Switchmen of Reform:

Competing Conceptions of Public Higher Education Governance in Poland

A Dissertation

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Piotr Pieńkowski, the teacher and mentor who planted the seeds it grew out of. Embodying integrity in the midst of fragmentation, you continue to spread branches for birds of the air to come and nest.

> *The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.* (Matthew 13:31-32)

Abstract

This study examined the extent to which academic leaders and government officials in Poland differ in their notions of good university governance, and sought to uncover how these notions intersect with global trends in higher education governance. As outlined in detail in Chapter 1, the research objective was to identify the criteria that determine what reforms of university governance in Poland are likely be perceived as acceptable by the two groups of most powerful higher education stakeholders.

Chapter Two sketches the contextual background of a crisis of public confidence in Polish higher education. It traces the origins of the crisis to a season of rapid and uneven system growth within a governance framework that hampers institutional adaptability and innovativeness. The example of a recent higher education reform bill demonstrates the limited power of the government vis a vis academic leaders to enact feasible change.

In Chapter Three, the conceptual rationale of the study is established on the basis of evaluative criteria for public policy. The theoretical framework combines Weber's (1991) notion of ideas as switchmen of behavior with path dependence theory, which posits that institutional trajectories reinforce social and institutional arrangements selected in the past, constraining the range of future options.

The chapter then turns to a review of relevant literature exploring the distinctive path that has shaped Polish academic leaders and their institutions. It is demonstrated that key stakeholders' conceptions of governance will likely involve elements of three distinct models of higher education that played a significant role in shaping the nation's

universities: the "Humboldtian" model of academic self-rule, the state-centered Soviet model, and the market-based or Anglo-Saxon model. The implications of these models for institutional governance are operationalized for the purposed of the analytic framework.

Second, it is hypothesized that the path of higher education institutions in Poland is influenced by the legacy of hostile foreign rule reinforced in the period of real socialism in Polish social architecture. This legacy affects higher education by virtue of a strong public-private dichotomy, displayed in a distrust of public processes, dual norms of achievement, hostility between the governing and the governed, and populist notions of equality.

The fourth chapter outlines the research design and instrumentation. The author adopted a qualitative approach with elements of ethnography and the technique of elite interviewing as most appropriate for gaining an insider's understanding of how Polish academic leaders conceptualize good governance. Study participants included representatives of the Polish government and leaders of four academic institutions in a large academic center.

The fifth chapter presents the findings of the empirical investigation, replicating how governance is conceptualized and operationalized by the research subjects. Findings indicate that the two groups of respondents hold distinct views related to the institutional structure of higher education institution, their mission, and the logic of their relationship to the state. Policy actors see higher education institutions as instruments of national development that are at their best when managed by professionals and held accountable

by external stakeholders. In contrast, academics see them as autonomous social institutions engaged in the preservation of culture and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, best governed by academic insiders on the basis of social trust. Both visions explored in the course of the study are recognized by respondents as problematic in Poland's social environment. The notion of accountability to a stakeholder board is complicated by the weakness of civil society and its lack of readiness to assume responsibility for the public good in higher education. Meanwhile, a model of academic self-rule renders academic leaders hostage to their constituencies while setting them at odds with the dominant academic ethos. Likewise, treating higher education institutions as instruments of the state does not achieve desired ends due to regulative mandates and output measures stalling innovation. The alternative, an institutional logic of trust-based accountability preferred by academic leaders, is proving as difficult due to strong norms of in-group loyalty that hamper merit-based evaluation.

In the sixth chapter, divergent views identified in the findings are interpreted as a conflict of two "rationalized myths" – accepted narratives of formal structures rationally fostering desirable ends. They are blueprints whose main attraction is not predicted viability or effectiveness, but symbolic association with a set of deeply held values. The two myths clash within the Polish system in such a way that both sets of goals are compromised. Suggested avenues to escape the impasse are values shared by both myths and therefore potential as sites of path-dependent transformation. These values include merit-based funding for research innovation, elite education, the development of "soft skills," and the empowerment of middle management. Whether path-dependent

transformation occurs will be affected by three considerations emerging from the data: the insufficiency of system-wide solutions introduced from the top down by means of regulation alone, the need of new structures for new aims, and the dangers of unreflexive borrowing of foreign organizational forms.

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"In the past three decades, higher education reforms have taken place almost everywhere in the world, and governance or the way that higher education is or should be coordinated has become a global topic."

(Cai, 2010, p. 229)

"From a structural perspective of funding and governance, until 2010-2011, Polish universities have remained largely unreformed (Kwiek, 2012c, p. 155).

CHAPTER 1: LANDSCAPE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.1 Massified System, Unreformed Governance

In the past two decades, Poland has been hailed as a success story of European higher education. Within fifteen years of the post-communist transformation in 1990, the number of students in Poland has grown by almost 500%. The rapid expansion of tertiary access greatly improved the educational attainment of Polish society. In 1990, only 10% of the population aged 25-34 held tertiary qualifications (Fulton, Santiago, Edquist, El Khawas & Hackl, 2007). By 2009, that percentage had risen over threefold to 35% (OECD, 2010).

Yet despite recent successes in expanding higher education access, Polish institutions of higher learning did not adapt to new market realities as quickly as other public sector organizations (Kwiek, 2012b). Having gone back to a governance model prevalent prior to the Second World War, the system suffered from poor alignment of educational programs with the new socio-economic realities (Dąbrowa-Szefler and Jabłecka-Prysłopska, 2006; Gociek, 2011; Papuzinska, 2009; Bucholc and Spiewak, 2009). By 2010, the massified yet largely unreformed system of higher education was being blamed by the public and the media for high numbers of unemployed graduates, low returns to higher education, and low ethical standards in spending public funds. Increasing public dissatisfaction with the relevance of higher education elevated it to a higher level of political priority than at any point since the post-communist transformation (Poland, 2010). Shortly before the completion of this dissertation in 2014, the chief architect of the economic transformation program in the 1990s publically called higher education "the worst remaining beachhead of real socialism in Poland" (Balcerowicz, 2014).

Findings of international evaluation reports demonstrate that one of the chief offenders contributing to the challenges facing Polish higher education is its peculiar model of governance that hampers strategic management (World Bank, 2004; Dąbrowa-Szefler and Jabłecka-Prysłopska, 2006, Fulton et al., 2007). It is a model in which higher education institutions function as federations of semi-independent faculties, academic leaders are elected as representatives of the community, and major decisions are made by collegial bodies consisting of senior academics. According to international experts as well as influential academics, institutions governed according to this model have been slow to adapt to a rapidly changing socioeconomic environment (Żylicz, 2011; Chałupka, 2011). In arguing for a new higher education bill, the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education highlighted a more effective model of higher education governance as the top priority of higher education reform (Poland, 2010).

What has so far hampered the work of policymakers in designing higher education reform is the lack of empirical studies examining the contemporary narratives of universities anywhere in Central and Eastern Europe that shape how implementers of reform conceptualize good governance. There are no studies exploring what university leaders in this region of the world perceive as good governance, what problems they see as most pressing, and what governance reforms they believe to be both effective and viable. Filling this gap in the literature is critical for the success of future reform efforts in Poland.

1.1.1 Contested Model of Academic Self-Rule

Governance is broadly defined as the decision-making arrangements within an institution that enable it "to set its policies and objectives, to achieve them, and to monitor its progress towards their achievement" (Oxford, 2006). The current governance framework of public higher education institutions (HEIs)[1] in Poland dates back to the brief period of Poland's independence following World War I and the time of real socialism[2]. New laws passed in the course of Poland's transformation to a free market economy restored academic freedom and opened universities to the forces of the market. They also restored a pre-communist model of academic self-rule, with a distribution of power favoring collegial bodies and senior faculty (Kwiek, 2011a). A law passed in 2005 adapted Polish higher education to the Bologna process, but it did not touch the hierarchical and heavily collegial mode of governance in which the locus of accountability remains within the institution.

According to some observers of Polish higher education, the current structure of governance hampers institutional innovation and seals HEIs off from their environment (Ernst & Young and Institute for Market Economics [EY&IME], 2009). Despite differences of opinion on minor issues, there is broad agreement among higher education experts that the current governance structure instituted in the wake of the transformation suffers from two serious problems.

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[1] The term "higher education institution" (HEI) is used throughout this paper to refer to an academic institution accredited to offer Bachelor's degrees (European Level 6) or higher. The term in Polish is "uczelnia."
[2] The historical origins of contemporary higher education institutions in Poland are discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

1.1.1.1 Lack of Transparency. A diagnosis of Polish higher education

commissioned by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in 2009 concluded that

the governance structure of public HEIs hampers institutional effectiveness and

accountability by granting overlapping powers to the same authorities (EY&IME, 2009).

The rector, equivalent to the president at Anglo-Saxon universities, has an executive

function as the head of the institutional administration. He[3] is also the head of the Senate,

which is the legislative and regulatory body charged with evaluating the work of the

administration. The rector is therefore the head of the body charged with supervising and

evaluating his own work.

The university Senate is a representative body consisting of the academic

employees, but it also has legislative competencies, makes personnel decisions, and

supervises the work of the rector. In essence, the representative body of the university

combines legislative, administrative and supervisory competencies (Jajszczyk and

Pacholski, 2010). An OECD report concludes that the extensive power of collective

bodies, such as the Senate and departmental boards, severely limits the decision-making

capacity of executive authorities, making it difficult for universities to adapt to the

changing environment (Dąbrowa-Szefler and Jabłecka-Prysłopska, 2006). What

complicates matters is the large size of university senates at public universities, where

they often consist of more than a hundred representatives. The involvement of large

representative bodies in managerial decisions such as long-term strategies, creating or

reorganizing units, or the management of university assets greatly complicates the task of

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[3] The vast majority of university rectors in Poland are male; therefore the pronouns used throughout this dissertation to refer to them are masculine.

the administration. The decisions are often results of unstable compromise between various interest groups (Poland, 2010). In a recent survey of higher education experts in Poland, increasing transparency in governance was recognized as critically important, more so than any other strategic goal for Polish higher education. 95% of all respondents expressed a belief that a transparent division of responsibility in governance would improve higher education quality (EY&IME, 2010b, p. 8).

What is notably absent at Polish universities is the representation of external stakeholders in their governance structures. Most higher education institutions, with the exception of the vocationally oriented Higher Vocational Schools, do not include employers or local government representatives in their governing bodies. Ministerial experts concluded that the overlapping and inward-focused governance structure lacks transparency and hampers the innovativeness of Polish universities (EY&IME, 2010b).

1.1.1.2 Managerial inefficiency. It is often noted in international evaluation reports that public HEIs in Poland are governed in an inefficient manner due to the lack of managerial expertise of their leaders. A World Bank (2004) report points out that management practices at most Polish universities "reflect a lack of understanding of the importance of setting objectives, assigning priorities, creating incentives, planning processes, and analyzing outputs against the targets set" (World Bank, 2004, p. 27). World Bank experts diagnose the problem in the following way:

> *Higher echelon management posts such as Rectors, Vice-Rectors and Faculty Deans are rotated according to academic seniority or group interests rather than by managerial skills or experience. The managers are elected for a rather brief*

period (three or four years) with a right to be re-elected once, which is not conducive to the accumulation of relevant skill and experience. The Law on Higher Education specifies the minimum academic qualifications a successful candidate for Rector or Dean should possess, but it does not define requisite managerial competence. The leaders are elected by large bodies composed of representatives of the academic and administrative staff and of students. (...) University senates and faculty boards, which is where many important decisions are taken, sometimes lack both experience and guidance on managerial and financial issues. A related issue is that there are few opportunities for either prospective or employed university administrators to obtain formal training in finance and management. There is no specialized university-level preparation for this profession and, surprisingly, universities do not offer continuing training opportunities to their administrative personnel.

(World Bank, 2004, pp. 27-28)

Although much has changed since 2004, and academic leaders now have access to more training opportunities than before, insiders of Polish higher education agree that the diagnosis still holds true. The electoral model and lack of managerial training restrict Polish higher education institutions' ability to adapt to changing social realities (CRASP [Conference of Rectors of Polish Academic Schools], 2010a). The unwieldy governance structure has the effect of "slowing down the decision-making process in matters requiring a managerial approach" (Dąbrowa-Szefler and Jabłecka-Prysłopska, 2006, p. 11), and

hampering institutional capacity for strategic planning (EY&IME, 2009 p. 25). Recent evaluation studies of Polish higher education highlight the impact of the current governance structure when they note that Polish universities remain strongly insular, maintaining few links with the external environment and displaying little initiative towards improving their external relevance (EY&IME, 2009).

1.1.1.3 Narrative of Exceptionalism. The persistence of a governance model described by Clark (1986) as "academic oligarchy" has been attributed to a socially convincing narrative of institutional exceptionalism of Central and Eastern European universities against their Western counterparts (Kwiek, 2011a). That narrative, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, helped insulate higher education institutions in Poland (and others in the region, e.g. Hungary and Czech Republic) from externally imposed governance reforms. Such reforms have been implemented in a large number of European Union countries in efforts to position higher education as an engine of growth in the global knowledge economy.

As described in detail in the next chapter, by the late 2000s in Poland, the narrative of exceptionalism was being eroded by high graduate unemployment, low returns to higher education, and a perceived erosion of ethical standards within academia. The crisis of public confidence in higher education opened a window of opportunity for the most comprehensive series of higher education reforms since 1990, passed in 2010-2011. Yet even those reforms, which according to one author introduced "fundamentally new rules of the game" (Kwiek, 2012c, p. 167) in HEIs relations to the state, the governance structures remained largely the same. So far, no empirical research has explored why governance

reform in Poland has been slow to occur, and what contextual factors must be taken into account by those who attempt to implement change in the next decade.

1.1.2 Political Pressures for Change

Voices calling for broad and strategic transformation of institutional governance at Polish universities have been present since the political transformation of 1989/1990. With each attempt at reform, pressure to move away from the traditional model of academic self-rule has met with strong resistance from the academic community. By the late 2000s, however, popular discontent with Polish HEIs coincided with the impact of international rankings and an increasing policy emphasis on higher education reform within the European Union. In the new political environment, it become a particular source of embarrassment to the Polish government that there is not a single Polish university ranked among the top 100 institutions in the European Union, or the top 400 universities in the world. At the same time, the ruling political party, Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform) occupied a stronger political position than any other since the transformation, and it had highlighted education as a key theme in their election campaign.

1.2 Uncertain Conditions of Viable Reform

The current Polish government has placed a higher priority than previous cabinets on the development of higher education, investing considerable resources into the drafting of a national higher education strategy. In 2008-2011, the government introduced a wave of higher education reforms that legislated the first comprehensive restructuring since 1990[4].

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[4] Provisions of the reform are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

The success of the reforms, remains to be seen, and it is strongly dependent on the cooperation of powerful HEI insiders. Polish HEIs enjoy extensive autonomy, which is by some accounts greater than that enjoyed by institutions in the majority of OECD countries (World Bank, 2004). Porous borders between politics and academia lead to a high degree of power in the hands of current and former university employees (Wnuk-Lipiński, 2014). Moreover, the governance structures of universities in Poland are not fully determined by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, but they are strongly shaped by their own democratically elected leadership. For that reason, an empirical comparison of the core narratives and commitments of policymakers as well as policy implementers at the level of university leadership is essential to develop effective and viable policy solutions.

1.3 Study Purpose

My study is an attempt to fill a significant gap in the literature around the dominant narratives about good HEI governance embraced by government leaders and academics in post-communist countries that returned to the model of academic self-rule, and particularly their conceptualizations of good HEI governance. It has been argued that a locally generated narrative has become "much less socially relevant in the Central European region than in Western European countries" (Kwiek, 2011a, p. 5), but that locally generated narrative has not yet been the subject of thorough empirical investigation. The objective of the study is to uncover and compare the key criteria that shape conceptualizations of governance held by government officials and leaders of academic institutions. The practical purpose guiding the research is to inform

policymakers on what kinds of reforms may be perceived as needed, effective and viable by those charged with their eventual implementation.

My ultimate hope in filling the existing gap in the literature is to provide a resource for both academic leaders and policymakers in Central and Eastern European states where the tradition associated with the legacy of Wilhelm von Humboldt intersects with market trends and a post-communist legacy. This study intends to inform future higher education policy by identifying the characteristics of governance reforms are likely to enhance the quality of academic work in the 21st century in a manner consistent with the local path dependence. On the basis of previous research in the region, this study is rooted in the notion that the values and conceptions of key stakeholders play a crucial role in determining the likelihood of meaningful change. As Samoff (1999) has argued, "Unless the beneficiaries of the reform become its bearers, it is likely to be still-born" (Samoff, 1999, p. 84). The present study offers to produce a cross-sectional view of how these higher education leaders construct the factors impacting governance structures, and how they are likely to respond under the increasing pressure for reform.

1.3.1 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to identify and compare the criteria that determine the appeal and viability of governance practices in the eyes of two groups of leading stakeholders of the higher education system: university leaders and government officials concerned with higher education. In order to identify these criteria, the research instruments involved in this study explore what government representatives, university administrators and senior faculty in Poland see as needed, potentially effective, and

politically viable governance solutions. I elicit stories and examples of good and bad governance, as well as the respondents' interpretations of why they turned out successful and unsuccessful. By examining the beliefs and narratives of key stakeholders, I set out to identify the conditions of change in university governance, and examples of good practice that takes heed of those conditions.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The questions directly addressed in this study are as follows:

- What are the conceptions of higher education governance held by government and university leaders in Poland?

  o To what extent do they agree or disagree on the goals of good governance?

  o To what extent do they agree or disagree in their evaluation of the current system, their perceptions of existing problems, and the diagnoses of these problems?

  o What governance reforms do they perceive as needed, potentially effective, and politically viable?

  o How do their notions of good governance compare with European and global trends in university governance?

- What are the key factors that shape government and university leaders' notions of what constitutes good governance?

o   What are the cultural, social, economic, historical and political criteria that influence the appeal and viability of a governance reform to these two groups?

1.4 Significance

In the past two decades, the distribution of power in higher education across the globe has changed to an unprecedented extent (Pusser, 2008). As HEIs are increasingly seen as key engines of the global "knowledge economy", they face competing ideas of how they should be governed (Vaira, 2004). Traditional notions of institutional autonomy and shared governance are being challenged by multiple stakeholders in response to shifts in the global political economy (Wellman, 2006). The challenge of adjusting HEI structures to the new times is therefore not unique to Poland, but rather a common one to all developed and developing nations that aspire for continued relevance.

While Poland experiences the same global dynamics as its neighbors, it faces a unique set of social and historical challenges that affect most post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. The countries that originally formed the European Union have wrestled with pressures on traditional governance structures ever since the 1960s, and many of them have reformed their systems in attempts to make them relevant in a world in which knowledge is more democratically distributed and plays a greater role than ever (Maasen and Stensaker, 2010). In places like Great Britain, Finland and the Netherlands, a reorganization of higher education governance preceded the rise of their universities' global standing, and stimulated the growth of national economies (Clark, 1986). While the policy solutions tested in Western Europe are instructive for the newer

members of the EU, post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe face social and cultural realities that preclude attempts at direct replication.

1.4.1 Poland's Leading Role in Central and Eastern Europe

For five decades after the Second World War, the higher education systems of most Central and Eastern European nations functioned in relative isolation from the economic and political dynamics that they must now cope with. Their leadership structures were embedded in a distinct political environment that tightly proscribed the institutional framework of governance. So far, little has been known about how the unique post-communist path dependencies affect the scope of possibility in governance solutions in the 21st century. An understanding of these conceptions is crucial for the construction of a viable higher education policy, and for effective university leadership in the region. This dissertation attempts to fill this critical gap in the research literature.

The significance of Poland in the post-communist higher education landscape lies in its established position as a political and educational leader in Central and Eastern Europe. Policy solutions developed in Poland have historically exerted significant influence in other post-communist nations. The only country in the region that has substantially reformed its governance since 1990 is Estonia, which has a different cultural context by virtue of its Scandinavian linkages. So far, nobody else has followed. Governance reforms instituted in Poland, on the other hand, have a high likelihood of impacting the policy direction of the entire region due to their greater relevance for the social and cultural context.

1.4.2 Implications of Higher Education Reform for Poland's Development

On the national level, the Polish government forecasts that failure to reform higher education at the present moment will increase the gap between Poland and the more developed nations in the EU. It estimates that reform failure would set Poland back by an additional 12-15 years and make it extremely difficult for the nation to compete with its neighbors (Poland, 2010, p. 35). Meanwhile, the current "window of opportunity" (Kingdon, 1986) opened by the public debate on higher education will not stay open for very long, especially given the increasingly volatile political situation in the region.

"One of the problems of living in a period of transition comes from the dissonance

created by an episodic shift away from older meaning systems

and our inability to react with any kind of sensibility or coherence

to the fragmentary new symbol systems that strike our bewildered consciousness"

(Shea, 1998, p. 40).

"Unless the beneficiaries of the reform become its bearers, it is likely to be still-born"

(Samoff, 1999, p. 84).

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Growing Pains

In the past two decades, Eastern Europe has witnessed unprecedented growth of its higher education sectors. Prior to the political transformation in 1990, higher education access was tightly controlled by the state, and tertiary attainment rates were in the single digits (Fulton et al., 2007). Following the political transformation, demand for higher education rose rapidly across the region, and the public purse was not capable of financing system growth (EY&IME, 2010a). In these circumstances, higher education expansion was accomplished largely by shifting its fiscal burden to the private sector. In Poland, a new Law on Higher Education (Poland, 1990) enabled the creation of non-public HEIs and allowed public institutions to charge tuition fees from the large subset of students who qualified for admission but not for government funding. In the wake of this provision, and thanks to high social demand, the number of higher education institutions (HEIs) skyrocketed from 97 in 1989 to 445 in 2005, and 461 in 2010 (Central Statistical Office, 2010). Access to education was thus dramatically widened through both external and internal privatization: the appearance of private providers and fee-paying places at public universities (Kwiek, 2011b).

As a result of these changes, the gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education reached 69% by 2008 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010). Since 2007, Poland has annually produced more tertiary graduates than any other European country in the OECD (OECD, 2011). Poland also continues to have significantly more tertiary students than EU average –

563 per 10,000 in the population, as compared to 383 per 10,000 (Central Statistical Office, 2010, p. 526).

Dramatic growth in the private sector of higher education and the internal privatization of public institutions reshaped the formal and informal rules governing the academic community. Availability of jobs in the private sector increased the incidence of moonlighting to a nearly universal level, with negative consequences for research productivity (Fulton et al., 2007). The consequences for academic norms have been described as the deinstitutionalization of the public university (Kwiek, 2012a).

Newly established institutions absorbed educational demand, but often did little to prepare students for the job market. With instructional activities accounting for the majority of university budgets (81% and 93% for public and private universities, respectively), new programs were offered primarily in disciplines requiring little investment, such as the social sciences and economics, but for which there was little demand in the job market (EY&IME, 2009).

Low quality instruction and poor alignment of educational programs with the new socio-economic realities have led to two related problems: high graduate unemployment and low returns to higher education. By 2008, hardly a week went by for an entire year without a media report on some dysfunction of the system of higher education, creating a public perception that higher education in Poland is now in a worse condition than it was during communism. In a 2010 survey, 59% of respondents representing higher education stakeholders, such as academic and business leaders, evaluated the Polish higher education system as higher than "satisfactory" but less than "good" – the equivalent of a C+ in the

Anglo-Saxon grading system (CRASP, 2010a, p. 35). HEI leaders have come under increasing criticism for their lack of leadership and strategic planning, while the issue of higher education reform has risen to a high priority on the government's priority list.

2.2 The Lost Generation

In the initial decades after the post-communist transformation, pressing concerns such as health care and pension reform dominated the policy agenda and eclipsed higher education, to which the government applied a "policy of no policy." In time, the plight of unemployed, underemployed and unfulfilled HEI graduates produced a haunting sense of deception best captured by a leading public intellectual, Adam Król:

> *Society creates hope, gives a promise, and it cannot fulfill it. We have never had this on such a massive scale. Millions of people are being educated, they are shown the attractions of the world in television series, and given self-help books that announce, "you can do more," "develop yourself," "improve," "live fully" - and then they are led into a dead end.* (Król, 2014; own translation)

The hopes offered to young people by near-universal access to higher education are not being realized. By 2013, over 700,000 people aged 25-34 had left the country – many of them young and educated at public expense (Ćwiek, 2013). In Poland, they face high unemployment, low returns to higher education, and, as a result bleak prospects for the future (Energy for Europe, 2013).

2.2.1 Graduate Unemployment

Prior to the crisis of the European currency in 2011, Poland already had one of the highest unemployment rates for young people (Eurydice, 2009) and one of the highest

graduate unemployment rates in the European Union (Kostoglou & Paloukis, 2007).

Although the figures have since paled in comparison to the troubled economies in Greece

and Spain, the problem of graduate unemployment persists. The level of unemployment

among holders of tertiary degrees in Poland has risen steadily within the last decade, even

as the total unemployment rate in the country has been falling. The percentage of

unemployed persons registered with the government Employment Office who have

tertiary education has risen from 2.6% in 2000 to 8.5% in 2008, and 9.4% in 2009. In the

same period, the rate of registered unemployment on the whole has fallen from 15.1% in

2000 to 9.5% in 2008 and 11.9% in 2009. (Central Statistical Office, 2010, p. 156). In

comparison, the average unemployment rate among holders of tertiary degrees in the

European Union for the same time period was 4.9% in 2000, 3.8% in 2008, and 5% in

2009 (European Commission, 2010).

The scale of the problem is not fully reflected in Employment Office figures, as

many young people without jobs do not get registered at the Office (Kabaj & Jeruszka,

2002), others seek seasonal or permanent work abroad (Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski,

2008; Newsweek, 2014), and many others are employed below their qualifications

(Poland, 2010).

The attitudes of university leaders towards the issue of employability are reflected

in a recent survey of higher education stakeholders, which found that 66% of all

respondents selected employment outcomes of graduates as the top criterion for

evaluating higher education institutions (CRASP, 2010a, p. 36).

2.2.2 Low Returns to Higher Education

The rapid growth of the higher education sector also coincided with a drop in the impact of higher education on lifetime earnings. Although persons with university degrees still fare much better in the job market than others, Poland has had of the lowest rates of return to higher education in the OECD – 28%, as compared to 76.8% in the USA and 68.8% in Portugal (Poland, 2010). Low returns to higher education play a part in the fact that many young people educated at public expense choose to live and work abroad – in 2013, their number exceeded 700,000 (Ćwiek, 2013). The "brain drain" has been especially severe among academics (CRASP, 2010a, p. 106).

2.2.3 Decreasing Public Confidence

Data from a longitudinal study conducted by Public Opinion Research Center (PORC) suggest that the five years between 2004 and 2009 witnessed a 13% decrease in the number of Polish citizens who considered the pursuit of further education a worthwhile endeavor (PORC, 2009). Families invest considerable resources in educating their children in hopes of ensuring them a better future, and their lack of employment becomes the cause of much resentment. A focus group study conducted in 2013 by the Public Opinion Research Center on behalf of the foundation Energy for Europe found that young people doubt the sense of pursuing higher education and resent their parents for pressuring them to obtain a diploma because what matters in the job market is not education but practical competence. They still see the value of a diploma as a marker of prestige and a gateway into employment, but more often they talk about higher education institutions as "unemployment factories" that merely postpone the inevitable (Energy for

Europe, 2013, p. 16). Young respondents lack hope for a future in Poland. They are not alone – a survey conducted in 2014 showed that only 17 out of 100 Polish people do not consider emigration (Newsweek, 2014).

From the perspective of the government, high graduate unemployment and emigration of graduates represent a waste of intellectual and social capital developed at the expense of public resources (Wilczyńska-Kwiatek, 2005). From an economic standpoint, failed links between education and employment and the emigration of young people in their prime threatens to undermine economic growth (Barro, 1997). From a human perspective, statistics hide the tragedies of individuals whose awakened expectations led them into a dead end where the only hopeful way out involves leaving the family and homeland that invested so heavily into awakening these expectations in the first place.

In the public discussion around the issue, HEI leaders are often blamed for the difficult situation of graduates in the job market (Gociek, 2011). The hope of a well-paid job is the main motivation of most Polish students entering higher education, and the failure of HEI leadership to deliver employability is seen as a failure of the higher education system as a whole. Young people ask with bitterness how those in charge of public HEIs can expand enrollments in study programs known as "unemployment factories," keeping poor instructors in poor programs just to keep receiving ministerial subsidies – and how the government can allow this to happen (Energy for Europe, 2013, p. 16).

2.3 European Policy Environment

2.3.1 The Bologna Process

Concerns over the responsiveness of higher education institutions to the socioeconomic environment have been a significant feature of the European policy environment for over two decades. Since signing the Bologna Accord in 1999, Poland has joined the European community in a commitment to advance higher education as an engine of regional economic development (European Council, 2000). Central to the Bologna narrative is the concept of a knowledge-based society – a society that derives its prosperity from the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge (Berlin Communique, 2003). In this context, higher education is seen as a key driver of socioeconomic development, and has received an increasing amount of attention in the international community that adopted the Bologna process. European trends in higher education governance have become important points of reference for Polish policymakers.

Targets of the Bologna process articulated as key features of a knowledge-based society include the development of lifelong learning as well as mobility and increased employability of graduates (Prague Communique, 2001; Berlin Communique, 2003). Across Europe, these goals have translated into initiatives to track students into their work lives as well as broad-based governance reforms.

The European Commission championed a reform agenda that included "a diversification of funding sources, an intensification of ties between universities and industries and a closer match between the supply of qualifications and labor market

demands" (Dobbins, Knill & Vogtle, 2011). Reforms adopted by Poland's neighbors have replaced direct government intervention in higher education with output funding and performance-based steering through intermediate bodies and agencies (Gornitzka and Maassen, 2000). In response to these measures, the trend in institutional governance has shifted towards a more professionalized model of "New Public Management", with more power in the hands of executive authorities, and increased accountability to external stakeholders (Braun and Merrien, 2001; Maasen and Stensaker, 2010).

2.4 A Tale of Two Strategies

The current efforts to reform Polish higher education have been informed by two influential analyses – one authored by a commercial consulting firm, and one by Polish academics. Each diagnoses the problems of the higher education system differently, and sees a different solution in the realm of governance.

In 2008, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education set out to create a national strategy for the development of higher education. It selected a joint bid by Ernst & Young and the Institute for Market Economics to prepare a diagnosis of Polish higher education and a development strategy for the next decade. The choice of a commercial firm to conduct the expertise elicited protests from the Conference of Rectors of Polish Academic Schools – a national association then under the leadership of Jerzy Woźnicki, the former president of the Warsaw University of Technology. Conditions of the ministerial call for proposals prevented CRASP from participating, so the association commissioned the creation of its own strategy. While controversial at the time, CRASP's

disagreement resulted in the Ministry receiving not one but two well-crafted strategy

documents.

Both analyses preceded the drafting of a higher education reform bill that was

signed into law in April 2011. With a focus on academic leaders' conceptions of

governance in mind, the following section outlines the elements of both strategies that

centered on governance, and the extent to which the solutions proposed enjoyed the

support of the academic establishment.

2.4.1 Strategy 1: Ernst & Young and the Institute for Market Economics (EY&IME)

The strategy prepared by EY&IME proposes that governance at Polish universities

should have clear delineation between the functions of management, supervision, and

employee representation – so that decisions made at HEIs serve the common good rather

than particular interest groups within academia. For that end, it proposes that all

universities be required to have five separate bodies cooperating in governance. The first

is a Board of Trustees (*Rada Powiernicza*), consisting of seven members: one Ministry

representative and two representatives appointed by the university Senate, local

government, and business associations. Trustees are not to be employees of any

university, and must have documented experience in managing an institution whose

budget is not to be less than the budget of the university (EY&IME, 2010a, p. 96). The

Board of Trustees is to select the rector and the Management Board (*Kolegium*

Rektorskie), determine their job descriptions, and supervise their work. In cooperation

with other governing bodies, it also approves the institutional charter and strategy.

In the EY&IME proposal, the Management Board consists of the rector and vice-rectors. Its function is to manage the university and make all decisions that are not the provenance of other bodies.

The Senate is proposed to consist of only up to thirty members who represent the academic faculty and students. Its suggested role, among other things, is to advise on institutional strategy and by-laws, supervise large research projects, recommend the initiation of new study programs, and evaluate annual reports submitted by the Management Board (*Kolegium Rektorskie*). The strategy specifies that the rector may but does not need to remain the head of the Senate (EY&IME, 2010a, p. 98).

The Student Government *(Samorząd Studentów)* and Staff Council *(Rada Pracownicza)* are proposed as bodies representing students and university staff. The rector is to inform these bodies on the state of the university, especially any upcoming changes affecting their constituencies, and to seek their advice on decisions that affect them (EY&IME, 2010a, p. 99).

Public consultations of the EY&IME strategy pointed to a noteworthy puzzle. In one survey, higher education leaders and experts selected increasing transparency in governance as the most critical priority for Polish higher education, and almost unanimously approved of the goals proposed in the strategy. Yet in another survey filled out by representatives of 22 universities, respondents reacted very unfavorably to each proposed solution. Particular criticism was reserved for the idea of introducing Boards of Trustees and the notion that representatives of the central and local government should participate in institutional governance. They feared that universities would lose

autonomy, and their governance structures would become politicized (EY&IME, 2010c, p. 8). This theme surfaces powerfully in the findings of this study presented in chapter 5.

Over all, the EY&IME strategy enjoyed the most support from academic leaders in STEM disciplines and those involved in business activities (EY&IME, 2010b, p. 10). One of the most common critiques of the strategy was its lack of attention to the political consensus needed for successful implementation.

2.4.2 Strategy 2: Conference of Rectors of Polish Academic Schools (CRASP)

The CRASP strategy, in contrast, distinctly rejects the notion that the government can successfully steer higher education by means of mandates and incentives. Such instruments, according to the authors of the CRASP strategy, convey a low level of trust and corrupt the academic ethos (CRASP, 2010a, p. 73). Instead, the authors postulate to rebuild trust between the government and universities, and suggest that the government should play a supportive rather than organizational role.

The CRASP strategy proposes to give universities the option of introducing an institutional Board of Trustees, but not to make such a solution obligatory. It argues that to do so would collide with the academic tradition of the Senate as a supervisory body (CRASP, 2010b, p. 100). The creation of the Board of Trustees is therefore proposed as optional, but it is to be incentivized by increasing the fiscal autonomy of universities that choose to appoint them (CRASP, 2010b, p. 100). Trustees would represent external stakeholders, appointed by the Ministry and the university Senate (CRASP, 2010b, p. 99).

At the conceptual level, the CRASP proposal differentiates between academic governance and academic management, and proposes to give universities the option of dividing these functions between the Senate and the Board of Trustees. In this model, the Board of Trustees is charged with supervising the administration in the management of resources in accordance with an institution's strategy, and the Senate retains its supervisory function with regard to the instructional process, research, and the social mission of the university (CRASP, 2010b, p. 67).

CRASP also proposes to expand the authority of the university rector as the executive director who bridges the spheres of governance and management. It suggests that it would be beneficial to change how the rector is elected, so that the Senate can call on a search committee to make final recommendations. The rector is then to be elected either the same way as at present, by the Electoral College, or by the Senate together with the Board of Trustees. He has the right to seek reelection for up to two terms, so one more term than at present.

The proposal retains the function of the rector as the head of the Senate, and charges the Senate with the task of determining an institutional strategy. The proposed solution to the lack of managerial skills among university leaders is for the Ministry of Science and Higher Education to offer regular training options. CRASP also proposes greater autonomy for universities in managing their personnel as well as their finances, as long as they do so in alignment with their strategic development plans (CRASP, 2010b, p. 67).

Although the CRASP strategy was commissioned by an association of rectors, it is not clear whether the proposed solutions enjoy the support of the majority of the academic establishment. It would appear from press accounts, for instance, that leaders of non-public institutions favored the EY&IME strategy.

2.4.3 Impasse of Conflicting Visions

The tale of the two strategies is an instructive picture of the complexities inherent in altering the balance of power and autonomy in a system in which the primary actors hold vastly divergent conceptions of governance. Both documents are written by respected higher education experts, both recognize the current governance structures as flawed, and both aim to increase their transparency and effectiveness. While it appears that there is a general agreement about the existence of the problem, no such agreement exists with regard to its diagnosis, or ways in which it could be cured. It is remarkable that both strategies propose the introduction of a Board of Trustees, which is a standard practice in other countries of the European Union and one of the established answers to the question of accountability. The specific proposals, however, reflect potentially different conceptions of governance.

The CRASP proposal to retain the supervisory function of the Senate and make the Board of Trustees optional reflects a view of governance that is rooted in notions of trust and academic self-rule. As I demonstrate in Chapter Three, these views are deeply embedded in the pre-communist academic tradition in Poland. The implicit diagnosis of the crisis in Polish higher education, of which the document speaks very openly, places

the illness outside of academic governance. Overlapping powers are not seen as a significant problem; if anything, it is the insufficient training of university leaders and limited institutional autonomy that is to blame for existing problems.

The EY&IME strategy, on the other hand, proposes a serious overhaul of the governance structure in an effort to increase transparency and accountability. The implicit diagnosis of Polish higher education points to the governance structure as a major culprit in the current crisis. In the following sections, I show that the underlying conception of governance is rooted in a market-oriented and managerial model of university governance that has been the European trend since the 1980s (Gornitzka, Maassen, Olsen & Stensaker, 2007; Maassen and Stensaker, 2011).

In the end, the controversy around the proper course of higher education development placed the government in a sensitive position with regard to the final shape of the reform bill.

Higher Education Reform Bill. The amendment signed into law by President Bronisław Komorowski on 5 April 2011 combines elements of both strategies outlined above (Poland, 2011). It is the first comprehensive overhaul of Polish higher education since 1990 (Poland, 2010). It must be noted that the reform includes numerous provisions, of which only those related to university governance will be discussed in the context of this study.

The first relevant change is an increase in the autonomy of universities with respect to designing study programs and institutional bylaws. New programs and changes

in bylaws will no longer need to be approved by the Ministry, which is hoped to improve the innovativeness of university leaders in responding to the needs of the job market.

Secondly, the reform expands the competencies of the rector to include the creation, reorganization and closing of academic units. Previously, such decisions required the approval of the Senate, which was often difficult to obtain for political reasons. The need for increased procedural autonomy and an expansion of the rector's competencies had been postulated in both strategies. The power of the Senate is further limited by limiting its members' tenure to a maximum of two terms, and its formal designation as a staff council (*Rada Pracownicza*).

The reform gives universities two options for governance selection. It allows them to choose between the current traditional model and what it calls a "managerial" model. In the managerial model, the rector is selected in an open search. He then has the freedom to conduct open searches for deans and vice-rectors (except the vice-rector for academic affairs, the equivalent of the Provost in the U.S. system), and make his own selections.

What is perhaps the most surprising aspect of the bill is that it only requires Boards of Trustees (*Konwent*) to be established at Higher Professional Schools, where they are already the norm. Other institutions are encouraged to appoint Boards of Trustees, but the reform does not incentivize them in any way to do so, despite arguing very strongly in their favor (Poland, 2010).

Mutually Unsatisfactory Compromise. It is very clear from the reform bill that its governance solutions are designed as a cautious compromise between various

conceptions of governance. Most of the changes it proposes are those that overlapped

within the two strategies, as in the case of greater procedural autonomy, more

competencies for rectors, and curbing the power of the Senate. The area where it does not

go as far as either of the policy documents is institutionalizing accountability by

involving external stakeholders in governance. The government's hesitation in this

respect points to realities beyond what meets the eye in the two strategies. It is very clear

in the policy documents that the current government strongly favors the idea of external

accountability, yet it does not even propose to incentivize it to the degree suggested by

the more conservative CRASP strategy. The puzzle regarding why external

accountability was not made mandatory was one of the issues addressed in this study, and

it is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

2.5 Contextual Implications for Theoretical Frame

In the following chapter, I seek to answer the question: What are the factors most

likely to impact the conceptions of higher education governance held by government and

university leaders in post-communist contexts? My choice of this question is guided by

Weber's metaphor of ideas as switchmen of behavior, and I attempt to model the criteria

that shape both continuity and change in the social system of Polish higher education.

The core of the conceptual framework employed in this study is path dependence

theory. If, as Weber posits, ideas act as switchmen of social behavior, the tracks consist

of self-reinforcing patterns developed in the course of institutional development. The

concept of path dependence is especially relevant in times of social and economic

transition, when institutions change more rapidly than the broader social architecture – as

has been the case in Central and Eastern Europe. Five decades of real socialism[5] shaped and reinforced social mechanisms in ways that have significant consequences for their trajectories of development. Path dependence theory explains how entrenched arrangements constrain the viability and effectiveness of new practices, even those that may have proved successful elsewhere.

Next, the review of relevant literature explores distinctive sections of the governance pathway of Polish higher education to uncover some of the factors impacting current conceptions of governance. Foundational among these are the major higher education models that have shaped Polish higher education in the course of its history. These diverse variants include the "Humboldtian model," the state-centered model, and the managerial or market-based model. Since all three traditions intersect in the Polish context, they are likely to generate a diversity of beliefs and expectations about the role of universities and ways in which they should be governed.

The second major body of literature that speaks to the distinctive determinants of governance in Poland is the sociological analysis of the post-communist legacy in social institutions in Eastern Europe. According to Polish scholars, the heritage of real socialism continues to be felt in three key areas: a deep sense of distrust between the governing and the governed, a stark differentiation between the public and the private, and a notion of equality that penalizes exceptional performance (Marody, 1991; Sztompka, 1993). Post-communist scholars point out that the chaotic period of post-communist transition, which

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[5] In this paper, "real socialism" is defined as the political system that was in place in Poland in 1944-1989. It is treated as synonymous with the term "communism," which the author chose to avoid not to enter into the controversial debate regarding the extent to which this system reflected the idea of the communist society developed by Marx and Engels.

universities often accomplished with little guidance, led to the emergence of an academic democracy that veers in the direction of populism. Nearly all university leaders in Poland lived through the post-communist transition; therefore these factors are likely to play a role in their current conceptions of good university governance.

"The basic problem which the reformers must recognize has to do with the fact that
everyday actions of individuals will be modeled by habits developed in the course of
social experiences radically different from those which should fill our new institutions"

(Marody, 1991, p. 167, own translation).

"The evidence suggests that Poland still finds itself lodged

between the market and academic oligarchy, and that the exogenous dimension

has moderately impacted the direction of change."

(Dobbins and Knill, 2009, p. 419)

CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Against the background of current debates on institutional governance in Polish higher education, this dissertation now turns to the theoretical constructs that may assist in explaining the factors that shape academic leaders' conceptions of governance, and criteria that determine the viability of future policy options. This section clarifies the definition of governance employed in this study before turning to policy analysis literature, Weber's economic sociology, and path dependence theory to provide a framework for understanding the complex layers shaping how governance in Poland is conceptualized, and in what directions it could conceivably develop.

3.1.1 Defining Governance

This study employs the standard definition of university governance suggested by the Council of Europe, which is "the framework in which an institution pursues its goals, objectives and policies in a coherent and coordinated manner" (Council of Europe 2006, quoted in Eurydice 2009, p. 12). Governance mechanisms are primarily legal and economic, but they also include academic customs and traditions.

In Polish policy literature, governance is often described as the "academic order" (*ład akademicki*) of the university. It includes both the internal order (*ład wewnętrzny*), which consists of governance arrangements internal to the institution, and the external order (*ład zewnętrzny*), which refers to the regulation of the institution by public authorities (EY&IME 2009, p. 10). In recent literature on the topic, governance has been discussed primarily in terms of the relationship between the university and the state (European Commission, 2008), which is understandable given the changing nature of that

relationship around the world. In the context of this study, the primary focus is on the internal distribution of power and those aspects of the external order that directly affect the organizational solutions and processes at the local level. The aspect of governance of primary interest in this study has been aptly characterized as "the rules and mechanisms by which various stakeholders influence decisions, how they are held accountable, and to whom" (European Commission, 2008, p. 12).

3.1.2 Framing the Problem: Evaluative Criteria of Public Policy

The central tension in discussions about governance at Polish universities stems from a lack of consensus on appropriate policy solutions to the current crisis. Key stakeholders agree that Polish higher education is struggling, but they do not agree what policies should be put into place. Because of the context of diverging views on appropriate policy responses, basic tenets of policy analysis provide a useful point of departure for the theoretical framework.

Bardach's (1972) classic typology of evaluative criteria identifies "four main constraints which bear on the objective of designing a policy that will work as intended: technical feasibility, political viability, economic and financial possibility, and administrative operability" (Bardach 1972, p. 216). In the two visions of Polish higher education outlined above, the debate over proper higher education governance is at the stage in which considerations of technical feasibility and political viability predominate. The criteria of financial possibility and administrative operability can only follow when it is clear what options are considered to be effective and viable. The main questions related to the subject at hand that are currently asked by the stakeholders represented in the two strategies are: How do we improve the governance of our universities? And how do we

do it in a way that will work in our context? The EY&IME strategy focused primarily on issues of technical feasibility, proposing a series of solutions documented as effective in other countries. The CRASP strategy, on the other hand, emphasized the unique social and cultural considerations limiting the viability of externally legitimated solutions.

Analysis of the two competing strategies and the subsequent legislation reveals the close relationship between considerations of effectiveness and viability in the context of Polish higher education. For example, the idea of introducing Boards of Trustees, proposed in response to a recognized need to increase external transparency and accountability of universities, met with strong resistance from the stakeholders who strongly expressed the need. The potential of implementing solutions deemed as effective elsewhere is bounded by their viability in a given context. The links emerging from the work of Bardach (1972) and Patton and Sawicki (1986) extend the theoretical rationale for an in-depth examination of the beliefs and motivations of key political actors in Polish higher education.

At the same time, as Patton and Sawicki (1986) warn, "making judgments about what is politically feasible can be a dangerous business, for what is not feasible today may be feasible tomorrow, and if judged infeasible, potentially important options may be given short shrift" (p. 215). They suggest that instead of seeking definitive judgments, political viability analysis should focus on recognizing when stakeholders and political conditions may become more receptive to policy change. The forces that govern both continuity and change in people's concepts and behaviors are a key focus of Weber's economic sociology, which forms a central prong of the conceptual framework.

3.1.3 Envisioning Change: World Images as Switchmen of Behavior

Weber postulated that social conduct is governed by a mixture of ideal and material interests (MacRae, 1974). In his view, human behavior is propelled as much by material interests as by ideal ones – such as ideological or status benefits (Swedberg, 2000). If interests are the engines of behavior, the tracks along which behavior progresses are shaped by what Weber calls "world images" – ideological or religious patterns of ideas. Weber compares those "world images" to switchmen who determine along which tracks behavior will develop (Weber, 1991, p. 280).

In the context of this study, the ideas of academic leaders' related to higher education and its proper governance are taken as a part of their "world images," and therefore imbued with the potential to act as switchmen in their governance practices. Identifying key ideas about governance, as well as the interests that drive people's behavior, plays a large role in discerning when stakeholders may become more receptive to policy change.

3.1.4 Charting the Path: Theory of Path Dependence

Path dependence theory completes Weber's metaphor with one more missing element, and provides the key element for the conceptual framework. If interests are the engine and ideas are the switchmen for individual and organizational behavior, the tracks consist of ingrained arrangements developed in the course of institutional history. At its most fundamental level, the idea of path dependence implies that past choices and events constrain what alternatives are viable down the line (Pierson, 2000). Levi (1997), however, proposes a more narrow definition of the concept. She favors the notion that each step down a set path induces continued movement in the same direction:

Path dependence has to mean, if it is to mean anything, that once a country or region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high. There will be other choice points, but the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice. Perhaps the better metaphor is a tree, rather than a path. From the same trunk, there are many different branches and smaller branches. Although it is possible to turn around or to clamber from one to the other-and essential if the chosen branch dies - the branch on which a climber begins is the one she tends to follow. (Levi, 1997, p. 28)

Path dependence theory is a relative newcomer in educational policy, and yet one that has held a particular appeal for scholars in the field who study post-socialist dynamics. In economic and political analysis, the concept of path dependence has been used to explain how self-reinforcing feedback processes perpetuate both productive and counterproductive social processes. It has been used most famously to explain persistent divergence in the economic performance across countries. Neoclassical economic theory would suggest that developing countries should adopt the practices of higher performing economies to achieve similar outcomes. Nobel Prize winning economist Douglass North used the notion of path dependence to explain why this does not happen – institutions put in place at earlier times operate within their own self-reinforcing loops initiated by different forces under different circumstances (North, 1990). The older the organization, the stronger the loops.

The concept of path dependence has been especially appealing to scholars examining the post-transitional dynamics in higher education systems in the former Soviet block (Stark, 1991, Jabłecka and Lepori, 2009, Tchalakov, Mitev & Petrov, 2010). For five decades, the rules of the game in Central and Eastern Europe were different, and they shaped strong institutional patterns that could not be eliminated overnight with the transition to a market economy. In the past two decades, institutions in the region have undergone significant evolutions in the manner described by North (1990), but as I demonstrate in further sections of this chapter, the social and institutional arrangements entrenched in the previous political eras have continued to function. The notion of institutional path dependence appears particularly relevant to universities, which occupy the cultural role of guardians of ideas and tradition.

A question that arises naturally with regard to the concept of path dependence has to do with its potential to explain change as well as continuity. Is it only a useful conceptual category for explaining how we arrived at the status quo, or does it offer any insights into how the status quo changes? While the theory is most frequently used in retrospective and descriptive analysis, it has also been employed in intriguing ways to examine trajectories of change. Stark (1991) captures the essence of such applications when he says:

> *...The true strength of the concept of path dependence... is precisely its analytic power in explaining outcomes where strategic actors are deliberately searching for departures from long-established routines and attempting to restructure the rules of the game. Actors who seek to move in new directions find that their*

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choices are constrained by the existing set of institutional resources. Institutions

limit the field of action, they preclude some directions, and they constrain certain

courses... The exploitation of existing institutional resources is a principal

component of the apparent paradox that even (and especially) instances of

transformation is marked by path dependence (Stark, 1991, p. 18).

Going back to Weber, the ideas of academic leaders' related to governance are proposed in this study to act as switchmen that shape the course of governance developments at Polish higher education institutions. Those switchmen, however, do not come up at random or in a vacuum. As a whole Polish school of sociology has demonstrated, the entrenchments of Poland's recent history will play a crucial role in defining possible paths of change following the post-socialist transition.

According to Marody (1991) "the basic problem which the reformers must recognize has to do with the fact that everyday actions of individuals will be modeled by habits developed in the course of social experiences radically different from those which should fill our new institutions" (p. 167). Conceptions of governance held by the leaders of Polish HEIs are strongly shaped by the paths that those institutions have traveled on in the past, and the institutional solutions they developed in response to past challenges. For changes in governance in to be accepted by these powerful higher education stakeholders, those changes must recognize the path-dependent character of organizational development. In the following section, therefore, I attempt to identify key characteristics of the path that impacts Polish academic leaders and their institutions, as well as the ideas that have the potential of acting as switchmen for future governance reform.

3.2 Conceptions of Governance in Poland

In this section, I put forward two sources hypothesized as influential for policymakers' and HEI leaders' conceptions of governance. These influences do not fully determine their notions of what constitutes good governance, but they were deliberately selected in this study to serve as research-based points of departure for further empirical investigation. The factors hypothesized as significant in determining the phenomenon of interest are the competing models of higher education and the legacy of hostile foreign rule in individual mentality and institutional organization.

3.2.1 Three Ideal-Type Models

In the course of Polish history, three ideal-type models of higher education have played a significant role in shaping the nation's HEIs. These three models are governed by different assumptions that dictate different criteria for planning and evaluating public policy. All three models appear evident in how Polish stakeholders think about higher education, and their intersections have significant consequences for the future of governance at Polish universities.

From a theoretical standpoint, historical models that shaped Polish higher education closely reflect the ideal-type frameworks proposed by Dobbins et al. (2011) for the comparative study of higher education. These ideal types are based on the seminal work of Burton Clark, whose triangle of coordination in higher education poses that primary power resides either with the state, the market, or the academic community (Clark, 1986). In Poland, conceptions of governance have been shaped by three historical variants reflecting the three ideal-types: the "Humboldtian" model of academic self-rule, the state-centered Soviet model, and the market-based Anglo-Saxon model. Each of these

variants is based on different assumptions and proposes different governance solutions. All three of the frameworks described by Dobbins et al. (2011) intersect in the Polish context, producing a diversity of beliefs about the role of HEIs and ways in which they should be governed. For the purposes of this study, the three historical variants serve as distinct lenses for examining what logics underlie current university leaders' beliefs related to governance.

"Humboldtian" model of academic self-rule. The modern institutional framework of Polish HEIs relies on the model proposed in late 18th and early 19th century, and associated with reforms of the medieval university introduced by the Prussian reformer Wilhelm von Humboldt. In a time of emerging nation-states, great technological advances and rapid industrialization, scholastic universities in Europe were discredited in favor of vocational institutions, becoming "more threatened than perhaps at any time before or afterwards" (Wittrock, 1993, p. 314). The accomplishment of Wilhelm von Humboldt lay in rehabilitating the notion of disinterested knowledge within a new organizational structure coherent with the intellectual currents of the time.

It must be noted here that historians of higher education have demonstrated how what is known today as the "Humboldtian" idea of the modern university is a "retrospective construction" of the 20th century (Rothblatt & Wittrock, 1993, p. 117; cited in Kwiek, 2006, p. 3). Humboldt's writings on university reform were not published or widely known until the late 19th century, and the "Humboldtian" model as it is known today was in fact constructed at the time of the subsequent crisis (Schwinges, 2001; De Ridder-Symoens, 2006). Therefore, the term "Humboldtian" is used throughout this dissertation in quotation marks. It must also be noted that it is a model specific to

universities that nevertheless, as shall be noted further, exerted significant influence on other types of HEIs.

Mission of higher education. Admirers of von Humboldt envisioned the university as a forge of both new knowledge and national identity. Like the German reformer, they saw higher learning primarily as a search for truth for its own sake, representing what Krücken (2003) calls a "non-utilitarian approach to higher education" (Krücken, 2003, p. 324). The pursuit of truth was to be undertaken in a community of faculty and students that involved a unity of teaching and research, specialist skills and integrative worldview (Marga, 1997). Defining and preserving the unity of national culture was counted among the primary roles of higher education (Amaral and Magalhaes, 2002).

Role of the state. Since HEIs served national interests, they were to be supported, controlled and regulated by the state to ensure uniformity across institutions. It was also the responsibility of the state to protect the academic freedom of teaching and learning from external inference. As Neave and Van Vught (1991) point out, from the perspective of the modern state, safeguarding individual academic freedom was an issue of "protecting the modernising sector of society against the pressures, claims, and special pleading of vested interests and inherited privilege" (Neave and Van Vught, 1991, p. 271). Academic freedom was therefore protected not for the sake of the academics themselves, but in the interest of national modernization and the legitimization of the dominant worldview.

Institutional framework. Consistently with the assumed role of higher education as a vehicle of national modernization, institutional governance in the "Humboldtian"

model was based on the ideal of individual academic freedom, but it involved no notion of institutional autonomy (Amaral and Magalhaes, 2002).

As Amaral et al. (2003) note, higher education in Western Europe was traditionally seen as "too important to be left in the hands of independent institutions" (p. 281). Authority in the "Humboldtian" university therefore rests with individual professors at the lower levels and government officials at the higher levels, with little if any power relegated to university-level administrators. Deans and rectors are drawn from the faculty and appointed for short terms, and they report directly to state officials. Over all, university is envisioned as a self-governing "republic of scholars" (Bleiklie and Kogan, 2007, p. 477) accountable directly to the state.

Impact on Polish academia. A "Humboldtian" tradition of academic governance dates back to the reforms of the oldest Polish university undertaken in the late 1700s by Hugo Kołłątaj shortly before Poland was partitioned by her neighbors and disappeared from the map of Europe for 123 years. Whenever Poland regained independence, its universities returned to the model of academic self-rule, entrenching the association between national and academic self-determination. To this day, the academic establishment in Poland is strongly attached to the notions of academic self-rule in a disinterested quest for new knowledge, without specific purpose to social or economic development (Szostek, 2004; Maliszewski, 2007). They tend to perceive the university in particular as a social institution, and higher education as a public good. Much like their peers all across Europe, Polish academics see the university as a guardian of the European humanist tradition. For that reason, segments of the academic establishment are likely to push back against pressure to embrace management approaches that tighten the

relationship between the university the economy or integrate the values of the business world.

State-Centered Model. After the Second World War, Poland found itself in the sphere of influence of the USSR and adopted the Soviet model of higher education. The entire system was subjected to central planning in all aspects of its functioning, undergoing a process that some have referred to as "sovietization" (Simonova and Antonowicz, 2006). In that time, the "Humboldtian" tradition was all but dismantled at all but a few elite universities, and Polish higher education became an important peg in the "state socialist modernization project" (Péteri, 2000, p. 280).

Mission of higher education. Like the "Humboldtian" model, the state-centered conception of higher education relied on the assumption that the HEI is a state institution and an instrument of national development. In the model of higher education, however, the system is designed to implement national goals that are pre-determined by the government (Olsen, 2007).

In the Soviet sphere of influence, those centrally determined goals were determined and constrained by the Marxist-Leninist doctrine (Dobbins et al., 2011). Within this framework, the mission of higher education was to foster economic and civilizational development as defined by the dominant ideological paradigm. The success of higher education depended on training future elites in disciplines crucial for national development and instilling in them a common identity on the ideological basis of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

Role of the state. Because the state-centered Soviet model assumed that production of knowledge and education of citizens are key national priorities, it assigned

the government a central role in controlling all key aspects of the educational process. Like in the "Humboldtian" model, the state funded, controlled and regulated higher education institutions. The difference between the two models, particularly when considering the Soviet conception of higher education, lies in the Soviet state pre-determining the precise goals to be achieved by higher education institutions.

Institutional framework. The logic of a state-centered conception of higher education implied a strongly hierarchical structure of universities. Administrative staff were appointed by the central government, not elected by the faculty. The state enforced nationally uniform standards regarding access, curriculum, faculty salaries, and most other aspects of higher education. Educational programs were also closely tied to the needs of a centrally planned economy. In the five decades of real socialism in Poland, university autonomy was lost to a ministry for higher education, which was fully subordinated to the Communist Party (Connelly, 2000).

While the autonomy of institutions was limited in a similar way as in "Humboldtian" systems, self-governance by academics was much more constrained. Dobbins et al. (2011) point out that in a state-centered model, higher education tends to be buffered from external forces, but dependent on changes in the government and in the political arena.

Impact on Polish higher education. The period of Soviet influence left an enduring legacy in Polish higher education. Although Poland was subjected to the Communist regime for only five decades, scholars have marveled at the thorough transfer of the Soviet model in Polish universities (Connelly, 2000). It was in fact in those years that the institutional types of HEIs multiplied, and the majority of today's state HEIs

were established. The new institutions adopted the state-centered logic and hierarchical organization from the time of their founding. A Soviet-type system of Academies of Sciences remains in place to this day (Péteri and David-Fox, 2000); the legacy of the period is also evident in academic degrees and titles in Poland still being granted by a state agency, the Central Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles (*Centralna Komisja do Spraw Stopni i Tytułów*). Remaining in the Soviet sphere of influence also meant that for five decades, higher education in Poland was isolated from the major trends and developments observed in Western Europe, including the transition from elite to mass higher education that began in the 1960s. When the real socialist paradigm in Central and Eastern Europe failed in the late 1980s, the cost to Polish higher education was a setback by an estimated fifty to seventy years in comparison to Western European neighbors[6] (Péteri, 2000).

The impact of the period of real socialism is felt in Polish higher education, both in its direct legacy, and in strong reactions against it in the early 1990s. On the one hand, Poland has retained a strong Ministry and an extensive legal framework that regulates issues ranging from the length of academic programs to the composition of the senate at public universities. On the other hand, intense central control and persecution of non-conforming academics left deep scars on Polish academia, and the early reform bills saw a decisive turn back in the direction of academic self-rule. Academic leaders remain wary of political interference and reject the prospects of state control over their activities.

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[6] The question of whether the real socialist model actually failed is the subject of extensive debate. It is not the aim of this study to take a voice in that debate. The author only contends that the political collapse of real socialism as a dominant political paradigm in Eastern Europe was very real in its consequences to Polish universities.

Anglo-Saxon Market-Based Model. Until the 20ᵗʰ century, higher education in

Europe was governed by two main actors – the state and the academic community. These

are also the actors that dominate in the older models of higher education. The recent

decades have seen the rise of what Hans Weiler calls a "new game" in higher education

(Weiler, 2000, p. 333). While the old game was a "straightforward and rather boring

affair" (Weiler 2000, p. 333) involving only two players, there is now a third player in the

game called "the market".

The Anglo-Saxon countries were among the first to employ a model of higher

education that envisions it as a market enterprise. Where in the continental models,

higher education is considered too important to be left in the hands of individual

institutions, the Anglo-Saxon model assumes "it is too important to be left to the political

whims of the nation state" (Amaral et al., 2003, p. 281). While market models can take

various forms in diverse national contexts, the common underlying assumption is that

market forces do a better job of regulating the educational enterprise than governments

do.

Mission of higher education. The mission of higher education in a market-based

model can be as varied as the market that it caters to. The most fundamental goal,

however, is to maximize the private and collective returns to higher education.

Universities function as economic engines for personal as well as regional or global

development.

Role of the state. In a market-based model, the state does not play the kind of

central role that characterized the "Humboldtian" and Soviet models. The state is a

facilitator of higher education, not its supervisor or ruler. It is by no means absent from

higher education, but it exerts its influence through quasi-governmental bodies such as funding or accreditation agencies. The role of the state is to promote competition and quality through mechanisms such as output funding and performance-based steering (Maassen and Stensaker, 2011).

Institutional framework. Institutions in the market-based model enjoy perhaps more autonomy than in any of the other variants. The university is envisioned as a "stakeholder organization" (Bleiklie and Kogan, 2007) that enjoys great liberty in developing the best possible ways of furthering the interests it represents. University activities are driven in a large part by competition with other institutions for resources, talent and prestige (Marginson, 2007).

Impact on Polish higher education. In Central and Eastern Europe, the market-oriented conception of higher education has been strongly promoted in the post-communist transition by institutions such as the World Bank, OECD, and the Soros Foundation (Weiler, 2000). In the wake of the political transformation, the social demand to raise university enrollments could not realistically be met using public funds alone. Market-based principles were incorporated into legislation across the region to expand higher education provision and access.

At the time of the political transformation, higher education spending had to take second place to other priorities, such as health care, pensions, etc. As Kwiek (2008) demonstrates, the countries that managed to successfully raise their enrollments were those that opened up universities to market realities by enabling the establishment of private institutions and charging fees by public ones. The Polish Higher Education Act of 1990, for instance, enabled the emergence of a private higher education market and fee-

paying places at public universities. The legislation preceded a five-fold increase in the number of students over fifteen years (Central Statistical Office, 2008). In contrast to their Western neighbors, the post-communist countries in the European Union now feature strong private higher education sectors whose enrollments exceed 10% of the total number of students (Kwiek, 2008).

Summary. The three models of higher education that are hypothesized to shape Polish university leaders' conceptions of governance are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Ideal-Type Models of Higher Education

	Locus of accountability	Mission of HE	Role of the state	Institutional structure	Impact on Polish HE
'Humboldtian' Model	Academics	• Search for truth for its own sake • Fostering national modernization • Defining and preserving the unity of national culture • Training of an elite	• Financial support • Protection of academic freedom • Control left to collegial bodies	• Academic freedom • Uniformity across institutions • Limited institutional autonomy	• Foundation of the modern institutional framework
Soviet Model	State	• Implementing pre-determined national goals • Fostering economic and civilizational development • Developing a common ideological identity through Marxist-Leninist doctrine • Training of an elite	• Financial support • Determining goals to be accomplished by higher education institutions • Establishing uniform standards of education • Process control	• Hierarchical structure • Limited individual freedom • Limited institutional autonomy • Uniformity across institutions	• Five decades of sovietization defining for the majority of public universities
Anglo-Saxon Model	Market	• Maximizing individual and collective returns to higher education • Fueling the growth of regional and/or global markets	• Stimulation of quality and competition • Product control	• University as a stakeholder organization • Extensive institutional autonomy • Academic freedom determined by institutions • Diversity across institutions	• Main logic behind post-socialist reforms after 1989

3.2.1.1 Emergent Post-Bureaucratic Hybrid. Since the 1960s, the governance of public HEIs in Europe representing all three of Clark's (1986) models has shifted in a new direction. In response to the enormous costs of financing an increasingly massified

system, European governments have opted to grant HEIs more autonomy in return for greater efficiency and accountability. The ideological grounding of such change was found in the principles of New Public Management, in which market-oriented management is seen as a means to increase public sector efficiency. Market-oriented trends in public management were set against what scholars refer to as the emergence of a new "regulatory state," which in Europe represented a fundamental change from state-bureaucratic 'welfareism' (King, 2007).

In the emerging blueprint, HEIs are seen as quasi-markets, governed by mechanisms of managed competition overseen by the state (Agasiti and Catalano, 2006). Greater institutional autonomy combined with competitive funding mechanisms and performance measurement (Gornitzka et al., 2007; Maasen and Olsen, 2007; Trakman, 2008). The new, post-bureaucratic forms of governance retain diverse conceptions of the mission of higher education, and have their roots in diverse institutional traditions. Nevertheless, there are common features that allow for the recognition of the new model as a "common policy template" (Capano and Regini, 2014). These features include:

> *the separation of operations from policy-making within government departments, the construction of a formal distinction between purchasers (government) and providers (market), and the establishment of independent agencies at arm's length from ministers to retain influence over the market on behalf of the public interest* (King, 2007, p. 413).

Some scholars have used the term "New Managerialism" (Braun and Merrien, 1999) as description of a model with redefined links between universities, markets and the state. The new blueprint is perhaps more accurately typified as a post-bureaucratic

hybrid of market and state coordination, in which the state acts as an arbiter for the market (Gornitzka and Maassen, 2000). Authors of a cross-country study of governance trends in Austria, England, Finland, Flanders, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Portugal concluded that in the new framework, "It is as if the governments want to make sure that the universities and colleges use the larger autonomy in such a way that the outcomes the governments expect of enlarging the autonomy are indeed achieved." (Gornitzka and Maassen, 2000, p. 284).

The Western European shift towards post-bureaucratic forms of governance is a significant feature of the policy context of Polish higher education. The "common policy template" (Capano and Regini, 2014, p. 73) was reinforced and legitimated by the European Union through its Lisbon Agenda, launched in 2000 with a strong focus on knowledge as the European economic engine. Policies such as concentrating power in fewer hands, strengthening HEIs' ties to the socioeconomic environment, and funding based on performance became an authoritative blueprint for reform. Since that time, European higher education systems have become increasingly similar – a phenomenon studied and theorized extensively by political scientists (theory of convergence – see e.g. Heinze & Knill, 2008; Dobbins & Knill, 2009; Dobbins, 2011) and organizational sociologists of the neo-institutionalist school (institutional isomorphism – see e.g. Zha, 2009; or world systems – see e.g. Schriewer, 2009). Convergence in higher education is an aspect of larger processes of global isomorphism and standardization in education (Schriewer, 2009).

Polish reforms of science and higher education passed in 2009-2011 share a great many features consistent with the European policy template. A 2010 reform, for instance,

separated policy-making from the operations of funding science by creating two independent funding agencies for basic and applied research – *Narodowe Centrum Nauki* (National Science Centre) and *Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju* (National Centre for Research and Development). It also created an advisory body, Komisja Ewaluacji Jednostek Naukowych (Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Units), that compiles annual rankings based on research performance. The statutory research subsidy was all but eliminated, and the agencies now disburse funds exclusively on a competitive basis. Features of the European policy template are also evident in the 2011 reform of higher education, which increased the autonomy of HEIs to design programs of study and expanded the powers of the central administration while also obliging HEIs to follow a National Qualifications Framework and to meet new standards of evaluation.

3.2.2 Legacy of Hostile Foreign Rule

The final source of impact hypothesized as significant for conceptions of HEI governance in Poland, which also carries significant implications for study design, is Poland's historical legacy of hostile foreign rule. Sociologists have argued that "the forty-five-year period of 'building socialism' has transformed Polish society much more deeply than could be expected after witnessing the permanent resistance of the Poles to communist rule" (Mokrzycki, 1991, cited in Sztompka, 1993, p. 244). Yet it has also been shown that the period of real socialism merely reinforced social trends that germinated during the period of 123 years prior to the First World War (1795-1918), when Poland was absent on the map of Europe, and its territories divided among its neighbors (Thompson, 2007; Wise, 2010). Polish national consciousness germinated not

under the protective umbrella of the state, as in Germany or France, but in opposition toward state authorities. What resulted was a lasting sense of alienation from public institutions and a lingering sense of threat to one's own value traditions that fuels their staunch defense (Wise, 2010). Dynamics such as the fear of being perceived as inferior, as these are common to post-colonial societies. According to Thompson (2007), " the partitions of Poland in the eighteenth century and occupation of Poland by Soviet Russia after the Second World War were forms of colonialism" (Thompson, 2007). Scholars like Clare Cavanagh detect a "distinctively Polish but unmistakably postcolonial sensibility" (Cavanagh, 2004, p. 88). It is a sensibility displayed in one of two extremes outlined by Wise (2010): Either outright rejection of one's own heritage as backwards and the adoption of superior foreign models (a cult of the Other), or glorification of one's own traditions and an indiscriminate rejection of all things foreign as agents of attempted domination (demonization of the Other).

Therefore, decades of Communist rule not only produced but also reinforced a host of attitudes, perceptions and adaptive mechanisms that had proved themselves effective in the context of hostile rule, and became entrenched in the social consciousness. Empirical studies of the heritage of real socialism in the social consciousness of Eastern Europeans have been the trademark of Polish sociology in the past four decades. In terms of the conceptual framework adopted in this study, the dynamics and mechanisms they describe shaped the path on which future directions are dependent. Three main features of a social consciousness shaped by hostile foreign rule, particularly by the legacy of real socialism, are relevant to a study of HEI governance.

3.2.2.1 Public-private dichotomy. Sociological studies imply that the mentality reinforced in the course of real socialism involves a conceptual split between the public and the private realms of life (Marody, 1987a, 1987b, 1991). Work and public involvement belong to one sphere, while home and private affairs constitute another. The fact that HEIs traditionally belonged to the public sphere has significant implications for its culture and governance.

In a setting of hostile foreign rule, public activity is governed by a different set of rules, beliefs and values than private life (Marody, 1987a, 1987b). Sztompka (1993) calls this a "pathological split in social consciousness" (p. 246) along the public-private divide. The public sphere is perceived as one that is governed by unstable and unfair rules that cannot be trusted. It is only in the private sphere that people can be authentic and act out of integrity. Unlike in the private sphere, public activities are not to be believed or relied on.

The public-private split is present in the very physical surroundings of people's lives. Growing up in southern Poland in the early 1990s, I saw the common spaces of most apartment buildings being dirty and vandalized, while the apartments themselves always seemed spotless and beautifully decorated. Residents seemed disgusted by the nasty hallways, but nobody did anything to change their appearance. The common attitude was that if something is common, it belongs to nobody – whether it is a hallway, a city park, or the flowers planted next to my elementary school, which were stolen each spring. Stealing a piece of public property was not seen as the same as stealing from a private person or company, with the implicit justification that it is simply taking something that would otherwise be wasted anyway.

The traditional positioning of the university in the public sphere presents a special set of challenges. Faculty and staff at public HEI are less likely than in other contexts to perceive their workplace as an institution in which they have a sense of trust, pride, and ownership. Those in positions of leadership are automatically imagined as corrupt, and extraordinary achievement in the public sphere is viewed with suspicion. Even in the current age of massive privatization in higher education, public universities are the flagships that define standards of excellence and train the majority of future academic staff. The public-private divide has significant consequences for the governance of Polish universities: who occupies governance positions, how that process occurs, how leaders relate to those they govern, and what attitudes they adopt with regard to the authorities above them – as evidenced in section 5.1.2.1 of the findings chapter.

3.2.2.1.1 Distrust of public processes. Conceptions of governance in post-communist contexts developed along a historical path that taught people to take all public actions or statements with a grain (or sometimes a cup) of salt. Public life in the period of real socialism was characterized by a degree of deception that permanently undermined people's trust in public processes, with important consequences for governance of universities.

As Lutyński (1990) has shown, public life in that period revolved around fake actions whose main purpose was to create an impression rather than to produce actual benefits. The "culture of quasi-activity" (Tyszka, 2009) started at the very top, with the employment of elaborate electoral procedures despite the existence of only one party whose apparatus had already made all the decisions. The same was true of the production plans: reports on their realization of these plans were consistently exaggerated, purely

ritualistic forms. They produced unrealistic statistics that then formed the basis for future impracticable plans. Even though all parties pretended to take them seriously, the meaninglessness of the production plans was clearly understood by both the people and the authorities that enforced them. Echoes of the same dynamic come up in findings around the implementation of a recent reform described in section 5.3.2.1.

The prevalence of such double standards created what Timothy Garton Ash dubbed "structures of organized lying" (Ash 1990a, p. 18). Public and private settings represent different genres of communication. The public genre is characterized by ideological and dogmatic language. Both addressees and speakers understand that it is duplicitous, and neither take it at face value. In private, speakers can express opposite opinions to those presented in public and distance themselves from their own words (Sztompka 1993, p. 247).

Distrust of others and especially of public processes continues to be seen in the persistence of attitudes and behaviors oriented towards "beating the system." Marody (1991) calls this "parasitic innovativeness" (*pasożytnicza innowacyjność*). Evading rules, exploiting legal loopholes, cheating on taxes and outright fraud are seen as marks of success at gaming an unfair system. As Sztompka (1993) observes, this type of behavior shows that "people try to attain their private goals in spite of the system rather than through the system" (p. 247). Because the governance structure of universities is a part of the system, it is likely that it is also seen by some as something to be gamed and subverted. For this reason, the idea of good governance may also appear as a contradiction in terms to some university employees.

Even more significantly for governance practices, distrust of public processes fuels a continued reliance on private networks in public activities (Tyszka, 2009). Because the public sphere cannot be trusted, management and accountability decisions, especially those with regard to employment, are more likely to be based on personal connections than a transparent procedure. By many accounts, nepotism is rampant in Polish academia (Dybczyński, 2011; Leja, 2011). Introducing transparent criteria for hiring and accountability is fraught with difficulty, partly because they are also not trusted and suspect of being a cover-up for hidden interests. As evidenced in Chapter 5, these factors impact how Polish academic leaders understand, problematize, and practice good governance.

3.2.2.1.2 Private achievement, public passivity. The notion of good governance is complicated further by the existence of two separate sets of norms regarding individual success and achievement. Predictably, the boundary between the two sets of norms falls along the lines of the public-private divide. As Sztompka (1993) observes, "...the bonus for passivism, conformism, submissiveness and mediocrity in public roles is clearly incongruent with the emphasis on success, self-realization and individual achievement in private life" (Sztompka, 1993, p. 245).

The institutional path paved in the previous political era promoted "negligence, inefficiency, [and] absenteeism" (Sztompka, 1993, p. 245), in contrast to the conscientiousness of self-employed or private-sector employees. People who are diligent, self-reliant and altruistic in their private lives often seem to take on an entirely different personality in the world of work, where they display "learned helplessness, reluctance to take decisions, delegation of responsibility, emphasis on security and egotistic benefits"

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(Sztompka, 1993, p. 245). These attitudes and behaviors were developed in response to a hostile system that did not encourage good work and bred apathy. They remain evident in public life as a sort of atavism of the previous order that outlived its origins.

With the political transformation of 1989/1990, the conditions of people's work changed dramatically, but institutions financed from the public purse maintained a greater degree of continuity with the past. In the course of the political transition, the system of higher education was largely allowed to reform itself, and its internal governance structures remained the same (Poland, 2010). Because the internal structure and the funding mechanism of universities have remained stable, and academic staff were not shuffled or replaced, the system was not positioned to challenge the norms of passivity and conformism entrenched during real socialism – a theme that comes up in section 5.3.2.1.

The norm of passivity in public life fuels a reluctance to participate in change efforts or get involved in governance. People think critically about the way their institutions function, but they often do not believe that anything can be changed. They also fear the consequences associated with becoming involved, adopting what has been called a "fatalistic orientation" (Thompson, Ellis and Wildavski 1990, p. 3).

The distinction between the norms of passivity and achievement often becomes problematic at intersections between the public and private sphere. In the early days of the transition, the ambiguity around appropriate norms affected people who engaged in private enterprise, which was illegal during the communist period. They were often seen with great suspicion mixed with envy, and called by the derogatory label *prywaciarze* (direct translation: "privateers"). Suspicion towards these individuals may have been

caused by the perception that they crossed the boundary between the public and the private in an inappropriate manner. They transplanted attitudes and behaviors proper for the private sphere, such as inventiveness and self-reliance, to the realm of work, which belonged to the public sphere and was thus supposed to be governed by other rules. When these people became the leaders and beneficiaries of the post-communist transition, the suspicion lingered on, fueled by decades of Marxist-Leninist indoctrination (Péteri, 2000). Leadership is not something that is broadly desired or admired in others, which is even reflected in the Polish language, where notions such as "leadership" and "ambition" hold negative connotations.

Similar suspicion to that experienced by the early "privateers" becomes a threat to leaders who attempt to challenge the norms of submissiveness and mediocrity at public institutions. Based on past reality, public assertions of ideals such as transparency, meritocracy, service and egalitarianism are suspect of being a cover-up for hidden interests.

Governance reform efforts that ignore the dualistic norms of achievement in post-communist societies are likely to promote a type of leadership that breeds the mistrust of organizational members. In theory, governance responsibilities should be assigned on the basis of diligence, merit and leadership skills. In post-socialist contexts, however, these traits are commendable in private settings, but if used as benchmarks in public ones, they may paradoxically expose the leaders to suspicion. As section 5.1.2.1 of the findings attests, this may be especially true in universities where leadership aspirations are also at odds with the dominant ethos of the scientist.

3.2.2.2 Low social trust. The prevalence of double standards in public and

private contexts allows for the interpretation of what might be the most problematic

social legacy of real socialism in Eastern Europe, namely the lack of generalized social

trust. The diagnosis made by Rose (1994) still stands today, "East Europeans know those

whom they trust, and trust those whom they know" (p. 29). In keeping with this pattern,

Poles have a high degree of trust in members of their family, but they tend to ascribe

negative intentions to strangers and neighbors (Nowakowski, 2008; PORC, 2012;

Czapiński, 2013). In the category of generalized trust, Poland is consistently near the

bottom among countries included in the European Social Survey. In 2012, only 18% of

Poles agreed with the statement that "most people can be trusted" – three times less than

in Denmark (69%) or Finland (61%). The only two countries that scored lower were

Romania (12%) and Portugal (13%) (European Social Survey, 2012). Poles doubt the

good intentions of others – the 2013 Social Diagnosis found only 16% to believe that

people usually try to be helpful towards others (Czapiński, 2013). Low social trust is a

self-perpetuating spiral: Those who believe the fundamental disposition of others is to

look out for their own interest without regard for the interest of others are more likely to

protect their own interest at the expense of others, fueling the general perception that

every person is out for him- or herself. As Nowakowski (2008) points out, however, low

social trust does not necessarily have a detrimental effect on the perceived quality of life.

The percentage of people in Poland pleased with their life is at over 60% and slightly

growing, which may point to individual happiness being built within a narrow circle of

family and friends at the cost of eroding social and institutional norms.

3.2.2.3 Hostility between the governing and the governed. It clearly follows from the previous discussion that the relationship between the governing and the governed is a problematic one in post-socialist contexts. As Sztompka (1993) explains, "the authorities are perceived as alien and hostile, the government is seen as the arena of conspiracy, deceit and cynicism, or at least stupidity and inefficiency" (p. 245). In contrast, private networks and relationships are valued and even idealized as sources of information and advancement.

Tyszka (2009) points out that the hostility between the governing and the governed in Poland has deep roots that go far beyond the post-socialist period. It is telling that only once in Polish history – in 2011 – did the same party ever win reelection (The Economist, 2011). In fact, neither of the two largest parties in the current political scene existed in 1991. The tide often seems to turn against any politician as soon as he or she is elected for office. Public opinion surveys consistently confirm a low trust towards public authorities and institutions – Polish people were recently shown to have the lowest level of trust towards governmental institutions in the European Union (Nowakowski, 2013).

What is more, it is a common sentiment, especially in public institutions, that persons of true integrity should not covet positions of leadership or strive for self-advancement. People elected for prominent positions within such a culture are likely to be either reluctant and uncontroversial, or ambitious and mistrusted. Just as with social trust, it is futile to speculate whether it's the continuing incompetence of the governing authorities causes the mistrust of society, or if the mistrust is the root cause of authorities' failures. What does seem clear is that the opposition of public and private spheres continues to entrench the divide between the governing and the governed.

Tischner (1992) speculated that some of the hostility stems from the fact that the person raised in a Communist regime defines his identity in the context of the external power wielded by the authorities. Tyszka (2009) describes this identity as a learned helplessness that entails "a profound conviction that one's destiny depends almost completely on being close to 'the authorities'" (p. 512). The powers that be are hostile, but they can be "privatized" and used for one's own purposes. Such relationship with authority breeds servility, opportunism, and a system of unhealthy dependencies that some believe to be the undoing of Polish higher education (Dybczyński, 2011; Pacholski, 2011).

The distrust of the governed renders the work of many university leaders exceedingly difficult, especially if they attempt to initiate broad-based change (Pacholski, 2011). It also elevates the power of those people within the system who possess personal authority but do not occupy official positions. Such persons can often possess more influence over the direction of the organization than those formally charged with its leadership, which is one of the reasons why informal authority figures were included in the sample of this study alongside formal HEI leaders.

3.2.2.4 Populist notions of equality. One of the most lasting legacies of the socialist era in Eastern Europe is a particular notion of egalitarianism that discourages individuals from standing out of the crowd. It is a view of equality that is reflected in many Eastern European proverbs, such as "The nail that sticks out gets hit" and "The tallest blade of grass gets cut." As Tyszka (2009) explains, "The mechanism of elimination of any attempt to stand out from the mediocre crowd was deeply engrained in the logic of this form of egalitarianism" (p. 512). According to the dictum "to everyone

according to their need," exceptional performance was not rewarded any more than mediocrity; and those who did not contribute as much as others could still expect protection.

Marga (1997) argues that such "'populist' mentality, whether found in academe or elsewhere, is the last bastion of Eastern socialism" (p. 176). It is a deeply entrenched attitude that essentially undermines the principle of a meritocracy, with most harmful effects for institutions like universities that depended on it for their quality and social legitimacy. A strong commitment to meritocracy embedded in the university tradition remains in tension with the populist idea of egalitarianism.

3.2.2.5 Legacy of the transition. As some post-socialist scholars have argued, the mentality described by the scholars of social change in the late 1980s and early 1990s persists in the new generation, and therefore cannot be understood as a product of the real socialist system alone (Tyszka, 2009). Persistence of similar attitudes and behaviors in a generation that did not know real socialism suggests that the transition to capitalism may have entrenched earlier dynamics in social institutions, including those in higher education.

In the chaotic period of political transition, most universities navigated their transformation without expert guidance. Some have argued that the authorship of new higher education laws in Eastern Europe by academics led to the emergence of an academic democracy that hints of populism (Marga, 1997). In an effort to shed the political and ideological control as completely as possible, higher education systems across Central and Eastern Europe reverted back to the "Humboldtian" tradition of academic self-rule. What they did not shed as easily, however, was the populist notion of

equality inherent in the previous system. Andrei Marga, a Romanian philosopher and university president, describes what followed:

> *"New laws and regulations did away with most of the authoritarian structures and encouraged academic freedom. The duties of administration came into the hands of faculty and students. In the absence of clear guidelines, there arose a kind of 'academic democracy' that often veered toward populism. The more or less deliberate confusion of 'academic' democracy with civil democracy conceals not only certain attitudes left over from communism, but also a new conservatism wrapped in liberal slogans. This confusion, and the political manipulation it implies, has threatened many... universities with a slide into provincialism and intellectual irrelevance."* (Marga, 1997, p. 166)

As the pendulum swung as far away from political control as possible, accountability became one of the casualties. Academics as well as entire institutions were no longer accountable to the state for their activities, while the conflation of academic democracy with civil democracy broke the link of accountability between academics – a theme evident in section 5.3.2.1 of the findings. Meanwhile, continued state funding assured that they were also not accountable to the market. Hans Weiler has described such a forms of governance as "mutual non-aggression pacts for the purpose of conflict-free and performance-independent resource allocation and of seeking and finding the lowest common denominators among competing factional interests" (Weiler, 2000, p. 335).

The system that arose has been compared to the period of Polish history in the 17th and 18th century called "golden freedom of the nobility" (Dybczyński, 2011), when noblemen secured so many privileges and political power from the king that governing the country became impossible and anarchy loomed large, which some believe led to the eventual partition of Poland by her neighbors (Konopczyński, 2002). Annual reports produced by universities for the government became the only link back to the state funding sources, and those are often so hollow as to resemble the ritualistic form of earlier production plan reports (EY&IME, 2009, p. 22).

While Poland and other Eastern European nations re-appropriated the "Humboldtian" tradition, other countries in Europe had been moving away from it ever since the 1960s, first in response to the new reality of mass enrollments, then to the increasing priority of higher education in the global knowledge economy (Maasen and Stensaker, 2010). In Poland, however, discussions about introducing external accountability or evaluation mechanisms are typically accompanied by accusations that such plans constitute an attack on academic freedom (Pacholski, 2011).

"To understand is always to understand differently"

(Gadamer, cited in Bernstein, 1983, p. 139)

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed to compare conceptions of HEI governance held by key stakeholders in Polish public higher education. This study is guided by an interpretive approach and uses multiple methods of data collection to answer the overarching question: How do Polish government and public HEI leaders conceptualize good governance in higher education, and in what ways do their conceptualizations differ?

The chapter describes and justifies the methodological choices in answering the research question. It provides background on the research setting and an overview of the design, sample, instrumentation, and data analysis. Issues of validity, researcher's previous experience with the setting, and ethical considerations are also addressed.

4.1 Design of Study

The study is designed as a partial answer to the problem of finding a viable governance solution in the impasse facing Polish public higher education. Its goal is to provide theoretically and empirically grounded responses to actual social tensions and problems (Selznick, 1996). Both the literature and the empirical research are, therefore, means towards generating insights into effective and viable pathways towards future university governance reform in Poland.

4.1.1 Approach and Methodology

The study assumes an interpretive approach in taking up the assumption that people ascribe different meanings to the world around them, and the meanings they construct constitute an essential element of social reality (Menzel, 1978; Schwandt, 2000). Regardless of their ontological or epistemological merit, subjects' meanings and

interpretations have a real impact on the world they inhabit – or as Thomas and Znaniecki (1927) noted, "if men perceive situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (p. 81). The interpretive approach was chosen as appropriate in a study of an indeterminate ideal that is "good" governance, which does not have a uniform, agreed upon definition. The notion of good governance may have different meanings to different people, and the meanings of participants may differ from those of the researcher. My role as a social scientist is to observe and interpret reality in terms of what it means to the people included in the study, with the aim of producing a representation the subjects themselves would recognize (Geertz, 1973).

Because the research question concerns the participants' meanings and conceptualizations, as well as the contextual forces that shape them, the selected methodology is qualitative in nature (Maxwell, 2005). The study aims to discover not just behaviors and attitudes, but people's contexts, meanings and ideals that shape those behaviors. Qualitative research design allows for face-to-face interaction with subjects in their own environment and enables greater insight into their context (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). As outlined in the following sections, the primary research strategy involved qualitative elite interviewing (Dexter, 2006, Tansey, 2007) supplemented with elements of ethnography. The selection of methods was dictated by the research problem as well as the practical considerations of doing research with a population of limited accessibility. A qualitative methodology enabled the generation of exploratory data rooted in the relevant context.

4.1.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted in two sites – a region of Poland where four major types of HEIs were present, and the offices of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Warsaw.

4.1.2.1 HEI context. The main portion of the study was conducted in the Małopolska region of Poland whose choice as the study location was influenced by three factors: 1) The region is a major academic center, home to institutions representing all major types of HEIs overseen by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education: a flagship HEI (one of the top two universities in the country), a technical HEI, a specialized HEI, and a vocational HEI. It offers cross-section of the diverse higher education institutions present in Poland within a convenient geographic scope, 2) The choice of one region reduces the likelihood of finding differences that are specific to a region more than to the type of institution being investigated; 3) Location outside of Warsaw is preferable because it is representative of the majority of colleges and universities in the country. Over 75% of all higher education institutions in Poland are located outside the Mazowieckie region of which Warsaw is the capital (Central Statistical Office, 2010). HEIs based in the capital differ from those in other parts of the country. Academics located close to the political capital are likely to have more personal contact with policymakers and to provide input into planned reforms, or even to have conversations about their meaning. 4) The Małopolska region is one with which the researcher is personally familiar, having lived and worked there for a number of years.

My background as an academic working in the Małopolska region provided an insider connection with research participants, and facilitated trust. I have followed the

politics of the region for many years, and will be able to understand the context in which universities operate. Perhaps as significantly, access to research participants was made possible by personal connections to former colleagues, who re-introduced me to the academic networks and provided personal recommendations to potential respondents. The strategy of obtaining personal recommendations proved to be the only reliable means of obtaining access to participants. Prior to arrival in the region, I sent out an official letter inviting each of the four universities to participate in the study (Appendices 1-2). No response was initially received. After a two-month period of networking through local colleagues and at academic functions, the interviews were granted freely and gladly by those in leadership positions at the same HEIs.

Four public HEIs within the region were selected as the HEI sites of the research. The selection of institutions was guided by the concern for a diversity of sizes, historical roots, and educational profiles. To extend the transferability of my findings beyond a single type of institution, each university in the sample represents a major type of public university with a distinct history and governance framework. The names of all institutions but one are hidden so as to protect respondents' anonymity; in the case of the institution whose name could not be hidden for practical reasons, additional precautions have been taken to ensure that individual respondents cannot be identified.

1. *Flagship HEI*

Flagship HEI is one of only two HEIs in Poland ranked in the top 400 universities in the world. Uniwersytet Jagielloński (the Jagiellonian University) is the oldest institution of higher learning in Poland, founded in 1364, and given its current name in 1400. It was recently ranked as the top

university in Poland (Perspektywy, 2013), and it is considered Poland's flagship university.

2. *Technical HEI*

Technical HEI is one of the 31 public universities of technology (*politechniki*) in Poland, with long-standing traditions of cooperating with industry. According to the Polish Law on Higher Education, the name politechnika can be applied to a university that grants doctorates in at least six disciplines, with at least four of them in technology or engineering (Poland, 2005).

3. *Specialized HEI*

Specialized HEI is one of the so-called *uniwersytety przymiotnikowe* – universities that grew out of specialized institutions, established or re-organized after 1946, and granted autonomy after a period of functioning as arms of the Communist state.

4. *Vocational HEI*

Vocational HEI is one of 36 State Higher Vocational Schools. It represents the youngest type of public HEI in Poland.

4.1.2.2. Government Context. The government component of this study was conducted in the offices of the Polish government in Warsaw and at events attended by government representatives. Sites of the research included the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, conference venues around the country, and the offices of national experts and politicians with a focus on higher education.

The majority of stakeholders identified as instrumental in shaping higher education policy in Poland are affiliated or associated with one of the youngest Ministries

in the Polish government. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education was created in 2006 after a period of 14 years (1991-2005) when chief responsibilities of setting scientific policy belonged to a collegial Committee for Scientific Research, which consisted mainly of academics. A separate agency concerned with higher education had existed under various names throughout the real socialist period, setting strategic objectives for HEIs and appointing most of their authorities. It was eliminated in 1991 in a wave of reforms that aimed to democratize and de-politicize higher education. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education was created in its current shape by Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz of the Law and Justice Party, who split a short-lived Ministry of Education and Science during his short-lived term in power.

The creation of the new Ministry came on the heels of a new law on higher education of 2005, which harmonized the Polish system with the European Higher Education Area as part of the Bologna Process. From its beginnings, the Ministry was strongly embedded in European higher education networks, and tasked with bringing Polish higher education in line with European norms.

Echoes of recent history are evident to this day in how employees of the Ministry view their role, and how they are seen by the academic community they supervise. Policy actors affiliated with the Ministry work under the weight of memories of their predecessors' tight control over HEIs in the communist period, and of the total dismantling of the Ministry in the initial years of the transition.

4.1.3 Sample

 4.1.3.1 HEI context. HEI leaders were drawn from three groups:

- HEI executives and senior administrators

- Members of governance bodies

- HEI insiders with informal power and authority

As noted in the previous chapter, the work of Sztompka (1993) and others indicates that in a post-communist social system, those with the greatest power are often not those who occupy powerful positions. The distrust of the governed towards the governing diminishes positional power and elevates the influence of those with relational and expert power (Pfeffer, 2005). For that reason, it was considered crucial in this study to identify and include members of the HEI community who exert significant influence on governance without occupying significant positions within the HEI structure. Such people might include academics who write for the press, play leading roles in civic initiatives or organizations concerned with higher education, or simply enjoy the respect of the HEI community by virtue of their knowledge and experience. Such powerful insiders were identified based on their visibility in the media and in public debates on higher education, and their reputation at participating institutions.

Initially, the HEI sample proposed to include a fourth group of higher education experts – those outside the institution identified by academic leaders as influential in shaping their thinking and leadership practice. In practice, however, respondents rarely mentioned specific people or organizations – rather, they referred to broad entities such as "the European Union," or "the employers," and rarely spoke of them in approving ways. Therefore, external experts were eventually not included in the academic sample; especially since the government sample already included EU advisers and political pressure groups such as employer associations.

In the end, the intended sample included a rector, vice-rector or former rector of each HEI, one senior administrator, two members of a governance body, and one informal leader. The actual composition of the primary sample is summarized in Table 2. In the final HEI sample, there were 18 male and 2 female respondents.

Table 2: HEI Sample Composition
(n=20)

	President, Vice-President or former President	Senior Administrator	Member of Governance Body	Informal Leader
Flagship	2	1	2	1
Technology	1	2	2	1
Specialized	1	1	2	1
Vocational	0	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	5	7	4

Government context. The second group of subjects in the study is defined as policy actors with an influence on higher education policy. For the purposes of this study, these policy actors were drawn from three groups:

- Senior employees of the Department of Strategy of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education
- Architects of the 2008-2011 reforms of higher education and science
- External experts consulted by the government
- Legislators and political pressure groups in the area of higher education

The selection of subjects in the administration, the legislature and political pressure groups ensured that the scope of the research includes the interests and perceptions across the political spectrum. A minimum of two persons from each group above were interviewed. The composition of the secondary sample is summarized in Table 3. The government sample consisted of 6 males and 6 females.

Table 3: Government Sample Composition
(n = 12)

	Ministry of Science and Higher Education	Reform architects	External experts	Political advocates
Participants	3	3	2	4

4.1.4 Research Methods

The investigation employed three primary qualitative methods to explore the ideas and interpretations of higher education leaders. The research problem and the elite status of study participants informed the choice of elite interviews, document analysis, and elements of ethnography.

High-profile participants are not likely to allow extensive access to ethnographic researchers; they are also not likely to fill out a survey or participate in a conventional interview (Dexter, 1970). The primary method employed in this study is therefore the elite interview, and to ensure the validity of the data in the Polish context, the interviews took place in the context of the researcher's extended stay in the country that allowed for the triangulation of results with information obtained through document analysis and elements of ethnography, such as participant observation.

4.1.4.1 Document analysis. A single interview offers only a limited window into the deeply held ideas surrounding good governance – yet a single interview is all that

elite participants are willing to give. The quality of the data obtained in such a narrow window of time was enhanced through the interviewer's demonstrated familiarity with the respondent's role and institutional context resulting from a thorough analysis of publically available documents and press releases put out by institutions employing study participants. As a result, respondents perceived the interviewer as knowledgeable and did not feel the need to educate her on technical matters related to the subject at hand. That way, the interviews were more easily focused on the respondent's emerging ways of thinking rather than factual information available through other channels. Publically available documents and press releases were used to triangulate qualitative research findings. Using both interviews and analysis of documents such as organizational charts, institutional newsletters and administrative memos ensured the inclusion of different perspectives of the conceptions of governance underlying the governance structures participants' institutions (Maxwell, 1996).

4.1.4.2 Participant observation. Although it is rarely viable to conduct an ethnographic study of elite populations, I made every attempt to become immersed in the social world of study participants for one year. From February 2013 to February 2014, I was employed as a Visiting Scholar at the Institute of Public Affairs at the Jagiellonian University – the academic unit that trains leaders and managers for the public sector, including higher education. I was supervised by a well-known and respected figure in the region's higher education sector. My supervisor's personal recommendation brought with it invitations to academic functions and led to a number of participants agreeing to be interviewed. My office was located next to the office of a professor who had trained the administrative personnel of higher education institutions all across the country for a

number of years. This person also opened many doors and proved to be an invaluable sounding board throughout the research process. As a result of connections developed in the initial period of the study, I was invited to participate in closed events sponsored by organizations such as the Foundation of Polish Rectors and the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools. During my stay in Poland, I participated in the following functions:

Event	Date	Attendees	Description
Bologna Seminars organized by the Foundation for the Development of Educational Systems and Bologna Experts	March 25, 2013 April 25, 2013	Administrators from all major universities in the southern regions of Poland.	Seminars on the new law on higher education and its implications for university practice
"Deregulation in Higher Education" Conference organized by the Fundation of Polish Rectors	April 19, 2013	30 top higher education experts from Poland, Germany, Czech Republic and Ukraine; and presidents of the flagship universities.	Conference on deregulatory trends in the European Union
Annual Meeting of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools (CRASP)	May 26-27, 2013	Rectors of all academic schools in Poland, and the Minister of Science and Higher Education.	Conference resulting in a list of requests and recommendations submitted to the Minister of Science and Higher Education
Celebration of the Bicentenary of the Founding of AGH University of Science and Technology	May 27, 2013.	Distinguished guests from around the country and the Minister of Science and Higher Education	Symphony concert and dinner
"Condition of the Polish university"	October 26, 2013	Management faculty and students	Open discussion of the condition of

Seminar		from flagship universities across Poland	Polish universities since the recent wave of reforms
"Mixed methods in social science research"	December 12, 2013	Faculty and students in management from a leading university of technology in northern Poland	Open lecture on mixed methods using examples from my dissertation, followed by discussion
"Humanistic Management" Conference	January 2014	Faculty and students in public management from universities across Poland and from the UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the US	Two days of lectures on management from a humanistic perspective, including presentations on the management of universities
Congress of Academic Culture "Reactivation of the Idea of the University	March 2014	Leaders of academic institutions from across Poland	Three-day conference with over 50 talks on the idea of the university, celebrating 650 year anniversary of the oldest Polish HEI

Extended presence in the country and participation in the academic life of the participants enabled the observation of their actions and their "life world" (Lee, 1991, p. 348). Sustained engagement may have also increased the degree of participants' trust, which impacted the quality of the subsequent interviews. As discussed in the previous chapter, recommendation by a member of a private network not only facilitates access, but also takes account of how communication styles differ depending on whether the interlocutor is perceived as a member of the public or private sphere. Participant observation was therefore valuable not only for the insights it gained, but also for the researcher becoming known to the participants prior to the interview.

4.1.4.3 Elite interviews. Due to the high social positions of the participants, the primary method selected for the study was elite interviewing, a method developed in political science specifically for studying prominent populations. In doing research with elite populations, political scientists have found that they "do not like being put in the straightjacket of close-ended questions. They prefer to articulate their views, explaining why they think what they think." (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002, p. 674). Their high status requires special interviewing techniques that emphasize their expert knowledge, allow them to correct the interviewer's assumptions, and ensure flexibility in the design of the protocol (Dexter, 1970, p. 6).

Elite interviewing is a type of open-ended questioning that involves three characteristics:

"1. stressing the interviewee's definition of the situation

2. encouraging the interviewee to structure the account of the situation

3. letting the interviewee introduce to a considerable extent (...) his notions of what he

regards as relevant, instead of relying on the investigator's notions of relevance."

(Dexter, 1970, p. 5)

Interviews tend to be effective at facilitating respondents' self-awareness (Dexter, 2006), which is essential for comparing two groups' conceptualizations of the notion of governance. Open-ended interviews using the elite methodology provided direct insight into how respondents conceptualize good governance, and what key factors shape their notions of this idea.

The interview protocols, including Polish translations, are included in Appendices 3-6. The theoretical grounding of the interview questions is presented in Table 4 below. In order to improve validity, the interview questions were piloted in November 2011 with two faculty members in Poland who had close familiarity with the populations represented in the sample. Consulting with these academics allowed to ensure that the language employed in the protocol was clear and appropriate for the audience (Conklin, 1964). The protocol was adjusted based on the feedback from pilot interviews. Interviews were then conducted in Polish, the native language of the researcher and the participants. The themes and corresponding interview questions are presented below in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Themes in Relevant Literature

Theme	Research Objective	Probes
Policy criteria	**Bardach, 1972; Patton and Sawicki, 1986**	
Effectiveness (or technical feasibility) Political Viability	To determine how participant decides on the effectiveness and viability of governance solutions proposed since the beginning of the reform conversation (e.g. governing boards with external stakeholders, professionalized administrators)	In Western Europe, we've seen a trend towards including representatives of the external environment in governing boards. What is your stance on effective this might be, and how viable in Polish HE?
HE models	**Dobbins et al., 2011**	
Mission of higher education	To identify the goals of higher education embraced by the participant	As you look at public higher education today, what would you say are its strongest and weakest aspects?
Role of the state	To identify how the participant envisions the role of the state in governing HE	What is your opinion of the current level of autonomy of public universities/your institution?
Institutional framework	To identify participant's beliefs regarding the best way for HEIs to be governed	As somebody inside the system, how do you evaluate the way the governance system is working in practice at your university? How would you describe the conception of higher education governance favored the academic community? By the government? How do you foresee the impact of the reform on how public universities in Poland will be governed in the next decade?

Historical Legacy	Sztompka, 2005; Marody, 1991	
Hostility between the governing and the governed	To identify the mutual attitudes of participants representing the government and the academic community	How does the government perceive the academic community? How does the academic community perceive the government?
Policy environment	Braun and Merrien, 2001; Maasen and Stensaker, 2010	
Impact of the broader policy environment	To determine the extent of the participant's exposure to the global higher education policy conversation	In your professional opinion, which scholars, institutions and organizations are doing the best quality work on higher education that is relevant to the Polish context? In your work on the long-term strategy for Polish higher education, what have been the professional networks and resources that you have found most helpful and stimulating?
Strengthening of the steering core	To identify participant beliefs about the effectiveness and viability of governance solutions	In the European Union, we've seen a trend towards *including representatives of the external environment in governing boards / professionalizing and giving more power the administrative core / output funding*. What is your stance on how viable this solution might be in Polish HE?
Accountability to external stakeholders		
Output funding		

The research received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Minnesota prior to conducting this study. Prior to beginning each interview, each participant received an email with an overview of the study and a consent form approved by the IRB at the University of Minnesota. Interviewees were assured that participation is voluntary, the information they share will be confidential, and they were free to decline to answer any question they are not comfortable with. Sending participants a consent form ahead of the interview ensured that they had ample time to familiarize themselves with the study and their rights as participants, and to ask questions. Since the participants represent academic and government elites, their time is very limited, and sending the form ahead of time cut down on the time needed for formalities at the beginning of the interviews.

Prior to each interview, participants were asked to address any additional questions. With the interviewees' permission, interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder. The interviewer also took extensive contemporaneous notes for the purpose of providing a backup record, but also to provide a culturally appropriate indicator that she is actively listening to the participants. Each respondent was assigned a number on the recording and in the researcher's notes.

On average, the interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, and the possibility of meeting with participants again after initial analysis of interview data was left open. The researcher followed up with two respondents who expressed willingness to meet once again to member-check and provide additional information.

4.1.5 Data Management

I kept a detailed record of notes from participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. After each interaction or interview, a detailed memo was compiled that summarized the main themes and insights. Each interview was also transcribed shortly after it is completed, and a second researcher memo was compiled upon the completion of the transcription whenever additional insights surfaced.

Digital files were stored on a password-protected computer and external hard drive available only to the researcher. All transcriptions were de-identified to ensure that the information cannot be linked to the individual who provided it. The interviews were then coded in the original language using textual data analysis software MaxQDA. The main themes were translated into English upon the completion of initial analysis.

4.1.6 Data Analysis

Content analysis of the interview data was conducted in the original language to compare the two groups of respondents using markers of three ideal types of higher education models – "Humboldtian," state-centered, and market-based (Dobbins et al., 2011). Working from transcripts and interview notes, I initially organized the interview data by themes identified in the review of relevant literature such as assumptions and solutions associated with the three models of governance – "Humboldtian," market-based, and state-centered. Interview segments were coded for the model of governance that they, and for the evaluative stance of the speaker, so that both positive statements and criticisms could be analyzed. Each primary code was divided into three main sub-codes: mission, structure, and relation to the state. For example, when a respondent spoke favorably about stakeholder boards, the segment was coded under "+ Market-based structure"; or if she spoke unfavorably about the organization of study programs being legislated by the government, the segment was coded under "- State-centered structure." The main part of the code system is presented below in Figure 1, with the emergent in vivo codes highlighted.

Figure 1: Code System

- Code System
  - + Market-based model
    - + Market-based mission
    - + Market-responsive structure
      - + Boards of trustees
      - + Strong executive
      - + Professionalized management
      - + Models drawn from business
    - +: Market-responsive role of the state
  - - Market-based model
    - - Market-responsive mission
      - - Massification harms outcomes
      - - Not our goal to prepare specialized workforce
    - - Market-responsive structure
      - - Boards not viable
      - - External managers not accepted
    - - Market-responsive role of the state

  - + Humboldtian model
    - + Humboldtian mission
    - + Humboldtian structure
      - + Self-governance
      - + Collegiality
      - + Tested executives
      - + Training by doing
    - +: Humboldtian role of state
  - - Humboldtian model
    - - Humboldtian mission
    - - Humboldtian structure
      - - Isolated from environment
      - - No accountability
      - - Ineffective university executives
      - - Impossible to combine administration and research
      - - Collegial management leads to worse outcomes
      - - Executive hostage to academics
    - - Humboldtian role of state

  - + State-centered model
    - + State-centered mission
    - + State-centered structure
    - + State-centered role of state
  - - State-centered model
    - - State-centered mission
    - - State-centered structure
      - - Legislative diarrhea
      - - No accountability for management
      - - Not democratic
      - - Inflexible employment
    - - State-centered role of state

The coding system served as a tool framework the initial organization of the data, and enabled the mapping of dataalong the lines defined in the literature, including areas where criticism of features associated with one model coincided with approval for another. Coding also enabled the identification of areas where rich data did not fit on the a priori map, or suggested a different mapping altogether. In the course of analysis, special attention was devoted to "apparent absurdities" (Kuhn, 1974) – layers of apparent inconsistency and paradox that highlight differences between the researcher's implicit assumptions and the world images of research subjects. In the course of content analysis, the two groups of respondents were compared in their criteria for evaluating governance solutions discussed in the interviews.

In the analysis process, I was alert to discrepant evidence, especially in the comparisons of accounts given by the government and academics regarding each other's beliefs and behaviors (Maxwell, 1996). Having multiple perspectives of recently passed and currently proposed reforms served as a form of data triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Once potential themes were identified, I invited those respondents who indicated their interest to follow-up interviews. An opportunity for member-checking provided respondents with a chance to validate or question emerging themes and to offer more reflective insight.

Documents released by the government and institutions where respondents are employed were examined in order to glean additional information about the themes and issues raised in the interviews. Document analysis helped inform questions asked in subsequent interviews, and provided a larger picture of the governance structures discussed by interview participants.

4.2 Validity and Reliability

According to Berry (2002), validity and reliability in qualitative research depend primarily on the appropriateness of the measuring instrument to the task at hand, which has been addressed in the preceding sections. Nonetheless, two other sources of validity come from specific strategies employed to ensure rigor and high quality of findings, and the researcher's professional preparation.

4.2.1 Validity Threats

The primary challenge to the validity of a study involving high-status university leaders and policy actors is the threat of receiving cautious, guarded responses. To mitigate this threat, interview questions were carefully crafted and pilot-tested to ensure that they solicited general views and not "information that might jeopardize the respondents' personal interests (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002, p. 675). General questions were asked at the beginning of the interview, while more sensitive ones were left for the end, when respondents already felt comfortable with the interviewer.

Another specific validity threat stemmed from the context of the investigation, with different genres of communication in public and private networks. When a researcher approaches an influential leader through a public channel, such as a letter or a phone call to a secretary, he or she runs the risk of being seen as an element of the public sphere of the research subject's life, and receiving public responses that differ from those uttered when trust is present (Marody, 1991). Having learned from a few initial interviews where I suspected I had heard only the official version, I began to rely exclusively on a recommendation of someone within a respondent's private network. Participant recruitment followed a period of networking in the social circles of the

participants, and after the first few attempts, I managed to obtain a personal recommendation for the majority of the interviews. While time-consuming, this stage turned out essential to ensure the validity of the data.

Another challenge in conducting research with an elite population lies in the limited time and access that they are likely to grant to researchers. Maxwell (2005) suggests that long-term engagement with research subjects through "repeated observations and interviews, as well as sustained presence of the researcher in the setting studied, can help rule out spurious associations and premature theories" (p. 110). It is not realistic with elite populations, however, to request multiple interviews, or to triangulate findings by using multiple methods. Fortunately, the topic of this research elicited a high degree of interest from participants. As someone who has lived and worked at universities in the region of the university research site, and yet lives outside of the country and works in the field of higher education, I was perceived as a safe and intriguing partner in conversation. After the interviews were complete, it was a matter of fortunate timing that I was able to attend the Congress of Academic Culture, a major event celebrating the 650th anniversary of the Jagiellonian University, that drew together academic leaders from around the country, including my respondents. Those who had expressed the wish to do so were allowed to review preliminary findings and provided additional insights, which helped assure the reliability of my interpretations.

Validity threats derived from limited possibility of methodological triangulation were also somewhat alleviated thanks to a close familiarity with the academic context under investigation. Berry (2002) emphasizes the importance of extensive background knowledge in elite interviewing, which is assured in this case through long-term

engagement in the region where the research site is located. The researcher's ability to obtain valid data was enhanced by virtue of association with a well-regarded research university. The international scope of a study conducted under the auspices of the University of Minnesota made me more likely than local researchers to win the trust of the target group.

As far as my professional preparation, previous experience at the University of Minnesota has also provided me with opportunities to develop significant expertise in qualitative interviewing. In the three years prior to the writing of this dissertation, I had personally interviewed almost one hundred academics, including forty in Eastern Europe, under the supervision of seasoned researchers. This kind of experience in the field ensured the necessary preparation to conduct high quality research with Polish university leaders.

4.3 Data Collection Timeline

The interview protocol received institutional review board approval from the University of Minnesota in November 2011. I traveled to Poland for the first stage of the study that month, and began preparations for a year to be spent in the country from January 2013 to May 2014.

4.3.1 Stage 1: Government

The first stage of the data collection was a three-week visit to Poland in November 2011 to conduct interviews with representatives of the government located in Warsaw. The interviews were conducted very shortly after the reform of the Law on Higher Education was introduced. Interview requests and confirmations arranged by email and telephone with the help of two personal connections involved in the reform

process. In spring 2012 and fall 2013, those interviews were transcribed while I collected legislation and accompanying commentaries released by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in connection with the reform of the Law on Higher Education. While conducting initial analysis of the policymaker interviews, I negotiated a Visiting Scholarship at the Institute of Public Affairs of the Jagiellonian University, which enabled the second stage of the study.

4.3.2 Stage 2: Academia

With transcriptions of the policymakers' interviews completed and subjected to initial analysis, I relocated to Kraków in January 2013 and joined the faculty of the Institute of Public Affairs. For the period of two months, I participated in numerous networking activities to establish connections with potential respondents. After a period of culturally-appropriate participant recruitment, data was collected in the region where the four academic institutions are located in the spring and fall of 2013.

A longer duration of the academic portion of the study was necessitated by the challenges associated with obtaining and recruiting an elite sample in the context of interest. A challenge pointed out by Goldstein (2002) is that just getting in the doors of the elite requires significant and strategic effort. In this study, access was facilitated by personal networks and the perception that the study as a serious research endeavor with prospects of international publication. Based on previous experience in the region, I was prepared for the lack of response of academic participants to contacts by email or telephone. Locating many of the participants, especially older academics who tend to dominate governance bodies in Poland, required face-to-face contact and a trusted recommendation. Approaching participants through private channels and obtaining

personal recommendations also required sufficient time in the field. Time for such face-to-face contact and the building of trust was therefore built into a study design.

Another time-consuming aspect of the sample recruitment process had to do with identifying influential members of governance bodies and informal leaders at the four selected institutions. Finding these individuals required a networking groundwork of informal conversations, visits to academic functions, etc. Once the sample was complete and interviews began, additional buffer time was needed as elite participants tend to keep busy schedules, and they often ask to reschedule their interview appointments. Data collection was completed by January 2014, and the writing of this dissertation was finished by April 2014.

Everyone agrees that we need an atomic bomb,

as long as it's not in my own back yard.

(207:93)

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

On the basis of empirical investigation undertaken over the course of two years, this chapter depicts and analyzes the "world images" (Weber, 1991) of good governance in higher education held by Polish policy actors and academic leaders – conceptions related to the path dependence of Polish institutions of higher learning. Using the metaphor from Chapter Three, this chapter depicts the tracks of their worldviews along with potential switchmen might develop. The goal is to replicate how good governance is conceptualized and operationalized by the research subjects themselves, with the aim of providing a representation they themselves would recognize, placed in its proper context for an external audience (Geertz, 1973).

The presentation of findings follows the narrative flow of the in-depth interview. Questions related to good governance elicited a deepening flow of study participants' thoughts on the logic and mission of higher education, revealing differences not just regarding how higher education should be governed, but more fundamental differences about what it is and what it should do. Therefore, a section on images of the governance framework is followed by a discussion of policy actors' and academic leaders' fundamentally different logic and mission ascribed to higher education. The categories of institutional framework and mission are framed using the typology proposed by Dobbins et al. (2011), while the concept of institutional logic follows the distinction proposed by Maassen and Olsen (2007).

The juxtaposition of views held by the two different groups brings to light a series of contradictions that Kuhn described as "apparent absurdities" – windows into how the

subjects' meanings differ from each other, and from those of the researcher. In the

context of this study, apparent absurdities converged on one central theme: Respondents

in both groups hold and defend ideals that they also – with varying degrees of reflective

awareness – describe as unworkable in the current Polish context. To the subjects

themselves, their views and actions are reasonable, and the discussion that follows in the

next chapter sets out to read them as "rational, rather than as absurd, peculiar, pointless,

irrational, surprising, or confusing" (Lee, 1991, p. 352). A discussion of the ethical

criteria governing both policymakers' and academic leaders' views of good governance

serves as the foundation for identifying key markers of path dependence, and for the

policy considerations that follow in the final chapter.

5.1 Structure: Stakeholder Organization vs. Academic Self-Rule

Policy actors and academic leaders represented in this study hold distinct but

overlapping views of the proper institutional framework for governing HEIs.[7] The focus

of what they described as their preferred model of governance suggests different levels of

divergence than what might be expected from reading the two competing strategies

described in Chapter 2.

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[7] As Chapter 3 clearly attests, this study is not representative of all Polish academic institutions. When speaking of "policy actors" and "academic leaders" when describing the findings, it should be clear that I am referring to the respondents included in this study, leaving the question of transferability to the readership.

Figure 1: Code Frequencies for Positive Views on HE Structure*
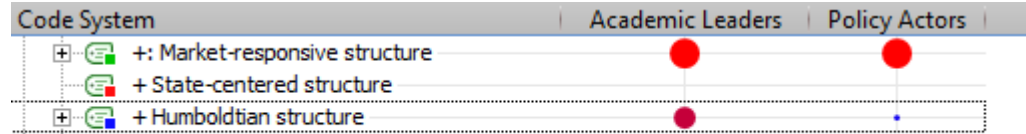
* In this and all subsequent figures, the size of the dot corresponds to the number of segments coded in a given group. Calculation of symbol size refers to the column. The full frequency table is included in Appendix 7.

Policy actors and academic leaders share the conviction that given the increasing complexity and societal importance of HEIs, they should be managed by strong executives with managerial skills and external legitimacy. Academic leaders emphasized even more frequently than policymakers that as far as management is concerned, academia has fallen behind the times and has much to learn from business:

Figure 2: Code Frequencies for Positive Views on HEI Structure (Detailed)
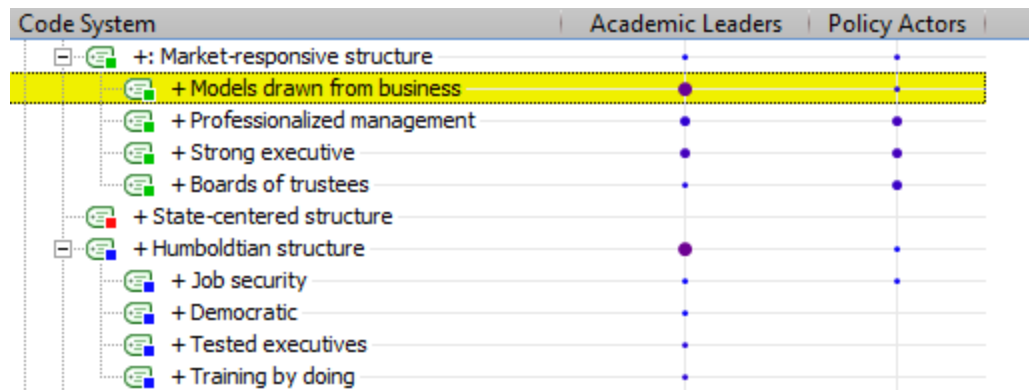
While policymakers shared the view that HEIs should draw some of their organizational solutions from business, they were less likely to believe that professional management is enough – in their view, such management must also be held accountable to the public that funds it, represented by a stakeholder board. Discussions of HEI boards revealed significant tensions in the two groups'notions of power and accountability in higher education.

For policy actors, good governance in higher education can be defined as managerial professionalism accountable to a representation of the public, with the public in the driver's seat of accountability. For academic leaders, the locus of accountability is and must remain internal to the institution. Although their views differed considerably, they shared two strong convictions: that HEI leadership should be selected among tested individuals within the HEI itself, and that HEIs require far-reaching autonomy from external interference. Thus, the differences in policy actors and academic leaders' conceptions of the proper institutional framework in higher education comes down to a difference between valuing accountability to public interest, and valuing the independence of the academic order from short-term political interests. These differences were evident in the critical comments made by both groups, illustrated in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Code Frequencies for Critical Views on HEI Structure
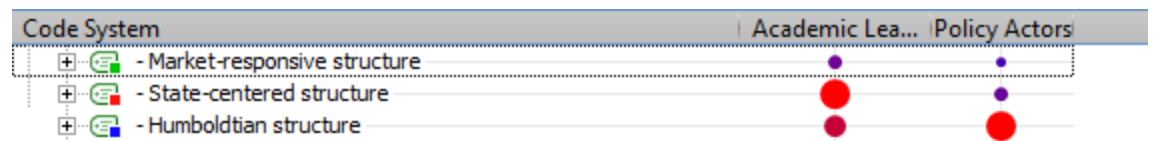
The main object of policy actors' criticism was the "Humboldtian" tradition of collegial management, which they thought isolated HEIs from their environment and rendered academic leaders hostage to internal interest groups. The academic leaders, on the other hand, criticized what they called the corset imposed on HEIs by the government.

Policy actors' ideal of an externally accountable stakeholder organization, however, is complicated by the civic immaturity of the stakeholders that would be supposed to govern it, the dearth of public trust figures, and low levels of trust in public institutions. The reservations of those in the public community regarding the viability of stakeholder boards were distributed along the same lines as the criticisms voiced by academics.

Figure 4: Code Frequencies for Critical Views on Market-Based Structure

Code System	Academic Leaders	Policy Actors
⊟ - Market-responsive structure	·	·
- Boards not viable	●	●
- External managers not accepted	●	·
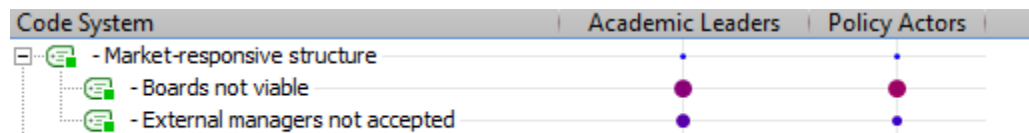
Candidates for HEI boards or executive offices from outside the academic community – whether from business, government, or the non-profit sector – are seen as having even narrower interests than the academic groups that presently govern HEIs. As discussed in more detail below, academia has historically been the stronghold of moral and artistic values against the pragmatic aims of business and government, rendering the inclusion of these fields' representatives in HEI governance inconsistent with HEIs' self-perceived integrity.

Likewise, although the current model of academic self-rule honors the convictions held deeply by academic leaders, it is also described by them as being wasteful of the potential of good scientists, setting HEI leaders at odds with the core academic ethos, rendering university authorities hostage to the interest groups that selected them, and – in a view of the minority of respondents – diffusing responsibility to the point of no accountability. As seen in Figure 5, policy actors and academic leaders shared similar criticisms of the "Humboldtian" model of academic self-rule.

Figure 5: Code Frequencies for Critical Views of "Humboldtian" Structure

Code System	Academic Leaders	Policy Actors
⊟ – Humboldtian structure	·	•
– Isolated from environment	·	·
– No accountability	•	•
– Ineffective university executives	•	·
– Impossible to combine administration and research	•	
– Collegial management leads to worse outcomes	·	·
– Executive hostage to academics	·	•
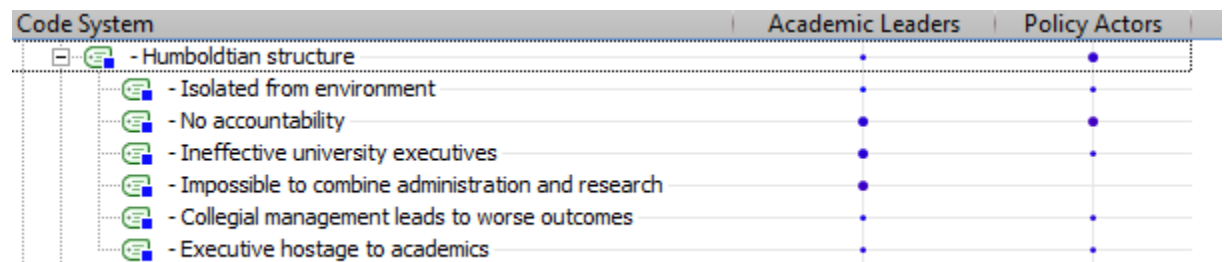
The sections that follow depict and analyze the world images of the two groups of respondents in qualitative detail, noting the tensions inherent on both sides.

5.1.1 Policy Actors: "Anglo-Saxon structure"

The views of those in the Polish policy environment align to a great extent with the conception presented by the authors of the Ernst & Young report – good governance as a combination of managerial professionalism and public accountability. Policy actors' ideal model is one in which the rector functions much like a CEO of a publically traded company – his or her task is to ensure high, albeit partly non-monetary, returns on public investment. It is for these returns that he is held accountable by a board that represents the taxpayers' interest. Public interest is the key value at the core of

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policymakers' world images of higher education. For public interest to be preserved, the interest of the academic community must take a back seat:

> *As I understand it, what reforms are about is not reform of the railways for the good of the railwaymen, or science for the good of the scientists, but for the good of taxpayers. There is public interest here.* (102:57)

The ideal example of good governance, cited consistently throughout the interviews, was the Anglo-Saxon university, especially in its U.S. iteration. The majority of respondents in the policy environment favored a model featuring a strong executive overseen by a stakeholder board:

> *The best-functioning universities are those based on the Anglo-Saxon structure, with Boards of Trustees or Boards of Regents. The rector is accountable to people who held the competition, he is selected based on a competition, and he has to prove his professionalism. The academic staff then deal with what they are supposed to deal with, which is the essential things, and nobody interferes with these.*(101:17)

In this view, strong and competent managers in executive functions free academics to do the work they are really meant to do, while an external board ensures the accountability of the management and the HEI as a whole to those who fund it. Collegial bodies do have a role to play as far as strategic matters and faculty affairs, but day-to-day management should rest with the rector and his cabinet:

... their [senates'] *role should be exclusively advisory. They should cooperate*

when in comes to strategy, mission, etc. But day-to-day management should be

the exclusive domain of the rector and his coworkers. (112:13)

The majority of policy actors interviewed for this study believe that to ensure highest

standards of professionalism, the rector should be selected in an open search, not elected

by the academic community, which – as in the present case – holds him hostage to its

own interests:

Election of the rector by academic employees means that he becomes a prisoner

to what he promised in his declarations when he was a candidate for office. Other

than that, he is not able to do anything against this community. (101:15)

…as long as the rector is elected democratically, he will not be able do conduct

any reforms. (104:7)

Despite a strong normative commitment to the model of the HEI as a stakeholder

organization, policy actors had serious reservations about whether Poland has what it

takes to make such a model viable. Their concerns were echoed with even greater

intensity at all four HEIs.

5.1.1.1 Despite the Weakness of Civil Society

Both groups of respondents expressed doubt as to whether Polish civil society as

such is ready to play the role of a stakeholder in governing higher education. Attempts to

test the institutional framework preferred by policy actors have so far met with poor results in the Polish context.

A key difference between Poland and countries with a dominant stakeholder model in higher education is maturity of civil society, which relates to the level of social trust. Poland is known for one of the lowest levels of social trust in Europe, and one of the lowest levels of trust towards public institutions – a fact noted by the respondents and evidenced in the European Social Survey (2013). A model in which a powerful executive is held accountable by an external board places a great deal of power in the hands of relatively few people who are trusted to represent public interest and act on its behalf. In Poland, such trust is tenuous or non-existent. If the power to select and supervise HEI executives were concentrated in the hands of fewer individuals, those available for office will, either in actual fact or in public perception, be guided by even narrower interests than those represented in the current model of academic self-rule. Two thoughtful respondents captured this insight directly, saying it is too early to assign society and the economy responsibility for higher education and science – as one of them said, they are "mentally and culturally not ready" (208:27). While a number of academic leaders spoke favorably of the idea of rectors being held accountable by a Board (205, 210, 214, 217), not one person thought it could be implemented in the Polish context – including at Vocational HEI, which is now required by law to appoint such a board in an advisory capacity. Over and over, respondents used the expression that Polish society is simply "not ready":

It is an Anglo-Saxon model. What it would be in my opinion is an implant into an

organism which is not yet ready for it. (211:41).

The devil is in the details, and the details in Poland differ from those in the United States

or Great Britain. First, who should determine the composition of HEI boards? If it is a

politician, HEIs will do their best to subvert a perceived attack on their hard-won

autonomy (221). If it is the academic community itself, accountability mechanisms

continue to be set up by the one who is supposed to be accountable, raising the question

whether it is any improvement upon the current model (205). Second, who in a young

democracy has the competencies and the legitimacy necessary to act on behalf of the

public as a Trustee? Ernst & Young proposed to tap experienced business executives who

had previously run companies with budgets equal to those of particular HEIs. Yet almost

all such companies in Poland are foreign-based, which raises the further specter of

foreign rule. The lions's share of the Polish economy consists of small and medium

enterprises, whose executives do not have the experience or the interest in governing

HEIs. Respondents observed that interest in higher education and science is predicated on

their perceived benefits, which are also different in Poland than in the United States:

On the one hand, we have small and medium enterprises that are at Poland's

foundation... They don't have money. Large corporations already have these

things, they don't want to share, they have their own research units. (224:17)

Our economy is not the economy of the United States. We do not have the same

demand for innovation. Most people are employed by small companies that

cannot afford research and development; or large international corporations that

have their R&D units elsewhere. ***What benefit from science can possibly come to***
the owner of a hot dog franchise? *(222:6; emphasis added)*

I would not want an American model of higher education to be forced upon us.
We will not support ourselves. There, science is supported by corporations, and
this forces progress. We are not prepared for that here, especially since our
corporations and our industries used imported technology, which they consider
better. There is no preference for one's own technology. ***There is no tradition of***
the economy supporting science*. (218:38; emphasis added)*

All of the respondents who recalled attempts to involve the business community directly
in HEI governance described them as failures. In the experience of one government
expert, the obligatory boards appointed at Vocational HEIs followed one of two paths –
they were either aimless meetings over coffee that nobody wanted to attend, or (in two
cases) they became a forum for rough arguments and mutual indignities. There was no
way to bring the board members to order or to work out a common policy (101). A senior
representative of the ministry recalled the indifferent scenario happening in the private
sector as well:

Private HEIs, which we knew were trying to win by connections with the
socioeconomic environment, told us something like this: I created a konwent, a
Board of Trustees, whatever you may call it, but ***nobody came to the meetings.***
People are simply not interested. *This means, in my opinion, that we do not have*
a society in Poland yet that is mature enough (104:6; emphasis added)

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Two policy actors known as major advocates of appointing Boards of Trustees admitted that hearing tales such as these, they eventually gave up on the idea of making them mandatory. For one, it did not seem to make sense to create "fictitious beings" (104:7); for the other, the idea fell apart over "who should be on such boards and what to do so these people are not politicians. Where do we get competent people to be on these boards? (102:91). The problem was summed up well by the person who said:

> *There is no such tradition, so it is not a trivial problem to solve how to make such a Board of Trustees more than a hollow dummy, but a body that actually helps with something.* (110:34)

Academic leaders also provided examples of past attempts to solicit help from the business community for various forms of cooperation that failed either because there was no interest, or because the academic community resisted the idea of being controlled (104, 222, 214). The lack of interest and mutual respect goes both ways – as some of the most highly respected members of Polish society, senior academic leaders do not tend to take kindly to the advice or involvement of those with fewer titles, not to mention without any titles at all:

> *A business lady with elementary education is supposed to tell the honored doctor professor how to be a manager? It does not seem right, and I understand the traditional professors who are the majority, although she would certainly bring in something new.* (220:91)

In a society where only 7.1% of the population is involved in any type of non-governmental organization (European Social Survey, 2013), it is not only in business that the bench is not deep:

> *There is no big business, large companies that have been in the market for decades, it is not here.* ***There are no culturally neutral political activists with societal legitimacy,*** *there are actually only party activists with a high turnover.* (214:53; emphasis added)

Another person put the situation in starker relief, claiming a more fundamental hostility between the academic and business communities:

> *We have this phenomenon in Poland that* ***the business and science communities look askance at each other.*** *The former do not believe anything good can be done in Polish science, and all academic scientists and teachers think they work so well they deserve the Nobel. No applied science, until recently these things were treated as a worse kind of science.* (207:31; emphasis added)

There is a sound historical and sociological basis for the deep tensions between the realms of science and business. Disdain towards most types of economic activity has been a trope in Polish history since the dawn of democratic institutions, at a time when the country was ruled by a land-owning nobility who considered trade or non-agricultural business demeaning (Davies, 2010). Unlike her neighbors, Poland did not grow a vibrant merchant class until well into the 19th century, and the one it did have until that point was primarily German-speaking. The defining moment for Polish national identity occurred at a time when the country did not exist on the map, and to generate economic value was to

serve the interest of the oppressor. During communism, official sanction towards private

enterprise breathed new life into the older trope of the immoral businessman, upholding

the ethos of the externally marginalized but inwardly resilient intelligentsia. Norman

Davies, the author of a best-selling history of Poland, goes as far as to claim that the

primacy of moral and artistic values over visible reality is one of the most persistent

aspects of Polish culture (Davies, 2010, p. 541). With these considerations in mind, the

mutual distrust of the academic and business communities in Poland, as well as their

differing views on the proper aims of higher education, can be seen as a contemporary

incarnation of an age-old tension between the forces of the idealistic and the pragmatic,

the visible and invisible.

In off-hand jokes made by academics, pragmatic efficiency was associated with

the forces that nearly destroyed Poland. "Efficient?" – repeated one person with a smile

when I used the word when posing a question. "Auschwitz was efficient."[8] A dean joked

as he walked me to the door at the end of an interview: "So as you see, the university is

the kingdom of the absurd. But let's look at the bright side – if it wasn't, it would be a

German, not a Polish university." The tune of these examples of characteristically dark

humor harmonizes with Davies' (2010) insight on the clash between the orders of the

ideal and the pragmatic. This clash has only intensified since the early 1990s, when

Poland regained independence and embraced capitalism. It is symptomatic that to this

day, professions associated with moral and artistic values, such as those of a university

professor or artist, are respected much more than those of a private business owner or

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[8] The Polish word used by the respondent was "skuteczny", derived from the word "skutek" – result. The connotation is therefore related to action that is effective at bringing about desired ends.

politician. Therefore, as the discussion will continue to demonstrate, the debate over HEI governance is about much more than faculty bodies versus stakeholder boards. It is about the integrity of institutions that guard central values and traditions of Polish culture.

5.1.2 Academics: "German Model of the University"

Polish academics may joke at German efficiency, but most are well aware that the roots of their ideal of HEI governance reach over the Western border. Polish academics share two key convictions with the intellectual descendants of Wilhelm von Humboldt – that HEIs do best when they are allowed to govern themselves, and when those that lead them come from within the institution.

It must be reiterated at the outset that the vision of ideal governance expressed by academic leaders was much less uniform and more conflicted than the one embraced by policy actors. It was not as clear-cut, or as neatly alined with one ideal model. The academic elite interviewed for this study expressed a deep awareness of how the world has changed since the days of von Humboldt, and an equally deep conviction that HEIs must tighten their connection to society and the economy:

> *I just want to say that **we can clearly not be torn away from civilization and***
>
> ***culture** - sitting in an ivory tower and meditating. These are different times.*
> (217:39; emphasis added)
>
> ***To have power, you must have money**. (209:25; emphasis added)*

The latter comment illustrates the avid realism of academic leaders with regard to the financial realities within HEIs in a capitalist order. Academic leaders favored solutions

such as diversifying HEI incomes, meanagement through competitive funding mechanisms, and hiring professional economists to manage university finances. It was symptomatic that whenever respondents voluntarily shared their opinion on tuition fees, they were in favor of public universities charging them. Nevertheless, the most prominent features of their conceptions of proper HEI governance stemmed from an older tradition and defined by values other than financial viability. First, academic leaders believed HEIs do best when they are allowed to make their own decisions without external interference:

We want independence, limited autonomy guaranteed to us in the Constitution.
(220:77)

Academic leaders differed in their views of the proper nexus of power in a HEI, but all except three people agreed that it should remain internal to each institution. Some favored more power to lie with the rector – these, predictably, were mainly the current and former rectors (110, 203, 207). Only one person disapproved of the 2011 reform diminishing the role of faculty committees (219). The majority of respondents did not oppose strengthening the rector's position in the HEI, even at the expense of collegial bodies. On the contrary, only one respondent spoke approvingly of the days when collegial bodies played a larger role in scientific matters, and even then he spoke very critically of collegial decision-making on a day-to-day basis:

To be honest, a collegial body has never decided something as 50 or 100 people;
it has never come up with a constructive project. (219:15)[9]

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[9] More on this issue in section on Logic: Academics

Respondents spoke of responsibility being diluted when decisions are made by a large group of people, and thought it was unfair to hold a rector accountable for decisions he had no power to make (205, 207, 223). Legally, the rector is the single person responsible and liable for the functioning of a HEI, so it would not be just to deny him the power required to lead. A former rector thought that before the reform, the situation was such that:

The rector has all responsibility and no power (207:59)

The expansion of the rector's competencies accomplished in the course of the 2011 reform met with no objection from participants. The common denominator in their view of the proper institutional framework was therefore not collegiality, but respect for the self-determination of each HEI, and a guarantee of its independence:

*The model of the university has been a corporate one ever since the Middle Ages. We have a German model of the university, and within it, these solutions have worked. [The model favored by the government] limits the autonomy of the university because it rejects the wisdom of the corporation and introduces an external official. **We've had this before - in the 1950s**.* (219:59; emphasis added)

As seen in the highlighted portion of the previous quote, the idea of HEIs being ruled by a professionalized elite with "public good" on its lips and political masters to report to rings a familiar and ominous bell. Fear of returning to the governance model of the not-so-distant commnist past was brought up in both groups of respondents:

Let's remember that we are sensitive or over-sensitive about our autonomy. There is a fear that if we adopt this model [the model suggested by the government]*, it*

*will be a bureaucratic official who perhaps even comes from the Ministry, and he might know a lot, but he will interfere in matters he shouldn't interfere with, perhaps tell us what to research. **There is a subconscious fear of a Bolshevik agent sent to rule us**. (201:51; emphasis added)*

The idea of autonomy is deeply rooted, and treated as the achievement of the last two decades. There was no autonomy during communism, so it is an achievement that should not be reversed. (108:34)

Respondents pointed out that HEIs are among the few types of educational institutions that have so far managed to preserve their independence from short-term interests of politicians. For instance, principals of elementary schools and high schools are selected by local governments, who tend to reward political loyalty over competence. In such instances, involving external stakeholders tends to subject educational institutions to particular goals of powerful interest groups (221, 205, 207). The main reason HEIs have been able to remain independent is that their authorities are both elected and held accountable by the academic community itself.

The only example cited in all the interviews of a public university departing from this model paradoxically showed its persistence. Since the 2011 amendment to higher education law opened the possibility to select a rector in an open competition, only one vocational HEI was known to respondents to have attempted it. The only candidate in the "open" competition was a long-time rector who used it as a route to subvert term limits imposed by law on elected rectors. He was being investigated by the Ministry at the time of the interview (220:85). Once again, the only precedent of attempting a solution

borrowed from the Anglo-Saxon model appeared to confirm fears of whether such solutions might bring back a Soviet-style regime to Polish HEIs.

Academic leaders were quite aware of the weaknesses of the model of self-rule by an academic oligarchy of senior professors. They recognized that it is not entirely free from politics – it favors large departments that unite to vote in such a way as to protect their own interests, and favors rectors who tend to maintain the status quo. Yet it does ensure a relative balance of powers between academic interest groups, including students:

> *Now it is at least known that there are various groups, it is a game between these groups, sometimes students prevail, sometimes the administration is strong, **these are various games. But it is familiar and we know how it works.** There are all sorts of fractions but the HEI lives its own life, and here suddenly someone should artificially select a rector?* (205:171-173; emphasis added)

Over all, academic leaders saw governance by an academic oligarchy as the lesser evil – an insider bound to an academic community may do less good than an apt manager, but he or she will also do less harm than someone without personal ties inside the HEI keeping him or her in check:

> *…**perhaps less harm will be done** by an associate professor hired for a few years in case he does not prove himself as a manager, managing a HEI that sometimes employs a few thousand people and educated tens of thousands of students. The risk is higher.* (211:68; emphasis added)

The choice of an insider also has more pragmatic benefits. For a rector to be able to rule the kind of loose federation or organized anarchy that is a public HEI in Poland, he needs

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the respect, trust and mandate of the academic community. For that to be possible, "he must be one of them" (203:100). The academic community will not trust someone from the outside, because "an external manager really does not know the realities of science and research" (217:36). HEIs play a role too important in society to entrust their leadership to people who have not been tested in a variety of positions over the course of many years (201, 203, 206, 208, 211, 216). Therefore, respondents claimed that

> *A managerial way of selecting university authorities will not be realistic any time soon... The academic community never accepted it.* (201:51)

5.1.2.1 Despite Unmanageable Management

Although academic respondents took a decisive stand for a version of self-rule with a strong rector elected internally by the academic community, they noted three major ways in which the Polish incarnation of the traditional model is currently failing. These observations are consistent with the views also expressed by policy actors. First, the current model of self-rule wastes the potential of good scientists while setting HEI leaders at odds with the academic ethos. Second, it makes university authorities hostage to those who elected them, creating infertile ground for decisions favorable in the long term but painful in the short term. Third, as noted by a minority of respondents, the current model suffers from an endemic diffusion of responsibility with little or no accountability.

Even more often than policymakers, academic leaders acknowledged that HEIs have become highly complex organizations with increasingly diverse public roles;

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therefore, those who lead them need increasingly professionalized skills. Executive roles also require different competencies than academic teaching or research. Meanwhile, the current model assumes that regardless of position, an academic leader is first and foremost a scientist – one who sacrifices a few years of his or her life to the unpleasant but necessary task of management. It is a sacrifice, but "someone has to do it" (203:28). This approach is not only a matter of culture, but also institutional practice – for example, the average director of an academic unit has only about 10% of her or his time alloted to administrative and managerial tasks, and even deans are expected to do a fair amout of teaching and research in their tenure.

The view of management as secondary and undesirable from the perspective of a good scientist was most evident at Flagship University, where it surfaced in the few instances when respondents recalled how they came to hold office. The story of one Flagship dean serves as the best example:

> *I had previously been the director of an institute for academic affairs, and [a person higher up in the hierarchy] liked me. He then became the dean and he asked me to be the deputy dean. For personal reasons**, I was not by any means excited about it, but I agreed.** After two terms of being deputy dean **I was sincerely sick of being in office**. I said, great, I will finally be able to do research - because an administrative function takes up a lot of time**... The idea was simple, that I would give it up and focus on research.** To which one dean from another department, who was my friend, said to me: Don't joke around! This is not possible. There is an organizational logic that a person who had been the deputy*

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and passed the test in that post becomes the next boss. It would be irresponsible of

you to run away from that. (208:8-10; emphasis added)

The man continued to describe how he assumed the role of a dean only with great

hesitation – a theme that came up with varying frequency at almost all institutions. This

example is symptomatic of the finding that except at Technical University, it was seen as

inappropriate to openly claim having aspirations to a leadership position. Exemplary tales

involved coming into office only at the insistence of others while actually wanting and

continuing to pursue research. Yet according to a former rector with the reputation of one

of the most able managers in the country,

To be a good scientist and a good manager at the same time is a conflict of

interest. It is impossible. (203:26)

In practice, it is not the best scientists that become deans and rectors; the metaphor

brought up by academics and policy actors to describe the elections was that of a

"game" (205, 103, 110, 210), in which the outcome is more or less "coincidental" (206,

112):

Who assumes power at a university is really often a matter of coincidence, better

social network, better supportive accents in various departments, tactics.

Sometimes it really happens that the academic community notices somebody as a

truly valuable person. Sometimes it is a matter of choosing the lesser evil.

(210:20)

For policy actors, such conflict of interest is problematic because the assumed primacy of

research produces a systemic deficit of managerial professionalism:

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There is no professionalism. There are great rectors and deans, and terrible rectors and deans - it is not dependent on the system. The system doesn't guarantee anything. (102:105)

The skills of an academic manager are different than those of a noted scientist, as one respondent put to words with a memorable metaphor:

That's as if I said that a coach for our national team must be able to shoot a goal from 35 meters with a wall of eight people in front of him. Managing such a structure and scientific achievements are two different things. (104:8)

For academics, however, the same symptom points to a different problem – placing good scientists in charge is a waste of good scientists. The way deans in particular spoke of their work evidenced a view that time spent in office detracted from the primary occupation that is research, and for a good scientist to take up a position of academic leadership means the loss of his or her potential:

*A great scientist should not be a rector because it's a problem **that it's simply a waste of him**.* (203:26, emphasis added)

The main problem with deanship is that there is no time for one's own research. (214:9)

If we keep the model where HEIs are run by scientists, professors, we make it impossible for these people we choose, those we consider the best, to continue their scientific career... I always look with terror at great doctors who begin to manage a HEI. (211:56, 60)

A different view of academic leadership at Technical University appears related to the greater respect accorded by the academic community to applied sciences, including the applied science of management. Coincidentally, Technical University was the only HEI in the study where members of the rector's cabinet said explicitly that they had consciously given up on teaching and research for the sake of doing well at management. It was also the only HEI where all respondents spoke well of the leadership. Elsewhere, management was generally spoken of in terms indicating it is a lesser task.

Yet at the HEI where the preference for pure research was strongest in the sample – Flagship HEI - there were also voices claiming a surprisingly high number in HEIs of those who do aspire to hold office (206:6; 208). The reasons had to do with the associated boost in earnings and social prestige. The status of deans and rectors in the Polish context is perceived as very high:

> *There is a bonus in the form of prestige. When I walk in somewhere and I say that I am a dean, it is as if I were an African chief. It makes a huge impression. It has huge firing range, and the prestige, the authority associated with fulfilling a function, especially if you represent a certain organization, gives a certain life bonus.* (208:13)

What respondents did not comment on in describing the dynamic is that leadership aspirations are inconsistent with the dominant ethos of science as the ultimate goal. Since they also carry significant individual benefits, the leader faces an uphill battle in winning the kind of trust and respect postulated by academics as necessary for genuine leadership. This notion seems to have been supported at Flagship HEI and Vocational HEI, where in

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informal settings, respondents consistently belittled their bosses as opportunistic, enchanted with the ceremonial pomp of holding office, and lacking in vision for the institution. Such attitudes could well have to do with the personal qualities of the leaders in question, but the institutions where they surfaced did share some similarities. In both instances, the rector was new to the post, and the selection was seen as contrary to what the institution was supposed to be about. At Flagship HEI, the rector was suspected of being a mediocre scientist who ran for office because he was not succeeding in research. If he were good in his field, he would not have wanted to waste his potential. At Vocational HEI, they pointed out even in formal interviews that the rector was an academic scholar with no experience in business or any vocational endeavor:

> *the new rector came and it is not people who can do anything practical. It's the academic bent that gets under your skin so deeply that you just can't do it.* (223:6).

The second area of tension has do do with HEI authorities elected and held accountable by the academic community becoming hostages to those they are supposed to lead. The hostage crisis appears quite severe in the area of staffing policies. As had already been pointed out, the ability of the rector to make decisions depends to a great extent on his relationships and personal qualities:

> *Despite the appearances, the rector has quite extensive power in Poland. That stems from the law. Yet how much power a rector has depends in fact on his personal qualities.* (203:16)

The most frequent and intense complaint of deans and senior administrators was the near impossibility of setting strategic priorities in a system where the staff select their own boss, and the leader is in fact "a representative of academia" (206:3). In particular, deans and senior administrators found it very difficult to bring consequences against academic staff who do not perform (201, 205, 207, 214). At Flagship University, three academic leaders said that a large percentage of academic staff who do not perform either in research or in teaching is the greatest problem faced by the university (201, 207, 214). A former rector estimated that 15-40% of academic staff do no research at all, blocking those with good ideas and academic potential (207). Everywhere except Technical HEI, respondents said that the sway of the academic community over its leaders in staffing matters is the single most significant hindrance for those leaders being able to lead universities in a strategic direction:

> *I am not for firing people, but if the dean and the rector are not able to get rid of an employee who is a bad employee relatively fast, then speaking of policy is useless. It is not a matter of scaring people. It's just that not everyone is great. The resources and the money are limited. You either have socialism, where you spread everything equally, or you have a gradation. Here the rector, not even just the dean but the rector, has no chance of such gradation.* (205:32)

Current rectors and senior academics tended to blame the culture of academic bodies[10], while others emphasized that rectors could go against the interests of faculty bodies, but their position is such that they are afraid to oppose their colleagues:

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[10] Discussed in more detail in section Logic: Academics

In all honesty, everyone knows, but nobody will touch the problems because in a moment he is going back to that community. (207:89)

Two policy actors affiliated with academic institutions (101, 102) shared a similar diagnosis:

*A rector's power is like a sultan's - he can do much in small things. He can tell a man to be at work or do something, but he cannot strategically manage a HEI, because there is the senate, there are departments that don't bother one bit about him. **The closer to the elections, the less they bother***. (101:61, emphasis added)

The third and final area of failure in the current model of academic self-rule, noted by a minority of respondents, is the diffusion of responsibility and lack of accountability. Despite legal changes in 2005 and 2011 that limited the power of collective bodies, such bodies continue to hold decisive sway over executive decisions at large HEIs. People who are to be held responsible for decisions are often not the ones who in fact make those decisions – they merely affirm or ratify the collective consensus. In the words of one person,

In many departments the dean is not really the dean. *(...) Perhaps not a puppet because he still has a lot of power, but it's a matter of whether it is beneficial for him to use that power. Without the signature of a dean, 90% of things will not happen. But **the dean only does differently than expected in 3-4% of cases***. (205:26-28; emphases added)

It is unheard of for a dean to make a decision contrary to the opinion of a Department Council (205, 224). Although none of the deans openly admitted being held hostage by

Department Councils, deans and their equivalents were a group that expressed the least agency and the most frustration of all respondents in the study:

You can't manage a university department. (214:67)

It is nonsense. There is no possibility for a dean to actually manage a department. (205:30)

For as long as I were the dean, I did not feel I had any greater power to shape how the department was managed… I only thought about how to survive, leaving my office at six or seven at night and returning at eight in the morning. And between leaving and coming back I'm also supposed to be an active scientist and to think conceptually about governance. (211:27)

I am a nobody in this structure, I have no authority. (223:16)

Those charged with leading academic units felt stuck. The majority of interviewees at Flagship University and Specialized University, and one dean at Technical University, saw themselves as stuck between the rock of tightening government regulations[11] and the hard place of their powerful constituencies. At Vocational University, where academic unit leaders have no formal influence on staffing policy altogether, their frustration was even more pronounced.

Respondents across the board wished for a more transparent arrangement with clear lines of decision and responsibility. Some even desired greater accountability, which would signal to them that someone above them in the hierarchy cares about how they perform. Such an attitude was exemplified in of the most memorable encounters of

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[11] Discussed in more detail in section 5.3.1

this study - a meeting with a person at the middle level of the hierarchy at Flagship University, held in an elite faculty club that admits only those with the title Professor and their guests. Seated in a lavish interior of a historic building, we had the following conversation:

> *Interviewer: So in practice, what is a dean accountable for?*
>
> *Respondent: I don't know. (Pause).*
>
> *The question is whether anybody is really accountable at all? (Thinks)*
>
> ***I don't see a system of accountability in higher education. Nobody is accountable.*** *(Pause)*
>
> *Your term is just over. I understand that perhaps it is a form of accountability that you may be elected for another term. If someone is a bad person, whatever that means, he is usually not re-elected. (...) Another question is what accountability means? Unfortunately in higher education today,* ***no one keeps anyone accountable for anything****. You serve your term, your term ends, over. You go back as a professor and it's over.*
>
> *I: Are there no consequences of good management, or bad management?*
>
> *R: No. Neither. At least that's how I see it,* ***I was a unit director and now I no longer am, and nobody asked me to account for it or told me if I was a bad director or a good director.*** *(...)*
>
> *I: You became a dean. Do you consider this a reward?*
>
> *R: Perhaps it is. But what I mean is that there is no means of accountability.* ***In a system of accountability you always have to pay attention.*** *It's easier in the good*

direction - to give prizes, to praise, etc. But not everyone is great and wonderful.

What is done when someone is a bad director? An accountability system would

mean that something has to be done. But what? He stops fulfilling his function,

goes back as a professor, and what can be done? Nothing. **There is no**

accountability system*.*

I: Is the system learning? Let's say a dean who was a great scientist was a bad

manager; do people choose a different kind of person in the next term?

R: No.

I: So who becomes the next dean? Based on what criteria?

R: It's hard for me to tell.

(205: 73-85; emphases added)

A dean cannot be held responsible for the decisions of a Department Council, so the

rector does not hold him or her accountable, so he or she has little incentive to display

initiative, and the cycle reinforces itself in such a way that the status quo is maintained.

According to a prominent figure at Flagship University, the situation is only likely to

change if the dean is elected in such a way that he or she is beholden first and foremost to

the rector, not to the people he or she leads:

The election of a dean should be done differently. Either the rector gives two

candidates and the Department Council chooses one, or the Department Council

gives two candidates and the rector chooses one. **The dean is the weakest link of**

the university because every dean is immersed in the community*.* (207:73;

emphasis added)

Weak links of accountability are also evident at the top levels of the governance structure. Paradoxically, the reforms that expanded the powers of the rector weakened the only kind of accountability present – accountability to the academic community itself – without replacing it with another mechanism. At larger and older institutions, the combination of the electoral model and the academic culture preserves checks and balances, but at a smaller institution with fewer senior academics, like Vocational HEI, the rector is virtually all-powerful (221, 223).

Poland is one of only six countries in Europe with no supervisory body controlling the rector or the Executive Board (European Commission, 2008). In Germany, the homeland of the "Humboldtian" tradition, the rector had traditionally been elected in a similar way as in Poland, but he had to consult all financial decisions with a chancellor appointed by the Land government. In recent reforms, almost all Lander have appointed Governing Boards (Hochschulrat) that control Executive Boards. Poland does not have similar mechanisms in place. Polish law provides for the posts of a HEI administrative director (kanclerz) and financial director (kwestor), but they do not have a supervisory function in the system – rather, they are appointed by the rector and dependent on him for their powers.

In summary, academic leaders are well aware of the weaknesses inherent in the current model of governance, and their criticisms are not unlike those in the policy community. Where the two groups differ is in their estimate of what these weaknesses mean for policy. For policymakers, the shortcomings of the current model point to its bankruptcy, and the need for thorough reform. For academics, they are an unavoidable

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price to pay for the ultimate value of HEIs as independent of political or corporate influence.

5.2 Mission: Maximize Returns vs. Pursue Truth

As the preceding discussion made evident, respondents' conceptions of the framework in which HEIs pursue their goals are not merely technical ideas of potentially efficient organizational solutions. Conceptions of part and parcel of deeply held ideas about the fundamental role and mission of higher education institutions. The key criterion in whether a given governance solution corresponds to the assumed mission of higher education. This mission is perceived quite differently by the academic and policy communities:

Figure 6: Code Frequencies for Positive Views of HEI Mission[12]
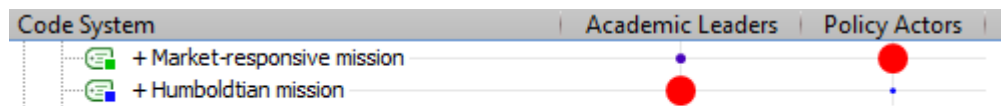
For policy actors, higher education exists for aims characteristic of a market-based conception: to maximize public and private returns, primarily by preparing graduates for jobs and stimulating the economy through innovation. For academic leaders, the mission of higher education is close to the "Humboldtian" ideals of pushing the boundaries of knowledge and providing a holistic, broad education that is not to be equated with job training. What stands out as far as both groups' critical comments concerning HEI

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[12] State-centered mission was not mentioned in positive terms by either group.

mission is the general sentiment that the massification of higher education typical of market-oriented systems harms overall educational outcomes, because HEIs used to cater to a well-prepared elite, and now classrooms are filled with people who would have had no chance to go to university a few decades ago:

Figure 7: Code Frequencies for Criticisms of HEI Mission (Detailed)
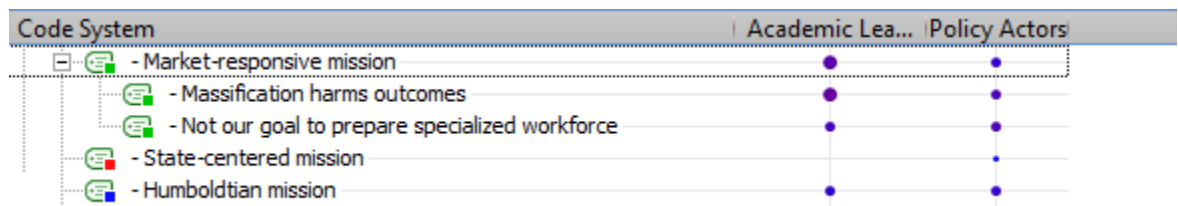
Policy actors and academic leaders also shared criticism of an approach to higher education that emphasizes only market-relevant skills, and thought HEIs had a greater role to play than merely the preparation of a specialized workforce. Notably, however, both groups also opposed the other extreme of seeing higher education as an ivory tower where knowledge is pursued merely for its own sake, without relevance to social or economic realities.

5.2.1 Policy actors: "ensure the graduate a job"

According to policymakers, higher education exists mainly for the reasons assumed in Clark's (1986) market-based model – to maximize private and public returns. A good higher education system is one that helps graduates get jobs, and stimulates the economy by means of innovation. This notion was epitomized by a high-ranking ministry official:

...higher education should ensure the graduate a job, and contribute to the

development of the economy (105:59)

Another respondent pointed out that this assumption has been written into the recently

amended Law on Higher Education, giving the market-based logic a powerful boost:

In the first chapter of the law where it talks about the mission and goals of a HEI,

it says that it is to cooperate with the economy, with the socioeconomic

environment. (106:46)

To policymakers, HEIs exist to serve society, but it is not just the kind of service

assumed in the mission statements of many universities as the public dissemination of

research findings. A key aspect of HEIs' service to society is fostering economic

opportunity. Some (105, 109) reinterpreted the traditional "third mission" of the

university to mean responding to the needs of the local job market, cooperating with

employers, and joining forces with the local administration in fostering socio-economic

development.

Government advisers affiliated with flagship HEIs pointed out that the returns of

higher education can be as varied as the people and communities who are the intended

beneficiaries. A HEI can be good at a variety of things – from high-quality research to

providing students with a good social experience (101). The defining criterion for quality

is whether the institution offers a product that serves society, and for which there is

demand.

Those with HEI affiliations noted that in the age of globalization, HEIs must not

see their role as merely training students for a specific occupation, because what they do

over the course of their lifetime might change – but they should give them the kinds of competencies that will serve them well across various occupations:

It is a mistake to think the university is supposed to give people an occupation. It is supposed to give them an education. There is a difference between the two. (110:17)

While universities cannot be held directly responsible for whether their graduates find a job, they should do their best to study what sorts of competencies will be needed in a dynamic and global job market – e.g. entrepreneurship, critical thinking, and intercultural competence. A common phrase that came up in discussing the mission of higher education was "responding" or "adjusting" to the needs of the environment. The two most consistently cited goals of the reforms had to do with aligning education to the needs of the workplace, as well as supporting better and more commercially applicable research. One of the key architects of recent reforms said that they were designed in such a way,

*so the student would have better skills, so that his education would be **adjusted to the needs of the workplace**, so that the structure of study majors would also change to the more technical ones that are **in demand**. Of course, not forgetting about basic science either. Scientists can now do **better research** and join international teams, for there to be **greater integration with the economy** in this research. So there have been changes **making it easier to commercialize** research findings.* (105:68; emphasis mine)

When "responding" or "adjusting" was mentioned, it was nearly at all times connected to criticism of the academic community not doing these things in relation to society. The faculty senates in particular were seen by policymakers as obstructing ties between the university and the external environment:

*There are many ideas that would **help respond to the needs of the market**, both the employment **needs of the workplace**, and joining in with expert activities, supporting the processes of **technological progress**. Many such activities that would be beneficial and would help respond to needs are blocked [by university senates]. There is no permission to begin such activities that are not standard.* (103:54)

Policymakers recognized that the task of universities is complex:

There is no direct transfer that this specific program will ensure economic development, that the graduate will have a job, and that his skills will be equal to the skills required by the employer. (105:60)

Yet those affiliated with the government also blamed HEIs for hardly even trying, but responding to the needs and demands of the academic community itself rather than the needs and demands of those whom it was supposed to serve.

A weakness of the academic community is that it is sealed off, not integrated with the economy. All other weaknesses come from that - the lack of integration affects both teaching and research. (105:59)

It must also be noted that the economic role of higher education was not the only aspect of its mission mentioned by policymakers. A significant public return to such education desired by this group was the preparation of ruling elites:

> ***It is not true that we no longer need well-educated elites… In my opinion this is the original mission****… It is in the interest of society to pick out people who represent certain values that are important for various social roles, and to create opportunities for them. We don't do it, and it is not done anywhere.* (103:68; emphases added)

In summary, policymakers' criteria for evaluating governance solutions are guided by considerations of the extent to which they enhance HEIs' contributions to the development of the economy (primarily through preparing people for gainful employment, and fostering innovation) and the development of society (by training competent elites).

5.2.2 Academic leaders: "objectivism and truth – lofty goals"

For academic leaders included in this study, higher education is not primarily an instrument of development, but an institution engaging in the disinterested pursuit of truth. In the context of a knowledge-based economy, the benefits it provides for individuals and economies are significant, but those are mere side effects of the essential mission of higher education. A professor who had spent years training university executives summarized this notion when he said:

*The university has two tasks; on the one hand, to hold up tradition, which is the identity of a given community, and on the other hand, to speak out against that which is harmful to this community... **The role of the university is to proclaim truth and speak against error**. This is the best definition of the university mission. (206:28; emphasis added)*

Another respondent said:

The whole concept of the university is about disinterestedness. *If the university is subjected either to business or to politics, then it is just a service provider*. (217:43; emphasis added)

The aim of higher education is to push the boundaries of knowledge and to provide students with a holistic education, in which employment skills are not the main focus. Such sentiments were most common at Flagship University, and often accompanied by expressions of disillusionment at how the ideal of pursuing truth is realized in practice. One of the deans remarked, with both genuine conviction mixed with irony:

*HEIs should strive for **objectivism and truth - lofty goals**. (208:30; emphasis added)*

Ideals of pursuing and teaching truth were seen by many as being undermined by the recent policy shifts associated with the Bologna process, and the government's efforts to make higher education an engine of economic growth. The one exception was the University of Technology, where complaints regarding the government's policies had more to do with the tightening grip of bureaucracy associated with increased accountability for outcomes, while the goal of aligning higher education with the job

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market was seen as positive. It was the only HEI at which the goals of pursuing truth and providing high returns to higher education were seen as complementary.

All academic leaders recognized to some degree that to realize their "lofty goals" in the present age, HEIs must play by the rules of the market. The market is where the resources are, so it has to be reckoned with – but everywhere except the University of Technology, it was seen as a reality that must be lived with and even exploited for one's own ends; but not given in to as far as mission is concerned.

As a result of market forces, applied research, which used to be held in contempt, is now more respected for the money it brings in, especially at the University of Technology:

> *No applied science, until recently these things were treated as a worse kind of science. It's not that way anymore.* (207:31)

Yet even at this university, which has the strongest links to industry, some disagreed on the value of applied research:

> *What is most highly valued is bringing in grants, large grants from industry, which can certainly be of benefit to the country. But is this beneficial for furthering knowledge? I don't think so.* (214:9)

Even less respect was accorded to practical training programs that prepare graduates for specific jobs. The richest and most heated discussion surrounding HEIs' mission had to do with specialist versus general knowledge. There was a widespread sentiment that the aim of a HEI is to give students a broad education, not narrow job training. Leaders of Flagship University and Specialized University in particular

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expressed strong opposition to the idea that the role of the university is just to provide targeted training for the workforce:

> *If the employer complains that we do not have a study program that will prepare his employee for a specific workplace, we just don't have that. That's not what universities are for. (201:38)*

> *These days, people are being promoted for the job market, but they are not being educated. In the traditional model of the university that you might call a museum the point was to educate the person, to develop his capabilities… Education is like glasses that either give a wide perspective, or keep it narrow. A small education causes me to look at the world as through a narrow slot. A better education causes that slot to widen, and it allows me to see reality in a more complex and sophisticated way. (217:15)*

The utilitarian and pragmatic emphasis of reforms initiated since the Bologna process was the focus of the most impassioned criticism expressed in the course of the study. The prevailing view was that increasing policy pressures to "adjust" education to narrowly understood needs of the market is short-sighted, since the demands of the market change quickly while the ability to reason and solve problems is needed in any social role.

Arguments to the same effect are often heard in the Polish media, most famously in the inaugural speech by the new rector of Warsaw University in October 2013. One of the youngest rectors in recent history, he said:

> *The university is not a company, and accounting is not the queen of the sciences. HEIs are not responsible for the condition of the Polish economy… I have no*

doubts that various vocational schools are necessary. Ignoring technical

knowledge would be a mistake, but we are pouring out the baby with the bath

water. Why should practical qualifications be Poland's trademark? Will welders

solve the current social and economic problems of the country? Will Polish

seamstresses beat those from Bangladesh? (Gazeta Wyborcza, 2013-10-01).

It is noteworthy that in interviews, at no point did applied science or practical

training come up in the context of service to society, as it did with policymakers.

The view of the university as a temple of knowledge was most pronounced at

Flagship HEI and Specialized HEI, where such a view coincided with an overwhelmingly

negative assessment of the recent massification of the higher education system:

It is some idiocy - the percentage [of those going to university] has grown so

much, that some people who will receive a tertiary diploma are people who

should not think about it. (201:6)

Massification was seen as the culprit in eliminating the master-student relationship

central to the kind of broad and transformative education desired by most respondents.

Even at Flagship university, academic leaders admitted that the nurturing role of higher

education was not being widely realized any more. Administrators who were already in

leadership positions in the post-communist transition recalled that they took in more

students not because they wanted to, but because they had to do so to keep their staff

employed and to keep research going under the new funding formula:

The subsidy should be calculated (...) so that we get this or that many million, we

divide it by a given amount of financing, and we only create that many study

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places. The Ministry did the opposite - whoever takes in more students gets more

money. It was forced action. I realized at one point that I can't go against the

current, although I thought it was nonsense to educate that many teachers (...).

But I would have done harm to the school, because we wouldn't have gotten the

money, and we had to move forward. (206:34)

At all HEIs, massification was seen as harmful because of the associated decline in

educational quality. Academic leaders wished for the return of the days when there were

few students, small seminars, and opportunities building a master-student relationship.

They agreed with policymakers that training elites has become an Achilles' heel of Polish

higher education:

There is no system for fostering elites. If we didn't create such a system, we

should have at least created a system for practical education for the job market.

But we do not have that either. (223:28)

Academic leaders recognized that not all HEIs need to be universities in the traditional

"Humboldtian" sense, but none of them wanted to be anything else. The majority of

academic leaders described the realities of massification and state mandates to make

education practically relevant in terms suggesting that they were undesirable

perturbations contrary to HEIs' proper mission. Interestingly, such sentiments also

prevailed at Specialized and Vocational HEI – institutions whose official mission

statements refer to the development of practical competencies. Representatives of both of

these institutions stated that if they could, they would eliminate the adjectives attached to

their names and assume the same status as traditional universities. Respondents at

Flagship University complained of the devaluing of the term "university." Interestingly, the same criticism was reiterated at Specialized University, which itself called itself a "university" only within the last twenty years.

The phenomenon of "academic drift" appears to be fueled by two principal dynamics. First, the majority of HEIs were built on the organizational blueprint of traditional universities, which is also where they drew from for their staff:

> *If you look at the staff of practical HEIs, let's say the State Vocational HEIs and private HEIs, their staff came from large public universities... These HEIs usually do not have the rights to grant Ph.D. or Habilitatus degrees, or at the most they have the rights to grant Ph.D.s in a few disciplines. So **the staff comes from universities and grows up within their patterns**.* (213:46)

The academic drift was seen as a serious concern by those policy actors who thought the path chosen in the 1990s was schizophrenic:

> *It is a type of schizophrenia that in memory and in mission statements higher education institutions refer back to the idea of the Humboldtian university. The research university has not expired or ended, but in Poland, I won't risk numbers, but few universities can pretend to the Humboldtian name. Sometimes within one institution we have units or centers strongly focused on research, and that is what they specialize in, research and training future scientists and innovators. So some fit this category. The rest is unfortunately, or perhaps not unfortunately, devoted to the third mission, or direct service to society. You see that clearly. If a small, local school, fully integrated with the local job market, cooperating with*

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employers and the local administration, would like to be a Humboldtian

university, then this is a complete misunderstanding. (109:8)

The "Humboldtian" identity, however, is not a matter of culture alone. Reforms to the system of higher education since the 1990s were designed by experts from traditional universities, who entrenched the "Humboldtian" logic in legislation and funding policies that apply equally to a flagship university and a vocational institution. Even in the 2011 reform, greater autonomy to open new educational programs without ministry approval was granted only to institutions and units with the right to grant Habilitatus degrees. The funding formula also continues to favor HEIs with academic profiles:

> *There is power in granting academic degrees and titles... It gives greater*
> *autonomy, and higher subsidies for teaching. The prestige is higher because we*
> *can educate our own staff, and staff for others. It matters in rankings and*
> *financing algorithms.* (218:56)

In summary, academic leaders recognize the need for practically relevant training, but their views on good governance in higher education will be guided by considerations of whether the chosen organizational aid the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and non-utilitarian, general education for at least the most talented segment of the student population.

5.3 Logic: Instrumental vs. Institutional

If alignment with presumed mission is the key criterion determining how stakeholders evaluate potential governance solutions, the logic of relations with the state often provides the litmus test. Like in most other European countries, the path

dependence of Polish social institutions involves a prominent role of the state as a funder and regulator of higher education. The logic governing the relationship between the state and HEIs is distinctive across the three ideal type models, and it differs significantly between the two groups of stakeholders included in this study. Policy actors and academics in Poland continue to see the state as an essential player in funding and regulating higher education, but they differ in their assumptions regarding the logic of mutual relations.

For policy actors, higher education is an instrument of state policy. Although their preferred aims and mechanisms aligned closely with the assumptions of a market-based model, their logic of how to achieve desired outcomes did not – the locus of accountability for market-based outcomes is a state intermediary, not the market itself. For academics, HEIs are autonomous institutions deserving of public support not for any short-term returns they might provide, but for their role as preservers of common values and forges of identity. While the government must watch the spending of public resources, it should do so in trust towards the mechanisms of mutual accountability within the academic community itself.

The logic of policy actors is complicated by the limitations of mandates and indicators available to the state in exercising its intermediary role. In its attempts to promote responsiveness to the market, the state relies on extensive regulation that, according to academics, stifles initiative and innovation.

5.3.1 Policy Actors: "if the state pays for something, it expects specific results"

Policymakers embrace what Maassen and Olsen (2007) call an instrumental logic, in which the higher education sector is an instrument of state policy, so that "support, economic and otherwise, depends on contributions" (p. 27). Such logic is characteristic of state-centered models and the emerging New Managerialism.

On a surface level, the views of Polish policy actors suggest a market-based logic. In policy briefs and interviews, they state explicitly that the desired outcome of higher education is the development of society and the economy, and that such development can be promoted through mechanisms of fair competition. Competition was a word used 41 times in the 12 interviews with policy actors, compared with 13 times in the 21 academic leader interviews:

> *The main goal of our amendment is to create better conditions for our HEIs to compete with each other, not just with one another, but also in the international market.* (105:68; emphasis added)

> *What we need most of all is to activate competition. If in the entire Polish reality since the fall of communism competition gave such good results, then why is it that in the area most important for our future we have not in twenty years activated healing competition based on quality?* (112:34; emphasis added)

> *If we want higher quality, we need competition – for students, for staff, for money, for everything.* (101:23; emphasis added)

Aims and mechanisms embraced by policymakers align closely with the assumptions of a market-based model, but their logic of how to achieve desired outcomes

does not. Higher education is too important to be left to the whims of the very imperfect educational market. Multiple respondents noted that a truly free market is not possible unless "consumers" are the ones paying for a "service" and assessing its value – and most students at public universities in Poland do not pay for their education. All policy actors who mentioned tuition fees in the interviews, spoke in their favor. At the same time, they accepted that higher education will likely remain a quasi-market because free access to higher education is guaranteed by the Polish constitution. Moreover, the idea of tuition fees is deeply unpopular in society. Therefore, since it is the state that pays for public higher education, it is also the state that takes up the role of the consumer:

...if the state pays for something, it expects specific results. (108:34)

In the non-ideal situation in which the majority of public university funding comes directly from the state, it is up to the state to make sure public money is being spent well; and what "well" means is determined by the state.

According to Polish policymakers, it is up to the state to evaluate the outputs of higher education, and to incentivize those perceived as strategic for national development. In a manner reflective of state-centered logic, policymakers thought that the state must skew the educational market in favor of those who will provide the best services with the greatest public benefit. Not one person among those interviewed believed the invisible hand of the market would ensure the best private or public returns, at least not in the current legal, economic and cultural environment. It is presently too easy to deceive potential students, the costs to the public are too high, and the effects take too long to be seen. Without some control from the state, for instance, too many people

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would want bogus degrees, and too many universities would be willing to provide them. The educational market is also too obscure and too imperfect to allow for truly informed choice, so the state that pays for so much of public higher education must also act as the arbiter of what kind of education serves public interest. The view of the state as an ally and protector of public good in higher education is illustrated well in the following excerpt:

> *The way I see it, progressive forces in higher education should notice incentives from the state, and if they are intelligent, they will see the state as their ally. Those who are good are often scattered, they are many, but they are scattered and they are often not in positions of power, so they need support from the state, otherwise they will not win this fight alone.* (108:38)

While policymakers shared the view of the state as the one who establishes the playing field, who pays and demands – they differed in their ideas about the extent of what the state can and should demand. Some thought that the government should merely provide fair rules, create transparent systems of information, and allow the market to do the rest. The market, for example, should play a key role in evaluating the preparation of graduates, even those at the doctoral level:

> *I like what you have in the States, that a young person graduates or gets a doctorate, and it's the external world that evaluates him.* (110:40)

Others favored a more robust state involvement in controlling the educational process, especially as far as setting priorities for funding and preventing pathologies:

We have certain goals, like we want to control and monitor the minimum staffing

requirements, to control moonlighting. (105:163)

Full-time employees of the Ministry spoke most distinctly about the role of the

state being merely supervisory, limited to financing and accreditation. They claimed that

in the system of higher education as a whole, they hold much less influence than the

academic community itself:

The role of the ministry is limited to supervision, just supervision. Control of the

fulfillment of their tasks. So the ball is 100% in the HEIs' court. (106:34)

They can do what they want… We don't force them to do anything, we give them a

chance.(105:141)

In light of other findings of this study, including comments made by the policymakers

themselves, a merely supervisory role of the Ministry appears to be an aspirational ideal,

just as introducing tuition fees is an ideal that is not viable in the current environment.

Policymakers clearly believe they should play a very limited role, but the role they

actually play is quite substantial. During the tenure of Barbara Kudrycka (2007-2013),

whose senior employees were interviewed for this study, the role of the Ministry in

steering higher education became more assertive than at any point since the post-socialist

transition. Marek Kwiek, a leading Polish researcher of higher education, notes that for

the first time since 1989,

"the state is becoming a stakeholder with its own, distinct say in higher

education. And for the first time, a say of the state as a stakeholder is different

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from a say of (the part of) the academic community represented by the rectors'

conference" (Kwiek, 2012c, p. 167)

To mention just a few examples, the Ministry plays an assertive role in determining the criteria for the statutory research subsidy and for state accreditation, setting strategic funding priorities for programs deemed crucial for national development, and selecting members in all major bodies such as the Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Units, the Polish Accreditation Commission, and the Main Council for Higher Education. Therefore, the ball being in HEIs court can either be interpreted either as an aspirational ideal, or as a defense of the increasing exercise of state muscle in higher education.

Despite initial appearances, the overall logic behind the recent wave of reforms is not characteristic of a market-based model of higher education. If it was, as one of the respondents observed, one of their first reforms may have been the abolition of the Ministry. The logic behind the reforms is closer to New Managerialism (see p. 50), in which HEIs are given greater autonomy in return for increased accountability as far as achieving outcomes defined by the state. As noted further, the extent of HEIs autonomy in the Polish context is hotly debated. Nevertheless, the reforms of 2010-2011 certainly did aim, at least in theory, to give HEIs the freedom to shape their research agendas and study programs, with indirect control at the level of evaluating the quality of internal evaluation measures and final outputs:

Institutions have received more autonomy… They have more freedom, they have

more scope in their affairs, and a different mechanism was set up, namely

external quality assurance, which only becomes necessary in this context where

you don't have this direct control. However, it is exactly in this context that some

kind of external oversight and involvement of society at large makes sense. So

basically the two sides of the coin being autonomy and accountability. (107:13)

The most important point of this reform is that the notion entered the public

debate that a HEI should be accountable. (104:4)

The trend to increase accountability and incentivize externally defined quality is most evident in how the Polish government evaluates and funds research. It was summarized bluntly by a member of the Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Units who said:

Do as you please. Yet it's not quite do as you please – do as you please and at the

end of the year come show me your points. (102:131)

The "points" mentioned by the respondent refer to a new national system for the evaluation of academic units.[13] Departments and centers are ranked by the scientific output of their employees. Using parametric criteria such as the Impact Factor, the Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Units assigns each evaluated unit one of four categories, determining the amount of a statutory research subsidy received by that unit for the following four years. The evaluation is based on a point-based ranking of scientific publications announced annually by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.[14] The logic of the mechanism is to incentivize deans and other unit directors

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[13] The 2010 law on the financing of science defines an academic unit as an institution continuously conducting research and/or development, which includes basic organizational units of HEIs as specified by their statutes, units of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research institutes, the Polish Academy of Skills, and other legally registered research organizations.

[14] The ranking consists of three parts: A) Journals that have an assigned Impact Factor in the Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports (JCR) (10,230 journals; 15-50 points); B) Journals that do not have an Impact Factor (1854 journals; 1-10 points), and C) the European Reference for the Humanities (4334 journals; 10-14 points).

to recruit and retain highly productive academic staff whose achievements will translate into increased funds (108). Since all other funding for research in Poland is disbursed on a competitive basis by independent agencies that also use the ministerial ranking as a guideline,[15] nearly all research funds supposed to be distributed according to externally defined and performance-based criteria. This represents a radical departure from past practices, when statutory research funds were not tied to performance, and became distributed through academic hierarchies. In the view of most of the policymakers, steering through objective performance-based criteria eliminates cronyism in the distribution of taxpayers' investment and sets the system of higher education and science on course towards greater public benefit.

Among respondents from the policy arena, there was one significant voice of dissent with regard to the merits of output funding. A person with experience in both academia and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education saw the logic of setting goals and demanding results as detrimental to genuine creativity and development:

> *Autonomy of HEIs is a guarantor of the academic freedom of thought, of creativity. If you just give a task and finance it and hold people accountable to it, you put a hamper on development.* (103:52)

In this view, the university is a forge of new ideas foundational for the process of innovation, and many such ideas would not appear if everything was measured and accounted for. Instrumental and institutional roles of higher education go hand in hand, and recent reforms go too far in attempting to measure the unmeasurable.

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[15] Basic research is funded by Narodowe Centrum Nauki (National Science Centre - NCN); while applied research is funded by a separate agency, Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju (National Centre for Research and Development – NCBiR).

Over all, policymakers spoke of three ways in which the state is currently attempting to incentivize desired outcomes in the provision of higher education.

i. Mandating the inclusion of student evaluations of teaching in mandatory evaluations of academic staff.

ii. Mandating universities to collect tracking data on their graduates. Amendments to the higher education laws passed in 2010-2011 left the method up to individual institutions, but an amendment currently being discussed proposes the combination of the national higher education database with anonymized data from the Social Security Administration, which would allow a longitudinal tracking of graduates' earnings (Poland, 2013)

iii. Implementing a Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF) – an integrated referencing system for qualifications awarded in Poland that uses learning outcomes as a major point of reference across all educational sectors. The whole framework consists of eight qualification levels, and learning outcomes are described in the three categories of knowledge, skills and social competence. The system is based on the European Qualifications Framework – an EU-wide initiative to make qualifications more readable and transferable across member countries.

Since the reforms in 2010-2011, in order to be accredited, higher education programs must formulate their curricula in terms of learning outcomes described in the Framework (Educational Research Institute, 2013). In the past, the Ministry maintained a set list of 118 study programs and their required components. Now HEIs have greater autonomy in shaping their study programs as they please, provided that the learning outcomes align

with the PQF. In the accreditation process, the Polish Accreditation Commission verifies whether the validation of learning outcomes is consistent with programs' stated aims. As becomes evident in the next section, all three mechanisms are seen as quite problematic by academic leaders, and the root of the opposition goes back to a fundamental disagreement about the relationsip of higher education to the state.

In summary, the state's instrumental view of higher education evident in the interviews as well as actual policies implies incentivizing outcomes perceived as strategic, and serving as an arbiter of an imperfect educational market – whether by making sure HEIs evaluate what they say they want to accomplish, or by providing the public with reliable information on their outcomes.

5.3.1.1 Despite liberalization through overregulation

In the view of academic leaders, the striving of the Ministry to steer HEIs by means of regulative mandates and output measures is achieving the opposite of what was intended – it stalls innovation and entrepreneurship by means of bureaucratic control. Their critique of the government's current approach was summarized by a dean at Flagship University, who said:

> *Here in Poland, after communism, we took a big gulp of freedom and the autonomy of HEIs was emphasized. Now the pendulum has swung the other way, the administrative control is tightened, **the Ministry exercises control, and it is all done using free market tools. But can you have steered liberalism? I don't think you can.*** (208:27; emphasis added)

An economy should be innovative, but I don't know if you can impose the

obligation to innovate from above, with a decree of the dean, the rector, or the

minister. Shouldn't the pull come from industry? (224:19)

The sentiment was echoed to various degrees at all types of institutions that in its efforts

to mandate innovation, the government has stripped HEIs of the autonomy they would

need to innovate in genuine ways:

The Ministry practices magic – it says like a charm "you have autonomy" and

expects that to become true. But HEIs do not have real autonomy. (222:7)

Academics are free to research what they want, provided that they can obtain funds from

institutions that disburse them according to what is deemed strategic to the country. They

can teach what they want, as long as it aligns with the Polish Qualifications Framework.

While recent laws may represent an ideological shift towards greater autonomy and

accountability, the full body of regulations prevents the greater autonomy from becoming

a felt reality.

Four respondents described the law using the same word – a "corset" (210, 213,

214, 217). The feeling of being bound was especially common among deans and those at

the middle level of HEI governance structures:

I am in a corset of regulations. I can't do anything. (217:51)

The legal frames are so stiff that HEIs are completely incapacitated (213:58)

The "corset" prevents academic leaders not only from doing what they believe HEIs

should do, but even from the kind of entrepreneurial activity expected by the government

and conceded by academics to constitute an inevitable aspect of academic work in the

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21st century. The only person to whom the academic respondents ascribed agency in the system is the Minister:

The main failing of the system in Poland is a far-reaching limitation of the autonomy of HEIs. Who has the most power at public HEIs? The answer is obvious and I think everyone will tell you this to a greater or lesser degree – the minister. (213:11)

Universities are currently regulated by over 200 executive regulations (*rozporządzenia wykonawcze*). The Law on Higher Education regulates issues ranging from the number of publications required for the granting of a doctorate, the composition of the university senate, to minimum staffing requirements at various types of academic units. According to one respondent, in 1991, the Law on Higher Education and its executive regulations took up 20 centimeters on the shelf. By 2006 they took up 2 meters (206:22). Since 2007, the government passed two additional amendments (nowelizacje), with another amendment being proposed at the time of the writing of this dissertation. The laws governing higher education have indeed become so complex that it has opened up a new segment of the legal market, with firms now specializing in appealing the decisions of the Ministry, the Polish Accreditation Commission, and other regulatory bodies.

Leaders of academic units, except those at Technical HEI, say they are hemmed in by the law and too overwhelmed by the burdens of bureaucracy to lead in a strategic or competent way. The word used by three respondents to describe their situation was that of a "corset" (210, 213, 214). The "corset" prevents academic leaders from exercising

competent leadership even in areas recognized as strategic by the government.

Respondents provided telling examples of how their ability to design marketable study

programs in accordance with the Polish Qualifications Framework is restricted by

minimum staffing requirements and other restrictions set out by the law. For example, at

Vocational HEI, legal restrictions prevented the opening of publically subsidized

programs in Information Technology, Materials Engineering and Agrotourism – fields

that represent growing sectors of the economy. The application to open a program in

Information Technology was denied because too many of the Ph.D. holders listed for the

minimum staffing requirement received their degrees in disciplines other than computer

science. In order to be accredited, undergraduate study programs must employ at least

three academic staff with the Doctor Habilitatus (*Doktor Habilitowany*) degree, and at

least six with doctorates in the required academic field. In practical fields, up to one

Doctor Habilitatus can be replaced by two Doctors, and up to two Doctors can be

replaced by two people Master's degree in that field.[16] Each academic staff can only be

counted towards the minimum requirement at one institution. An administrator at

Vocational HEI explained that holders of doctoral degrees in Information Technology are

very hard to find because their demand exceeds supply, and they are able to make three

or four times more outside academia. The same problem was confirmed by a dean in the

hard sciences at Technical University, who said he had seven unfilled positions at the

time of the interview for which he could not find candidates (216). In the case of

Vocational HEI, if the law was not as restrictive, it would have been possible to fill open

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[16] The law provides exceptions to this rule in select disciplines that have been in existence for some time
and were able to make a case for differential treatment.

positions with holders of Master's degrees, and such instructors would have been preferred. As a few respondents noted, holders of advanced degrees trained at public research universities transplant their preference for theory over practice to HEIs that exist to train students in practical fields (213:46). Yet for the sake of meeting the minimum staffing requirement, the administrators at Vocational HEI had to resort to finding Ph.D. holders in other disciplines who used information technology, such as Quantum Physics. Still, their application was denied (220).

Vocational HEI was also denied applications to open programs in Materials Engineering and Agrotourism. The reason was that they did not have the proper laboratories and infrastructure on campus, although they had signed agreements with commercial firms and a partnering university to make such infrastructure available until the HEI can develop its own. The reason for the denial was a legal provision that requires HEIs to demonstrate that they have the necessary classroom space and equipment on campus (221). At present, Vocational HEI offers degrees in academic fields, such as political science, philology, management, and pedagogy. One administrator said bluntly, "we are aware that we are producing unemployed people" (221:32). Leaders of this university realize that what they offer to students is inconsistent with what they say in their mission statement, or with what the students come for – but they do not have the agency to change it.

The exercise of HEIs autonomy is complicated further by the rapid pace of change to the law. Academic leaders of all institutional types said that regulations change

so often that they are impossible to keep up with. One respondent labeled the policymakers' condition as "legislative diarrhea" (206):

> *It is legislative diarrhea of a seriously ill person. It is awful – they must be mad. For them the rule of law means the rule of making law. In fact it is the opposite – the rule of law is the rule of a stable law that creates a framework for action, but doesn't bind* (206:22)

A chief complaint made by respondents with regard to the Ministry was the instability of the Law on Higher Education:

> *Every minute we have a new amendment to the Law on Higher Education. To me, good law is a stable law, so the minister cannot have three amendments in her five-year term. What do they mean? That every one of them is unfinished.* (216:3)

> Representatives of the government had explained the increasing regulation results from three imperatives: 1) Eliminating pathologies; 2) Fulfilling the duties of European harmonization; and 3) Promoting high quality of teaching and research. The official who listed these imperatives also admitted that with the exception of the new grant funding mechanisms, the policy instruments are almost exclusively mandates:

> *I would say it was a repressive approach – too much moonlighting, so let's forbid moonlighting. Too much nepotism, so let's forbid nepotism…* (108:6)

According to academic leaders, the result is that the measures intended to eliminate pathologies often produce further pathologies (217, 222). For example, since it is not legal to have two full-time jobs, academics take on independent contracts that give them less money than before, engendering the necessity to take on even more jobs to stay in

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the middle class. Tightening restrictions in the areas of public finance, many of which get interpreted differently by different officials, discourage academic leaders from applying for external funds in fear of audit and looming penalties for non-compliance.

Some respondents claimed that not even the Ministry can keep up with its own regulations itself. Responses from different officials differ considerably. The legal "corset" makes both officials and academic leaders inflexible, fueling their reluctance to act in entrepreneurial ways:

> *Regulations are complex and they are not interpreted in a consistent way, so what counts is the interpretation and not the law. Officials are afraid, and that dictates how they interpret the law. They are afraid of an audit and they make up further restrictions, because the more we restrict, the safer it is. It is not the result of bad will, but the system causes this to happen. This makes it very hard for entrepreneurial institutions to act. If someone doesn't want to build, invest, or develop anything – he has nothing to worry about.* (110:14)

In some cases, it proves impossible for HEIs to abide by all laws even without trying to be entrepreneurial or to introduce innovation. A dean at Flagship University described an instance when choosing among conflicting laws was passed down as an official guideline from senior university authorities:

> *Our chancellor once said in a meeting of about 30 university authorities that **we cannot act according to the law**. He said this at a meeting which was being recorded. The only thing we can do is consider which laws to break that won't land us in prison or with high penalties, or ones that are in any way negotiable.*

*We are a large university, we can afford very good lawyers and **we must only** *

take care not to break certain of the laws. *That is also how it works at the*

department level. (214:68; emphases added)

Even those academics who affirmed the ideas behind the regulations thought that their

intended aims were being degenerated by fear:

The idea of the system in Poland is good, but out of fear, officials demand more

than necessary. The same goes for applications to the European Union – the

criteria are milder there, and here they are made harsher out of fear. (219:21)

HEIs are no longer autonomous institutions, or if they are, they remain so by acting on

the edge of the law. At the same time, HEIs are also not the instruments of national

development envisioned by the government. They are something in between, and their

uncertain position achieves neither of the two visions.

The new approach to funding science embraced by the government rests on the

foundation of externally legitimated measures of research impact, such as the Impact

Factor. Such externally legitimized (if controversial) proxies to measure the value of

research have no analogies in measuring the outputs of higher education. Paying HEIs for

results was favored by the majority of policymakers with regard to not only research, but

also the provision of education, but it was nonetheless recognized as a potentially utopian

undertaking. The outcomes desired by policymakers from higher education are a

contribution to developing the economy (primarily through preparing people for gainful

employment and fostering innovation) and the development of society (by training

competent elites). Measuring these outcomes is complicated by the host of overlapping

factors, with the condition of the economy and the legal environment being just the obvious tip of the iceberg. One solution introduced in Great Britain, of which some respondents in Poland spoke favorably, had been to include the employment rates of graduates in the funding algorithm (104, 108, 110, 111). Nobody, however, thought the scheme was viable – either because it would obscure the educational value added and penalize HEIs that target underprepared students (108), or because it would bee too radical and antagonize those in the current system whose support would be needed to make it a reality (104, 110, 111). Still, it was a universal sentiment that quality in higher education – that which implicitly leads to desired outcomes – should be incentivized and rewarded, not just controlled and regulated.

5.3.2 Academics: "protected from the rationality of the market"

The logic of academic leaders is quite different than that of policymakers, and it aligns closely with their view of HEIs as temples of knowledge. Since the primary mission of higher education is non-utilitarian, say the academic leaders, it requires extensive autonomy. Universities are forges of identity and a link between the past and the future, so they must be supported by the state not for short-term instrumental goals, but in recognition of their broader social role. The state paying and demanding specific results amounts to the degeneration of the very mission of higher education, especially dangerous in the realm of research:

Politicizing science is tragic for science. It should have no place in my opinion, we cannot do science for politicians - examine these problems but not those, impose what must necessarily be examined and proven. (224:33)

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Despite claims by policymakers that HEIs have full freedom to realize their mission, academic leaders see the recent decade as a season of diminishing autonomy. As noted by academic deans in particular, the government claims it wants to evaluate outcomes, but it in fact also controls minute elements of the educational and research processes, leaving little room for strategic leadership at the level of individual HEIs. One particular statement by a dean at the University of Technology stands out as a stark judgment of the emerging system, all the more striking because it was uttered by someone who sympathized with the reformers' aims more than most respondents:

It is just like during communism. The constitution said that everyone is free, there is freedom of association, freedom of speech, except it must be regulated. We also have full autonomy, but it must be regulated. The number of regulations sent non stop to HEIs is such as we did not absolutely have under the previous regime… On the one hand, the state claims that they give us complete autonomy, but it is just an appearance. They give us autonomy when it comes to the content, but not when it comes to the form – but the form determines what you can put in it.

(214:61-62)

If academic leaders see autonomy as a critical condition for the proper functioning of higher education, and criticize the government so heavily for its regulatory efforts, what is their view of the proper form of accountability? Most of what academic respondents said about accountability was in criticism of the reforms. Contrary to what the government prefers to think, what is central to the mission of the university cannot be measured:

a university cannot be made into a firm because apart from its commercial tasks,

it has one overarching task - to educate people in a way that cannot be measured.

(219:59)

Only four academics spoke of accountability in the same terms as the policymakers – as protecting the taxpayer's interest. The mechanisms of evaluation and accountability of which academic leaders spoke favorably are informal and unwritten, allowing for flexibility and enabling free pursuit of knowledge. The ideal form of accountability is a matter of organizational culture, not a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet of standardized points. The only kind of accountability that does not stifle creativity is one where academics evaluate each other on an individualized basis. This kind of evaluation continues to function despite the efforts of the government of objectify and standardize it:

There must be a system of verification, and it actually does exist in the academic

community as in every community – the hierarchy is known of who is good and

who is worse. It is unwritten and these points don't change it. (219:33)

We are in Poland, and this is a HEI with a long tradition. We have informal

mechanisms that function. (208:6)

Evaluation of creative academic endeavors is too complex to be reduced to a set of externally defined indicators. An example brought up in a variety of contexts was that of Immanuel Kant – one of the most significant figures in Western philosophy who would have been fired by the current point-based criteria, since he produced only one small book in ten years. A good system of academic accountability is one that supports

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people like Kant instead of eliminating them for the sake of meeting performance standards.

In summary, the logic embraced by the majority of academic leaders is one of social trust in academics to hold up moral standards, and hold one another accountable for the quality of their work. Their views on good governance will therefore likely be guided by considerations of whether the organizational structure institutionalizes mutual accountability of academics with the assumption of social trust.

5.3.2.1 Despite interested evaluation of disinterested truth

While there was apparent agreement that the ideal is mutual accountability of academics accompanied by social trust, a minority of respondents questioned whether this ideal could ever be realized in Poland due to the culture of the academic community (203, 205, 214, 217, 222). These voices are unsurprising given the central role of trust in the idealized system proposed in a country with one of the lowest levels of social trust in Europe (European Social Survey, 2013). The dilemma was captured by one person who said:

> *For science to function normally, you need trust. Trust is at a deficit in Polish science.* (222:16)

In five rich interviews, favorable discussions of the "Humboldtian" ideal of trust-based accountability were accompanied by statements like, "of course, it's a utopia" (217), "it's a type of academic culture that we won't ever have here" (214), or "it's practically impossible" (203). A few others described what they would hope for

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universities to be, and then go on to say why it will not work in Poland. The culture of Polish academia as painted by these five respondents is one in which personal and institutional goals are habitually achieved by evading formal rules and officially stated processes. Having complained about increasing regulation and expressed nostalgia for trust-based accountability, some of the respondents went on to say things such as this:

> ***My own postulate is unrealistic to me*** *because I know that in Poland this system would have this effect, that special conditions would be applied to people who meet the basic condition of being close friends of the rector's neighbor, or the neighbor of the rector's first wife.* (214:110; emphasis added)

While most people spoke of low trust within and towards academia as an external issue, these five people saw the culture of academia itself as the problem, and as a problem that cannot be changed with regulation:

> *This is our mentality here. This cannot be changed with any decisions or regulations. It is definitely a thing of mentality.* (205:97)

> *It is not working in Poland at all. That is my impression. But it is not the government's fault, the culture is what is to blame.* (214:11)

For twenty years after the transformation, the academic community was governed by democratic and "Humboldtian" principles, with freedom to set its own priorities and to regulate itself. Due to mental and social habits that preclude trust, attempts at trust-based accountability produced system of rewards that actually rewarded those who performed less well:

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There is no system of feedback, so that those who work better and do more live better. Here it is the opposite - if someone treats their work lightly, gets another job, does something else on the side - this person has lots of cash and an easy life. (207:23)

The question is whether anybody is really accountable at all? I don't see a system of accountability in higher education. Nobody is accountable. (205:73)

Given the abuses of trust-based accountability, it is no wonder to some respondents that the Ministry took a more decisive stance. While they may disagree with the actions, their impetus is well-understood:

*For twenty years the academic community has shown that it is not able to govern itself, and it cannot set its own priorities… Although I disagree with the Ministry, I understand them. **If you are unable to govern yourselves, you will have a hegemon**.* (222:11; emphasis added)

Elements of the culture cited as contrary to the basic assumptions of the "Humboldtian" model were described in the following way:

*What we have here is in some sense an outcome of the mentality that a Pole will **finagle**, a Pole will find a way around. Perhaps this is a harsh judgment, and it is unfortunate… Poles are excellent at going around various regulations, there are influential people with the old mentality, and the new generation is similar.* (219:25,57; emphasis added)

The original word used by the respondent is the untranslatable term "kombinować," which connotes beating the system or manipulating a situation in an attempt to achieve a

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goal. Unlike the English translation, the Polish word is not necessarily pejorative – it

suggests finding a way around many obstacles, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

> *What we have here is a constant **finagling**, I'm not saying it in a bad sense, but*
>
> *finding a way around everything.* (210:8; emphasis added)

In the view of most respondents, "finagling" is a habit that was first reinforced by the two

decades of unrestricted self-governance, and is now being reinforced even further by an

unrealistically overgrown law that cannot be followed in its entirety without

contradiction. Academic leaders believe that the normal functioning of their HEIs is only

possible thanks to its loopholes and inconsistencies. This traps people stuck between

options they do not ethically approve of:

> *But **we all act with a constant sense of either doing absurd things or breaking***
>
> ***some laws while needing to look through our fingers at others who break laws.***
>
> *Such activity is constant*. (214:80; emphasis added)

Respondents provided numerous examples of evasive behaviors that enabled them to get

things done despite laws perceived as restrictive, unrealistic or unfair. For example, a

person at Technical HEI who oversaw its impressive rise in rankings and in financial

prosperity, said he was only able to lead the university as he did because he centralized

its management of finances, which required making adjustments of dubious legality to

the strictly defined job descriptions of his key management staff. A dean at Specialized

HEI described how the unfair incentivization of international publications in the field of

Polish Philology could be evaded by means of a mutual publication deal with a colleague

just across the border in the Czech Republic. Examples of this kind were provided freely and openly in about half of all interviews with academic leaders.

The trouble with "finagling", even when it might be a reasonable response to the monster of bureaucracy, is that it furthers the erosion of trust – both between academics, and in their relation to society. Lack of trust translates into more attempts for control, which generates more evasion, and the cycle continues to run its course. One respondent captures this well when he looks with jealousy at his German colleagues who are not subjected to the same control as what is being introduced in Poland, but then resigns himself to the recognition that such trust must be deserved, and admits with sadness:

I cannot say that the academic community deserves the trust of society. (219:37)

There were eight respondents in the sample who saw the root of the problem mainly in the academic community itself. In their view, trust-based accountability could not be realized due to persistent social norms of loyalty and reciprocity in collegial evaluation that trump merit-based considerations. Due to the potentially controversial nature of the comments that follow on the subject of integrity, it must be noted again that the opinions they express are not representative for all of academia; they also touch on issues that have been covered extensively and critically by the Polish press without being the subject of sufficient empirical research. According to these eight respondents (102, 110, 205, 208, 207, 211, 214, 219), the mechanisms of collegial accountability in Poland do not function as intended because of an entrenched culture of reciprocity within a shared network. An expressive metaphor of what is wrong with mechanisms of accountability was provided by one dean at Flagship University. After returning from a visiting professorship in the

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United States, a colleague of his tried to introduce a system of peer review in evaluating classroom presentations. He had to give it up before the conclusion of the semester because students all gave each other consistently high marks in expectation that they would be evaluated the same way when their turn came. There was some element of merit – a weak presentation would receive 13 out of 15 points, for instance – but students would not assign less in expectation of reciprocity. He compared the thinking of his colleague's students to that of the academic community:

> *The academic community in Poland is small.* ***It is a clique - that is all a remainder from the previous era.*** *It is not prepared to compete in a healthy way. This results in a bad solidarity - 'I will support them because I know them, and then they will help me if needed, and vice versa. And if he failed my project, I will fail his when I am a reviewer.'* (208: 29)

The principle of in-group reciprocity is likewise seen when inadequate doctoral theses are passed because the reviewer is a friend of the supervisor, and it takes a darker turn when good theses are failed because the thesis supervisor had failed a reviewer's student in the past (208; 110). While personal networks play a role in all educational systems where peer evaluation is used, the culture of Polish academia combined with the tightness of regulations take their shadow especially far. The influence of personal networks is perhaps most strongly evident in the daily work of academic deans, who occupy the space between the networks of academics and the official workings of senior administration. A former rector of a leading university, now in an advisory role to the government, gave an example from personal experience:

I've had situations where a dean comes to me and says: 'Look, I have a request by

one of my professors, I agreed because it would have been seen badly if I

disagreed, but will you please disagree?' This shows you the atmosphere. ***We are***

all colleagues, so it is seen badly if I do something against someone. (110:3,

emphasis mine)

Even though the law is strict and detailed, it is assumed that exceptions can be made for

those in one's own networks. Following official rules and procedures towards a member

of such a network can be taken personally. Deans, who return to the faculty after their

term, do not have it in their interest to be seen as "doing something against someone."

Respondents agreed that the creation of independent funding agencies did

increase academics' trust in the public processes of disbursing funding. Yet faculty at

Flagship University and Specialized University (including all those with degrees in the

humanities and social sciences) thought that shared networks continue to hold sway in the

independent funding bodies and amidst the strict evaluation criteria:

Scientists supposedly evaluate each other and each other's projects, but if you

look at the winning grants in successive competitions, you see the universities of

the members of evaluation committees. Nobody talks about this, but such cliques

function in Poland. The rules of the game are not clear. (219:23)

The lack of transparency in peer evaluation was blamed on the internal culture of HEIs

being cliquish and feudal:

I think there are elements of a scientific backwater in Polish academia. There are old-boy networks and it happens that in the past we had so-called feudal relations. (217:47)

Feudal metaphors appeared in six interviews (201, 2013, 216, 217, 102, 108), mostly in reference to a far-reaching dependence of junior academics on their supervisors for employment and promotion. Close ties and personal loyalties similar to those between a vassal and an overlord were noted as a factor encouraging academic "inbreeding" and delaying scholarly independence. A young academic in Poland has almost no chances at employment without the "patronage" of a senior professor negotiating an opening at their institution, which tends to perpetuate "feudal" relations (214).

Nearly everyone agreed that Polish academia would benefit from universities hiring academic staff from other institutions. Yet since most institutions tend to hire their own graduates, and mobility on the whole is very low, individual academics see it as unfair to their own students to employ graduates of other institutions. As a result, most of those hired as assistant professors at large public HEIs are graduates of the same institution, often working alongside the same professor who had been their supervisor. The government requires that all full-time positions at universities be filled on the basis of an open competition, but in practice, these competitions are tailored towards a specific person who is intended to win. This is evident in the informal language used to describe the competitions – they are opened "for" the person who has already been selected. One intended beneficiary of such a competition called the process a "ritual dance in honor of

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objectivity." Selecting the best-qualified candidate from outside the institution is in conflict with the interest of enabling the employment of one's own students.

Some defended the model of patronage that they and others described as "feudal" in nature. As long as the "feudal lord" is a principled and ethical person, argued one respondent, "feudalism" is preferable to a soulless bureaucracy perpetuated by the government in its efforts to make HEIs perform:

The term "feudalism" is meant as a system that is all evil. But please note that what is mistakenly called feudalism - I do not mean to defend it, but a university unit with a professor who cares, who manages it with a tough hand, almost tells people what to write about, demands - but sends everyone abroad, helps find scholarships abroad, reads their texts quickly, corrects, talks, meets - this is a feudal lord! (...) This is a good example - it can also be bad and I know examples of blocking someone's promotion, making things harder, treating the younger person as someone who wants to pull my chair out from underneath me. Such person should be ethical in every sense of the word, and I do not say this in a holier-than-thou way. (201:15)

A respondent at Specialized University expressed a similar sentiment in stating that reforms aiming to do away with feudal relationships amount to throwing the baby out with the bath water:

The model introduced by the educational authorities in Poland seems to be technocratic, bureaucratic and dehumanized. (217:15)

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Very good - so we no longer have a feudal structure where a professor and

Department Council decides about my Habilitatus degree. But the effect is that

young people are taught to be so pragmatic in a technocratic way of thinking

about science that they are not interested in doing valuable research, they are

interested in collecting points. (217:50)

As noted above, the proper functioning of what the respondents called the "feudal" model

is a high standard of ethics held by the person at the top – a standard that depends on

strict and fair mechanisms of recruitment and promotion. Those also turn out to be

problematic. Respondents across the board claimed that not everyone has to do research

if they are good teachers, but a significant percentage of academic staff do neither, with

no consequences from their peers:

We have to accept that our world does not consist only of people with high moral

standards. Some people chose this path to live peacefully and not be bothered

(201:27).

The ability of the academic community to clean house on their own is not very

high. (201:34)

A government advisor involved in the institutional evaluation of universities expressed a

similar sentiment when he explained that the solidarity of the academic community

sometimes goes as far as to turn a blind eye to breaches of research integrity – a topic

frequently raised by the Polish media yet still insufficiently researched:

The mechanisms of the internal ethos are weak. The academic community does

not eliminate behaviors on its own that are seen as inappropriate, and much evil

is simply tolerated. When there was the scandal at Harvard involving the

psychologist who tweaked his data - it was a big affair and he was kicked out. In

Poland this is nothing, nobody pays attention to such things. (108:34)

As hinted at earlier, deans and rectors at all HEIs claimed that they found it nearly

impossible to let unproductive staff go. They saw it as a matter of labor laws and

academic traditions, but some also blamed a culture of badly conceived solidarity:

In the current legal system it is very difficult to fire someone. The only moment

when it's possible is when they do not get their Habilitatus degree in time,

*otherwise it's impossible because the academic community is solidaristic (*orig*:*

solidarystyczne*). There is an evaluation every year or every three years, and then*

collegial bodies vote, and collegial bodies support their colleague for various

reasons - because we know each other, let's give him a chance. Sometimes the

director of an academic unit wants to make such a decision, but this can harm

*him, because **this is not a Western mentality here, where if you didn't meet the***

conditions then we say goodbye. This is a group mentality, which says, Let's

***protect one another.** He clearly does not meet the conditions, but the Council will*

vote against firing such a person. (219:45; emphasis added)

The respondent refers to the situation prior to the reforms of 2010-2011, when a

dean's decision to terminate required approval by the individual's Department Council

(*Rada Wydziału*). Now, the HEI has the right to let someone go after one negative

assessment, and is legally obligated to do so after two negative assessments. Yet two

senior administrators at Flagship University expressed doubt as to whether the new rules would be followed, since they go against the entrenched culture.

At Technical HEI, the impossibility of letting staff go was mentioned only in reference to labor laws, and only at one faculty in the social sciences and humanities. In the hard sciences, it was finding rather than firing qualified staff was the most pressing problem. Students in these fields are being recruited by industry even before they graduate, and starting salaries outside academia can be four times higher than the salary of an assistant professor, which is barely enough to live on. One dean in the hard sciences said he currently had eight job openings, for which he had received only five applications, with only one meeting the required criteria (216). This is in sharp contrast with the sciences and the humanities, where the candidates are many, but underperforming staff prove difficult to push out. A dean in one of these fields at the same university complained:

> *I would gladly fire five people right now, but I can't. I am in a situation where I simultaneously cannot fire people, and I have to give them work.* (214:62)

For this dean, the main problem had to do with labor regulations and the types of contracts with his underperforming staff. At all other HEIs, the job security of underperforming faculty was said to be a matter of Department Councils (*Rady Wydziału*) voting like trade unions to protect each other's job security:

> *Department Councils and Institute Councils do not act rationally.* ***They often vote like trade unions - against the interest of the HEI, in order to protect and not harm one of their workplace colleagues.*** *Department Councils often stand in*

opposition to a rector who demands something of them, like evaluating scientific

activity or teaching. Nobody wants to do this because then the atmosphere

becomes less pleasant. When one does nothing, the atmosphere is more pleasant.
(207:11; emphasis added)

If the notion of solidarity within private networks is indeed an issue in some

quarters of Polish academia, it could also be expected that some respondents would speak

of its other side – namely protecting the system from people who come from outside

these networks and disrupt the accepted standards of performance. In his discussion of

real socialist social legacy, Tyszka (2009) says that "The mechanism of elimination of

any attempt to stand out from the mediocre crowd was deeply engrained in the logic of

this form of egalitarianism" (p. 512). Such mechanism did come up in a three of the

interviews (102, 111, 214). The theme figured most prominently with the director of one

of the agencies that disburse funding for science. His harsh view is in the minority, but it

is worth noting:

> *We see a negative selection - mediocre people choose even more mediocre*
>
> *coworkers in order not to appear inferior. It is caused by the outflow of elites*
>
> *from Poland, first during the war, and then, until this day, as a result of*
>
> *emigration. People are afraid of someone good.* (111:3)

It is notable in this context that the only institution where the majority of leaders

spoke respectfully of their colleagues and saw their own academic culture as consistent

with trust-based accountability is the University of Technology, which is curiously the

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one that maintains the closest ties with industry and receives the largest percentage of its funding from non-governmental sources.

It may appear puzzling that senior academic leaders wield such scathing critique towards social systems in which they occupy top roles. Respondents appear to be painfully aware of a number of social dynamics at odds with the traditional academic ethos they embrace, but with a few notable exceptions at the University of Technology, they see themselves as hostages of this system with little agency in changing its rules – a dynamic that will be the subject of discussion in the chapter that follows.

5.4 Summary: Map of Stakeholders' Conceptions of HE Governance

Figure 8: Summary Map
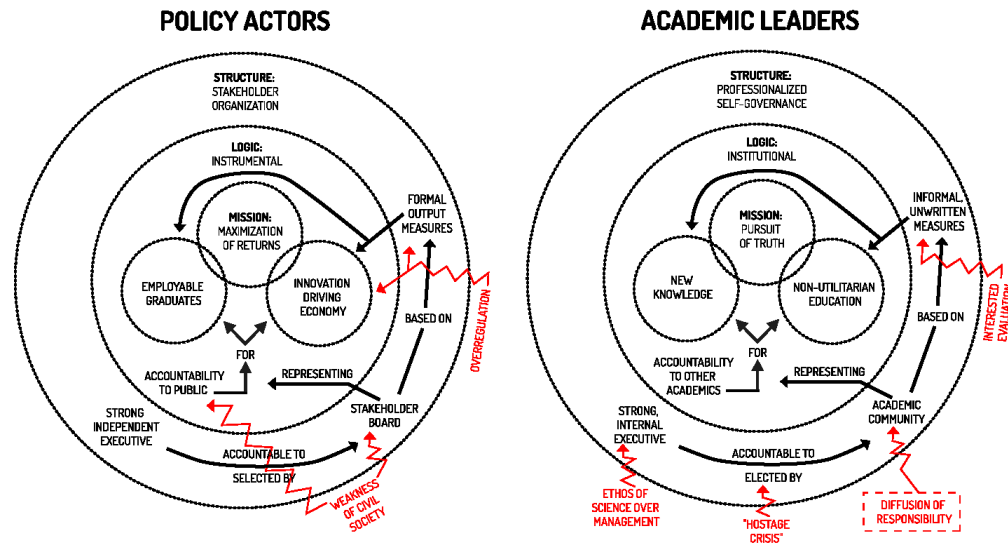
In summary, study findings indicate that policymakers' key criterion for

determining the merit of higher education policies is whether they enhance

HEIs' contributions to the development of the economy and society, understood primarily

as educating employable graduates and fueling economically viable innovation. In

contrast, academic leaders' key criterion is whether new policies aid the pursuit of

knowledge for its own sake, and holistic education understood as a non-utilitarian pursuit.

Policymakers hold an instrumental view of HEIs as a strategic tool of national

development that is best held accountable for its outcomes by external stakeholders,

while academic leaders see HEIs as autonomous social institutions that internal

accountability on the basis of social trust. Policy actors' views translate into a preference

for the HEI as a stakeholder organization, in which the rector is elected and held

accountable by a representation of the taxpaying public. They believe the power of collegial bodies should be limited in favor of the power of a central executive, and that executive must answer to a board representing public interest. Academic leaders' views, on the other hand, translate into a strong preference for academic self-rule, whereby the rector is elected and kept accountable by the academic community. In recognition of the rising challenges facing HEIs in a global and rapidly changing environment, academic leaders agree with those in the policy community rector should hold wider prerogatives than in the past, which means a limitation on the powers of the academic senate and a rising importance of professional non-academic staff charged with management and administration. The locus of accountability, however, should remain internal to the institution so as to protect it from political interference.

Both positions explored in the course of the study are recognized by respondents as problematic in Poland's current social environment. The notion of accountability to a stakeholder board is complicated by the weakness of civil society, with low trust towards social institutions and poor availability of legitimate candidates for board posts. Meanwhile, a model of academic self-rule without the inclusion of external stakeholders is seen as a mechanism that renders academic leaders hostage to their constituencies even while the assumption of leadership usually runs counter to academic ethos. In a similar way, policymakers' treatment of HEIs as instruments of the state does not achieve the desired benefits because the use of regulative mandates and output measures stalls innovation and entrepreneurship through bureaucratic control. The alternative, an institutional logic of trust-based accountability preferred by academic leaders, is likewise

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proving difficult if not impossible to realize given the presence of strong norms of in-group loyalty that hamper merit-based evaluation.

Given these findings, the questions that remain to be addressed in the final chapter of this dissertation are as follows: What is the rationality of respondents embracing their respective conceptions of governance despite perceiving serious obstacles in the way of their implementation? What are the areas of convergence where the ideas they hold may act as "switchmen" in the policy process? Finally, what do the findings of this dissertation imply for public policy?

"It is impossible, but it would be immoral not to try"

Mazurkiewicz (2014)

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The picture that emerges out of the study is that of higher education institutions suspended between the immaterial and material; between disinterestedness and entrepreneurship; between the academic oligarchy and the market. Neither policy actors nor academic leaders see the current governance framework as an approximation of their ideal. The mission of disinterestedly pursuing truth is not being realized due to utilitarian pressures from the government and those who elect it, expressed through legal mandates and funding mechanisms emphasizing quantity rather than quality. The mission of maximizing individual and societal returns is also not realized due to a profoundly non-utilitarian culture of academia, reflected in HEIs' structure and incentives, with evaluation and promotion based on academic criteria alone. What academics and policymakers agree on is that Polish higher education fulfills neither mission well. The system is caught in no-man's-land between two rationalized myths.

Observed tensions cannot be considered unique to Poland; they are a familiar reality to all missional institutions operating in a market economy. Tension itself can spur creativity, and since truth cannot be pursued without resources, and money is made through the dissemination of new knowledge, some level of synergy between the material and immaterial is essential for the survival of both. If it is present, then as the Polish proverb goes, the wolf is full and the sheep is whole. In the picture painted by this dissertation, however, the sheep is half-eaten and the wolf goes hungry.

6.1 Intersection of Rationalized Myths

A recurring theme in study findings was respondents' strong identification with ideals considered more or less impracticable in the relevant context. In theory, boards with stakeholder representatives are a rational way to achieve the goal of external accountability to public interest – but how can the goal be achieved if there is no one to fill the boards? Collegial evaluation may be preferable to a dehumanized point system, but how does it advance the pursuit of truth when humans doing the evaluating prioritize in-group loyalty? Consideration of mere ends and means does not explain the intensity and consistency with which respondents hold on to their ideals and the organizational forms that symbolize them; the criteria of effectiveness or viability also miss the explanatory mark.

What does illuminate the rationality of subjects' conceptions of governance is the neo-institutional notion of "rationalized myth" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Schriewer, 2009). Rationalized myths are "widespread understandings of social reality" (p. 343); accepted narratives "depicting various formal structures as rational means to the attainment of desirable ends" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 345). They are not mythical in the sense of being false, but in the sense of presenting a proscribed view of the world and conditioning behavior. Rationalized myths play a particularly significant role in organizations that experience high levels of environmental uncertainty and an ongoing need for social legitimacy – such as current institutions of education. Organizational dilemmas are not solved through independent analysis of the best means for particular ends, but by reference to ready-made blueprints and procedures recognized as rational in

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the societal environment. Policy actors and academic leaders function in different societal environments, and they enact different myths.

Hints as to the rationality of respondents' "rationalized myths" were provided in two conference presentations on the condition of the Polish university. Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz, a prominent scholar of educational leadership, concluded his lecture entitled "Rulers of the Mind" with an appeal to the traditional ethos of the university, saying:

It is impossible, but it would be immoral not to try.

A similar statement was made by Olaf Gajl, a former vice-minister of Science and Higher Education, who expressed quite divergent views in a lecture on "How to evaluate the potential of Polish science with quantitative means," but he opened it with quite similar words:

You practically can't do it, but you have to try.

There are values on both sides in Polish higher education whose import exceeds considerations of what is and is not possible – and the university is a repository of such values. The guiding criterion for the rules and mechanisms of governance is not their predicted viability or effectiveness, but ethical merit, understood as alignment with the goals proscribed by the overarching myth. Actions or policies to improve higher education judged first and foremost on the basis of the ethical virtue of attempted aims, while pragmatic concerns take second place.

There is strong indication that the myth embraced by academic leaders leaves room for the notion of "noble failure" – an idea embedded in Polish culture in the course

of a history charged with the challenge to make sense of defeat. Some of the most memorable statements made by respondents in this study amount to admissions of failure, combined with suspicion of pragmatic success:

"...of course, it's a utopia"

"...my own postulate is unrealistic to me"

"Efficient? Auschwitz was efficient."

"So as you see, the university is the kingdom of the absurd. But let's look at the bright side – if it wasn't, it would be a German, not a Polish university."

With a few notable exceptions, most of them at Technical University, academic leaders included in this study described themselves as helpless to change what they see as a "sick" system. More than half of the respondents wielded scathing critiques of systems in which they occupy leadership roles. Yet there was no indication that the persistence of the "sickness", and their perceived lack of agency to "treat" it, reflected in any negative way on their self-perceived competence or character. For academic leaders, it is nobler to prove ineffective while aiming for the right thing than to succeed at accomplishing the wrong one – and aiming for the right thing will more often than not lead to failure in the pragmatic sense. Noble endeavors are bound to encounter complication and outright opposition, and if they fare like Poland did for much of its history, they will likely end in defeat. To fail in a quest for a noble utopia, however, is cause for pride, not embarrassment. In the long run, visible reality with its short-lived concerns will be outlived by indestructible values of a moral nature – values guarded and cultivated at the university.

Academic leaders fight for the impossible against impossible odds, but it is their conviction that it is the right thing to fight for. What they are fighting for is to preserve the ideal of disinterested knowledge. They are doing it despite having their hands tied by the law and by the competing interests of their constituents, against a government that seeks to remake HEIs into something they have not been, a society that expects immediate rewards, and by a professional community whose ethos and integrity have been compromised by the pressures of massification. It is a losing battle, but in their eyes, it is the right battle to fight – and they are in good company. Some of the greatest heroes of Polish history and literature were failures in their lifetime. Tadeusz Kosciuszko (1746-1817), the national hero who also fought in the American Revolutionary War, led a failed insurrection that became the prelude to the final partitioning of Poland by her neighbors and her disappearance from the map of Europe. The protagonists of Romantic literature, such as Adam Mickiewicz's *Konrad Wallenrod*, saw themselves defeated in the short run so that the impossible ideals they stood for might live on. The same trope re-surfaces in contemporary Polish cinema: to reach for a recent example, the hero of the popular and highly acclaimed film *Drogówka* (2013) is killed in a staged accident in retribution for publicizing a corruption scandal. The rules he tries to live by belong in a different, utopian world; it is his insistence on living by these rules that makes him a hero.

If a myth in which values take such pronounced precedence over pragmatic realities strikes U.S. readers as an Eastern European oddity, or a clever mechanism to justify failure, let them consider a few instances where the same logic operates closer to home. It is one of the founding values of the United States that "all men are created

equal," and should have an equal chance at the pursuit of "life, liberty and happiness." In practical terms, the myth of equality is a utopia. Children born in the United States are nowhere near equal in terms of their social position, cultural capital, wealth, or language. Rates of intergenerational mobility, measured as the relationship between a parent's and a child's earnings, are lower in the United States than in most Western European nations (Causa & Johansson, 2009). Even the best early childhood education programs cannot compensate for the fact that the cards are stacked for or against a child at birth – for example, the number of words a child hears by the time they are three years old is closely correlated with their academic success at the age of nine, giving children born to educated parents an instant advantage (Hart & Risley, 1995). It is impossible to ensure all American children an equal start in life, but upward mobility a value entrenched in U.S. culture, the cornerstone of the American dream. It is impossible, but it would be immoral not to try.

In Poland, the forces that are coming to dominate higher education may place efficiency and gain above the immaterial values of truth and education for its own sake, but in their eyes, it would be immoral not to try to preserve them. What is at stake is not merely the procedure for electing a rector or the choice between a senate and a board. What is at stake is the preservation of values central to Polish culture against a tide of Americanization. Preference for a "Humboldtian" structure of the university is a means of signaling allegiance to a myth.

Like academic leaders, policy actors also embrace a myth – a "shared symbolic model" (Scott, 2004, p. 463) of what makes a higher education. The myth has nearly all

the features of the post-bureaucratic European blueprint outlined in Chapter 2 – the powerful and externally legitimated narrative disseminated by supra-national agencies such as the EU and the OECD. Its chief idea is that the state can steer higher education towards the market. The myth embraced by policymakers combines market-oriented goals with state-centered means: the state manages the playing field for autonomous institutions, who are incentivized to maximize individual and social returns through strategic funding mechanisms, and kept accountable through performance measurement. This rationalized myth promises to bring the benefits of an Anglo-American system of higher education to continental Europe, with a much more pronounced role of the state.

Where policy actors included in this study depart from the common European policy template is in the scope of autonomy for which they believe HEIs to be ready. Policy actors realize that if HEIs were left to their own devices, apart from funding and evaluation, it is far from obvious that they would turn out employable graduates and marketable innovations – and the findings of this study lend credence to their suspicion. It is also not a matter of waiting for the new generation to take charge, since the new generation is socialized, for better or worse, into the ethos and structural mechanisms of earlier generations. Guided by a different myth, policymakers see academics as self-absorbed, passive in relationship to society, and hypocritical in violating the ethos that they preach. Given this image – attributable partly to a different myth, and party to a genuine decay of the academic ethos lamented by academics themselves – policy actors do not trust academics even to the limited extent seen in Western Europe and described by Gornitzka and Maassen (2000). If HEIs cannot be trusted to deliver the expected

results, they must be hemmed in through laws and regulations specifying anything from the format of their syllabi to how they hire new staff. The outcome has a troublingly familiar scent to academics, who say: "We've had this before - in the 1950s" (219:59), "It is just like during communism" (214:61).

Comparisons between the current regulatory environment and the mechanisms employed in times of real socialism lend credence to the notion that in Poland, the logic of the new "regulatory state" (see section 3.2.1.1) is being enacted through state-bureaucratic means. Since the 1960s, forms of governance in the European Union have moved towards a post-bureaucratic paradigm. In Poland, the government has embraced the new myth, except where it assumed the readiness of society for the decentralization of authority and extension of autonomy. What results is a diffusion of post-bureaucratic forms of governance and evaluation through state-bureaucratic means. There are attempts at meta-regulation (peer evaluation of internal evaluation standards) instead of direct process control, but as Woleński (2014) complains, "when an academic joins a government body, he begins to act like a government official" (Woleński, 2014).

In other words, those doing the evaluating are reported to employ a state-bureaucratic paradigm. Even though these mechanisms lock HEIs in a "corset" and look to academics more like a return to the Soviet past than the way of a brighter future, there is no other obvious way to live out the policymakers' myth. What is at stake is not merely the procedure for electing a rector, or the choice between a senate and a board. What is at stake is Poland's economic future. Preference for an Anglo-American structure of the university signals allegiance to a myth.

The picture of the Polish system of higher education painted by this study is a no-man's-land between two rationalized myths. While both armies entrench themselves in their positions, the space in between occupied by most inhabitants of this realm leaves them few chances for well-being or job satisfaction. Those in top roles within the system say:

The legal frames are so stiff that HEIs are completely incapacitated (213:58)

I am a nobody in this structure, I have no authority. (223:16)

there is an awkwardness and even a sickness in the system of elections. (210:18)

I cannot say that the academic community deserves the trust of society... they do not treat their duties seriously, they treat students with contempt, often it is not clear what they do (219:37,47)

The state has no benefit from this, since it educates these people for public money, and 50% of them leave to wash dishes in England… There is no system for fostering elites. If we didn't create such a system, we should have at least created a system for practical education for the job market. But we do not have that either. (223:10; 28)

…we all act with a constant sense of either doing absurd things or breaking some laws while needing to look through our fingers at others who break laws (214:80)

If such is the view of HEI leaders, can be expected as far as the morale of rank-and-file employees? The impasse of rationalized myths has consequences not just for those

negotiating between HEIs and the government, but also for faculty who go into the academic profession for different reasons than what they are eventually evaluated for, for students who come to HEIs with expectations misaligned with those of their faculty, for taxpayers who fund a system whose merit they are unsure of, and for a society with shortages of both competent technicians and broadly educated elites. Going back to the Weberian metaphor, neither train arrives at the station because the tracks intersect in such ways as to obstruct the other.

Another metaphor mentioned consistently at all but one institution included in this study was that of sicknes. Proponents of the two myths propose competing diagnoses. Those who embrace the "Humboldtian" myth see the root cause in the occupation of higher education by a corporate culture that is foreign to its tradition.[17] Advocates of the market-oriented managerialist myth believe the "sickness" is caused by the backwardness of the academic community, which boycotts a role that a knowledge society needs it to play in order for the country to prosper.

The metaphors of war, obstruction, occupation and boycott capture the views from the two sides of the tug-of-war over the aims and means of higher education. The medical imagery invoked by the respondents themselves offers a deeper view summed up in the medical term of polypragmasia. It refers to a situation in which the same patient is treated by different doctors who pose different diagnoses and administer different courses of treatment, resulting in harmful interactions and undesirable cross-impacts. Suspended

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[17] For a recent and eloquent articulation of this view by one of the most prominent Polish social scientists, see Sztompka (2014)

between the two myths, the Polish system of higher education suffers the detrimental effects of their combative contest.

The beginnings of polypragmasia in Polish higher education date back to the 1990s, when the country entered onto a path that has since induced continued movement in a space that straddles competing aims and logics. The process is best captured in yet another metaphor. The Polish higher education system in the 1990s resembled the situation of a farmer who needed to plow a field, but did not have a horse. Not having what he needed, the farmer harnessed his dairy cow. The dairy cow did the job, although the trauma from the harness had adverse effects on her health and diminished the quality of her milk. As the farmer's holdings grew and horses were still in short supply, he decided to invest in more cows to plow his fields. Twenty years later, there are horses in the market, but the farmer already has a herd of cows who do not produce good milk because of their harness trauma, but do well enough plowing the fields for the farmer to just barely stay in business.

In the early days after the transformation, the government needed to prepare a workforce for the market economy, but had few institutions or teaching staff specialized in this type of task. What it did have access to were existing universities and other HEIs. The ethos and institutional structures of most well-respected institutions were primarily oriented towards an entirely different type of activity than the preparation of a workforce for a market economy – the pursuit of knowledge and the training of an academic elite. The system was rapidly expanded, with a growing number of institutions and academic staff patterned and socialized according to an organizational blueprint that corresponded

with goals and myths other than those now placed before both old and new institutions. Twenty years later, the fields of market-relevant education remain poorly plowed, and the milk of new knowledge is hampered by trauma incurred in the harness of the market. The exceptional case of Technical HEI reinforces the point – the only institution in this study described by none of its leaders as "sick" is one whose root identity is consistent with the myth embraced by the government, and the aim of serving the needs of the economy. Going back to the farming metaphor, the horse that is Technical HEI might suffer when the harness is too tight, but the harness does not deny or restrict its fundamental identity.

As Pierson (2000) has argued, path dependence implies that past choices constrain alternatives available down the line – once the fields are purchased and cows set to plowing, there is no turning back to the starting point, and every new beginning comes at a high cost. Academic leaders in Poland would gladly return HEIs to their original tasks, but that would require letting go of a significant proportion of their staff. There is no telling whether many HEIs would survive such transition. Some academic leaders, in fact, are unsure if they would make the cut themselves if their own postulates were realized – one interview in particular stands out, in which the respondent claimed that she does not belong in the top league, and if the HEI looked the way she would want it to, there might not be any room in it for her anymore.

While there is no going back to the "Humboldtian" ideal of the past, there is also no skipping forward to an idealized future in which historical dependencies do not matter. In the past five years, policy actors passed legislation based on the assumption that with a generous infusion of investments and mandates – an optimal balance of carrots and a

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state-of-the-art harness – the academic community can yet be taught to produce employable graduates and marketable innovations. Academics have had no choice but to adapt to the changing mandates and incentives, but the adaptations should occasion serious pause for the policy community. The response of a community loyal to a different myth has been to appear compliant towards new demands, but to preserve the fundamental identity of the existing system. When the possibility is created for a rector to be selected rather than elected, it is used as a way to extend term limits for a long-time leader. When the law proscribes open competitions for academic posts, they are announced so as to choose a candidate pre-selected by the academic community. When criteria for promotion are tied to international publication, faculty arrange with colleagues in the Czech Republic to publish in each other's journals what they would have published freely had the regulation not been in place. Such selective adaptation to mandates and incentives is sanctioned at the uppermost levels of leadership, where it is said to academic staff: "Please do it in such a way that it looks good on paper" (214:31).

Policy actors are not ignorant of how their ideas get implemented, and they note with exasperation: "If you take a look, everything looks right on paper, but the reality is still the same" (110:15). It is not quite the same, however – the root of the former ethos is compromised by the "finagling" required to preserve its semblance. Leaders of the academic community could be accused of subversion or even dishonesty, but their adaptive behaviors are consistent with and protective of the essential identity of the institutions they were elected to lead. Their tragic reality is that such adaptive

mechanisms undermine the social trust that is at the very foundation of the "Humboldtian" model of academic work.

If there is no going back in time, no shortcut to an idealized future, and no escaping the path once entered, is there any chance of altering the course of the path so it offers a chance for a less troubled future? Are there any "world images" evident on both sides of the barricade that might switch the conversation from a track of opposition and impasse to the path of common good and public gain?

6.2 Potential Switchmen

The final sections of this dissertation extend the findings of this study to hypothesized avenues for path-dependent transformation – areas where conceptual "switchmen" have the potential to bring existing institutional traditions and resources to intersect in ways beneficial from the perspective of both myths. The existence of these intersections does not guarantee successful reform, but successful reform is unlikely without such intersections. Four areas where the notions of academic and policymakers might act as potential switchmen is in the spheres of research innovation, elite education, "soft skills training," and the empowerement of middle management.

6.2.1 Merit-Based Funding for Research Innovation

Conducting research at the forefront of existing knowledge lies at the core of what academics see as the identity of HEIs; it is also valued from the standpoint of potentially maximizing public returns to higher education. As far as ideals are concerned, both academic and policy communities appear to embrace the notion that research funding

should be distributed through merit-based mechanisms, not on the basis of individual qualities or institutional affiliation of the researcher – a notion that corresponds with the ideal Mertonian norm of universalism. The potential of research innovation as a conceptual switchman, capable of bridging rationalized myths, is already evident in the case of funding Polish science.

The institutions crucial for bridging myths in the sphere of research are the agencies for funding basic and applied science, the National Science Centre (NCN) and the National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR). As new agencies independent from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and relying on academics themselves for their peer review processes, they have shown themselves as capable of winning greater public legitimacy than their predecessors. The success of these institutions at fostering path-dependent transformation hinges on the perceived validity and transparency of the means employed for evaluating merit in grant proposals, and on the continued commitment on the part of the government to disburse the majority of future funding for scientific research by way of independent institutions rather than through political channels. At this point in time, independent agencies only disburse less than half of the country's research budget, but they have won a measure of respect unapproachable for any post-socialist government, encumbered by public distrust of politics and politicians. Provided an ongoing and strenuous commitment to the preservation of integrity, the activities of these agencies can and should be scaled up, keeping in mind the findings of a recent UNESCO study that middle-income countries benefit more from translational than from basic research (Schaaper, 2014).

6.2.2 Elite Education

The second area where conceptual tracks related to the role of HEIs might feature a promising switchman has to do with elite education. Policymakers and academic leaders agree that Poland is not succeeding at providing an education that prepares people for competent leadership in various layers of society. They also agree that elite education should be broad rather than specialist, and requires a strong master-student relationship. It is therefore likely that reforms driving greater diversification of higher education, with an emphasis of strengthening elite training, will align with the dominant world images of the main stakeholders.

The complication inherent in developing and sustaining elite programs and institutions is twofold. First, elite programs with few students and highly qualified instructors are expensive to operate. Second, selecting to fund some programs more generously than others runs counter to a culture with a strong value of egalitarianism. Investing more resources in nop-notch programs is unlikely to be politically acceptable if it is undertaken at the expense of other programs or institutions. Although key stakeholders recognize that some programs and HEIs could and should be eliminated, nobody will vote for their own workplace to disappear – as one respondent said, "Everyone agrees that we need an atomic bomb, as long as it's not in my own back yard" (207:93). It would take great political courage to close down the programs and institutions that do not generate value other than the employment of those who work there – and by the admission of the respondents in this study, such programs do exist.

The more problematic aspect of the intersecting conceptions of the mission of higher education, where potential switchmen are not evident, is the opposite end of the spectrum – the postulate for HEIs to prepare graduates for gainful employment. While policymakers insist that employability is an essential outcome, and the majority of students pursue higher education for this end, the idea runs contrary to the mission deeply held by academic leaders and entrenched in academic structures. As noted in section 6.3.2, for the mission of fostering employability to gain a prestigious institutional foothold, new structures might be required in the system of higher education.

6.2.3 "Soft" Skills

The third possible path of path-dependent transformation is centered on the notion of "soft skills" – universally applicable competencies such as critical thinking, teamwork, intercultural communication, the ability to find reliable information or quickly adapt to new situations. There is broad-based agreement that skills such as these are not only the cornerstone of a broad education based on humanistic values, but also of the practical training of employees for a rapidly changing workplace, in which working in one place for the majority of one's career is no longer the rule but an increasingly rare exception. The need to include transferable competencies in the curriculum is being recognized in Poland even by institutions with a traditional focus on developing technical and vocational skills – a shift illustrated by the introduction of mandatory classes in the humanities at one of the leading universities of technology (Tadeusiewicz, 2014).

The complication associated with teaching "soft" skills in Polish HEIs has to do with how they are acquired, which is through experience and practice – a reality that

precludes the possibility of simply adding new content into the curriculum. Incorporating teamwork or intercultural communication requires a different kind of pedagogy than the traditional university lecture, and if faculty are to foster such skills in their students, they need to experience them first. It generated justifiable controversy in Poland when the government passed a law mandating the inclusion of "social competencies" in course objectives, leaving HEIs little time, few resources, and offering little training on how to integrate such competencies into meaningful and consistent course design. Even more than other aspects of instructional practice, the teaching of "soft" skills appears quite resistant to regulatory guidance; on the contrary, attempts to such effect have the unintended consequence of "vaccinating" faculty members against an idea they may have otherwise wholeheartedly embraced.

6.2.4 Liberation of Middle Management

Finally, a "switchman" with the potential to bridge the rationalized myths may be located around the notion of empowering academic management, especially at the middle level that had so far not been the subject of much policy debate. Academic leaders and policy actors are well aware that public HEIs are especially challenging places for deans and unit directors, who are the very people seen as the face of academic leadership by most members of the academic community. The career path of academic leadership does not sufficiently prepare these leaders for their often contradictory roles. Deans in particular find their roles highly ambivalent – on the one hand, they carry full responsibility for their decisions; on the other, they are expected to merely sign off on

decisions made by the faculty bodies. On the one hand, they are pressed by external stakeholders and upper management to act as managers; on the other, they find it impossible to do so in a setting in which they are bound by restrictive laws and regulations while considered by their followers as first among equals. So far, none of the reform proposals have even attempted to address the incoherent demands of academic middle management. At the very least, those entering into such roles should have access to professional learning communities to prepare them for the challenges ahead and assist them in coping with the uncertainty. The contextual conditions described in the findings of this study preclude the acceptability and arguably the viability of selecting middle managers outside the institution at this point in time. A solution worth debating in the Polish academic community is the appointment of deans by the rector from a pool proposed by Department Council on the basis of his or her leadership potential. Such an appointment would affirm the collegial tradition on the one hand, while at the same time binding the dean or director more strongly to the central executive than to the people he or she is supposed to lead. Another means of empowerment worth considering might be a nationally recognized program in higher education leadership, open to younger academics with leadership potential and aspirations. Such program might play a role analogous to that of Preparing Future Faculty in the United States – addressing a perceived gap in the higher education system through a combination of hands-on learning and a strong element of mentoring. The complication inherent in the latter solution stems from an academic culture in which leadership aspirations can rarely be expressed without censure, and the danger of young trainees being perceived as a threat to current HEI

authorities. The following section addresses how this and other complications might be addressed through policy and leadership practice.

<h3 style="text-align:center">6.3 Considerations for Policy and Practice</h3>

The question whether the hypothesized avenues can foster path-dependent transformation depends on a host of practical considerations. If they are to be tested in the near future, at least three such considerations should be noted based on the findings of this study.

6.3.1 Selective Surgery, Healthy Diet

So far, it has been a strong temptation in Polish public policy circles to reach for top-down solutions enacted through regulations and mandates, which is the equivalent of opting for surgery with a sick patient. Overreliance on large-scale mandates is an approach has not worked in the past and will not likely work in the future. It is especially true now that the volume of legislative change in Polish higher education in recent years has produced a strong sense of "reform fatigue." The academic community has struggled to keep pace with the new regulations and directives. Each successive reform effort deepened the perception that the previous one was incomplete and underdeveloped, and that new solutions were not allowed to ripen or bear fruit before being superseded by even newer mechanisms. Whether this perception is accurate or not, the mere perception increases the likelihood that further reforms of the existing system in the near future would be resented, evaded and even subverted by the foot soldiers on the ground.

The reality of "reform fatigue" places successive Ministers of Science and Higher Education in a bind. After two terms of vigorous reform efforts by the most assertive

minister to date, there is still the sense on both sides that the system is "sick," with some academics in the humanities perceiving the sickness as having progressed to the level of a "plague" (Modzelewski, 2014). The sense of a crisis is also mounting among the public. From 2004 to 2009, the percentage of Polish people strongly convinced that it is worth pursuing higher education has fallen by 13% (PORC, 2009). The year 2013 was the first year when the university professor did not appear at the top of the Public Opinion Research Center list of most highly respected professions, as it had for as long as the survey has been conducted (PORC, 2013). Thirty-seven percent of the Polish population now believe that scientists "lie about their research for personal gain" and 28% consider them "dangerous" – the highest percentages in a sample including ten European Union countries and the United States (BBVA, 2011, p. 34). Given the dire diagnoses both within and outside academia, the government chosen in the 2015 elections will face the strong appeal of opting for radical surgery. Radical steps are certainly called for in some respects, most urgently with the cancer of uncensored research misconduct. Although solid empirical data on the subject is scarce, both the public and academics perceives misconduct to have proliferated to an unprecedented extent. Thirty-seven percent of the population perceiving scientists as lying for private gain is a disturbing figure; for HEIs to function as institutions of public trust, a thorough examination and prompt surgery on the cancer of misconduct must be done quickly and without anesthesia.

At the same time, it must also be noted that surgery on the system of higher education is performed on a live and fully conscious organism. At the time of the completion of this dissertation in May 2014, the patient appears severely weakened as a

result of the many different and sometimes contradictory treatments. There is no doubt

that dangerous tumors should be cut off – but what is required at that point is a scalpel,

not an axe. As the previous section of this chapter suggests, surgery can and should be

avoided in areas where the same objectives can be reached through a diet that boosts

what is beneficial within the system and starves out the harmful and pathological.

6.3.2 Different Structures for Different Purposes

The second point to consider is that social systems tend to generate the outcomes

they were designed for. According to the systems theorist Richard Buckminster Fuller,

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a

new model that makes the existing model obsolete" (Fuller, n/d). The outcome of market-

relevant skills is absent from the model of traditional universities – but it is central to the

identity of many other institutions that have sprung up in Poland since the 1990s.

With little if any public support, private HEIs, NGOs and foundations have

already sprung up to fill the niche. Some have developed highly innovative educational

programs deserving of public support. Just to cite a few examples, Kozminski University,

a private institution in Warsaw, has been rated by Financial Times as one of the top 20

Master's programs in global finance in the world, and the best business school in Central

and Eastern Europe (Financial Times, 2013). ASBIRO, an alternative HEI focused on

local business and entrepreneurship, draws large enrollments by advertising that all of its

instructors are entrepreneurs and not academics, offering practical courses from property

investment to managing bankruptcy (ASBIRO, 2014). Institutions such as these are

examples of new organizational structures built up within the last twenty years to address

some of the very same needs that the government has tried to pressure traditional HEIs to fulfill. Referring back to the farming metaphor, they are the horses that had been unavailable to plow the field twenty years ago, faster and better at doing things others found contrary to their identity.

Given the doubtful success of earlier approaches, policymakers might consider diversifying public investment in different types of educational structures for different purposes. There is no doubt that traditional universities still have a part to play in pushing the boundaries of knowledge and preparing broadly educated elites – that is the milk they are built to produce. Yet perhaps it is time they were no longer required to plow fields, since there are other types of HEIs with proven track-records of excellence that could prove deserving of public investment. An approach that has not yet been tried is providing seed funding for promising new approaches in higher education that might be developed as new organizational models, accompanied by thorough evaluation to determine which models show promise for scaling up. The same principle goes for new organizational structures within old institutions – it is counterproductive to encourage people to adopt solutions for which there are only negative precedents, as in the case of proposed Boards of Trustees.

Recognizing the need of different structures for different purposes also implies differential approaches from the standpoint of regulations and reward systems. At this point in time, vocational HEIs are subject to the same law as traditional universities, and although they receive certain exceptions, the message sent by these exceptions is that they are worse versions of the ideal blueprint of a comprehensive university. For

example, the number of staff with the *Habilitatus* degree is still taken as a measure of educational quality, and a number of staff with this degree must be employed for any program to be accredited by the state. Yet the academic accomplishments required for this degree have no relationship to the quality of practically-oriented programs, where an academic orientation can be an outright liability. For as long as academic programs are treated as the blueprint in the law, the "academic drift" of non-academic institutions is likely to continue, with successive colleges and specialized schools seeking the status of universities. What Poland needs is the means to increase the prestige of practically-oriented education by investing in select programs that show exceptional promise, and limiting regulation in such a way as to leave non-academic institutions the breathing room they need to succeed. Loosening the grip of regulations would be welcome news to all other types of HEIs, allowing for greater diversification and renewed focus on that at which each type of institution can truly excel.

6.3.3 Measured Policies over Expensive Shortcuts

The final consideration for policy and practice reflects the reality that in post-transitional contexts like Poland, there are few shortcuts towards strengthening public institutions that do not turn out to be misleading. Borrowing organizational forms proven to work elsewhere and transplanting them into the local soil only seems like a shortcut, but can in fact make the goal more distant. Forcing organizational solutions perceived by insiders as forced or foreign tends to provoke a strong auto-immune rejection that later functions as a vaccination against any similar solutions, even in instances where they would be helpful and appropriate.

The dynamic is illustrated well in the case of a recent congress of NGOs in Kraków organized by city authorities. Inspired by study visits to Western European cities, the Commissioner for NGO Affairs decided that the city needed an NGO Advisory Council. She invited representatives of all NGOs registered in the city to a conference and presented the idea. Just as participants learned enough to discuss the merits of such a Council, they were placed in groups with professional moderators who solicited feedback on technical details of how the Council should operate, ending with a vote in favor or against the Council. The plan backfired. People left the meeting feeling cheated and manipulated, with many refusing to vote – not only because many feared that the Council would become a tool of political manipulation, but mainly because they felt the way the idea was presented was a manipulation itself (Dziewitek, 2014). Despite the best of intentions on both sides, an attempt to speed up the replication of a tested European practice became a step back in mutual cooperation. The story brings to mind Stark's (1991) words cited earlier: "even (and especially) instances of transformation are marked by path dependence" (Stark, 1991, p. 18). Barring the event of a revolution, attempts to speed up transformation by sidestepping the path easily land reform efforts in a tangle of weeds.

6.4 Summary and Final Remarks

The aim of this dissertation was to explore the dominant narratives about good HEI governance in Poland, and to identify the criteria that determine what reforms are likely to be perceived as acceptable by the most powerful two groups of higher education stakeholders. I found that these two groups, policy actors and academic leaders, embrace

divergent "rationalized myths" – shared narratives of what HEIs are, how they work, and what they are trying to accomplish. These myths are legitimated by the long-standing "Humboldtian" tradition on the one hand, and a shared policy template of the European Union on the other. Both myths provide compelling and idealized blueprints of governance. The propagation or adoption of these blueprints despite pragmatic concerns signals allegiance to a set of values. Therefore, policy actors are likely to favor governance mechanisms associated with the Anglo-Saxon model, oriented towards the aim of maximizing public and private returns. Academic leaders, on the other hand, are more likely to favor solutions associated with the "Humboldtian" model, with a primary focus on a disinterested pursuit of truth. I also found that the two dominant myths appear to intersect in the Polish system of higher education in such a way that the goals of neither are being realized.

The practical aim of this study was to inform future higher education policy by identifying the characteristics of governance reforms likely to enhance the quality of academic work in the 21st century in a manner consistent with the local path dependence. Based on the findings outlined above, I proposed four potential avenues of path-dependent transformation – areas of shared significance in both myths that do not guarantee successful reform, but do increase the likelihood of success. These avenues include merit-based funding for research innovation, elite education, training in "soft skills," and the liberation and empowerment of middle management in public HEIs. I also suggested three practical considerations likely to affect whether path-dependent transformation is likely to happen. First, radical change achieved from the top down

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through regulations and mandates has not brought satisfactory results in the past, and it is not likely to succeed in the future, given the current climate of deep "reform fatigue." Second, academic institutions tend to generate the outcomes they were designed for, therefore new aims, such as the development of market-relevant skills, require new institutional structures that can be tested on a small scale and supported from public sources as they are scaled up. Third, borrowing organizational forms proven to work elsewhere is not a safe shortcut, since attempts to replicate foreign solutions run the risk of sabotaging path-dependent growth and biasing key stakeholders against solutions that may turn out beneficial at a different point in time, or given a different rationale than mere replication. Consideration of the issues explored and ordered in this dissertation is vital for the construction of a strategic higher education policy for Poland's future, and for transformative leadership of higher education institutions facing a dual crisis of declining enrollments and waning social trust.

In summary, what Poland needs at this point in time is not just a truce between old myths, but the creation of new ones. Poland needs new myths that make room for diversity – not just in the organizational structures of higher education, but all throughout social life. One of the lasting shadows of Poland's recent history is the denial of diversity and the affinity to universalize one's own identity or position as a benchmark for all. The Communist authorities perpetuated a narrative of homogeneity in Polish society that is still alive today in the assumption that if all is well, we should all think, believe and act alike. Yet like the biological world, the social and economic order developing before our eyes is one where monocultures spell disaster. The diversity of institutional forms in

Polish higher education testifies to its vibrant potential, but it is not yet a feature of the dominant myth. For the past twenty years, the dominant myth was monopolized by traditional universities, and today, its appeal is waning. According to Marody (2014), the age in which the traditional "Humboldtian" university played a dominant cultural role has come to an end. The university as a depository of pure knowledge must survive, but it will only survive if it gets off its pedestal and enters the higher education scene as one humble actor among many. If the university continues to defend itself from the entrenched position of a sole benchmark of orthodoxy and virtue, it will be relegated to the same marginal position in Europe as fundamentalist forms of religion – obscure throwbacks to the past disconnected from the main currents of the present.

6.5 Epilogue in the Aftermath of the Crimean Invasion

In Zen philosophy, it is said that to know the universe, one must study a single blade of grass. The blade that is Polish higher education reflects the image of a continent in desperate need of new myths. Across the ocean, the teetering American Dream stumbles on uncertainly as Europe snickers at its naiveté. Closer to home, another myth pushes against the European doorstep, held back by a threat of the naiveté we look down on.

In the month of this dissertation's completion, Russian forces overtook the Crimean peninsula, and after a staged referendum, the autonomous region of Ukraine was joined to the Russian Federation. Hardly a shot was fired in its defense. This was not ordinary warfare; it was a psychological conflict for the soul of a nation, waged using "explosive materials of nationalistic and social struggle as well as misinformation."

(Rotfeld, 2014; own translation). The myth behind the Crimean development is an imperial vision of a Eurasian Union "from Brussels to Vladivostok" signaled openly by the Russian president Vladimir Putin since at least 2007. Europe, lodged in a mythless abandon of values like solidarity or equality, stood mute as Vladivostok moved one step closer to Brussels. The capacity for dialogue and the creation of new myths are not just a matter of survival for Polish universities. They are a matter of survival for Europe as we know it.

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Appendix 1: Invitation Letter

March 18, 2013

Dear Rector,

I am writing with an invitation for your university to participate in a research project sponsored by the University of Minnesota and related to changes in the governance of Polish universities. The aim of the research is to examine leading conceptions of governance at universities in various institutional contexts. This invitation is directed to four higher education institutions in Poland.

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview to be conducted in the spring of 2013. The language of the interview would be Polish. I would also request that you recommend three other representatives of your institution who are in leadership positions, who know the governance of your institution well, and who would be willing to participate in an interview.. I would be grateful for your response at the address or number indicated below. If you have any questions, please contact the Institute of Public Affairs at the Jagiellonian University, which supports this research in Poland.

Kind regards,

Marta A. Shaw
Principal Investigator, Conceptions of Governance Project
Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Administration
University of Minnesota
martashaw@umn.edu
18 marca 2013

Appendix 2: Invitation Letter: Polish Translation

Szanowny Panie Rektorze,

Zwracam się do Pana z prośbą o umożliwienie przeprowadzenia w Uczelni X badania z ramienia University of Minnesota, dotyczącego zmian w modelu zarządzania uczelniami. Badanie ma na celu wyłonienie wiodących koncepcji zarządzana uniwersytetów w różnych obszarach instytucjonalnych. Niniejsze zaproszenie skierowane jest do czterech uczelni w Polsce.

Zwracam się do Pana z zaproszeniem do udziału w wywiadzie eksperckim w języku polskim, jaki chcielibyśmy przeprowadzić w semestrze wiosennym 2013 roku. Prosilibyśmy również o wskazanie trzech innych przedstawicieli władz uczelni, które znają dobrze model zarządzania uniwersytetu i byłyby skłonne do udzielenia wywiadów. Będziemy Panu ogromnie wdzięczni za odpowiedź pod wskazanym poniżej adresem lub numerem telefonu. W razie wszelkich pytań prosimy o kontakt na adres Instytutu Spraw Publicznych UJ, który wspomaga prowadzone w Polsce badania.

Z wyrazami szacunku,

Marta A. Shaw
Principal Investigator, Conceptions of Governance Project
Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Administration
University of Minnesota
martashaw@umn.edu

Appendix 3: Government Interview Protocol

Introduction

As we discussed over email, this study is about governance in Polish higher education. As part of this research, you are being invited share your expert opinions about the topic in this interview. I am very grateful for your willingness to share your time with me. The findings will be used to evaluate future proposals for effective and viable governance models.

By your permission, I would like to record the interview. In any sort of report that we might publish, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify you. Transcription of this interview will be de-identified, and research records will be stored securely on a password-protected computer to which I have exclusive access. You are not required to participate. You can choose not to answer any of my questions or to stop participating at any time. If you have not done it yet, please read the consent form carefully.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

(Collection of the informed consent form)

1. I would like to begin with an element of your biography that does not figure on the website. How did you first become involved in higher education work?

2. This year's reform of higher education has generated a lot of discussion about the condition of higher education in Poland, and you are in a unique place to speak to this issue. As you look at Polish higher education today, what would you say are its strongest and weakest aspects?

3. In international reports published some years ago, the governance model of public institutions was mentioned among the weaker links. Today, how do you evaluate public university governance?

    - What are some good and bad examples of governance that you have seen?

    - What is your opinion of:

        - The strategic direction of public universities in Poland?

        - The current level of autonomy of public universities?

        - The effectiveness of the university presidency?

        - The effectiveness of the academic senate?

4. How do you foresee the impact of the 2011 reform on how public universities in Poland will be governed in the next decade?

    - How likely is your institution to select the managerial governance model?

    - What changes do you expect to be positive, and what – negative?

- To what extent will this reform follow the earlier trajectory of moving towards a more marker-friendly model?

5. Why do you think public governance *is changing / has remained the same* at your university?

6. Do you think *the changes / the lack of change* is problematic?

7. In Western Europe, we've seen a trend towards including representatives of the external environment in governing boards. What is your stance on how viable this solution might be in Polish HE? Also:

- Professionalized administrators
- Output funding; treating the public university like a private enterprise that provides public goods

8. Given your experience, you are well aware of the various voices in the debate around an effective governance model. How would you describe the conception of higher education governance favored the academic community?

- To what extent is the government pleased with the 2011 reform?
- What did it want to accomplish and didn't?

9. To what extent was the academic community pleased with the reform?

- What conceptions of higher education governance are favored by the academic community?
- How does the academic community perceive the Ministry?

10. If I could give you a supernatural power to accomplish something that the reform didn't accomplish, and I could guarantee that it would be signed into law without regard for political consequences, what would you accomplish?

11. I do not have supernatural powers, and political consequences must be reckoned with in real life. To what extent are your proposals politically viable in the next five to ten years?

 - Who will have the greatest impact on the political viability of these ideas? In other words, who will have the most power in higher education?
 - What features of the higher education landscape, including the culture and mentality of the main stakeholders, have to be taken into account when creating viable policy?

12. In your professional opinion, which scholars, institutions and organizations are doing influential work on higher education that is relevant to the Polish context?

- In your work on the long-term strategy for Polish higher education, what have been the professional networks and resources that you have found most helpful and stimulating?

Appendix 4: Government Interview Protocol: Polish translation

Środowisko rządowe

Wstęp

Jak już Pani pisałam w mailu, mój projekt dotyczy modeli zarządzania w polskim szkolnictwie. Jestem bardzo wdzięczna za Pani wkład ekspercki to to badanie. Jestem Pani bardzo wdzięczna za pomoc w tym projekcie. Jego wyniki przysłużą się do oceny rozważanych w najbliższych latach propozycji efektywnego i realistycznego modelu zarządzania.

Jeżeli Pani pozwoli, chciałabym nagrać nasz wywiad żeby nie polegać tylko na notatkach. W publikowanych opracowaniach nie będzie zawarta żadna informacja umożliwiająca rozpoznanie Pani danych osobowych. Transkrypcja wywiadu zostanie oczyszczona z danych identyfikacyjnych i dane będą przechowywane na komputerze zabezpieczonym hasłem, do którego ja mam wyłączny dostęp.

Uczestnictwo w wywiadzie jest w pełni dobrowolne i ma Pani pełne prawo nie odpowiedzieć na którekolwiek pytanie lub przerwać wywiad w dowolnym momencie. Jeżeli jeszcze nie miała Pani ku temu okazji, bardzo proszę przeczytać formularz zgody na wywiad, bardzo proszę to zrobić. Czy ma Pani jakiekolwiek pytania do mnie zanim zaczniemy wywiad?

(Podpis na formularzu zgody na wywiad)

1. Zacznijmy może od elementu Pani biografii, którego nie poznam ze strony internetowej. Jestem bardzo ciekawa jak to się stało, że zaczęła się Pani zajmować szkolnictwem wyższym?

2. Tegoroczna reforma sprowokowała wiele dyskusji o kondycji szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce. Pani jest w stanie wypowiadać się w tej sprawie ze sporą dozą autorytetu. Jaka jest Pani zdaniem najmocniejsze i najsłabsze aspekty publicznego szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce?

3. W wielu raportach międzynarodowych sprzed kilku lat wymieniało się wśród słabszych ogniw zarządzanie uczelni publicznych. Jak ocenia Pani obecne funkcjonowanie publicznych struktur zarządzania?

- Czy może Pani podać przykłady dobrych i złych struktur zarządzania w polskim szkolnictwie wyższym?
- Jak ocenia Pani:
    - Poziom zarządzania strategicznego uczelni?
    - Poziom autonomii polskich uniwersytetów?
    - Funkcjonowanie urzędu rektora?
    - Funkcjonowanie senatu uniwersyteckiego?
    -
4. Jak ocenia Pani wpływ tegorocznej reformy na struktury zarządzania uczelni?

- Jakich zmian można realistycznie oczekiwać od tej reformy?
- Jakie uczelnie zdecydują się na wybór menedżerskiego modelu zarządzania?

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- Do niedawna zachodni badacze przewidywali, że na publicznych uczelniach w Polsce już niedługo zawita menedżerski model zarządzania jaki widzimy obecnie w krajach UE, z większą władzą w rękach rektora i większym wpływem środowiska zewnętrznego. Jak Pani zdaniem ma się do tych przewidywań tegoroczna reforma?

-

5. Dlaczego struktury zarządzania się zmieniają/nie zmieniają?

(Humboldtowska tradycja, postkomunistyczne dziedzictwo oddzielania tego co prywatne od tego co państwowe / "demokracji" akademickiej, interesy środowiska akademickiego? – na ile reforma stworzyła zupełnie nowe zasady gry?)

6. Czy Pani zdaniem te zmiany/brak zmian jest/są problematyczny/e?

7. W wielu krajach Unii Europejskiej wprowadzono w ostatnim dwudziestoleciu rady powiernicze, zwane też konwentami, które nadzorują pracę rektora; zasiadają w nich m.in. przedstawiciele środowiska zewnętrznego. Jak ocenia Pani potencjał takiego rozwiązania w polskich warunkach? Jak ocenia Pani potencjał:

- Większej profesjonalizacji kadry administracyjnej, tzn. dłuższych kadencji rektora i prorektorów
- Finansowania przez państwo na zasadzie *ex-post*, czyli np. po tym jak student ukończy naukę i znajdzie pracę w zawodzie

8. Z racji Pani doświadczeń, zna Pani dobrze różne strony w debacie o efektywnym modelu zarządzania uczelnią. W dokumentach uzasadniających reformę wyglądało na to, że MNISW preferuje model menedżerski, z większą władzą w rękach rektora i radą powierniczą. Jak opisałaby Pani koncepcję modelu zarządzania uniwersytetu preferowaną przez rząd Tuska i w szczególności przez MNISW?

- Na ile MNISW jest zadowolone z tej reformy? Czego nie udało się zrobić? Dlaczego?
- Jakie uczelnie skorzystają najwięcej z tej reformy?

9. Na ile zadowolone z reformy jest środowisko akademickie?

- Jakie koncepcje modelu zarządzania preferuje środowisko akademickie?
- Jak środowisko akademickie postrzega MNISW?

10. Powiedzmy, że mogłabym dać Pani dzisiaj różdżkę, która pozwoliłaby Pani dokonać czegoś, czego nie dokona ta reforma – i zagwarantowałabym Pani, że to, co Pani postanowi wejdzie w życie bez względu na polityczne konsekwencje. Czego by Pani dokonała?

11. Niestety nie mam różdżki i w prawdziwym życiu zawsze trzeba się liczyć z politycznymi konsekwencjami. Na ile Pani postulaty są politycznie wykonalne w ciągu najbliższych pięciu lub dziesięciu lat?

- Kto będzie miał na ten temat najwięcej do powiedzenia? Kto ma największą władzę w polskim szkolnictwie?

- Jakie cechy polskiego środowiska akademickiego i polskiego uniwersytetu uważa Pani za szczególne w porównaniu z innymi krajami? W szczególności interesują mnie różnice w kulturze i mentalności jakie trzeba brać pod uwagę w tworzeniu i analizowaniu polityki naukowej.

12. Według Pani profesjonalnej opinii, jakie osoby, instytucje lub organizacje – w Polsce i na świecie – zabierają obecnie ważny głos w sprawach szkolnictwa wyższego?

Appendix 5: University Interview Protocol
Introduction

As we discussed over email, this study is about governance in Polish higher education. As part of this research, you are being invited share your expert opinions about the topic in this interview. I am very grateful for your willingness to share your time with me. The findings will be used to evaluate future proposals for effective and viable governance models.

By your permission, I would like to record the interview. In any sort of report that we might publish, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify

you. Transcription of this interview will be de-identified, and research records will be stored securely on a password-protected computer to which I have exclusive access.

You are not required to participate. You can choose not to answer any of my questions or to stop participating at any time. If you have not done it yet, please read the consent form carefully.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1. I would like to begin with an element of your biography that does not figure on the website. What prompted you to seek a leadership role at this university?

2. This year's reform has generated a lot of discussion about the condition of higher education in Poland, and you are in a unique place to speak to this issue. As you look at public higher education today, what would you say are its strongest and weakest aspects?

3. In international reports published some years ago, the governance model of public institutions was mentioned among the weaker links. Since then, a lot could have changed. As somebody inside the system, how do you evaluate the way the governance system is working in practice at your university?

- What are some good and bad examples of governance that you have seen?
- What is your opinion of:

- The ability of this university to set a strategic direction?

- Your current level of autonomy?

- The effectiveness of the university presidency?

- The effectiveness of the academic senate?

4. How do you foresee the impact of the 2011 reform on how your university will be governed in the next decade?

- What changes can realistically be expected of this reform?
- What types of institutions are most likely to select the managerial governance model?
- To what extent will this reform follow the earlier trajectory of moving towards a more marker-friendly model?

5. Why do you think public governance *is changing / has remained the same* in Polish higher education?

6. Do you think *the changes / the lack of change* is problematic?

7. In Western Europe, we've seen a trend towards including representatives of the external environment in governing boards. What is your stance on how viable this solution might be in Polish HE? Also:

      - Professionalized administrators

      - Output funding; treating the public university like a private enterprise that

      provides public goods

8. Given your experience, you are well aware of the various voices in the debate around

an effective governance model. How would you describe the conception of higher

education governance favored the academic community?

      - To what extent is the academic community pleased with the 2011 reform?

      - What did it want to accomplish and didn't?

9. To what extent was the government pleased with the reform?

      - What conceptions of higher education governance are favored by the

      government?

      - How does the government perceive the academic community?

10. If I could give you a supernatural power to accomplish something that the reform

didn't accomplish, and I could guarantee that it would be signed into law without regard

for political consequences, what would you accomplish?

11. I do not have supernatural powers, and political consequences must be reckoned with in real life. To what extent are your proposals politically viable in the next five to ten years?

- Who will have the greatest impact on the political viability of these ideas? In other words, who will have the most power in higher education?
- What features of the higher education landscape, including the culture and mentality of the main stakeholders, have to be taken into account when creating viable policy?

12. In your professional opinion, which scholars, institutions and organizations are doing influential work on higher education that is relevant to the Polish context?

- In your work on the long-term strategy for Polish higher education, what have been the professional networks and resources that you have found most helpful and stimulating?

Appendix 6: University Interview Protocol: Polish translation

Wstęp

Jak już Pani pisałam w mailu, ten projekt dotyczy modeli zarządzania w polskim szkolnictwie. Jestem bardzo wdzięczna za Pani wkład ekspercki to to badanie. Doceniam Pani czas poświęcony na ten wywiad i pomoc w badaniu. Jego wyniki przysłużą się do oceny rozważanych w najbliższych latach propozycji efektywnego i realistycznego modelu zarządzania.

Jeżeli Pani pozwoli, chciałabym nagrać nasz wywiad żeby nie polegać tylko na notatkach. W publikowanych opracowaniach nie będzie zawarta żadna informacja umożliwiająca rozpoznanie Pani danych osobowych. Transkrypcja wywiadu zostanie oczyszczona z danych identyfikacyjnych i dane będą przechowywane na komputerze zabezpieczonym hasłem, do którego ja mam wyłączny dostęp.

Uczestnictwo w wywiadzie jest w pełni dobrowolne i ma Pani pełne prawo nie odpowiedzieć na którekolwiek pytanie lub przerwać wywiad w dowolnym momencie. Jeżeli jeszcze nie miała Pani ku temu okazji, bardzo proszę przeczytać formularza zgody na wywiad, bardzo proszę to zrobić. Czy ma Pani jakiekolwiek pytania do mnie zanim zaczniemy wywiad?

1. Zacznijmy może od elementu Pani biografii, którego nie poznam ze strony internetowej. Jestem bardzo ciekawa jak to się stało, że zdecydowała się Pani kandydować na obecne stanowisko?

2. Tegoroczna reforma sprowokowała wiele dyskusji o kondycji szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce. Jako osoba znająca ten system od podszewki, jest Pani w stanie wypowiadać się w tej sprawie ze sporą dozą autorytetu. Jakie są Pani zdaniem najmocniejsze i najsłabsze aspekty publicznego szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce?

3. W wielu raportach międzynarodowych sprzed kilku lat wymieniało się wśród słabszych ogniw zarządzanie uczelni publicznych. Od tego czasu wiele mogło się zmienić. Będąc na Pani stanowisku, jest to Pani w stanie ocenić niejako od kuchni. Jak Pani zdaniem funkcjonuje w praktyce system zarządzania tego uniwersytetu?

- Czy może Pani podać przykłady dobrych i złych struktur zarządzania w polskim szkolnictwie wyższym?
- Jak ocenia Pani:
  - Poziom zarządzania strategicznego uczelni?
  - Poziom autonomii polskich uniwersytetów?
  - Funkcjonowanie urzędu rektora?
  - Funkcjonowanie senatu uniwersyteckiego?

4. Jak ocenia Pani wpływ tegorocznej reformy na strukturę zarządzania Pani uczelni?

- Czy Pani uczelnia zdecyduje się na wybór menedżerskiego modelu zarządzania?
- Jakie zmiany ocenia Pani jako pozytywne, a jakie jako negatywne?

- Do niedawna zachodni badacze przewidywali, że na publicznych uczelniach w Polsce już niedługo zawita menedżerski model zarządzania jaki widzimy obecnie w krajach UE, z większą władzą w rękach rektora i większym wpływem środowiska zewnętrznego. Jak Pani zdaniem ma się do tych przewidywań tegoroczna reforma?

5. Dlaczego struktura zarządzania na tej uczelni się zmienia/nie zmienia?
(Humboldtowska tradycja, postkomunistyczne dziedzictwo oddzielania tego co prywatne od tego co państwowe / "demokracji" akademickiej, interesy środowiska akademickiego? – na ile reforma stworzyła zupełnie nowe zasady gry?)

6. Na ile Pani zdaniem te zmiany/brak zmian jest/są problematyczny/e?

7. W wielu krajach Unii Europejskiej wprowadzono w ostatnim dwudziestoleciu rady powiernicze, zwane też konwentami, które nadzorują pracę rektora; zasiadają w nich m.in. przedstawiciele środowiska zewnętrznego. Jak ocenia Pani potencjał takiego rozwiązania w polskich warunkach? Jak ocenia Pani potencjał:

- Większej profesjonalizacji kadry administracyjnej, tzn. dłuższych kadencji rektora i prorektorów
- Finansowania przez państwo na zasadzie *ex-post*, czyli np. po tym jak student ukończy naukę i znajdzie pracę w zawodzie

8. Z racji Pani doświadczeń, zna Pani dobrze różne strony w debacie o efektywnym

modelu zarządzania uczelnią. W dokumentach uzasadniających reformę wyglądało na to,

że MNISW preferuje model menedżerski, z większą władzą w rękach rektora i radą

powierniczą. Jak opisałaby Pani koncepcję modelu zarządzania uniwersytetu

preferowaną przez rząd Tuska i w szczególności przez MNISW?

- Na ile MNISW jest zadowolone z tej reformy? Czego nie udało się zrobić?
  Dlaczego?
- Jakie uczelnie skorzystają najwięcej z tej reformy?

9. Na ile zadowolone z reformy jest środowisko akademickie?

     - Jakie koncepcje modelu zarządzania preferuje środowisko akademickie?

     - Jak środowisko akademickie postrzega MNISW?

10. Powiedzmy, że mogłabym dać Pani dzisiaj różdżkę, która pozwoliłaby Pani dokonać

czegoś, czego nie dokona ta reforma – i zagwarantowałabym Pani, że to, co Pani

postanowi wejdzie w życie bez względu na polityczne konsekwencje. Czego by Pani

dokonała?

11. Niestety nie mam różdżki i w prawdziwym życiu zawsze trzeba się liczyć z

politycznymi konsekwencjami. Na ile Pani postulaty są politycznie wykonalne w ciągu

najbliższych pięciu lub dziesięciu lat?

- Kto będzie miał na ten temat najwięcej do powiedzenia? Kto ma największą władzę w polskim szkolnictwie?

- Jakie cechy polskiego środowiska akademickiego i polskiego uniwersytetu uważa Pani za szczególne w porównaniu z innymi krajami? W szczególności interesują mnie różnice w kulturze i mentalności jakie trzeba brać pod uwagę w tworzeniu i analizowaniu polityki naukowej.

12. Według Pani profesjonalnej opinii, jakie osoby, instytucje lub organizacje – w Polsce i na świecie – zabierają obecnie ważny głos w sprawiach szkolnictwa wyższego?

Appendix 7: Coding Frequency Table

Code	Academic Leaders (n=12)	Policy Actors (n=20)
+ Market-based model	3	3
+ Market-based structure	2	6
+ Market-based structure\+ Models drawn from business	20	6
+ Market-based structure\+ Professionalized management	9	13
+ Market-based structure\+ Strong executive	13	13
+ Market-based structure\+ Boards of trustees	5	11
+ Market-based funding	18	32
+ Market-based mission	14	20
+ Market-based mission\+ Diversification	3	19
+ Market-based evaluation	17	21
+ Market-based role of the state	1	16
- Market-based model	0	1
- Market-based structure	27	14
- Market-based mission	9	3
- Market-based mission\- Massification harms outcomes	10	4
- Market-based mission\- Not our goal to prepare specialized workforce	7	4
- Market-based evaluation	4	1
- Market-based role of the state	0	0
- Market-based funding	5	6
+ State-centered model	0	0
+ State-centered mission	0	0
+ State-centered structure	0	0
+ State-centered evaluation	1	3
+ State-centered role of state	3	0
- State-centered model	1	1
- State-centered funding	1	0
- State-centered mission	0	1
- State centered funding	2	2
- State-centered structure	8	5
- State-centered structure\- Guaranteed employment	11	1
- State-centered structure\- Legal/bureaucratic corset	39	12
- State-centered structure\- No accountability for management	1	0
- State-centered structure\- Not democratic	4	0
- State-centered structure\- EU convergence	0	3
- State-centered evaluation	14	2
- State-centered role of state	3	1
+ Humboldtian model	2	2
+ Humboldtian funding	2	0
+ Humboldtian mission	28	9
+ Humboldtian structure	21	1
+ Humboldtian structure\+ Job security	1	2
+ Humboldtian structure\+ Democratic	1	0
+ Humboldtian structure\+ Tested executives	7	0

+ Humboldtian structure\+ Training by doing	8	0
+ Humboldtian evaluation	1	1
+ Humboldtian evaluation\+ Culture better than regulation	7	3
+ Humboldtian role of state	0	0
- Humboldtian model	0	1
- Humboldtian funding	1	1
- Humboldtian mission	5	3
- Humboldtian structure	6	10
- Humboldtian structure\- Isolated from environment	1	6
- Humboldtian structure\- No accountability	9	13
- Humboldtian structure\- Ineffective university executives	9	7
- Humboldtian structure\- Impossible to combine administration and research	12	0
- Humboldtian structure\- Collegial management leads to worse outcomes	5	8
- Humboldtian structure\- Executive hostage to academics	7	8
- Humboldtian evaluation	1	0
- Humboldtian role of state	0	1