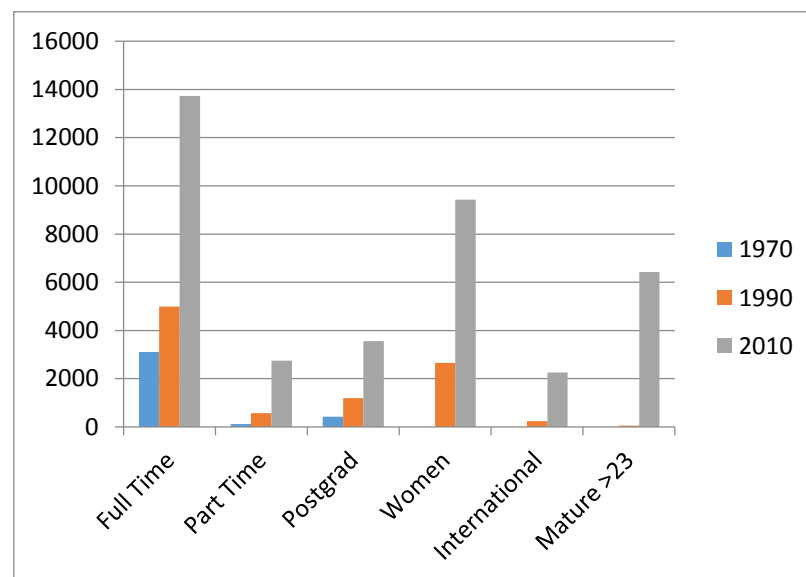
Figure 6.1 Growth in Student Numbers at NUIG from 1970 to 2010. *Source* **Presidents Reports 1970, 1990 and HEA Facts and Figures 2010/11**

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[34] The cluster comprises Galway-Mayo IT, IT Sligo, Letterkenny IT and NUI Galway (St Angela's / Shannon College incorporated into NUI Galway (HEA, 2013b)

Table 6.2 Growth in Staff Numbers by Category at NUIG 1970-2010 *Source* President's Reports and HEA Facts and Figures 2010/11

	1970	**1990**	**2010**
Numbers of Faculty Staff	246	414	733
Numbers of Administrative Staff	20	37	834
Research Centre Staff	-	-	446

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Table 6.3 Growth in number of Cited Publications at NUIG 1971-2011 *Source* Web of Science

	1971	**1981**	**1991**	**2001**	**2011**
Number of Cited Publications	1	147	185	291	1175

In 1990, the university reports involvement in a range of community based research projects and in collaborative mobility and research projects with European partner organisations. By 2011, this type of activity has extended internationally to partnerships with institutions in the United States, Japan, Korea, India and Malaysia (NUIG, 2012). In 2013 the President welcomes NUIG's ranking in the top 200 universities in five subject areas:

> This is very good news for NUI Galway as the QS World University Rankings by Subject series takes into the account the opinion of academics and employers via a global survey confirming that our position globally is on the rise. We operate in a global market, competing for students and research support on an international playing field and this international recognition of the quality of our research and teaching from academic and employer opinions around the world are very significant. (NUIG, 2013a)

In the words of the interviewees one of the aims of NUIG management is to ''register on the global map of academia'', that the institution aspires to move away from the perception of ''just being a west of Ireland university'' (Interviewee 6). A study of the archival documents also conveys this shift in the identity and character of the university (Figure 5.2). Early publications emphasise its traditional university origins, its location and its connection with Irish language and culture. The choice of typography is the only design element in the 1970 calendar; the old Gaelic alphabet is used[35] for Irish text, uppercase roman lettering is used for the NUI to reflect its primary status at the time, and old English typeface for the university name. The overall image emphasises tradition

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[35]The government adopted the Roman alphabet for use for written Irish some five years previously.

and stability and national cultural identity. The calendar cover of 1991 marked a transition. A corporate style logo appears for the first time intended to project more modern image of the university but the history and location of the university are also portrayed in a crest containing the emblems of Galway and Connacht[36], as well as the harp of the National University of Ireland and the British lion. The text is still bilingual with the primary placing given to the Irish language. The 1997 Universities Act elevated the status of NUIG as a constituent university of the National University of Ireland and a new logo was designed to mark this change. Again, the history of the university is depicted in the profile of the clock tower of the original Quadrangle building[37] while the location is strongly emphasised by the lack of abbreviation of the city name. In the last four decades, Galway has broadened its reputation from being a centre of Gaelic culture to being a more cosmopolitan location for the arts. Its annual Arts Festival is internationally renowned and the university takes an active part in it. The artistic dimension to the city and its connection with the university is reflected in the cover of the 2013 prospectus; the identity projected is of a modern university with a strong traditional and regional character. In summary, the data shows a transition from a university which in the 1970s was circumscribed by legislation, severely limited by underfunding, and confined mainly to the role of regional university and promoter of Irish language and culture to one which now aspires to being a global player in niche areas of research. It maintains it regional character and traditional multidisciplinary university status but now projects that identity in a global rather than purely local or national context. In institutional theory terms, the transition is from an organisation that considered itself an agent of the state and/or just one entity within the professional arena of university education in Ireland into an organisation with increased sovereignty and a clearer sense of its identity and special purpose (Brunsson & Sahlin-Anderson, 2000).

Hierarchy and Structuration

The documentary data shows a steady progression towards a more centrally managed and differentiated organisation during the four decade period. The President's report on the academic year of 1970/71 is reflective of the status of one who was *primus inter pares* and playing a somewhat detached role in the directing the affairs of the university as evidenced by the slightly deferential language used by the President in declaring how he has '' the honour to present'' the report (UCG, 1971, p. 1). The style of the report is in keeping with that written by a figurehead or ceremonial head of institution rather than from the perspective of a President who is directly in charge of running the organisation as is the case for the President in 2010.

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[36]The province in which Galway is located.
[37]The Quadrangle building, built in local limestone in a Tudor Gothic architectural style, was modelled on Christ Church at the University of Oxford (http//www.nuig.ie/history)
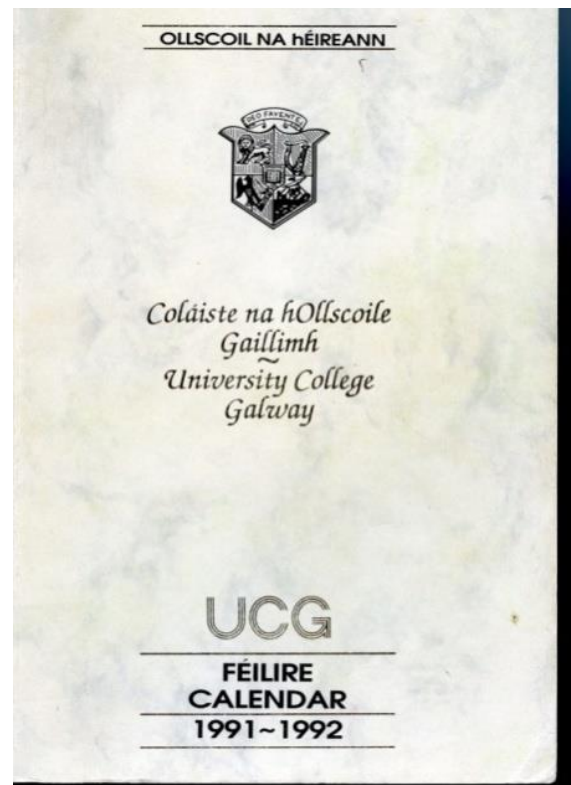
Calendar 1970/71

Calendar 1991/2

Current Prospectus

Formal Crest

Current Brand Mark

Figure 6.1 Evolution of NUIG identity since 1970

The President welcomes the increase in the number of research publications, although as we saw none are registered in the Web of Science citation list. A list of appointments is given along with an expression of concern about the high proportion of non-statutory academic staff employed in the faculties another indicator of the university's capacity to act without state approval. A new Governing Body came into office in February 1971 and twelve new committees were set up to address a range of policy and operational issues because of the ''complexity of detail to be considered'' in a College which in a decade had tripled in student numbers and which had a large-scale building programme to implement (UCG, 1971, pp. 1-2). The reasoning for establishing the committees was probably due to the paucity of administrative support. Only twenty non-academic posts are listed in the 1970 calendar; a Registrar, a Secretary- Bursar, an Academic Secretary and three assistants, a Secretary to the President, an Administrative Officer, a Librarian and five assistants, a Lady Superintendent[38]and four clerical Deans of Residence (NUIG, 2013). The general impression is of an organisation that is somewhat overwhelmed and not structured or resourced to cope with the rapid changes taking place and this description resonates with comments made in relation to Galway and other Irish universities contained in the Commission report some three years previously (Commission for Higher Education, 1967).

The funding difficulties and pressure for places are still evident in the 1991/2 President's report. However the general tone of the report is more assertive and features a number of initiatives taken by management including some capital acquisitions which were carried out with the ''approval of the Higher Education Authority, but without any commitment to immediate funding'' (UCG, 1993, pp. 1-2). The issue of university governance is a major theme of the report. The President directly addresses the topic by stating how "logic demands that, from time to time a University, of all institutions, re-examine the precepts, structures and resource-allocation procedures under which it operates''(p2).

A new management team structure had been put in place and was reported to be ''operating very effectively''; the Governing Body is ''strongly advised'' to undertake a similar exercise in relation to academic staff structures. (ibid).This appeal would take some years to take effect; the restructuring of academic departments took place in 2005. Administrative functions had expanded but not significantly perhaps because of funding constraints. New managerial posts appeared most notably a Director of Buildings and Development, an Assistant Secretary in charge of Industrial Liaison and a Director of Computer services.

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[38] Woman appointed to look after the particular welfare needs of female students.

The organisation chart and a description of the managerial decision making processes that existed in 1997 are contained in a consultancy report commissioned by the HEA just after the enactment of the Universities Act of that year (HEA, 1997) and see Appendix C. It made some general claims and criticisms in relation to governance arrangements and management structures of Irish universities of which the following are the more significant (HEA, 1997, pp. 6-11):

Governing Authority - a lack of clear definition of respective roles of Governing Authority and Chief Officer. Over-preoccupation with operational matters. A need to confine committees to key areas and more involvement of Chief Officer and the management team in decision making.

Academic Council – overly large and unwieldy with a possible overuse of committee system of decision making. Attendance can be inconsistent with some grades of staff and all students under represented.

Committee Structures - System increasingly being employed by Governing Authority, Academic Council and executive management. The report highlighted the hazards of delays in decision making and time wasting that this proliferation of committees could bring.

Role of Chief Officer and Management Team – inadequately defined particularly in relation to strategy and policy formation. Conflicting roles of middle management particularly that of Registrar in ''ensuring academic cohesion and thrust'' of the university (p.8). Clarity required too for the posts of Secretary, Chief Financial Officer, Librarian and Dean of Research.

Faculties and Departments- over fragmented and slow to evolve into effective management units.

Executive and Advisory Boards- assist decision-making but not constituted on statutory or formal basis.

Management of Administrative Services - report noted the growth of such areas and the lack of coherence in managing them.

Decision-making procedures - The general criticism was that the process was overly complicated with too many parties and loops involved in arriving at a final decision. On the other hand, some critical decisions about finance and staff resources seemed to be 'handed down' from the centre with no active participation by faculties or departments.

The report made recommendations which broadly steered universities towards the more contemporary model of governance described in Table 6.1 and to a large extent NUIG moved in that direction, but slowly. From discussions with academic management it appears that the development of the current hierarchy and structuration took place in three phases over the

period of the study (interview 7). In the 1960s, the university was generally professoriate led along the lines of many European universities with the absence of any substantial administrative centre. The Governing Authority responded to the increased influx of students in the early 1970s with the appointment of a Bursar and Academic Secretary to support the President's administrative role and this triumvirate essentially were the authoritative centre of the university for the next twenty years with very sparse support staff. Apart from at the time of registration, students, would have little or no contact with administrative staff until the end of the academic year when exam results would be publically announced by the Exams officer.

The next phase of development took place in 1991 when the management restructuring, referred to in the President's report of that year, took effect with the establishment of a University Management Team comprising the President, a Registrar with direct line to all Deans, a Bursar, an Academic Secretary and two Vice Presidents appointed by the President from academic staff but assigned for their period of appointment to cross university functions. In later years a VP of research and innovation, an internally advertised post, would be added to this team. Rationalisation of the Governing Body involved the reduction of the number of sub-committees to four core areas of strategic planning, finance and resources, academic planning and resources and support services. The same period saw the emergence of many of the support services which are now an accepted part of a functioning university –see current organogram in Appendix F- and led to the large expansion in numbers of administrative staff described in Table 6.2.

What is notable about this managerial restructuring is that it was perceived at the time, as a reassertion or *re*-centring of academic influence in the decision making processes of the university (Interviewee 7) and not the ''*de*- centring'' of power and influence which is commonly ascribed to the new modes of management in universities in Europe and the United States (Rhoades & Sporn, 2002, p. 26). This is explained by the interviewee as due to the fact that the majority of the members of the team were ''serving or former academic staff members'' and that it replaced a structure in which academic staff had no influence whatsoever. The third phase of development took place in 2005 with a major restructuring of the academic faculties and departments- see organogram Appendix D. Seven faculties were merged into five Colleges and 65 disciplinary departments were replaced by 16 Schools. The perceived benefits were a rationalisation of communication between academic managers and administrative support and the final establishment of a clear hierarchical structure from academic staff through their Head of School, to Dean of College and through Registrar to President of the University.

Again the data points to a definite transition towards the contemporary archetype of organisation with a clear authoritative centre and a professionalisation of management to deal with the

expanded role of the university. What is also interesting from an institutional theory perspective is the role that the HEA played in promoting this model and their use of an international consulting company to assist them in this task, supporting the description of the role of these firms in the diffusion process, as global carriers of such organisational models (Sahlin-Andersson & Engwall, 2002).

Rationality

The current strategic plan for NUIG commits the university ''to develop a performance – orientated culture, benchmarked against best international practice, and based on transparent metrics'' (NUIG, 2009, p. 9). Such terminology is largely absent from the management reports of the 1970s to 90s[39] but now performance management or the need to ''measure, measure, measure'' have become ''part of the organisational culture'' (Interviewees 6 and 7). Such data is seen as ''an informing factor'' in management decision-making for future (Interviewee 6). A Vice-President of Performance and Innovation is one of the members of the university management team and reporting to that office are a Director of Quality and an Institutional Research Officer part of whose duties is to assemble the metrics which the university provides to ranking agencies. There is an awareness of the benefits and limitations of the use of metrics internally and externally. Internally the metrics can serve as a basis for making decisions in relation to resource allocation or promotion within academic departments taking into account the difficulties of making comparisons across disciplines, or the rate of production of different research outputs e.g. articles vs. books, or making comparisons between contributions to teaching and research. Externally, the metrics are seen as a useful benchmark against international standards or ranking systems despite their ''inability to accommodate diversity in institutional role and mission'' (NUIG, 2009, p. 8) and see newspaper commentary by NUIG and DCU Presidents on this topic (MacCraith & Browne, 2011). The management perspective is that such rankings are now widely referred to by existing and potential international partners and ''NUIG must be cognisant of how it can maintain or improve its ranking'' while retaining its particular mission and values (Interviewee 7) The university makes such metrics public, see for instance the announcement on QS subject rankings referred to earlier, or the *NUIG at a Glance* section in the Presidents report but also places on its website, more detailed information on organisational performance in the form of institutional reviews and action plans (NUIG, 2013b).

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[39] Universities were required for the first time to draft strategic plans by the Universities Act 1997. The current plan is the third; the fourth is in the early stages of development

Incorporation of the Individual

The data indicate that it is this aspect of organisational culture which has probably shown the most marked transformation for the period of the study. As mentioned previously, the almost anonymous 1970 President's Report , begins by calling into question the wisdom of the previous first year intake choice of courses in Science , Engineering and Commerce and complains of the most ''dismal results'' in five years for the faculties in question (UCG, 1971). Those admitting students were required to ''produce a certificate of good character from the Head of School or other institution last attended by him'' and to attend before the President and sign in his presence an engagement to observe the Rules of the College; copies of the rules could be consulted in the College Library or obtained in the Office of the Academic Secretary and students were warned that ignorance of the Rules would ''not be accepted as sufficient plea in the event of a breach thereof'' (UCG, 1970, p. 32)**.** Student welfare included the provision of a chest X-Ray Examination and access to a Medical Practitioner whose services were paid for by college funds so that ''no charge is incurred by any student who wishes to avail himself thereof'' (ibid. p.33). A College Restaurant served on weekdays '' a four course luncheon at a reasonable price, and tea, coffee and other beverages throughout the morning and afternoon'' (ibid). As for academic and other staff, a roll of names and positions are given and publications listed by name in the 1990 President's Report but otherwise we are given no other information on either their capacity or their achievements. In sum, the role of the individual in the organisation was typically not publicised.

By contrast, the *Report of the President* for the academic year 2011/12 commences with a signed address from the President along with photo image Figure 6.3. He addresses staff directly, not through a governing body, and talks in corporate first person plural terms of how ''we have reached the mid-point of our strategic plan'', how ''we have always been clear about what makes us distinctive'' and how '' we can point to many significant achievements NUI Galway has made'' (NUIG, 2012, p. 1).

Much of the report points to exceptional academic and other achievements by individual students, staff members and alumni of the college. Pride of place in the report goes to the celebration of the election as President of Ireland of a former student and staff member Michael D Higgins (NUIG, 2012). This attention to the individual student and staff goes deeper than the gloss of annual reports or positive images of student life in the college prospectus. There is a strong awareness of the ''ambassadorial role'' that current and past students play in promoting the university (Interviewee 7). Radio advertisement slots and website pages feature testimonials from existing students telling of their aspirations in their chosen discipline before coming to NUIG

and replies from academic staff members explaining how those aspirations were met. Entering students no longer sign the Rules of the College in the presence of the President; registration is taken as implicit of a Code of Conduct , Student Rights and Responsibilities but more significantly this code is phrased much less legalistically and instead framed in the context of the need for students to be aware of the rights of other individuals around them and ''to afford dignity and respect to their fellow students, staff of the University and members of the community outside of the University'' (NUIG, 2013c). Facilities are made available to advise and support individuals including those experiencing learning difficulties or personal problems including the counselling service, the Equality office, the Chaplain etc.

Figure 6.2 Opening Text to Presidents Report NUIG 2011/12

Staff too, are given detailed advice on how to support and respond to students in distress (NUIG, 2013d) and teaching students now centres on the need to adopt learning strategies that ''encourage active learner engagement and critical thinking'' by individual students (NUIG, 2013e). A Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching research supports and trains staff in this task (ibid.) and to date over ''200 academic staff have undertaken the professional development programmes offered by the Centre'' (Interviewee 7). Such professional development forms part of a ''talent management strategy'' by the university to encourage individual staff members who are seen to ''lift themselves beyond introspection'' and are aware of the ''broader institutional interests'' and in this way ''using their moral authority and personal credibility to bring other people with them'' (Interviewee 6). Part of the rationale for the reorganisation described earlier was to allow for the mentoring and direction of new staff towards this position (Interviewee 7); for the same reason current policies on promotion take into account, as well as teaching and research performance, the concept of contribution to community either within or outside the

university. All this is indicative of the contemporary organisation that assumes a person is capable and identifies with the organisation and bases its performance assessment on that assumption. Students and staff are now seen as individuals with rights, responsibilities and particular needs. Difficulties in achievement are recognised and addressed by mentoring or other means. Success in achievement is acknowledged, and celebrated as something to be shared within the organisation and without.

Dublin City University (DCU)

Boundaries, Sovereignty and Identity

Setting one's own boundaries and position is the common challenge facing all new entrants into an established organisational field, and the early years of DCU were particularly challenging in that regard. It took almost six years to come into existence after its corporate formation as the National Institute of Higher Education Dublin in 1975; even convening the Governing Body for the new entity proved difficult with the eventual appointment of a Chairman who had previously publicly opposed its establishment (White, 2001). The first report of that Governing Body reveals the struggle it was experiencing in negotiating with HEIs, the HEA and the Department of Education. The same report expressed regret that 'the Minister has not been able to involve the Authority more in the physical planning of Phase 1 of the Institute' and later that ''it was a source of considerable regret'' that the Minister had failed to set a date to meet with the members of the Governing Body to discuss their plans for the Institute (NIHE Dublin, 1978, pp. 7,18). The report also dealt with negotiations between the Governing Body and the NCEA on matters concerning course design and quality assurance procedures for the new institute. However, in the midst of these difficulties, the Governing Body managed to set out the parameters which would define the new organisation and distinguish it from other third level providers at the time. These included an emphasis on professional courses at graduate and postgraduate levels, the provision of adult education on campus and by means of distance study, a full range of part time courses for people in employment with built-in flexibility ''both structurally and pedagogically'' and a commitment to facilitate and promote the engagement of staff in research and investigative work; the last objective differentiated its mission from the RTCs who at the time were almost exclusively teaching-based institutions (NIHE Dublin, 1978, p. 18). The Institute was established on a statutory footing with the passing of the National Institute for Higher Education Act in 1980 which largely endorsed these organisational objectives (Irish Statute Book, 1980). It eventually opened its doors in that year. Speaking on the occasion of the launch, the newly- appointed

Director of the college took the opportunity to announce that the Institute's role would be ''unashamedly applied and technological, directing its attention to the needs of industry, business and agriculture'' (White, 2001, p. 153). In its first decade as the NIHE, the organisation largely lived up to this declaration setting up faculties in the applied sciences, engineering, computing and maths, business and professional studies and education. The staff recruited to set up the schools within these faculties came with established research reputations and the academic support services included a strong industrial liaison dimension which included course and graduate placement on most courses; business advisory groups were actively encouraged to participate in course and research programme design (NIHE Dublin, 1982). An assessment by an International Study Group on third level technological education in 1987 stated ''that the standards of scholarship at the NIHEs are as high as the universities'' and that ''they have reached the stage of development where they should be self-accrediting institutions'' - report of group quoted in Hyland and Milne (1992, p. 452). It specifically recommended against the term ''technological university'' being used in the title of the upgraded organisation and suggested that it be renamed Dublin City University. The legislation to enact the recommendation was passed in 1989 assisted to a significant degree, according to White, by lobbying from the Confederation of Irish Industry (White, 2001). In the introduction to his first report as President of the university, Dr O'Hare welcomed this newly acquired autonomy and a ''newly progressive thinking'' between government and universities which was enabling the devolution of powers and responsibilities to universities which have been ''hitherto, the subject of minute control by the Departments of State and their agencies'' (DCU, 1990, p. 2).The benefits of this autonomy would be better ''quality, innovation , flexibility speed of response and cost effectiveness''; accountability is implied in the admission that such freedom would also require universities ''to take [and be responsible for] difficult decisions at local level without reference to centrally placed bodies'' (DCU, 1990, p. 2).

The data suggest that the university took full advantage of that autonomy. In the following two decades student numbers almost tripled (Figure 6.4), the number of undergraduate course offerings expanded from 19 in 1991 to 60 in 2010 (CAO, 1991; 2010), and the campus ''grew to the limits of the existing site'' (Interviewee 4). In addition to expanded research and teaching facilities the university constructed extensive sports facilities, an incubation centre for start-up business and a 3,000 seat theatre. Many of these additional facilities are managed as self-financing campus companies. The number of academic staff more than doubled between 1990 and 2010 and administrative support grew accordingly (Table 6.5). Over 40 research centres have been established around national hubs for collaboration in Information and Communications Technology, Biotechnology and Pharmaceuticals, Innovation in Business and Services and

Manufacturing Competitiveness[40]. As with NUIG, the increased investment in research in the last decade is reflected in the increased numbers of research publications (Table 6.6) and registered PhD students which numbered 718 in 2010 (HEA, 2012). The present strategy is to focus on ''translational research'' by 'addressing societal and economic issues of national international significance including Health, Conflict Resolution, Cloud Computing, Science Policy and Sustainability' (DCU, 2012, p. 25).

The regional focus of the university was initially on the north city area in which it was located. Part of the rationale for locating the college there was to address the disparity in participation rates between this part of the city and the more affluent southern suburbs. While the university is still active in promoting access initiatives in the area its regional focus has expanded to include the greater Dublin area and northwards in a development zone referred to as the Eastern Corridor between Dublin and Belfast (DCU, 2012).
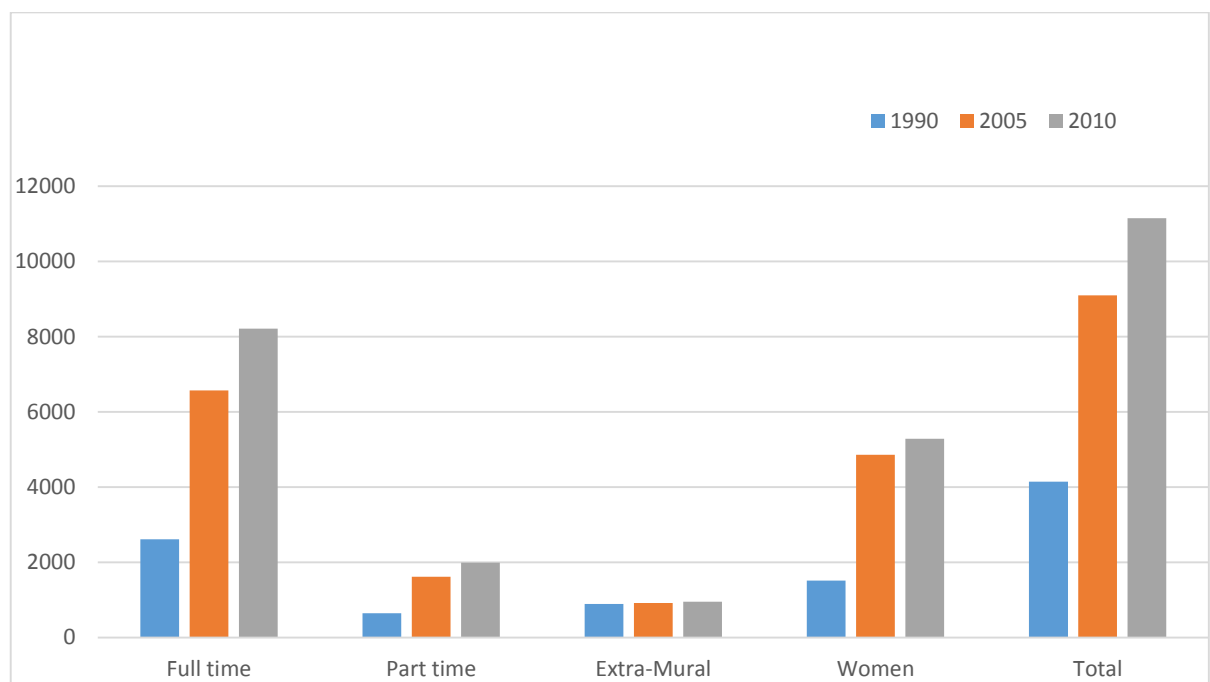
Figure 6.3 Growth in student numbers at DCU 1990 -2010 *Source* President's Reports 1990 , and HEA Facts and Figures 2010

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[40] Further information on each of the centres is available at http://www4.dcu.ie/research/institutes.shtml

	1984	1990	2000	2010
Faculty Staff	184	186	442	477
Support Staff	136	200	365	409
Research Centre Staff	N/A	26	109	366

Table 6.5 Increase in Research Publications at DCU 1981-2011

	1981	1991	2001	2011
Number of Publications	2	96	177	531

DCU has entered into a '3U' alliance with the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland and the NUI Maynooth the vision of which is to ''enhance our ability to deliver richer educational opportunities for our students and to solve some of the major research problems of our time'' (NUIG-UL Alliance, 2010). As part of the recent reconfiguration of Irish higher education it forms part of a regional cluster of HEIs to the north and west of the city[41] (HEA, 2013b). The same document proposes the integration of three teacher training colleges in Dublin into a single Institute of Education within the university (ibid.).

As with other Irish universities DCU has been active in most EU mobility and collaborative research programmes. Within Europe, as we mentioned earlier, it has aligned itself with a consortium of innovative universities. Among the common characteristics of members that are listed on the website are that all ''are relatively young, either in age or spirit, and strongly committed to the encouragement of innovation and entrepreneurism committed to developing new forms teaching and learning, and have close ties with industry and their region'' (ECIU, 2013). Its current strategic plan describes the campus as ''amongst the most internationalised and

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[41] The cluster comprises Dublin Institute of Technology / IT Tallaght / IT Blanchardstown / Dublin City University (and incorporating linked colleges) National College of Ireland / Dundalk IT / NUI Maynooth / Athlone IT / Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

multi-cultural areas on this island, with almost 120 nationalities represented and a rich atmosphere of intercultural activities'' and its internationalisation strategy aims to:

- double the numbers of non-EU students over the next five years
- establish a small, dynamic, global network of partner universities across the global regions of Europe, Asia, North America, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa
- establish the Ireland India Institute at DCU as the national centre for knowledge exchange on issues concerning contemporary India

(DCU, 2012, p. 27)

As was the case with NUIG, this transition from local to globally focused institution, is reflected in the changing corporate identity of the university (Figure 6.5). The original logo conveys the impression of a classic university and uses the three castle emblem of Dublin City. The modern logo is more corporate and universal.

Figure 6.4 Changes in DCU Logo

In summary, it is probably the case that this corporate or entrepreneurial disposition was present in the organisation from the outset. Certainly the intent of the founding Governing Body was that the organisation would be different and resemble the more rational, clearly structured version described in Table 6.1, than that which pertained in other universities at the time. Excessive state oversight in the early years prevented that model being implemented. The turning point came with the introduction of enabling legislation of 1989 and later with the Universities Act of 1997, and the significant increase in state funding available for research, which gave the organisation the degree of autonomy it required to set its own boundaries in terms of teaching and research programmes, choice of regional and international partners and in developing and projecting its own corporate culture and identity. The above description also gives support to the

institutionalist idea of actor identity being formed by the context in which it emerges in this case; one where thinking of the role of the university was fundamentally changing and moving towards a much more socially embedded and flexibly organised university. This will become more apparent as we consider the other characteristics which shape such an organisation.

Hierarchy and Structuration

Unlike NUIG which made a very gradual transition to its present organisational form, the structure for DCU was planned even before its establishment. The founding Governing Body reported a ''unanimous decision to organise the institute on a Faculty-based Matrix Structure''. Academic and administrative functions would be headed by two Registrars reporting to the President in the areas of academic and administrative affairs; it was envisaged that the institute would have five faculties (NIHE Dublin, 1978). The second major difference concerned the governance structure set out in the establishing legislation for the NIHEs in Limerick and Dublin; it stipulated that the governing body comprise 25 persons (39 at NUIG) which contained only four members of staff and two students (Irish Statute Book, 1980). The result was that the Director was given more authority and could act as ''chief rather than chairman'' allowing that person to ''concentrate on the corporate goals [of the organisation] in the following decade'' (White, 2001, p. 161).

At the establishment of the university in 1989 there were four faculties and the DCU Business School reporting to a Registrar for administrative affairs, with an Assistant Registrar for academic affairs, who in turn reported to the President. The expansion of the university saw the number of faculties rise to seven, extended differentiation within the non- academic functions and a proliferation of internal committees whose exact mandate was unclear (HEA, 1997) (see also Appendix E). Significant changes in administrative arrangements have taken place since then in response to the internal need for more ''streamlined and visible decision-making'' and to meet the external demands for ''tighter governance'' by the state (Interviewee 4). These include:

- A rationalisation of the organisational structure with six administrative streams reporting directly to the President and a Deputy President in charge of academic affairs directing a reduced number of four faculties. Budget setting and spending decisions are devolved to executive Deans of Faculty (Appendix F).
- A strengthening of the management team with senior executive appointments in the areas of academic affairs, research and innovation, strategic planning, human resources and operations.
- A corresponding change in the role of the President. In the early years the President was actively involved in decision making process and chaired most internal committees. Now

the role is divided more evenly between executive function and building strategic relationships with national and international partners. ''The current President is perceived as having been especially effective in establishing close ties with policymakers and with industrial leaders'' (Interviewee 4).

- A tightening of governance arrangements. Detailed and documented procedures now exist on the functioning of Governing Body, Academic Council and the committees that report to each of these bodies (Appendices G and H). The object is to bring clarity to all groupings regarding their role and decision making powers and responsibilities. The current strategic plan commits DCU to ''continue its proud record of delivering balanced budgets even in the most difficult of financial circumstances''. (DCU, 2012, p. 8)

Rationality

As with organisational structure, the founding Governing Body anticipated the rational nature of the new institute when it committed it to ''nurture and promote a constructive and regular process of institutional and personal self-appraisal of performance in relation to stated aims and objectives'' (NIHE Dublin, 1978, p. 18). And as with NUIG, such goal setting and monitoring has now become ''part of the organisational culture at DCU'' (Interviewee 4) with the appointment of an Institutional Research Officer who tracks all key indicators for internal and external use on performance e.g. research output and resource deployment e.g. space utilisation. These indicators are used to carry out annual ''health checks'' on course programmes and faculties (Interviewee 4). At a higher level the university is now at the beginning of its fifth strategic plan, *Transforming Lives and Societies,* in which it differentiates itself as ''Irelands University of Enterprise'' (DCU, 2012). This, and the previous plan, *Leading through Challenge,* launched at the start of the present economic recession in Ireland, are intended to be responsive to the national crisis reinforcing the image of a university which is actively engaged with society. In relation to research, for example, that plan sets out the need for ''a targeted strategy delivering greater-short to medium term impact and with a clear focus on value for money'' (DCU, 2009).

The present plan reminds the reader that the university was founded during a previous period of severe economic difficulty in the 1980s and states that the university can now play ''a crucial role in the development of the Eastern Corridor, [a region] that can contribute significantly to economic recovery'' (p.8). The plan sets out strategic objectives that are typical of a modern entrepreneurial university:

- to transform our students lives by equipping them to flourish in the twenty first century
- to be recognised internationally as a leading university of enterprise

- to drive social and economic progress by translating knowledge into action
- to foster engagement with our stakeholders and partners, regionally, nationally, and globally
- to maintain academic excellence as our highest priority and
- to ensure that our physical and organisational infrastructure is effective in supporting our strategic intent

An average of ten goals or measures in support of each of these objectives, to be achieved over the next five years, are listed in the plan. What distinguishes this strategic process from previous versions is the annual ''review and renew'' process which will allow for continuous assessment of performance but also to be ''responsive to emerging opportunities, and alert to uncertainty and risk in our environment'' (p34). Strategic dialogue is now firmly embedded in the workings of the university as is the public reporting of what it describes as ''key information and metrics'' concerning income and expenditure and staff and student numbers (DCU, 2010).

Incorporation of the Individual Person

There is a strong biographical quality to the history of DCU. Photo images and biopics of all the new faculty and staff members feature in the first annual report of the NIHE (NIHE Dublin, 1982). Most of the staff and students who have passed through the doors of the college are still alive and the wall of alumni in the DCU library comprises people who are currently well known to the Irish public for their achievement in business, the media or sport. It is not surprising either, that the first history of the university is a pictorial one[42], a kind of family album featuring group and individual photos of all those who had been involved in bringing the university to life (Bradley T. , 1999).

More recent publications also pay close attention to the role of the individual. The President's report of 2009 begins with the announcement of the nomination of Professor Colum Kenny to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. It lists the names of the people who will feature on the Alumni wall for that year, and it welcomes home a former student, Sharon Commins, who had been held captive for 107 days in Darfur while working for an Irish aid agency. The student as individual features strongly too in areas of marketing, induction and teaching practice. The emphasis in the marketing message to prospective students is on the individual benefits of attending DCU in terms of future life course; advantages gained from work or community based programmes are highlighted (Interviewee 5). A student charter makes incoming students aware of their rights and responsibilities and their role as individuals within the university community. It begins by highlighting that role; ''YOUR university life at DCU opens up a gateway to a unique academic,

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[42] The history was compiled to mark the occasion of the retirement of the founding President, Dr Daniel O'Hare.

professional and personal development experience, which will differentiate you from graduates of other institutions'', and goes on to make explicit the mutual expectations of student and university in attaining this goal (DCU, 2013, p. 1 original emphasis). A central support unit, the Learning Innovation Unit, has been established, one of whose aims is to ''enhance the student experience by providing flexible opportunities for continuous professional development for academic staff'' (DCU, 2013).

Summary and Analysis

The data and analysis demonstrate a definite transition by both organisations towards the contemporary organisational type described in WS theory and outlined in Table 6.1. For NUIG the transition was a gradual one as an older organisational culture was progressively displaced; in the case of DCU the template of this organisational form was already present in its founding plans and legislation; all that was required was that it be given the latitude to operate by the state and this occurred with its elevation to university status. Once this sovereignty was achieved each organisation has generally been able to set their own boundaries in terms of research directions, course programmes, enrolment levels and choice of partners at both national and global level. Both organisations also seem to be able to preserve or protect this strategic autonomy from the increased demands by the state for more stringent standards of internal governance and financial control, accepting them as a necessary discipline in the present economic circumstances. Each has also set out to define and project a particular corporate identity. In the case of DCU, the image is of a rational, technological and business-like organisation that prides itself on its agility and inventiveness; for NUIG the image is of university with a proud tradition that is now emerging as a modern university and global player in niche areas of research. The choice of European grouping is indicative of each organisation's self-perception; the entrepreneurial ECIU in the case of DCU and the more long established and multi-disciplinary university grouping Coimbra for NUIG.

Organisational structures have also evolved in a similar way. In the early years, DCU's less cumbersome governing system allowed considerable latitude or a more corporate and Presidential type of management. The growth of the university and the development of a more homogenous legal and governance system by the state have resulted in a convergence of structural and hierarchical arrangements; a representative governing body with a small number of committees focusing on the core issues of resource management and strategic planning, a Presidential role that is more equally divided between internal executive management and external relationship building and a central team of academic and administrative managers with

clearer linkages to individual academic units and staff members. Internal groups or teams are now more influenced by organisational considerations with DCU going so far as to document the organisational responsibilities and decision making processes for such internal committees or departments. Both organisations have experienced increased differentiation and professionalisation of management. The common areas of expansion in the last decade have been in marketing and communications, strategic planning, external relations, and quality assurance; both organisations have recruited externally to source expertise in these areas. The drafting of strategic plans and increased attention paid to world rankings has meant that goal setting and performance measurement are now embedded in management practice; both universities have set up institutional research units to assemble key internal metrics and comparators with other institutions and make use of this data for operational and strategic planning. It will be used, too, to engage in the strategic dialogue process with the HEA which was discussed in the previous chapter. The need to make such metrics public is also recognised with special sections of the Presidents' reports given over to presenting the key metrics in relation to student and staff numbers and financial performance. All of this is indicative of the increased rationality that forms part of the contemporary organisational identity (Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006).

The incorporation of the individual is possibly the most visible attribute of this contemporary organisation in both universities. Images and profiles of staff members, students and alumni abound in reports, publicity materials and organisation websites. A recognition of students' individual rights, expectations, cultural background and differing learning styles has a significant effect on how the universities attract students, develop induction and student support services, and deliver taught programmes. In turn there is an expectation that students will actively engage in the university community, expressed explicitly in the DCU student charter, and become graduates that reflect well on the university. Similarly, human resource management concepts such as talent management, mentoring and professional development are having an increasing impact on the relationship between the university and individual staff members. Again, there is a reciprocal expectation of staff commitment and contribution to institutional interests and goals, beyond their teaching and research involvement. The participation of NUIG staff in radio advertisements for the university is a minor example.

Taken collectively, the above data seem to support a WS theory which suggests that universities have taken an "organisational turn" (Krücken & Meier, 2006, p. 241) displacing the professional or academic community character of universities of the past (Musselin, 2006). This construction of an organisational form is similar to what is happening globally in other parts of the public-sector

and in other social domains where aspects of organising were weak or absent (Brunsson & Sahlin-Anderson 2000; Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006).

As with all global models, diffusion may be incomplete or uneven and loose coupling or divergence from stated organisational goals will be evident (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The present case studies are no exception. An external organisational review of NUIG commends the university for the reorganisation of its academic departments and the adoption of best international practice in teaching and learning improvement discussed above, but recommends wider external participation on its governing body, a review of procedures for obtaining student feedback on courses programmes, more transparent arrangements for internal resource distribution and a more outward looking and aggressive internationalisation policy (IUQB, 2011). The interviews with management reveal a genuine commitment to participation by staff in organisational decision making but they also accept that primary loyalties may still be to the School and discipline rather than to the organisation as a whole and that some staff are less likely to embrace change than others; nor do all students grasp the principles contained in the Code of Conduct. The gender imbalance in appointments at the level of professor and above is also acknowledged[43].

A similar institutional review at DCU acknowledges the commitment of the university to innovation in teaching and learning and student supports, but recommends that the university develop and adopt a ''more consistent approach to providing feedback to students'', and introduce ''further ways for students to provide feedback'' on their learning experience and ''provide better induction support to international students'' (IUQB, 2013, p. 33). The university is also commended on ''the creative ways in which it has sought to show its appreciation for good [staff] performance but it still recommends that it continue to work toward introducing ''robust and reliable arrangements for the performance appraisal of staff'' ibid p16; and as a final example the report welcomes the internal review and performance work which was mentioned earlier but suggests that ''it would be wise to provide more, and more timely, evidence to stakeholders and the public of the thoroughness with which it reviews its internal activities and of its work to secure quality and standards' (ibid. p20).

The nature of these non-compliances with stated goals or organisational self-image is not at issue here; many of the matters raised may already have been rectified or are being addressed by management. Other reviews would, and do, reveal a range of areas for further development in

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[43] This has become an issue of general concern within the Irish higher education sector to the point that the HEA now publishes annually a gender breakdown of the levels of academic appointment in each university

the organisations; in the case of NUIG there is a comprehensive listing published on its website (NUIG, 2013b). As discussed earlier, institutional theory predicts such inconsistencies. Incorporation of global models into modern organisational identities – through the structures, policies, charters and plans that it develops - inevitably leads to decoupling according to institutional theory; these statements are more about what should happen than what will probably happen (Brunnson & Alder, 2002; Strang & Meyer, 1993). In the case of older universities like NUIG, there is an organisational history which influences the pace at which change takes place or as Ramirez and Christensen (2013, p. 696) express it, ''to understand the changing routes universities follow, one needs to take into account both the worldwide changing rules of the game that impinge on the universities due to facing common models as well as their historical roots and path dependencies''.

 Nevertheless, the commitment of organisations to a particular model is evidenced by the public pledges made in mission statements and strategic planning documents and also by the engagement of management with outside experts who help assess and guide them to come close to realising that model. In the cases discussed above, the acknowledgement by managers of organisational weaknesses, the use of external consultants to review their quality assurance arrangements, the willingness to make public the findings of such reviews and the intention to constantly review and renew their organisational plans is as much evidence of adherence to the model of the contemporary organisation as the exemplary behaviours described in earlier sections.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The introductory chapter of this thesis proposed that the development of Irish higher education over the last five decades - its rapid expansion and diversification, its increased centrality in a knowledge based economy and the significant changes in governance arrangements at state and organisational level are better understood in the context of similar advances that have taken in place in higher education throughout the world in the same time period. Secondly, it suggested that the nature of these global changes, and how they affect nation-states like Ireland, can be more purposefully explained using WS theory rather than the realist economic or critical theories which currently dominate the literature on this topic. The dual objective of this thesis, therefore, was to examine the evolution of Irish higher education over this period within this global perspective and in doing so to test the core claims of WS theory concerning the development and diffusion of global models of actorhood in social domains such as higher education. This concluding chapter presents the main findings and theoretical contributions of this thesis and discusses their significance from two perspectives. Firstly, it assesses the merit of the research approach in explaining the changes that have taken place. That approach was based on an institutional theory perspective that placed emphasis on ideational influences on organisational change, that took a longitudinal approach to analysing that change, and that assessed the impact of that change at the multiple levels of state, system and organisation. The second perspective addresses the theoretical significance of the findings; it discusses the way in which the core tenets of WS theory are supported by the data and also assesses the ability, and limitations, of the theory to address the issue of heterogeneity of change processes in different societal contexts. Finally, the implications for the development of Irish higher education policy are elaborated and areas for future research are identified.

Main Findings, Contribution and Significance

The empirical work in the three previous chapters reveals three main findings. The first is that there is a strong convergence of higher education policies promoted by the EU and the OECD towards the open, flexible and socially embedded model of higher education described by WS theorists, although arrived at by different routes and possibly driven by different motivations. In the case of the EU the evolution was from a position in the 1970s where the EU was largely uninterested in education to a point where it has now made it a pivotal instrument in its plans for economic revival in Europe. The OECD focussed on education at a very early stage of its development, initially seeing

it as a Keynesian-type instrument to encourage economic growth, and in recent years adopting a more neo-liberal stance of regarding higher education as the source of knowledge and human capital needed to feed into an expanding global economy. Given the common frame of analysis it is unsurprising that both organisations prescribe very similar policy solutions on how to achieve this socially embedded model, advocating research that is more closely linked to national, regional and global goals and improved quality and flexibility in teaching arrangements. Both organisations see this model as being essential to the development of the capacity of nation-states to participate and compete in the global economy; in the case of the EU there is the added dimension of creating a competitive European higher education and research space.

The second major finding observed from the data has been an increase in exposure of the Irish state and HEIs to these policy ideas through intensification of contact with the EU and the OECD. The establishment of international offices in government departments and HEIs to manage this interaction is indicative of this trend. The data also show the gradual build-up of the resources and organising capacity of the EU and the OECD in advancing their policy agendas through these interactions. The progression is most apparent in the EU as demonstrated by the following sequence of actions; the groundwork done in the 1980s by the Directorate General for Education on joint action mobility and exchange programmes; the expansion of the framework programmes in the 1990s creating research networks of HEIs across the continent; the central role of the Commission in advancing the Bologna and Lisbon agendas in the 2000s through the OMC and increased investment in research and education programmes. More recently, the Fiscal Stability Treaty of 2012 has granted the Commission, through the European Semester process, a direct input into the economic and budgetary planning process of member states including its education spending. The soft governance processes surrounding the Bologna and Lisbon objectives now have a slightly harder edge. Over the same period, the OECD has carved out for itself a globally recognised role in the collection, processing, classification and supply of education policy data, and metrics on national education system performance. As with the EU, there is an intensification of the same interactive soft governance processes; this time through the use of country and thematic reviews and the publication of national statistics. However, the OECD's role remains an advisory one in the area of education, although extremely influential in the case of small states like Ireland.

This leads to a discussion of the third finding around the gradual adoption by the Irish state and higher education system of the policy ideas being developed within the EU and the OECD and the co-evolution of structures at national and organisational level that reflect these policies. The change in thinking is most obvious in the 1960s when the recommendations of the Commission of Higher Education, and its emphasis on the preservation of the personal development role of the

university, was supplanted by the human capital paradigm contained in the OECD *Investment in Education Report.* This paradigm informed higher education policy making throughout the 1970s and 80s and was augmented by the notion of higher education as a source of knowledge capital in the 1990s. This dual role of higher education is currently articulated by the EU Commission as one of ''supporting jobs and growth'' (EU Commission, 2011). The Commission's accompanying agenda for modernisation of higher education is also apparent in the recommendations of the National Strategy Report on the reorganisation of higher education in Ireland. The governance requirements for all HEIs are now set in a broadly similar legal framework which devolves strategic planning to individual HEIs, within the constraints of accountability on use of resources and alignment of institutional plans with the broad priorities set out in the national strategy document. The process of ensuring this accountability involves the type of dialogue and feedback contained in the soft governance mechanisms deployed in the transnational arrangements deployed by the EU, and endorsed by the OECD. In other words, both policy content and policy implementation are moving towards the global model advanced by the OECD and EU.

Overall, these findings support the broad contention of WS theory that national education systems are embedded in a wider world society and that national developments are not just determined by the properties or history of the nation-state (Ramirez, 2006). The changing institutional context of Irish higher education policy that is described in the study can be seen to be permeated by ideas carried by international organisations that include, in the terms of WS theory, a changed actorhood for the state and HEIs. Irish higher education has moved closer to the inclusive, socially embedded and flexibly organised system described by WS theorists and the methods used by the state to promote that model mimic the soft governance approach of the EU and OECD. These soft governance processes are set within loose regulative frameworks that are largely underpinned by common belief systems around the centrality of higher education to economic progress and individual development and the autonomy of HEIs. The Irish state and HEIs are seen to be increasingly constituted by an institutional environment that is transnational in character and based on a common set of cultural-cognitive beliefs concerning higher education.

In this way, the use of WS theory has enabled a more coherent account to be given of the direction that Irish higher education has taken, why that trajectory of change corresponds to what is happening in other countries, and the roles is played by the various actors at national and transnational level in the story of its development. This coherence derives, I believe, from three elements of institutional thinking that informed the research approach ; the emphasis given to ideational changes and the social interactions that effect those changes, the extended time period

of the study and the attention given to the multiple levels of actors engaged in the change processes (Scott, 2008).

Firstly, by emphasising ideational change and the social interactions that affect them this approach presents an alternative to the a-theoretical accounts which have predominated up to now in relation to Irish higher education (Osborne, 1996; White, 2001), and that focus mainly on events and actions by key field members. The theory does not discount the influence of such actions on institutional environments – such as the decision by the EU and the Irish state to make substantial investments in higher education research or to make changes in legislation governing higher education. However, by directing attention to the institutional context in which these decisions are made, and the interactions between national and transnational bodies that create that context, this thesis can better explain the thinking that informed those these decisions and the role of various actors in implementing them. Secondly, such institutional contexts take time to form, often involving an iterative process of change before becoming clearly discernible in organisational practice (Meyer, 2010). The longitudinal nature of this study enables such changes to be tracked. One such trend has been the transition over the period of the study in the accent of policy discourses from local campaigns for the location of HEIs, to national promotion of the higher education system to attract foreign direct investment and more recently to an increasingly global perspective or attention to internationalisation. One can see too, that the assumptions by regulators (HEA, 2013b) concerning organisational autonomy underlying the current strategic dialogue process between HEIs and the state are of recent origin, and followed a slow transition of thinking concerning organisational governance within the sector. Thirdly, the presumption that HEIs and the nation-state in which they are located are both affected by transnational processes and structures has permitted a discussion of the co-evolution of these effects in shaping national and organisational structures rather than treating these as parallel developments. In this way, the study has been able to address a current research priority in comparative education i.e. to link the developments of higher education to contemporary societal changes at both local and international levels (Brennan, 2008; Shahjahan, 2012).

However, while WS theory is good at analysing diffusion processes that take place over time and transcend national boundaries, societal sectors and levels of social actors, it is less useful in explaining differences between particular social sectors like higher education, at national or transnational level, and between organisational actors within such sectors. Meyer (2010) identifies the need to research further the mechanisms or dynamics of diffusion of global models within particular social sectors or national contexts but does not prescribe a framework in which these

processes can be analysed. The same article describes how organisational actors are conferred with authorised agency by current cultural norms but does not analyse the specific factors which influence the choices made by actors in using such agency which may include token or noncompliance with current institutional models. Taking the field of Irish higher education as the case in point, WS theory is less equipped to address the detailed dynamics of institutional change that took place post the 1960s, the respective role of universities as incumbents in that field and the challenging role of the technological sector, and more recently private colleges, in shaping the contours of the present field of Irish higher education. At field level, WS theory explains the global origins of the new collective rationality (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991) of a socially engaged higher education system but is less effective at explaining how that shared meaning was arrived at and the ''institutional politics'' or possible power plays between various type of higher education institutes and state agencies in Ireland in adopting some aspects of the global model of higher education and resisting others (Lawrence, 2008). Similarly, WS theory describes how a pervasive world culture affects all social sectors in a broadly homogenous way but does not elaborate on how such social sectors interact within a particular national context. This study described how the general opening of all sections of Irish society to world cultural norms since the 1960s made possible the adoption by Irish education policy makers of ideas carried by agencies like the OECD and later the European Commission. However, the theory is less able to explain the relative degree of influence of different societal sectors in Ireland on the development of higher education and particularly the recent dominance of economic or business sector in policy making processes.

At organisation level, WS theory points to global institutional forces of rationalisation and marketisation that are affecting how HEIs are structured and managed and suggests various types of carriers in the form of professional bodies, regulatory agencies or consultancy companies. Again it is less able to distinguish between the relative impact of these various sources or, for example, the effect of activities of individual HEIs; one thinks in an Irish context of the impact of the example set by Dublin City University or University of Limerick on perceptions of how universities should be managed. Moreover, it acknowledges but does not explain how intra organisational institutionalisation and values can affect how individual organisations respond to prevailing institutional models (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996); the variation between NUIG and DCU approach to organisational change described in this study is illustrative of this phenomenon. Finally the implications for strategic planning at organisational level are unclear; how, and to what end, do individual HEIs deploy the authorised agency conferred by the present institutional environment and in particular respond the multiple demands arising from this complex environment in a way that is in keeping with their unique organisational identity (Frølich et al. 2013; Kraatz & Block,

2008); the latter point is of particular relevance to Irish HEIs who are presently engaged in a process of strategic dialogue within a performance framework laid down by the HEA that emphaises organisational diversity.

The above findings and discussion of the limitations of WS theory reflect and contribute to the current theoretical debates within sociological institutionalism around heterogeneity of response to institutional models (Greenwood et al. 2008). A central tenet of sociological institutionalism is that institutionalised models affect the construction of actors in an isomorphic fashion. Thus, the structures and systems of administration across nation-states tend to resemble standard world models despite the wide variance in resources and political philosophies. Similarly, organisations in all sectors tend towards a modern rationalised and autonomous form, even in sectors, such as higher education, which in the past were dominated by professional norms or seen simply as agents of the state. The study confirms this tendency to isomorphism. As discussed above, Ireland has generally followed the European (and global) model of higher education both in terms of policy substance and in the governance mechanisms used to implement such policies. Its active involvement and compliance with the Bologna process is a case in point. Moreover, these governance mechanisms are predicated on universities being organised in the rationalised and autonomous form prescribed in contemporary models. Again, the study shows how Irish universities have adopted the rationality of this organisational model, each in their own way. The introduction of the strategic dialogue process by the HEA across the sector implies that this adoption is generally the case.

The explanations of heterogeneity, that is, of the persistent differences across states in adoption of global models of higher education reported in the study, are less clear cut. Examples of discrepancies from ideal models within the Irish system include the underrepresentation of particular social groups and age groups in higher education, the male dominance in senior academic posts in most universities, or the continued imbalance of resource allocation towards the university sector, despite recent convergence in governance systems and a commitment by the state to diversity of provision. WS theory suggests general reasons for such divergence, such as the inherent idealism contained within institutional models. Since these institutionalised models are rooted in a world culture that is committed to the positive themes of rationality, progress and justice they tend to emphasise accounts of actorhood that can be presented as being for the collective good. The phenomenon is visible in the data. Many Irish policy statements commit to the ideal of lifelong learning or the economic growth agenda of Lisbon or the value of co-operation and collaboration contained within the Bologna process. A model of higher education that is inclusive,

socially embedded and organisationally responsive is difficult to dismiss even by traditional universities that in the past may have valued their exclusivity. Commitment to these elements of the model is commonly articulated in the mission statements and strategic plans of the Irish universities studied, and in the discourses of management members interviewed.

A possible outcome of this commitment to a particular model is that nation-states or organisations may put more effort into being seen to be such virtuous actors or presenting a certain strategic discourse, than into actually practising the role; the result is an institutional model or construction of actors that is often loosely coupled with actual activity. Evidence of such loose coupling is evident in this study. For example, government policy statements have committed Irish higher education to the provision of lifelong learning since the early 1990s but the goal was never fully realised, according to the OECD review of the Irish higher education system in 2004, mainly because the funding mechanisms to HEIs were based on the number of full time enrolments. Similarly, the idea of Irish universities competing in a global community of researchers could not have become a reality until the substantial increase in research funding from state and philanthropic sources that occurred in the 1990s. At institutional level, the study shows a slow process of reform of a traditional university like NUIG towards the idealised rational model of organisation and the acceptance by management that there was still some way to go in that process.

In a special issue of Comparative Education dealing with the meaning of world society and education Schriewer (2012) criticises this loose coupling argument describing it as a ''makeshift solution'' (p.417) to the problem of explaining the heterogeneity of response by states to global models or ideas in education. He strongly agrees with the analysis in the same issue by Steiner-Khamsi (2012), dealing with the global/local nexus of change in higher education, that refers to the loose coupling concept, in epistemological terms, as being much less an explanans or explanation of the facts and more an explanandum something that itself needs explanation. In other words, some alternative theory is needed to explain the type of heterogeneity observed.   Further research using the ''promising concepts'' (p.419) of historical and Scandinavian institutionalisms is recommended by Schriewer (2012) as a possible alternative theoretical framework to address this problem. In relation to the application of historical institutionalism, it is interesting to note the inclusion of the concept of path dependency, by one of the main writers on WS theory and comparative education Franciso O Ramirez, in a co-authored article explaining the divergent routes taken by Oslo and Stanford Universities towards formalisation of their organisational structures (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013). Similarly, applying the concepts of translation and editing of ideas contained within Scandinavian institutionalism (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008) might offer useful insights into how

the New Public Management Model (NPM) of organisation was edited in an Irish context. Doing so would might mean taking account of the of the heavy dependence by universities on state funding, the antipathy to the ideology underlying NPM and the reliance of the state on higher education as a driver of economic resurgence. The differing interpretations of the contemporary organisational model by the two universities featured in the case study might also be explained in terms of such translation and editing.

These alternative approaches to explaining heterogeneity highlight a divide within sociological intuitionalism on the role of agency or particular power and interests in determining how such institutional models are enacted. WS theory tends to negate such influences (Jepperson, 2002). On the other hand, institutionalists whose interests are at field level do acknowledge some degree of agency or impact by actors on institutional contexts (DiMaggio, 1988; Scott, 2008a). Heterogeneity is explained as the varying outcomes of struggles between incumbents and challengers in existing fields and the social skills of such actors (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012), the effect of local societal arrangements or business practices (Orru, Biggart, & Hamilton, 1991) or conflict between professional factions in the formation of new fields (DiMaggio P. , 1991). The rift between the two perspectives is most obvious in writings by Scott (2008) and Meyer (2008) each reflecting on the future role of institutional theory on the study of organisations. Meyer urges that institutionalist theory should ''keep to its last, and avoid attending to the clamour arising from realist ideological assumptions'' and reiterates that the ''great changes of our period …..occur much more through waves of non-decision than through networks of fully formed and autonomous rationalized actors'' (p. 807). By contrast, Scott presents organisational fields as arenas to be studied as socially constructed frameworks where ''we can observe contentious processes [of change], involving the participation of various types of actors with varying levels of understanding and influence, and always under the watchful eye, and sometimes, the active intervention of the state'' (2008, p. 218).

Until now, these alternative streams of organisational institutionalism have co-existed; one focussing mainly on the great changes at global level the other mainly on interactions within institutional contexts at meso level (Hasse & Krücken, 2008). However this study points to the fact that the expansion of organisations and organising at global level described by WS theory blurs that distinction between local and global fields. The emergence of a European field of higher education discussed in Chapter 4 is an example, or subsets within that field, such as business education (Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson, & Wedlin, 2006). Hasse and Krücken (2008) point to the concept of isomorphism within fields as the factor which determines persistent differences between fields; in this way ''organisations differ according to their field membership which, for example, results from

their embeddedness in national regimes'' (p. 542). The description portrays national fields as somehow insulating organisations from external influences which conflicts with a WS theory view that allows for actors to be enabled by global models regardless of policy adoption by nation-states. The findings of this thesis tend to confirm the WS theory perspective. Over the period of the study, the Irish higher education system is seen to become increasingly embedded in European and other transnational processes. Similarly, interviews with management of individual universities indicates that the type of organisational reform undertaken by universities was initiated as much by an awareness of what is happening internationally as from response to policies of the HEA or the Irish Department of Education. Generally, the picture presented of Irish higher education is one which is located within both national and international fields as depicted in Figure 2.3 whose boundaries are increasingly being permeated by interactions between actors at all levels.

This analysis supports the current theoretical reconceptualization of organisational fields from being bounded and stable entities to a concept of fields which are highly dynamic and interdependent on the actions of its members on other social sectors (Djelic & Quack, 2008; Fligstein & McAdam, 2012; Wooten & Hofffman, 2008). Theorists speak of the need to reconceptualise fields as being ''nested in a transnational institutional context'' (Djelic & Quack, 2008, p. 318). or ''embedded in a [global] macro environment'' (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 203). Fligstein and McAdam's conception of fields are dynamic arenas in which members continuously engage in strategic action to enhance competitive position but also to influence the shared meaning or collective mission of the field. Wooten and Hoffman suggest a refocus on that latter dimension; of how the collective rationality of the field is arrived at and the acceptance that fields ''serve as mechanisms for bringing about phenomena other than similarity'' (p.137). The logical consequence is a redirection of attention from outcomes (and attendant debates on loose coupling) to the processes of change – how fields form around new collective rationalities, how key actors relate to each other within fields at national and transnational level and factors which lead to changes in the meaning projects of particular fields. From a theoretical perspective this would suggest more of a complementarity than conflict between the macro and meso forms of sociological institutionalism with the former concentrating on the origin and institutionalisation of cultural beliefs and practice and the latter focus on the processes of adopting and enacting these beliefs in particular contexts. From an empirical perspective, this changed emphasis supports the analysis of Davis and Marquis (2005) of organisational research moving away from being paradigm driven to being problem driven focusing less on testing of core theories and concentrating more on the investigation of critical social sectors like higher education.

Research Implications

The above analysis calls for more theorising and further research on the concepts used to describe the field of higher education ; institutional theory needs to take account of global activities such as higher education that operate concurrently within global models and particular national contexts. As globalisation intensifies, the number of activities in this category increases. Research might then focus on how global models influence the emergence and settlement of new fields of global activity, for example online learning. What will be the respective roles of states and international non-governmental bodies in shaping them? Will the actorhood of the various participants be defined by interaction within these cross national fields or by some external institutional context? It raises some normative issues too about democratic accountability and control of such fields (see Morth, 2006) and the hazard of national policy making being outsourced to supranational bodies who may oversee them (Rinne, Kallo, & Hokka, 2004)

The discourses relating to world society theory and world culture tend to be retrospective. The transformations in world culture have occurred in a period, as Meyer expresses it, in which "one big trajectory was prioritized—a post–WWII liberal order shaped by massive amounts of educational expansion, lots of science, and tremendous expansion of individual rights'' (quoted in Carney et al. 2012). The question is whether these trends will continue and what impact, if any, current events in the world polity may have on the future content of world culture. It is possible as Boli (2005) predicts, that world culture will continue to become further rationalized, organized, institutionalized, and consequential in coming decades; the current economic crisis and threats from global warming, for example, may lead to a decline of neoliberalism and consumerism but, not any reversal of the drive towards rationalisation and the increasing complexity of world culture. However there may also be a reaction against this rationalist interpretation of the social world as is happening to a limited degree in the Islamist world; there may even be a rebalancing of the relative influence of science and the arts in directing the future of a world polity.[44] The effect that the internet will have on the shaping and transmission of world culture is still unknown.

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[44] See for instance, the *Washington Post* feature on the use of visual art by the *Occupy* social movement or more historically, President Kennedy's speech on the need for the American nation to represent itself not only through its economic or military strength but also through its art – '' the spirit which informs and controls our strength matters just as much''.
 (http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-12-05/lifestyle/35287432_1_mcpherson-square-posters-movement, and http://arts.gov/about/kennedy respectively)

Further theorisation and research on higher education, therefore, must focus on the possible consequences of such uncertainties and changes in world culture and its effects at all levels of world society. At a global level, there is a need to explore further the evolution of ideas on higher education. This study focussed on the role of the EU and the OECD in an Irish context. The interaction between these bodies and agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank is worthy of further study particularly as the continuing spread and development of the representation in these agencies shifts away from an American hegemony to accommodate the new economies of China, India, Russia and Brazil. Of particular interest is how such institutionalised models will affect higher education in developing countries – where most higher education expansion will occur in the coming decades (Altbach, 2004). Is it possible for higher education institutions in these countries to conform to these models in the absence of any meaningful national governance system and with very few resources? How can resources be transferred from Western states without loss of intellectual or cultural autonomy for the beneficiary countries? What is the effect of attempting to conform? Does it divert education policies and resources away from more immediate societal needs in those states?

At the level of the university, further study is needed on the type of impact that '' the imposition of the myth of organisation on a domain previously structured in more traditional ways'' (Drori, Meyer, & Hwang, 2006, p. 273). This study focussed on the structural and administrative changes. More insights are needed on how the imposition affects the individual role and behaviour of academic staff and students within such organisational forms. There is also the issue of how this imposed organisational form will evolve as universities enter the virtual world of online learning and the different organisational culture that exists in that space. The scope of this study did not extend to analysing the changed role of academic staff in higher education but it would be interesting to determine the degree to which changes in curriculum content and teaching or research practice – the move towards a more socially embedded university- is being driven by academic entrepreneurship in response to societal expectations rather than centralised planning at state or university level[45].

Finally, there is the diverse strategic environment in which universities are now located due to the previously mentioned blurring between global and local fields. Irish HEIs are, in varying degrees, situated between national and international field dynamics and that may impact in different ways

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[45] See the article in *Scientific American* describing the role of academics in launching the MOOCs project at Stanford University. http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=massive-open-online-courses-transform-higher-education-and-science

on organisational strategising (see Figure 5.7 and Frølich et al. 2013). Further research is needed on how these multiple influences combine to direct organisational strategy. How do higher education institutions interpret these complex environments and how do these interpretations affect their strategies? How are strategy making processes affected by the institutional environment? What actual effect do these strategies have on organisational direction and structure?

All of these issues have implications too for national policy making and the need for a redefinition of internationalisation of higher education in Ireland. Current internationalisation policies tend to focus on staff and student mobility with the objective of attracting further income and research talent into Irish higher education, and the creation of a '' new diaspora'' of graduates from Irish HEIs in Asia and other emerging economies (Interviewee 1). Research and policy making should be extended to all those aspects of current global models that will impact on higher education. This includes future trends in curricular development, the design and impact of global ranking systems, diversity of provision in a European or global context and alternative models of provision and governance systems that genuinely accommodate individual and organisational aspirations. What happens within Irish higher education is increasingly being determined by what is happening in a changing world society. It is crucial that future research and policy making strives to comprehend the forces and actors that are directing that change.

APPENDICES

Appendix A List of Interviewees

Interviewee	Position
1	Official in Policy Making Unit Higher Education Authority
2	Official Higher Education Unit Department of Education and Skills
3	Official International Unit Department of Education and Skills
4	Senior Management Team Member Dublin City University
5	Senior Management Team Member Dublin City University
6	Senior Management Team Member National University of Ireland Galway
7	Senior Management Team Member National University Galway

Oifig an Aire Oideachais agus Scileanna
Office of the Minister for Education and Skills

John Hennessy
Chair
Higher Education Authority
Brooklawn House
Crampton Avenue
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4

16. July, 2013

Dear John

I refer to my letter of 30th May, in which I outlined the national priorities of Government and the key system objectives for higher education that are to provide the basis for the new system performance and governance framework to be implemented.

As you know, as part of that framework, the Higher Education Authority is to report back to me on an annual basis on the performance of the system overall. A set of high level system indicators for 2014-2016 has now been agreed that relate to each of the key system objectives previously conveyed. These high level indicators have been developed in consultation with your agency and with other government departments and agencies and are set out in full in the document attached to this letter. Also outlined are the structures, mechanisms and policy and legal instruments that need to be put in place or further developed to deliver successful performance in the system against national priorities.

I expect that the annual system report will use these indicators and provide contextual analysis on their status so as to both monitor system performance and contribute to further system development. Policy advice from the Higher Education Authority will also be set out against this background.

The next step in the implementation of the performance framework is for the Higher Education Authority to now enter into a set of individual institutional performance compacts with Irish higher education institutions which will reflect each institution's

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contribution as part of a new higher education system designed to respond to the needs of Ireland's economy and wider society in the coming years. A key element in the overall approach will be the implementation of performance funding in the sector.

While this is a complex and demanding agenda, I know that the Higher Education Authority will be able to meet the challenges ahead, working in partnership with my Department. As part of our shared ambition to improve the governance of the system overall, my Department will be developing a new memorandum of understanding between the Department and the Higher Education Authority. Reporting and liaison structures will be agreed shortly within the context of that work.

I would like to thank you and the members of the Higher Education Authority for your ongoing contribution to the development of the Higher Education system in Ireland.

Yours sincerely

Ruairi Quinn, T.D.
Minister for Education and Skills

Source - Department of Education and Skills: http://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Higher-Education/Minister-s-letter-to-the-HEA.pdf

Appendix C Organisation Chart for University College Galway 1997

University College Galway : Management/Organisation

Appendix D Organisation Chart for the National University of Ireland Galway 2013

President

- Vice-President Innovation & Performance
- Executive Director of Operations
  - Shared Services
  - Information Solutions & Services
  - Human Resources
  - Buildings and Services
- Vice-President Student Experience
- Registrar and Deputy President
  - Deans of College, Dean of Graduate Studies and Dean of International Affairs
  - Academic Affairs (Administration)
  - Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge
  - Library
  - Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching
  - Lifelong Learning
- Vice-President Research
- Vice-President Capital Projects
- Bursar
- Secretary

APPENDIX E Organisation Chart Dublin City University 1997

Other Principal Committees
- Union Management Committee
- Campus Company Boards
- Computer Users Committee (Chair: Head, Computer Services)
- IT Strategy Committee (Chair: Secretary)
- Safety Committee (Chair: Buildings Officer)
- Strategy Group
- Validation Committee (Chair: Registrar)
- Programme Boards
- Accreditation Board (Chair: Deans in Rotation)

Principal Academic Council Committees
- Standing Committee (Chair: Registrar)
- Teaching Committee (Chair: Election of Members)
- Research & Post Graduate Studies Committee (Chair: Election of Members)
- Library Committee (Chair: Director, Library Services)
- Coiste na Gaeilge (Chair: Election of Members)
- Discipline Committee (Chair: Secretary)
- Appeals Board (Chair: Registrar)
- Appeals Committee (Chair: Registrar)
- Socrates Committee (Chair: Director, IIA)

Governing Body

President

Academic Council Chair: President

Executive (11)

Heads Group (26)

Secretary

Registrar

Dean Faculty 1 — **Dean Faculty 2** — **Dean Faculty 3** — **Dean Faculty 4** — **Dean Faculty 5** — **Dean Faculty 6** — **Dean Faculty 7**

Librarian
- Reader Services (5)
- Technical Services (3)

Head of Education Services
- Telecommunications (3)
- Audio Visual (1)
- Graphics (1)
- Printing (1)
- University Timetable & Teaching Space Allocation

Head of Computer Services (vacant)

Director Fiontar

Head School 1, Head School 2, Head School 3, Head School 4, Head School 5, Head School 6, Head School 7, Head School 8, Head School 9, Head School 10, Head School 11, Head School 12, Head School 13

Assoc Dean Teaching Research

Finance Officer
- Fixed Assets Risk, VFM (1)
- Research Accounts (1)
- Management Accounts (1)
- Student Fees (1)
- Company Accounts (1)
- Payroll (1)

Buildings Officer
- Building Maintenance, Capital Projects (1)
- Ground Maintenance, Security, Room Allocation (1)
- Space Management and Furniture (1)

Personnel Officer
- Supervision of office staff development & training, industrial relations, welfare, project work, personnel policy (1)
- Advertising, MIS, probation, manpower analysis, staff budgets, HEA returns, equal opportunities (1)
- Superannuation, income continuance scheme, attendance/timekeeping, monitoring & annual leave, employee benefits, maternity leave (1)

Note: Recruitment Selection, and staff contracts are common tasks

Assistant Registrar
- Modularisation (1)
- Statistical Services (1)
- Information/Publicity (1)
- Registry Registration, Admissions, Examinations & Graduations (3)

Director of Industrial & International Affairs
- Industrial Affairs (2)
- Research Affairs (1)
- International Affairs (1)
- Communications & PR (1)

Director of Student Services
- Counselling (1)
- Careers & Appointments (1)
- Health & Service (2)
- Sports & Recreation (1)
- Accommodation (1)
- Access Services (1)
- Schools Liaison & Student Financial Assistance (1)

Faculty
1. DCU Business School
2. Faculty of Computing & Mathematics
3. Faculty of Humanities (jointly with St Patrick's College)
4. Faculty of Engineering & Design
5. Faculty of Science & Paramedical Studies
6. Distance Education
7. Faculty of Education (jointly with St Patrick's College)

School
1. DCU Business School
2. School of Mathematical Sciences
3. School of Computer Applications
4. School of Applied Languages
5. School of Communications
6. School of Electronic Engineering
7. School of Mechanical Engineering
8. School of Chemical Sciences
9. School of Biological Sciences
10. School of Physical Sciences
11. School of Nursing
12. Distance Education Centre
13. School of Education

Notes

(1) Placement at a particular level does not necessarily imply a similar salary level

Appendix F Organisation Chart Dublin City University 2013

DCU Organisational Charts 2012-2013

DCU Senior Management

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                                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                    │       President         │
                                    │  Prof. Brian MacCraith  │
                                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                                      ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                                      │    Deputy President     │
                                                      │      Jim Dowling        │
                                                      └─────────────────────────┘
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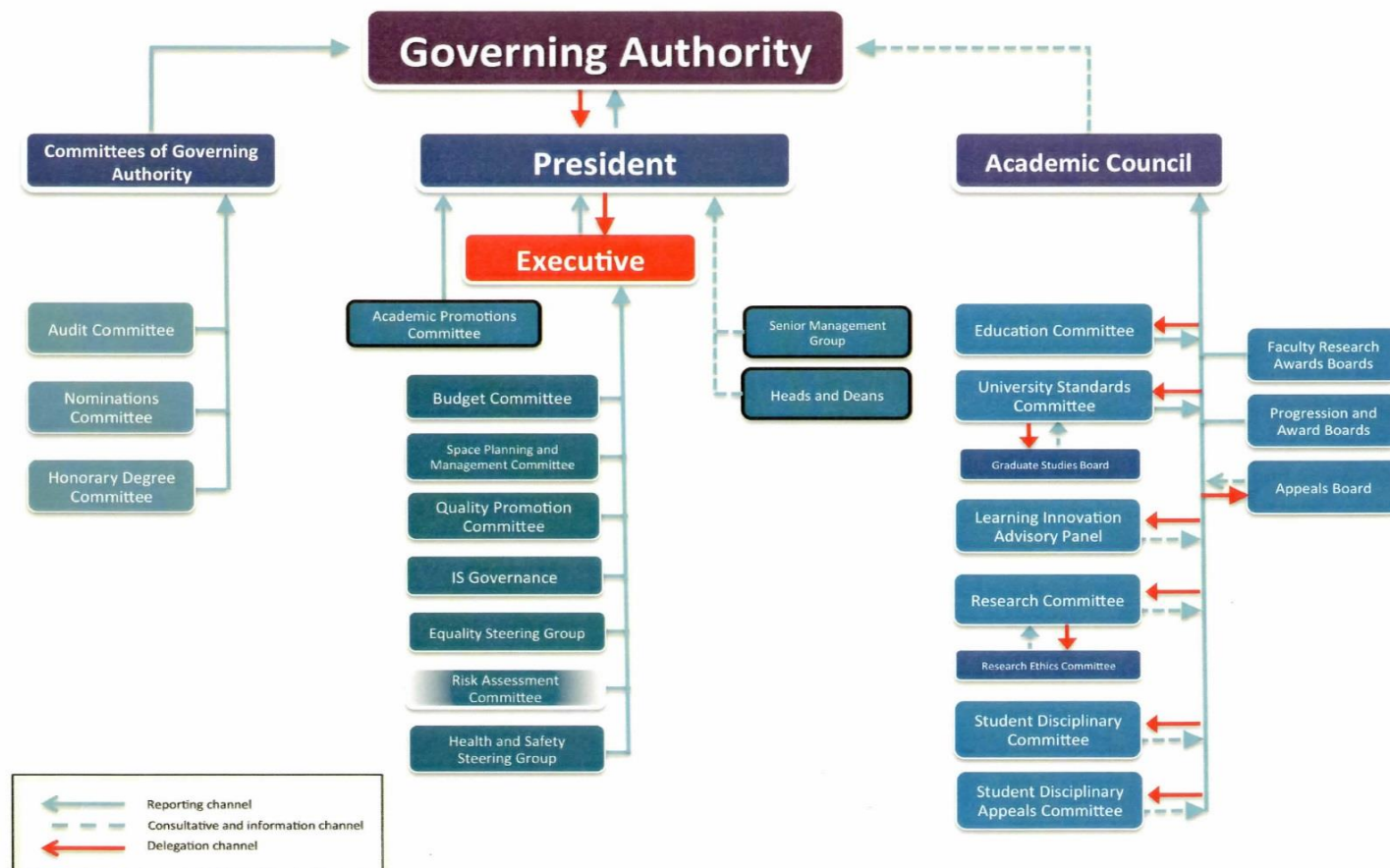| VP Academic Affairs (Registrar) Prof. E .Guilfoyle | Executive Director External & Strategic Affairs C. Ó. Cuinn | VP Research & Innovation Prof. A. Harvey | Chief Operations Officer Dr. D. Raftery | Director of Human Resources M. Burns | Director of Finance C. McGivern | Executive Dean, DCUBS Dr. A. Sinnott | Executive Dean, Science & Health Prof. J. Costello | Executive Dean, Humanities & Social Sciences Dr. J. Doyle | Executive Dean, Eng & Computing Prof. B. McMullin (Acting) |

Chief Operations Officer

Appendix G Committee Structure at Dublin City University 2012

University Committee Structure

GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

Dublin City University	Section
Standing Orders and Regulations for the Governing Authority	1
Code of Conduct for Members of Governing Authority	2
Role of Chancellor	3
Role of President / Chief Officer	4
Role of Secretary of Governing Authority	5
Functions and Decisions Reserved for Governing Authority	6
Code of Conduct for Employees	7
Statutes	8

APPENDICES

Universities Act, 1997	9
HEA / IUA Code of Governance of Irish Universities	10
Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (Dept. of Finance)	11

Governing Authority July 2011

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