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## ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY OF UNIVERSITIES: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE FROM 1972 TO 2014

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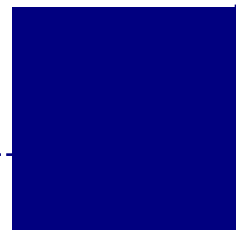
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# ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY OF UNIVERSITIES: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE FROM 1972 TO 2014

Xavier Dumay, Hugues Draelants, Aubépine Dahan

*Organizational identity provides an increasingly large number of researchers with a theoretical lens for examining current transformations of the university. The primary objective of this article is to propose an extensive, systematic overview of the literature published on the subject between 1972 and 2014. The analysis of 120 empirical studies reveals a literature which is rich but dispersed, in theoretical, epistemological and methodological terms alike; thriving since the 2000s, it is mainly US but increasingly globalised. After identifying six main research categories according to the classical distinctions found in the organizational identity literature, we propose a series of avenues for discussion bearing on the status of identity as an indicator of changes at work in the university, their level and depth, the linkage between the concepts of market and institutional field and finally, the epistemological implications of the international nature of this literature.*

Keywords: University, Organizational identity, Organizational image, Institutional change

Growing numbers of studies are using the concept of organizational identity to understand the current transformations of the university. Since the early 2000s, more than a hundred articles published in internationally peer-reviewed journals have been devoted to this question, or rather, this group of questions. This abundance of discussion and empirical findings is in fact relatively heterogeneous, dealing alternately with the influence of the transformations of the higher education field and its regulation on university organizations, with the forms of affiliation, identification and involvement with the university amongst stakeholders such as students and alumni, with the strategic management of images and public relations or with the institutional change at work. Our main objective is therefore to make sense out of this apparent complexity in order to clarify the status of the organizational identity concept as a tool for analysing the transformations of the universities.

Our literature review complements others recently published on the subject (MacDonald, 2013; Stensaker, 2014; Weerts, Freed, & Morphew, 2014). The first of these, addressed at a readership in the higher education field, brings out the diversity of the theoretical perspectives on organizational identity

found in organization theory literature. MacDonald encourages the use of the organizational identity concept for research on the transformations of the university but does not provide an overview of existing studies on this issue. Rather, maintaining that organizational identity raises essential questions for a university undertaking a process of change, he proposes above all a theoretical overview intended for the actors constituting the university. Weerts et al., meanwhile, carry out a review of the literature, but it deals only with the case of the US attempting to understand the emergence of the organizational identity concept as an analytic frame of recent transformations in US universities. They show the degree to which the concern with organizational identity in the US is tied to the context of the commodification and reduced funding of its public universities, but also the way the shift from an institutional identity to organizational ones reflects an institutional field in the midst of fragmentation and reconstruction. Weerts and his colleagues masterfully set the stage by showing that the organizational identity concept turns out to be a relevant analytic frame not only for understanding organizational strategies in a context of increased competition and rationalisation of resources but also, within a theoretical

perspective of a more sociological nature, for grasping the way university organizations are being repositioned in relation to the hybridisation and increased complexity of the university's missions.

Last of all, the overview presented by Stensaker (2014) deals with the question of organizational identity and the university from the specific perspective of change. Four processes linking change and organizational identity are identified, according to whether, identity is/is not the very goal of the change in strategic terms (the "strategic" approach), or indicative of more general transformations of the university (the "essentialist" approach) and, for another, whether the analysis is mainly focused on the games internal to the organization or on relations between the organization and its environment. The studies enumerated are intended as illustrations and thus permit neither an assessment of the representativeness of the literature nor an identification of the main directions it now appears to be taking.

In addition to taking into consideration this representative dimension and the international perspective underlying the literature, the present overview is distinguished by the adoption of a broad definition of the organizational

identity concept, drawing on the conceptualisation developed by Hatch and Schultz (2004). For these authors, organizational identity is a process of dialogue and comparison between external images of the organization (hetero-definitions) and its internal culture (self-definitions). From this point of view, opting for a strictly nominalist approach to identify studies dealing with organizational identity would be problematic because organizational images and cultures are intrinsically part of the definition of that identity. For this reason, we have identified not only those studies directly crossing the keywords "identity" and "university" but those referring to the words "image" and "culture" as well. Our approach to organizational identity also attempts to integrate the theoretical contributions of the neo-institutional literature, as brought out by Glynn (2008), in order to emphasise the institutional and relational nature of organizational identity.

After a presentation of the method used to select and process the articles surveyed, six types of studies are presented and described. The second section of the article proposes a critical discussion of the literature intended to bring out several key themes for future research.

## Method

In order to establish a map of studies dealing with the organizational identity of universities three distinct operations were carried out: an extensive bibliographic search on Scopus, a review of the bibliographies provided by the articles located and a selection based on criteria concerning publication data and the type of research. The Scopus search algorithm was adapted so as to obtain sufficiently focused results. The search “universit\* AND organizational culture” in the title, abstract and keywords, for example, yielded 2,438 results. We thus reformulated the query to search for studies including “universit\*” as keyword alone, and several key terms (“Organizational Identity”, “Organizational culture”, “Organizational image”, “Organizational reputation”, “Organizational branding”) as abstract, article title and keyword, and limited ourselves to the “Social Sciences” discipline. In addition to the organizational identity and university keywords, keywords were selected to reflect Hatch and Schultz’s definition of organizational identity. In order to include the external groups’ experiences of the organization, we opted for the terms “image”, “reputation” and “branding”. Only the concept of culture was selected for representing the self-definitions. These terms were then associated with “universit\*” as keyword alone, as in many abstracts the term “universit\*” appeared only as a descriptor at the end of the

abstract of the Press that published the article (e.g., “Chicago University Press”) or as a descriptor of the university in which was conducted the study (for instance a study on organizational culture and organizational commitment conducted at the University of Minnesota).

We did not limit the beginning date of publication for the articles. Strictly speaking, the search should have begun with 1985, the date of Albert and Whetten’s article, which marked the first attempt to define organizational identity, but our broad interpretation of the concept pushed the date of the first article selected (Burton Clark’s ethnographic study on the ‘organizational sagas’ of three US universities) back to 1972. Our bibliographic search includes articles published and indexed from 1972 through the end of 2014. This keywords search yielded a list of 342 publications. We then introduced a criterion for the quality of the works (only articles published in peer-reviewed journals were included) and another for the type of study (only those works presenting empirical research or a synthesis of empirical cases were used because we were seeking an overview of the issues mobilising researchers over the entire period). The application of these two selection criteria permitted us to arrive at a final list of 120 articles.

### Coding Procedures

The articles were systematically coded on the following variables: the status of the concept (independent or dependent variable); the process studied, with reference to the typology developed by Hatch and Schultz (2004); the theorisation of the organizational identity concept, following Glynn (2008); the academic discipline; the epistemological stance (distinguishing on the one hand between articles coming within an analytical perspective and those assuming a normative posture, and on the other, the inductive or deductive nature of the research approach); and finally, the methodology: the type of data collection (quantitative versus qualitative), the nature of the study design (cross-sectional versus

false longitudinal versus true longitudinal) and the type of sampling (theoretical versus representative).

The results are presented below in two stages. We begin with general considerations concerning the theoretical, epistemological and methodological orientations of the literature and then propose a typology of the studies which combines those of Hatch and Schultz (2004) and Glynn (2008). Appendix 1 details the keywords searched on Scopus and the number of papers per search; Appendix 2 indicates the coding dimensions of the articles; and in Appendices 3 and 4, the coding of the 120 articles, and the coded articles by types are presented in Table form.

## Results

### General Considerations

If the university's ability to behave as an actor is limited, the fact remains that it is summoned to become an actor and thus to assume a specific, distinctive identity (Krücken & Meier, 2006). Indeed, the emergence of the 'actor' as a highly legitimate figure in today's world (Meyer & Jepperson, 2000) is a factor which affects beliefs about what university management should be – namely, something closer to the model of an 'organization of stakeholders' (Bleiklie & Kogan, 2007) than that of the

'Republic of Academics'. In general, the university is called upon to become an actor as an alternative to passively undergoing a series of political, economic and cultural changes which have occurred over the past thirty years. The introduction of new methods for managing and assessing both research and education, the call for a closer linkage between the university world and local business, and the highly publicised international university rankings all constitute challenges for contemporary universities.

Even if some trends are common to all universities, regardless of their geographic location, the intensity of these challenges varies across national contexts. Compared to Europe, the US was confronted earlier on and more drastically by a number of changes in its higher education (rankings, budget cuts tied to the withdrawal of the state, privatisation, growing competition) that helps to explain why the literature on organizational identity initially appeared there before growing very rapidly in the 2000s and spreading to many other areas of the world. Indeed, for the period before the 2000s, we found only thirteen articles on the subject, eleven of which came from the US. That said, a shift in the literature on universities can be observed there in the mid 1970's (Leister, 1975), whereby they are no longer studied as hermetic systems producing meaning and a feeling of belonging but rather, as a political system tied to its environment (Weerts et al., 2014).

The issues raised by these societal challenges are not limited to the organization and traditional modes of operation of the universities. The evolution of the university's organisational form justifies the establishment of new organizational and managerial modes of regulation but adapting to this new institutional environment means that in order to know which strategy to follow, it is necessary to know oneself. In other words, the university-as-actor is also supposed to acquire an identity for use in its internal and external communications.

In its gradual transformation into a "genuine" organization, the university is thus supposed to build an identity, in this case, an organizational identity. Does this mean that until recently, most institutions of higher learning were traditionally devoid of this characteristic? From a managerial viewpoint, where identity is seen as a strategic lever, this is indeed the case. It is maintained that one of the university's problems is not having an identity and consequently being unable to act in a rational manner by following a clear, consistent course of action. The solution proposed then consists of building an organizational identity (see, for example, Melewar & Akel, 2005). But this is not the only possible type of identity.

Universities have long been considered not as simple as technical or productive systems but as social systems, which is to say, as institutions. More than any other form of organization, the university is an institution and as such, it is necessarily provided with a specific identity. According to Selznick, this is how we recognise institutions: "As an organization acquires a self, a distinctive identity, it becomes an institution. It involves the taking on of values, ways of acting and believing that are deemed important for their own sake" (Selznick, 1957, p. 21, as cited in Weerts et al., 2014, p. 239). In this sense, identity has been a central preoccupation for researchers since the first studies bearing on the university because identity is intrinsically related to the universities' status as institutions. Illustrating it, Clark considers the university



as representative of an “organization with a saga” which is “only secondarily a social entity characterised by plan and reason. It is first of all a matter of the heart, a center of personal and collective identity” (Clark, 1970, p. 9, as cited in Weerts et al., 2014, p. 240).

In short, the fact that the universities were not concerned with identity in the past does not mean that they had no identity. They simply had no need to assert it or raise questions about it, because it was relatively obvious and implicit. The universities had rather clear ideas about who they were as a group, namely entities with a social mandate to train elites and produce and transmit knowledge, and thus it was hardly necessary to raise the question of identity, whether collectively or individually. Otherwise stated, the university’s traditional identity was institutional (rather than organizational) and institutionalised, something to be taken for granted.

Considering the university as an institution in Selznik’s sense suggests, unlike the managerial perspective mentioned above, that the university is characterised less by an absence of identity than by an excess. The university’s problem as diagnosed here would reside in a form of institutional decline: changes in the environment would affect – and threaten – the academic world’s classical identity insofar as they touch on the distinctive core values characterising the university

and its traditional missions. This position is frequent amongst academics themselves and as such, differs from the more external managerial discourse. Although it can be seen as the exact opposite of the latter to the extent that it often strongly opposes the university’s evolution towards more managerial or commercial forms (e.g., Deem, Mok, & Lucas, 2008), the two positions are similar in their essentially normative tones, albeit prescriptive in one case and critical in the other.

Alongside these two readings, it is possible to discern in our literature review a third way of apprehending the uses of identity in order to understand the universities’ evolutions. It does not address the presence or absence of an organizational identity but sees identity as a heuristic concept which is useful for interpreting the changes under way, insofar as there is intense discursive activity around the subject. Unlike the first two approaches, which are normative, this one is above all analytical. In particular, it attempts to bring out the importance of identity in managerial discourses and those of the university actors themselves as a prism for reading the organizational change taking place. One of the key questions it raises, moreover, is that of understanding how the new identity-based categories coexist or conflict with the old ones (e.g., in function of trade-offs between the different institutional logics running through the field and the universities organizational positions within it).

## A Typology of Studies

As indicated in the introduction, we have drawn on the conceptualisation of identity set out by Hatch and Schultz (2004). Its interest lies in use of the identity-building process by combining and linking the notion of identity with those of culture and image which are often separated from it in the literature. The concept of organizational culture describes values, beliefs and standards shared by the members of the organization, things which are taken for granted and thus often tacit, but which allow the members to agree on what they are experiencing and also to give meaning to the organization and consequently refers to the latter's internal definition. The notion of organizational image is fairly close to the idea of a supposed reputation, for it is defined by what the organization members believe the outsiders' perceptions to be (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). Beyond the importance of the comparison and contrast with the other organizations in the identity-building process, already brought out by Albert and Whetten (1985), the notion of image in fact highlights in a broader way the crucial role of the organization's environment and public. Their perspective thus presents identity as a process through which the organization's image and culture dialogue and interact with each other. Their reciprocal influences dynamically come into play to create, maintain and transform the organizational identity.

Organizational identity is constructed at the intersection of two processes, one of

mirroring and reflecting and another, self-expression and self-presentation.

- Mirroring: valued individuals outside the organization have representations of it and thus hold out a mirror to those on the inside.
- Reflecting: the image reflected in the mirror held out by others cannot help but affect the way the organization's actors perceive and define themselves. Its interpretation on the inside depends on the organizational culture and the understanding of the collective identity available within the organization.
- Self-expression: over time, organizations, like individuals, constitute their identities through their own narratives, internal discussions and debates which are sedimented in the organizational culture.
- Self-presentation: images of the organization are projected towards its public, either deliberately and strategically or unintentionally.

To construct our typology of studies on the organizational identity of universities, we crossed the four elements of the identity-building process set out by Hatch and Schultz with the classification proposed by Glynn (2008) of the three major types of definition of organizational identity found in this literature. The first of these, which follows directly in the line of the initial definition of Albert and Whetten (1985), relies on an essentialist and *criterion-referenced* vision of the concept: organizational identity exists and its deeper nature should be a subject of investigation.

Researchers thus focus on identifying and enumerating the distinctive, lasting core aspects which would define the organization's "essence". According to Glynn, this definition is the most widespread in the general literature on organizational identity. In our analysis, however, it ranks second by number of articles, behind the *functional and strategic* definition (which is clearly dominant here, representing nearly half of the articles). This definition, which in practice can be combined with the preceding one, focuses on the way identity is used as a strategic resource, offering competitive advantages and functioning as a compass for organization members when they make decisions and strategic choices. Glynn distinguishes yet a third definition, of an *institutional and relational* nature, which shows a greater contrast with the first one. It is less concerned with seeking the unique nature or attributes of the organizations than with studying the processes of building positions within an organizational field. This point of view is relatively marginal in the literature reviewed by Glynn and it is also the least well represented in the literature more specifically centred on the organizational identity of universities (less than one out of five articles).

We began by systematically coding and classifying the articles by the theoretical types obtained by crossing of Glynn's three approaches to organizational identity and Hatch and Schultz's four elements of the identity-building process. In the end (see Table 1), we selected only six major types of studies out of the twelve possibilities. We observed very sharp imbalances between the two kinds of approaches distinguished by Glynn depending on the identity processes studied. When the research bears on the external dynamics (mirroring and self-presentation processes), the strategic approaches are largely dominant (40 studies out of the 64 identified), but in the case of the internal identity dynamics (reflecting and self-expression), which account for a smaller number of studies, the opposite is true: the essentialist approaches are better represented (22 articles out of the 35 identified). On the other hand – and this is the fundamental point – once Hatch and Schultz's typology is taken into account, Glynn's distinction between essentialist and strategic approaches did not prove to be determinant. The studies identified in one of Hatch and Schultz's four categories generally addressed identical questions and because subdividing each of

**Table 1.** *Typology of Studies on the University and Organizational Identity*

	Mirroring	Reflecting	Self-expression	Self-presentation
Essentialist or Strategic	Type 1: Image (N = 38)	Type 2: Sense-making (N = 21)	Type 3: Debating (N = 14)	Type 4: Branding (N = 26)
Neo-institutional	Type 5: Institutional logics (N = 7)		Type 6: Institutional positioning (N = 14)	

the categories on the basis of essentialist or strategic approaches did not bring out new issues, it would not have been useful. This does not mean that there is no difference between the two approaches but simply that the presentation of the four types of studies suffices to sum up a large part of the literature without having to split them in two. At the same time, Glynn's distinction between the neo-institutional approaches and the other two turned out to be quite relevant. The neo-institutional conception of identity introduces truly original questions which are either not explained or completely ignored in the literature drawing on the essentialist or strategic approaches. This situation justifies the creation of two other types of studies, which brings us to a total of six main types. Last of all, it should be noted that for the neo-institutional type of studies, we did not distinguish Hatch and Schultz's four categories with as much detail because this type of approach considers the organization as a reflection of field logics, with the result that the boundaries between organization and field are not really the subject of the studies. We have thus opted more simply

for the distinction between studies aimed at exploring the way the organization's internal actors understand and interact with the tensions between field logics (identity understandings, cf. Type 5), and studies seeking to clarify the ways the organizations position themselves in relation to standards and other field-level actors (identity claims, cf. Type 6).

**Type 1 (N = 38): Image.** The first group of studies (see Table 2), which is also the best represented in the literature, bears on the perception of the university by various publics and stakeholders. This perception is deemed worthy of interest insofar as it conditions choices and behaviours which generate resources for the university: future students' application choices, the decision to continue studying at the same university, various forms of alumni support. More than two-thirds of the articles of this type study image or reputation as an independent variable influencing decisions and behaviours, whilst about a dozen focus on the ways they are fashioned. How is the perception of an image shaped? What are its components? What are the criteria,

**Table 2.** Profile of Type 1 Studies: Image

	Image
Key concepts	Image, reputation, branding, organizational identification
Status of concepts	Independent variable
Dominant theoretical approach	Chiefly marketing, theory (psychology) of organizations when organizational identity is taken into account
Dominant methodological approach	Predominantly quantitative, cross-sectional studies
Dominant epistemological approach	Predominantly analytical, except for studies considering image as an independent variable

influences and timescale determining its development? These are the questions addressed in this part of the literature, which, unlike the preceding one, is characterised by an essentialist conception, sometimes combined with a strategic one. The articles taking a quantitative approach (the majority) test predictive models derived from either marketing theories or social psychology and organization theory. It should also be noted that normative approaches predominate in the case of studies dealing with the image as an independent variable, whereas the other subgroup assumes a more analytical stance. The articles adopting a normative approach generally begin by recalling that today's universities find themselves in competition with each other and faced with reduced public funding, a situation which "forces" them to borrow marketing tools in order to position themselves and "survive". This category of studies, along with that on branding (which is also strategic in nature), accounts in large part for the exponential growth of the literature on organizational identity and the university.

In fact, the articles dealing with mirroring correspond to the first stage of a marketing approach, namely, discovering the perceptions held by the university's different publics, audiences or stakeholders and how this representation is forged. One part of the articles in this category conceptualise it as reputation (Munisamy, 2014; Sung & Yang, 2009) or image (Baker & Brown, 2007; Brown & Mazarol, 2009; Pampaloni, 2010), whilst others place

the distinction and interactions between the two concepts at the heart of their analysis. A final group of articles study the dimensions of branding and its mechanisms (Bennett & Ali-Choudhury, 2009; Mourad & El Karanshaw, 2013; Priporas, 2011).

Even within this literature, image and reputation can admittedly refer to a multiplicity of definitions, and are sometimes confused (De Jager & Soontiens, 2009). Nonetheless, we can say that the image is considered as a perception formed on the basis of the individual experiences of those having a more or less intense tie with the organization (Baker & Brown, 2007; Belanger, Mount, & Wilson, 2002), whilst reputation is a more collective, overall appraisal of the organization's characteristics and in particular, "how well organizational responses are meeting the demands and expectations of many organizational stakeholders" (Wartick, 1992, as cited in Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001 p. 304). It is also associated with a construction in the long term, a judgment on the past, which gives rise to neo-institutional approaches described below.

Studies dealing with the formation of the organization's image for various external or internal stakeholders notably seek to determine the most influential sources of information or cognition, generally with the idea of equipping the universities for their marketing approaches later on (cf. Type 4). Palacio, Meneses, and Pérez (2002) thus bring out the double dimension, at once cognitive and emotional, of image formation in students' perceptions of

their university. The predominance of the cognitive element over the emotional one is confirmed, along with the link between image and satisfaction. A second issue is the formation of multiple images of a single school depending on the public, always with the objective of being able to segment its environment at a later stage. Arpan, Raney, and Zivnuska (2003) show that two different audiences (a group of current students and non-student adults) employ different criteria to evaluate the same university; thus, the predictors of image formation differ according to the publics.

The second major question running through this literature bears on the consequences of these perceptions on the behaviours of different groups, here too considered to be strategic for the organization: students (Alves & Raposo, 2010; Helgesen & Nettet, 2007; Sung & Yang, 2009), alumni (Drezner, 2009; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Stephenson & Yerger, 2014), university staff (Borden, Shaker, & Kienker, 2014; Fuller, Hester, Barnett, & Relyea, 2006) or employers (Parmeswaran & Glowacka, 2005).

The studies dealing with the criteria which define an image perceived by stakeholders as positive and desirable sometimes target a very specific segment of the supply (e.g., a tourism school; Russell, 2005) or the demand (Chinese students; Rudd, Djafarova, & Waring, 2012). Several articles also question the relevant locus for evaluating the image and its ability to predict stakeholder behaviours: the organization, the school/

faculty or university or the curriculum itself (Helgesen & Nettet, 2007). Considerations of cultural or national contexts also appear in several field studies conducted outside the US (which had provided the majority of the fields for many years): in Turkey (Polat, 2011), the countries of the Gulf (Mourad & El Karanshawy, 2013) and Syria (Dib & Alnazer, 2013).

Most of the studies seek to contextualize and develop the models involving image or reputation in behaviours. The consequences of the image/reputation for behaviours are direct or indirect, conveyed or sometimes even overshadowed by other dimensions such as experience, satisfaction and loyalty. These models attempt to render the complexity of individuals' decision-making patterns by attempting to situate the importance of the image and even more, the question of the coupling between the image and what goes on inside the organization.

Some articles do not problematise this question; rather, they are strictly limited to the study of the causal relationship between a given characteristic of the university and its image amongst one or another public, without alluding to its concrete activities or outputs. In these cases, the independent variables include the quality of the service or the physical facilities (Helgesen & Nettet, 2007) and student social life and employment opportunities for graduates (Duarte, Alvez, & Raposo, 2010). By contrast, Luque-Martinez and Del Barrio-Garcia (2009), who study the background

of the formation of the image amongst teaching and research staff at the University of Granada in Spain, highlight the activities proper to the organization: services to society, teaching and administration.

Others address the question of the coupling between the image and the organization's internal "reality". For the marketing approaches, the image is almost more important than the reality because students make their decisions on the basis of the image, as is the case for services. The more organizational approaches tend to advocate a certain coupling, or even a "sincerity" on the university's part. Thus, Belanger, like Terkla, and Pagano (1993), whom he cites, recommends a maximum congruence between what the university is and what it appears to be; otherwise, students will be disappointed and leave the university, which will affect its image. Without any real demonstration, he stresses that the need for coherence must be sought at several levels: coherence over time (between the expectations of future students and the realities experienced once they actually become students), between several internal components (administrators' and students' perceptions) and between different publics (parents, students, activists, funders, etc.). Strategy and essentialism converge to some extent, suggesting that the universities should, for strategic reasons, work towards aligning what they are (essentialist perception) and the way they are perceived, so as to give rise to a certain strategic sincerity. This overlapping between essentialism and

strategy corresponds to the search for a total linkage between the internal and the external, culture and image.

Several studies also compare explanatory models attempting to determine, for example, the degree to which student satisfaction with the programme (Alves & Raposo, 2010; Helgesen & Nessel, 2007) or the nature and extent of social exchanges with the alumni association (Drezner, 2009) serve, on the one hand, to predict dependent variables better than the perception of the image and, on the other, to condition the perception of the image itself. These studies tend to show that the internal socialisation experience within the organisation prevails over the prediction of loyalty and donation behaviours, thus relegating the perception of the image to the background.

The strategic nature of this part of the literature stems from the strategic dimension of university funding, which is of considerable importance in various contexts: in the US, because of budget cuts in public universities in particular (Weerts et al., 2014) but also in countries where the universities do not figure amongst the most renowned or best ranked, such as Malaysia or South Africa, as well as countries like England, in order to attract international publics. These studies addressing the formation of the image or the reputation and the implications for the behaviours of groups of actors considered strategic for the organization's survival anticipate the analytic or prescriptive investigations (at



the centre of Type 4 articles) of what the universities do, can do and should do to build, defend and improve their images.

**Type 2 (N = 21): Sense-making.** This category (see Table 3) encompasses most of the studies conveying an essentialist view of organizational identity or culture. They raise pioneering questions, with four articles published before the 2000s. Two types of research can be distinguished within this category. On the one hand, there are the studies basically attempting to understand the nature of the universities' organizational cultures, in either generic (Clark, 1972) or singular (Smart & Hamm, 1993) terms. Two of the more recent studies in this group place special emphasis on the fragmented nature of such cultures (Hsu & Elsbach, 2014; Mills, Bettis, Miller, & Nolan, 2005). On the other hand, the large majority of the studies are aimed rather at describing and analysing the role organizational identities and cultures play as filters in the absorption of the multiple demands for change; here too, the focus is alternately on their singularity (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Gioia & Thomas, 1996;

Lejeune & Vas, 2011; Stensaker, 2006) or on their more generic, institutionalised natures (Krücken, 2003). The demands most often analysed concern the new higher education regulations, the market (Gioia & Thomas, 1996), rankings (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996), accreditations (Lejeune & Vas, 2011), the new managerialism and "quality" policies in higher education (Stensaker, 2006), but also changes which are both institutional and organizational, such as the question of the relationships between science and knowledge, reflected in the development of technology transfer offices (Krücken, 2003) or the universities' relationship to the open university status and the development of schemes for the recognition of prior learning (Pitman & Vidovich, 2013).

This literature on identity as a filter gives rise to a series of interesting observations. First, one group of studies attests to a form of instrumental consideration given to demands for change, in that only those demands in line with the universities' identity and cultural orientations seem to be reflected in the organization's concrete

**Table 3. Profile of Type 2 Studies: Sensemaking**

Sensemaking	
Key concepts	Organizational culture and identity
Status of concepts	Independent variable for the most part
Dominant theoretical approach	Organizational theory only
Dominant methodological approach	Qualitative, most often case studies dealing with a limited number of universities
Dominant epistemological approach	Analytical, either comprehensive or explanatory



activities. Conversely, those demands for change which significantly perturb the universities' identity or threaten it are subject either to reinterpretations aimed at reducing the perception of the threat (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996), ritual and ceremonial transformations (Krücken, 2003) or internal negotiations and political games intended to measure the consequences of the changes for the different professional bodies coexisting within the universities (Garcia & Hardy, 2007). Only the article of Lejeune and Vas (2011) demonstrates a case of radical change following the perception of a massive gap between institutional and organizational expectations with regards to an accreditation process and the identity and culture of the universities. But it must be noted here that this study concerns a particular segment of the market – the business schools – which is not necessarily representative of the changes affecting the rest of the universities.

Overall, the traditional hypothesis of a sharp decoupling between the pressures of the organizations' institutional environment and their internal transformations (Meyer & Rowan, 1976) thus seems to hold up. But it can be improved with regards to two related points. For one thing, if we consider that organizations play an active role by guiding adaptations which are more or less real and more or less ritual depending on the degree of perceived correspondence with their identity, the passive nature of the organizations in the institutional change process must be kept

in perspective, given the strategic and political roles they seem to play (Gioia & Thomas, 1996). For another, under certain conditions which remain to be clarified (probably concerning the level of analysis – the full university versus one unit, a school/faculty or an institute, as well as the binding nature of the modes of regulation, such as the role of the accreditation process in the business school market), a clear coupling can take place, including when the changes to be implemented are considerably removed from the establishments' identity and cultural orientations.

Second, it seems important to distinguish, following Krücken (2003), two arenas or levels of change, namely the central, coordinated level and the more local arenas, most often dissociated from one another. In his study on the institutionalisation of a new relationship to the production of knowledge at university, Krücken thus shows that the largely ceremonial nature of the activities co-ordinated by the technology transfer offices does not prevent the development of multiple partnerships between business and the decentralised bodies (departments, schools/faculties, services, etc.) where research actually takes place. In short, this article brings out a paradox between, on the one hand, processes which are visible and co-ordinated but for the most part rituals of change at central level and, on the other, emerging processes of transformation which are loosely coupled but quite real, at a more local level. This finding, which warrants further exploration, echoes the

traditional interpretation of the university as a loosely coupled system (Weick, 1976) and the description of the universities' organizational cultures as fragmented (Hsu & Elsbach, 2014; Mills et al., 2005). But it also suggests that if the process of rationalising and centralising the university organization is largely ceremonial, there may well be an accelerated process of fragmentation and break-up with regards to the diversity of the decentralised bodies' local methods of adaptation to the multiple demands for change.

Third, in line with Stensaker (2006), it can also be indicated that the institutionalisation of changes does not necessarily seem to be reflected or preceded by a sharp de-institutionalisation of prior organizational identities and cultures. He maintains that demands for change are neither put through the wringer of the path dependency of the identities in force nor strategically ruled out but rather, added to the existing and desired identities, without real integration, thus resulting in hybrid organisational practices and more complex organisational identities. In our view, this

hypothesis echoes the distinction set out by Bromley and Powell (2012) between forms of vertical and horizontal decoupling. They suggest that, although most of the literature on the decoupling process focuses on the gap between the organizations' institutional environment and their internal activities, the main process at work in a context of increased rationalisation involves the separation between the rationalisation of the organizational activity and the organization's core missions. This would lead to the superposition of new rationalisation activities which take the new organizational demands seriously and seek to integrate the organizations' new missions and relationships with the environment in a "sincere" way, without managing to reconnect and re-couple these key orientations with sites where the organizations' very activities are taking place.

**Type 3 (N = 14): Debating.** Although it is not explicitly stated, the studies included in this third type (see Table 4) to some extent anticipate those of Type 5, which investigate the way the multiple,

**Table 4.** Profile of Type 3 Studies: Debating

Debating	
Key concepts	Organizational culture, organizational identity, branding, identity transition, identity negotiation
Status of concepts	Dependent variable for the most part
Dominant theoretical approach	Organization theory
Dominant methodological approach	Qualitative, including several long ethnographic studies
Dominant epistemological approach	Analytical

conflicting institutional logics found in the higher education field affect and possibly reconfigure university identity. However, the emphasis here is placed not on the institutional environment and the way the schools position themselves in relation to it or draw on it to build their identities but rather, on the discussions, or even conflicts and power struggles, generated within the university by these institutional logics and the resulting processes of questioning and negotiating identity.

Several authors draw attention to the growing corporatisation of the universities and stress the difficulties they encounter in attempting to reconcile the language and constraints of marketing with their institutional identity (Aspara, Aula, Tienari, & Tikkanen, 2014; Hemsley-Brown & Goonawardana, 2007; Lowrie, 2007; Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009). For example, Wæraas and Solbakk (2009) draw on an empirical study of a regional university in Norway to investigate how a process undertaken with a strategic aim of defining a single, coherent identity for the university led to failure. The conflict-ridden project, marked by the academic community's lack of engagement, was finally abandoned. Indeed, the branding approach, which attempts to introduce a marketing logic into the university world, tends to provoke internal resistance from academics, who are quick to criticise its ability to capture and render their institution's identity, with the result that the disidentification triggered amongst these actors accentuates the organizational fragmentation (Stiles, 2011).

If such an incapacity poses problems in terms of marketing and management, this is not the vision transmitted by the authors of the studies cited, who present the university's organizational identity as inherently complex and plural. Consequently, they maintain that seeking to reduce the composite social system constituted by the university to a brand or a single definition would not only be simplistic (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009) but would amount to calling its deeper identity into question and denying both its autonomy and the contributions of the schools and other bodies composing it to the identity-building process (Hemsley-Brown & Goonawardana, 2007).

This literature thus insists as well on the fact that a university's organizational identity is not strictly determined by its environment, its hierarchical position or even its past and the imprint of its founders. All of these elements certainly play a fundamental role in the definition of its identity but do not account for everything; it is therefore necessary to grasp the different stages and internal process of identity building. Gioia, Hamilton, Price, and Thomas (2010) even maintain that the creation of a workable identity depends on the way this process is carried out and demonstrate the importance of negotiation in particular. An organization's identity is gradually and continuously negotiated by its members through social interactions between themselves and with external stakeholders. For the authors, negotiation is also a necessary condition for avoiding

decoupling between image and identity. Given the interdependence between identity understandings and identity claims, the latter need to be in line with the former in order to generate a virtuous circle and strengthen the coherence of an organizational identity.

Although a certain number of studies adopt a critical perspective on this point and indicate the internal conflicts set off by the marketisation of the universities, others are more optimistic about the possibility of engaging a harmonious identity reconfiguration through a branding process. Smart (2013) in particular presents a case study of the creation of a new visual identity at Plymouth University in the UK. The article, normative in its approach, attempts to show the necessity and value of such an exercise, as illustrated by a successful example. It thus seems possible to make the different stakeholder expectations converge and preserve the organisation's deep values, provided that the process is carried out in a collective way.

The study conducted by Vásquez, Cordelier, and Sergi (2013) on collaborative processes of creating and managing an organization's brand image examines the idea – often wielded by opponents of branding – that the production of such an image would necessarily be a superficial process having no effect on the university's deep identity. Drawing on the communicative constitution of organization (CCO) approach, they show on the contrary that the collaborative processes which make branding a mode of organization in reality contribute to fundamental transformations of the university. The brand includes an organizing dimension which is constitutive of the organizing process.

**Type 4 (N = 26): Branding.** This fourth category of studies (see Table 5) bears on the ways universities construct their images, through communications and branding activities (most often external) in a market context. The empirical studies on the universities' activities related to self-representation are divided between field surveys contributing to an analysis

**Table 5. Profile of Type 4 Studies: Branding**

Branding	
Key concepts	Image, reputation, branding
Status of concepts	Quite clearly dependent variable
Dominant theoretical approach	Marketing > organization theory
Dominant methodological approach	Qualitative
Dominant epistemological approach	Both analytical and normative

of the universities' possibilities for using such tools and investigations bringing out the different factors (places, moments, status) which make the universities' uses of branding vary. Although the issue is not explicitly problematised, the fact that these studies take the cultural factor into account suggests the institutional dimension, which emerges from the definition of what a university's quality, performance and social function might be.

A first group of articles relate how one specific university has successfully used classic marketing tools (George, 2000, for the University of Texas; Melewar & Akel, 2005, on the University of Warwick's creation of a corporate visual identity [CVI]). The problem of the compatibility between business tools and the singular organizational status of the university is not addressed, however. Some studies in this vein seek to assess the efficiency of marketing tools (Gatfield, Barker, & Graham, 1999; Idris & Whitfield, 2014). Other articles, on the contrary, choose to explore the potentially problematic nature of the use of these tools. Deem et al. (2008) show how the investment of resources in order to attain "world-class" university status not only constitutes something of an absurdity given that no one really knows what this notion means but also diverts precious resources from the universities' core functions (teaching and research). For Bolan and Robinson (2013), the communications function and the development of marketing at the university are nothing but techniques for

"disciplining" behaviours (in Foucault's sense). Humphreys and Brown (2002), who explore the way the university's senior managers seek to legitimate the internal adaptation of identity through discursive practices, offer an early critique of the power struggle hidden behind the hegemony of such managerial discourses which present the university's identity as something natural to be taken for granted and thus mask the diversity of the organization members' possible reactions (cf. Type 3). And taking a more analytical approach, Chapleo (2004) describes the ambiguous position of academics with management responsibilities where branding is concerned: they willingly confuse reputation and brand and recognise the difficulty of developing an institutional brand insofar as a few characteristics may define the university as a whole. The existence of brands for sub-units – schools and faculties in particular – is at once easier to envision and problematic with regards to the existence of an institutional brand: What is the relationship between them? Which one holds sway? In his 2011 article, Chapleo refines his analysis of university branding. The fact that marketing professionals themselves consider this activity to be complex, given the very complexity of the university, emphasises its specificities and encourages a reconsideration of the functions of branding, for as the author suggests, these may have been overestimated: branding, and university branding in particular, cannot resolve all problems.

Several factors lead to distinctive uses of branding tools. First of all, it is possible to distinguish the various stages of brand construction: the fashioning of an image in the case of a recent university (George, 2000), the addition of a feature like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Atakan & Eker, 2007) or the concept of world-class (Deem et al., 2008), or moments of crisis when the university's reputation is called into question because of scandals and it has to be defended or repaired (Fortunato, 2008; George, 2000; Len-Rios, 2010; Varma, 2011). The cultural context is also foregrounded in order to investigate distinct methods of implementing branding. Ivy (2001) shows that marketing is used differently in British and South African universities because of different socio-economic factors; Gray, Shyan Fam, and Llanes (2003) suggest that marketing should be adapted to students from Asian countries in function of the values found there; Mourad and El Karanshaw (2013) study brand equity – the value a consumer attributes to a brand – in the Muslim world. Ivy (2001) identifies twenty-seven marketing tools used by four universities representing two distinct categories in the UK and South Africa, old and new establishments. They observe that the old British universities use marketing to increase the value of their “product” (and thus highlight the quality of the teaching and research, the professors' reputations, etc.) whilst the new ones draw attention to more extrinsic features (athletic facilities, student associations) and target opinion shapers such as

recruiters and guidance counsellors. These findings suggest that marketing tools are used differently in function of what the universities deem important for increasing their prestige and positioning themselves on the market. This echoes the Type 1 studies on image antecedents and suggests that these antecedents may vary according to the characteristics of the university (age, prestige, social and national context). Chapleo (2011) also points out an interesting distinction between the older universities, which are more concerned with reputation than branding, and the more recent ones, which, for lack of an established reputation, invest more readily in the construction of a brand.

Last of all, branding is also aimed at the organization's internal publics, for two reasons: internal branding is the best vector of the external image (Chapleo, 2004; Judson, Gorchels, & Aurand, 2006) and it is a lever for ensuring organizational coherence, which is the basis of a coherent image for the exterior as well. The shared acceptance of a common narrative about what the organization is and what it should become serves as a strategic lever.

Two studies stand somewhat apart, with a profile coming close to a neo-institutional vision of organizational identity or images, in the sense that they examine the universities' strategies of communications and organizational image-making in the light of new categories structuring the higher education field, such as the world-class university (Deem et al., 2008) or the

socially responsible university (Atakan & Eker, 2007). We are still dealing with a strategic approach, however, in that these studies are fundamentally interested in communications strategy and the categories are used in an instrumental way, as a relevant lever for fashioning or boosting the image of a given organization. In this respect, it should be noted that if the Type 4 studies (branding) permit a deeper exploration of certain questions already outlined in the Type 3 studies (debating), given their highly strategic orientation, they also tend to put aside major questions raised in the “debating” literature, in particular the way the universities’ new forms of self-presentation affect their deeper identities. However, several studies of the branding type which fall within a more essentialist perspective do come back to the question of the compatibility between branding and the university’s essence, its history, values and *raison d’être*. Without disqualifying the branding process, this approach leads them to stress that the image cannot be built *ex nihilo* but must, on the contrary, make use of the past (Bulotaite, 2003; Schrecker, 2014).

**Type 5 (N = 7): Institutional Logics.** These fifth groups of studies (see Table 6), which are limited in number for now, share an analysis of the university’s institutional field as a locus of multiple institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999) in tension with each other. The concept of institutional logic presupposes from the outset a plural, complex environment because, by definition, there can never be one but several logics running through a given organizational field. This very plurality is what gives the organizations leeway for responding to changes in the field and gives the universities a strategic capacity for working on identity. These studies insist on the fact that the universities are thus confronted by logics which are not only changing but plural and potentially contradictory. Following Stensaker and Norgard (2006), the universities can be considered to face a minimum of two contradictory pressures: one pushing towards standardisation (ranking and evaluation practices) and another towards innovation (in order to respond to massification combined with reduced funding, the universities reform their

**Table 6.** Profile of Type 5 Studies: Institutional logics

	Institutional logics
Key concepts	Institutional logics, institutional plurality, organizational and institutional identity
Status of concepts	Generally dependent variable
Dominant theoretical approach	Organization theory only
Dominant methodological approach	Qualitative case studies, most often longitudinal
Dominant epistemological approach	Analytical, either comprehensive or explanatory



governance to become more strategic and innovative). In other words, what is new is not only the emergence of particular logics (e.g., a commercial logic dictating that the universities should be cost-effective) but also the coexistence of certain logics within new groups, combinations of logics which did not exist before. This type of study (unlike the following one) thus brings to light the room for manoeuvre available to the organizations and their members rather than the isomorphic pressures.

Kleinman and Osley-Thomas (2014) have analysed the changing legitimacy granted to “commercial” practices and schemes through trade publications intended for university or college administrators. They thus selected more than 600 articles published between 1960 and 2010 on commercial practices or considerations in the fields of research (issues of intellectual property rights and patenting), education (the student as a consumer and education as a product) and university management (the question of strategic planning). Analysing the apparent level of legitimacy accorded by the treatment of the information in the articles, they were thus able to show that the legitimacy of the commercial-type institutional logic grew across time with regards to the aspects related to research and university management but that, conversely, the commodification of higher education tended to receive a treatment considering this view of education and the student as illegitimate. De Jordy, Almond, Nielson, and Creed (2014) analyse the

way religious research universities handle the multiple contradictions between institutional logics and identify a new form of resolving those tensions through the adoption of a superordinate logic. For their part, Kodeih and Greenwood (2014) indicate quite clearly the role organizational identity plays in guiding interpretation and hierarchisation of conflicting institutional logics. Through a study of four French business schools subject to new logics of rankings and the associated standards since the mid-1990s, they show that the field-level actors translate the tension between institutional logics into signals demonstrating their more or less reconcilable nature so that the tension is not directly transferred to the organizations. They also stress that identity aspirations play a major role in the interpretation of the tensions between logics and that the status of the university organizations (assimilated to the organization’s present identity) mediates the relationship between institutional complexity and organizational actions by affecting the perception of possible and desirable changes.

What does this emerging literature teach us? First of all, we would point out that it revives a Bourdieusian conception of the field, understood as a conflictual social game over the definition of legitimate standards and the “rules of the game”, even if the analysis bears on an organisational level. Second, it tends to show – mirroring the sense-making and debating types



of studies dealing with the absorption and implementation of the new forms of regulation of higher education – that the tension between the various normative registers (institutional logics) applied to the university organizations gives rise to a substantial effort at ordering and ensuring consistency which resolves the tensions either temporarily (McLaren & Mills, 2013) or on a more long-term basis (Kodeih & Greenwood, 2014). Third, with Kodeih and Greenwood in particular, it foregrounds the role of identity aspirations in this reconstruction effort. Last of all, it shows that an organization’s status within the field (conceptualised in a rudimentary way as its position in the hierarchy) affects the organizational responses and the nature of the identity aspirations manifested. The organizational identity presented generally refers to pre-existing categories in force within the field. These categories can be innovative but in the end will have to be integrated by the field in order to be recognised as legitimate and meaningful. The universities’ recourse to new categories and new registers of legitimacy is, moreover, a subject of investigation

for this type of studies (Ishikawa, 2009), as indicated above with the mention of the emergence of universities claiming to be amongst the 100 or 200 best schools worldwide (on the basis of criteria established by the international rankings) or the case of more modest universities highlighting their services to society. These issues are even more central to the second neo-institutional approach.

**Type 6 (N = 14): Institutional positioning.**

The final category of studies (see Table 7) relies more clearly on a neo-institutional definition of identity, namely as an identity claim, aimed at situating the organizations in light of the normative regimes of the field and the different positions they occupy within the “structure” of that field. We find studies dealing with the question of how strategies aimed at producing visibility (Washington & Ventresca, 2004) are influenced by the institutional logics running through the higher education field and especially by the decisions and strategies adopted by the other field-level actors. In this respect, the authors stress isomorphic phenomena (DiMaggio

**Table 7. Profile of Type 6 Studies: Institutional positioning**

	Institutional positioning
Key concepts	(Institutional) identity, image, institutional field
Status of concepts	Dependent and independent variables (equal share)
Dominant theoretical approach	Organization theory
Dominant methodological approach	Qualitative
Dominant epistemological approach	Analytical, either comprehensive or explanatory

& Powell, 1983) and the fact that image production is a standardised process and not something happening by chance or simply reflecting the organization's identity defined in a purely internal way (Glynn, 2008). In fact, the universities' institutional environment offers them a finite and relatively standardised reserve of identity-related elements which they will put together in their own unique ways (Martin et al., 1983). From this standpoint, the institutional environment is a constraint, but also a resource for shaping their institutional identity. This simultaneous attempt to achieve legitimacy and distinctiveness (Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006), which requires a complicated, fine-tuned effort to balance and articulate institutional and organizational logics, finds its clearest illustration in the case of the new universities. For this reason, several studies included in this type focus their analysis on the (re) positioning work of organizations when they arrive in the field (Czarniawska & Wolff, 1998; Huisman et al., 2002). In order to justify its creation, the new university must be able to innovate or fill a niche left vacant by the surrounding organizations and make its identity stand out. At the same time, however, in order to obtain public recognition of their university status, the newcomers in a field also have to prove their compliance with the existing order. This typically involves adopting the legitimate categories (rules, standards, vocabulary) and practices in force in the field segment they are attempting to penetrate and thus signalling their intent to become similar and comparable to the other actors there.

Czarniawska and Wolff (1998), for example, study the way two universities set up in the 1950s and 1980s, one in southern Italy and the other in northern Germany, negotiate their entry into the field with varying degrees of success. The Italian university had been founded with lofty ideals (injecting a new institutional culture into a poor, corrupt rural territory) but was to gain acceptance by adopting the local culture at the expense of these same ideals. The German university had also been established in a poor rural region with little industrial development. The founders were hoping to gain acceptance for an original positioning which combined a traditional universal ideal of the university with recourse to private funding. This identity claim, perceived as an incongruity, met with resistance from existing universities. The resulting conflicts within the new university and the fragmentation of its identity undermined the very foundations of its legitimacy and prevented it from attracting the resources of local private partners. The institution would never manage to establish itself as a "different" university within the organizational field because of this same incongruity.

Along the same lines, Huisman et al. (2002) carried out a study of three European universities founded in the wake of the social movements of 1968 with the explicit goal of being different from the existing universities. Starting out from the objectives originally assigned to the universities (participating in the development of a disadvantaged rural area

and exploring alternative teaching and learning methods), the authors consider what became of these objectives over a period of thirty years, with the aim of evaluating whether they are still relevant to the three universities' practices and identities. Their assessment differs considerably from that of Czarniawska and Wolff (1998), however. Indeed, Huisman et al. show that the three universities studied did manage to integrate changes under pressure from external and internal stakeholders without abandoning their distinctive features. They interpret these findings by the fact that the isomorphic pressures are neither unequivocal nor precisely described. The "innovative teaching methods university" label, for example, has no concrete meaning and the universities thus responded to this isomorphic pressure whilst developing their respective ways of being innovative. This coexistence of isomorphic pressures and strategic choices gives "different" universities the possibility of preserving their difference over time but also becoming a bit less radical. Similarly, in the face of increased pressure to become universities "like the others", they replied by demonstrating the value of their special features in terms of "profitability", which is another way of complying and remaining different at the same time. The opposite case, in which universities change whilst attributing new meanings to existing identity labels constitutes another way of controlling external demands (Stensaker & Norgard, 2001). This form of change within continuity is generally favoured by well-

established universities with a rich past. Here we can speak of automorphism, a particular form of isomorphism whereby an organization imitates its own (glorious) past on the assumption that it has everything to gain from repeating what has worked so far (Czarniawska & Genell, 2002).

All in all, these studies observe that, in a context of social and political pressures for legitimation and differentiation, the higher education field is gradually becoming a competitive space in which the control and upkeep of organizational identity and image are more than ever strategic concerns. Managing appearances, as attested by branding, thus emerges as a new activity in its own right (Czarniawska & Genell, 2002), whose primary objective is to respond to the isomorphic pressure coming from the institutional environment. And its consequence is the standardisation of the university's organizational form. Despite their varied identity pathways, the universities are all converging towards a similar organizational form, which is close to that of a strategic actor rather than that of an institution or agency taking on a generic public service. For some, this trend towards isomorphism in the shaping of a new institutional identity goes hand in hand with a relative decoupling between the production of images intended for external use and the actual internal workings. Czarniawska and Genell (2002) thus consider that the standardisation of organizational forms is functional in that it serves above all to develop a logic of shared representation, in other words,

a way of presenting the universities to the outside world which conceals the disorder necessarily prevailing within these organizations. It is above all a cosmetic change entailing the adoption of a new language – managerial jargon – to describe academic activities.

To sum up, these studies tend to show that what is being standardised is not identity, and even less the organizational culture proper to each university, but the university's institutional identity, in keeping with the idea that universities should become organizations like any others, namely ones which are rational rather than anarchic. This process calls for the adoption of international standards and practices as well as a shared language. The emergence of this common world leads to the sharing of a "community of fate" (Waggoner & Goldman, 2005) which consequently permits comparison and competition between universities within the globalised higher education space, beyond the singular features tied to each university's history and national university models. The impact of this standardisation of institutional identity on organizational identity remains open to discussion, however. If Czarniawska and Genell (2002) observe cases of decoupling in some Polish and Swedish universities, they are careful to indicate that the changes introduced could have unexpected effects over time. Over time, this change in language cannot help affecting the way the university sees itself and conceives its tasks, given the

paradoxical everyday experience brought about by a real decoupling, which is in fact close to institutional schizophrenia. Once it is set in motion, the standardisation of organizational forms and the language accompanying it tend to become an autonomous logic which perpetuates itself and colonises everything else. A particular challenge facing the university has to do less with imagining and programming its own identity but rather, trying to follow the changes it undergoes (Czarniawska & Genell, 2002).

Amongst the new practices which have become widespread in the university world and participate directly in the production of an image for purposes of legitimation in response to the field's expectations, we can cite mission statements (Morphew & Hartley, 2006) and rankings (Bastedo & Bowman, 2010; Bowman & Bastedo, 2009; Wilkins & Huisman, 2012). Mission statements are the very illustration of business practices which have become so widespread in the university world that they are unavoidable. Other articles in this group investigate the universities' promotional discourses (Gaspard, 2013) which, in accordance with mimetic isomorphism and the logic of the uniqueness paradox in organizational stories (Martin et al., 1983) all borrow the same key words, beginning with the emblematic "excellence". The terms openness, service, partner, mobility, competence, international, quality, network and company are other leitmotifs identified in the universities' promotional

discourses. Hartley and Morpew (2008), whose conception of identity is more essentialist than neo-institutional, arrive at the same conclusion through an analysis of the themes addressed in college and university presentation brochures: the more the institutions try to distinguish themselves and work on their external image, the more they end up using the same identity features, which leads to a standardisation of the discourse. The fact that all the universities adopt the same “language elements” attests to an over-determination of this discourse by the institutional environment (Gaspard, 2013). They consecrate a language of good intentions which is difficult if not impossible to oppose. The success of a few key words repeated over and over also lies in part in their empty, polysemic nature, devoid of any concrete meaning. “Nothing is less precise than what excellence refers to”, as Gaspard rightly indicates (2013, p. 59). The universities’ concern with their names (Barats, 2011) and other expressions of their identity such as their brands, logos or their graphic design – which reflect a branding policy directly inspired by the professional communications techniques of the business world – are also part of the “investment in forms” (Thévenot, 1986) undertaken by the universities in order to acquire coherence beyond their characteristic organizational anarchy. Given the extreme difficulty of agreeing on the content of an organizational identity, investment in forms serves to reduce the complexity by substituting a

limited number of entities which are more homogeneous and easier to master and control. In this way, it offers a convenient way of conveying coherence and a minimal organizational identity.

The analyses of rankings, meanwhile, show that the effects of this kind of tool can also be understood from an institutional standpoint, in that they structure legitimacy relationships between organizations and between the organizations and their publics. Bowman and Bastedo (2010) thus demonstrate that, in the US context, the rankings of the U.S. News & World Report have an impact on the reputation students attribute to the colleges and universities as well as their admissions indicators. Their findings indicate the importance not only of the relative positions in the rankings but also moves from one category to another (up or down within the top tier, onto or off of the “Top 50” featured on the front page). The impact of the rankings also varies across institutional types (private versus public, elite versus non-elite). A presence on the front page thus has more impact (i.e., than a change in the ranking alone) on admissions behaviours for private schools than for national universities. Along the same lines, the impact of the rankings (in the sense of a simple move up or down but also a change of category) on reputation is also more clear-cut for the private institutions, whilst the effect of a simple move within the rankings has more impact on the admissions outcomes of top-tier schools than those ranked below them. These

analyses thus indicate the extent to which the relationship between the organizations and their markets is structured by the institutional field and suggest the double-edged role played by rankings: on the one hand, formatting (through path

dependency) and giving visibility to the existing institutional structure and, on the other, putting pressure on this structure through the publication of information for the market.

## Discussion

Notwithstanding an initial impression of considerable heterogeneity, the literature on the organizational identity of universities nonetheless reveals, *a posteriori*, a relatively clear pattern of questioning about universities as organizations and institutions. With the essentialist type of approaches, which introduced the concept of organizational identity in the 1980s and 1990s, the analysis of the local identities of university organizations is seen to reveal significant transformations of the regulation of higher education and the university. Within this framework, the organizational identity concept makes the link with the traditional literature on university organizations and to some extent renews thinking about the fragmentary, poorly organized nature of the universities. But above all, it serves to qualify and analyse the recoupling processes between methods of regulation considering the universities as serious organizational actors

and the universities themselves, which differ in terms of the force of their history and identity, their status and positions within the field, but are largely comparable in terms of the degree of formalisation (always fairly low) of their activities and its real influence on those activities. The strategic type of approaches, meanwhile, stresses the major role market dynamics have assumed in higher education, at international and national level. Indeed, this is the case not only in the discourses and rhetoric but in the universities' investments in image surveys, communication strategies and schemes for involving stakeholders (students and alumni but also public opinion, businesses, politicians). These approaches, which are mainly normative, contribute to making competition between organizations seem routine, even if, on the one hand, the markets seem to be limited for the most part by national or regional borders and, on the other, the universities'

funding does not always depend on foreign students' tuition fees. In other words, it is as if the export of a concept (in its strategic view, which is after all dominant in current literature on universities) from the US context where it has been applied to the understanding of the university and its environment, formats the very reading of the nature of transformations at work in the European, Asian, African and perhaps to a lesser degree Oceanian (e.g., Australia and New Zealand) contexts. At the same time, this strategic type of literature is, on closer observation, similar to the first type (essentialist) in many respects. It emphasises the difficulty of fashioning a coherent image across the universities given their considerable internal fragmentation, the multiple stakeholders soliciting them and the control of their reputation. These two approaches to identity seemingly take opposite paths to arrive at the same point. Whereas the essentialist type of literature reflects the increasingly hybrid organisational practices and complex organisational identities brought about by university reforms and regulation changes, the more strategically oriented literature sees a discrepancy, a decoupling between the image-building processes, self-presentations somehow cobbled together, and organizations corresponding to logics driven by the "grass roots". As for the neo-institutional type of literature, in our view, it contributes two essential points. On the one hand, it permits a broader approach to the very nature of the transformations now under way in the field of higher education

and the university. In this respect, it shows that what is happening has more to do with confrontation and competition between multiple logics than competition in the strict sense between organizations from the perspective of market logic alone. The university would thus be seen more as a field than a market, with the result that the competition bears above all on the standards legitimately defining the basic, distinctive nature of university activities. On the other hand, this literature brings out the extent to which the efforts made by university organizations and their actors to organize themselves internally and position themselves externally is fundamentally *institutional work* which bears on the very meaning of the university's missions. Internally, the multiple institutional logics (old and new) penetrate to one degree or another the social practices of the actors on the various "rungs" of the university organizations and externally, the tensions between logics is reflected notably in reconstructions of meaning through the establishment of categories (world-class universities, research universities, service universities, etc.) and organization populations. Otherwise stated, this literature suggests that the universities are presently facing a double effort of rationalisation in Weber's sense, namely a purposive (means-end) rationalisation, reflecting the idea that the university would follow the institutional logic of its constitution as an organizational actor, but also a value rationalisation, namely a reconsideration of the values and meaning



of its missions and a possible arbitration. In the remarks which follow, we set out three questions that seem particularly worthy of attention for future research, given their relevance to key theoretical and empirical debates for understanding the present and future evolutions of the university, as an organization, but also as an institution. The first question, admittedly classic, concerns the university and change, which we shall address in terms of three issues: the locus of the change (internal versus external), its depth (ritual versus real) and its nature (organizational versus institutional). The second question deals with the heuristic power of the concepts of market and institutional field and their connections with that of organizational identity. The third question, more epistemological in nature, comes back to the idea of the globalisation of the very framework used for analysing organizational identity.

### University, Identity and Change

The concept of organizational identity is closely tied to the idea of change, whether that identity is the very purpose of the change or considered as a relevant concept for grasping the organizational and institutional repercussions of the transformations of the organization's environment. This double perspective is also central to the literature linking organizational identity and the university (Stensaker, 2014). On the one hand, identity is taken to be an interpretative scheme which at once limits change, gives it meaning and guides it, especially in the

Type 2 essentialist studies and the Type 5 neo-institutional ones. On the other hand, in a significant segment of the studies, in particular those of the strategic type, identity, or rather image, if not branding, is seen as the very purpose of the change, whether this research seeks to understand the way the stakeholders shape their image or interpret reputations, or to study (and in certain cases fashion) the universities' image-making processes.

This double analysis of the link between identity and change contributes significantly to reflections on what constitutes the purpose of change in the university world today, but also on what makes it possible and/or desirable. The Type 1 and Type 4 studies show that from the standpoint of the organizational actors in any case (especially the leadership and boundary services), image is of greater concern than identity or organizational culture. It might even be argued that culture and identity are mainly perceived in this context as dimensions limiting changes which are desirable, or even necessary, for adapting university organizations to the multiple demands and images coming from the organization's external stakeholders, and especially to market constraints. We would point out, however, that several studies raise the question of the value and performativity of the images if the communications policy is not authentic, in other words, conceived and developed in connection with the organizations' identity and inherited culture. The studies



of Types 2 and 5 see identity rather as an enabling factor for sense making and reading the changes which are necessary for the universities. They most often show decoupling and at best, either hybrid structures or vertical recoupling which result in ever more complex organizational activities. Depending on the segments of the literature (and especially the difference between the strategic conception of identity and the other two), the idea of what should and could change in the universities varies a great deal, in a near-perfect opposition. However, despite the fact that these two perspectives are now rooted in very different conceptions of change and the status of organizational identity within change, they could be viewed in a more complementary way. In support of the arguments set out by Hatch and Schultz (2002), we argue that the literature would be more discerning if the interactions between the universities' images and organizational culture were placed more squarely in the centre of its agenda. But also if it were able to predict which factors – the university's history, its status, the strength of its identity, its position in the field (dominant or marginal), the strategies of other field-level actors, or the political regulation at work in the national contexts – affect the perception of changes, competitive relationships and institutional positioning on the one hand, and the way the organizations embrace change (or not) on the other.

The second significant issue here concerns the spread and depth of the changes. It

must be recognised first of all that the very large majority of the studies identified in our literature review deals either with the leadership of the universities (presidents/chancellors, boards of directors, various steering committees) or the boundary services (communication, international relations, regional and economic development) and especially the new professionals hired to accelerate change and make it a reality through the import of social and professional practices exogenous to the academic world. But does this mean that change is limited to these spheres of the university which, within the inverted perspective of the managerial hierarchy, traditionally have relatively little weight? This is what can be supposed from studies like that of Krücken (2003), for example, on the logics of the production and diffusion of academic knowledge for commercial purposes. We believe, however, that the question remains open and merits further exploration in order to arrive at a better understanding of the coupling which can be developed between the central, centralising components of the universities and their decentralised ones, which obviously remain the sites where the university's core activities are carried out. This question about the extent of the diffusion of changes and the impregnation of the university's multiple components by new, exogenous organizational and institutional logics is implicitly addressed in the Type 3 studies but merits further investigation. And it raises another question which receives even less attention in current literature: if we refer back to the distinction made

by Colyvas and Jonsson (2011) between diffusion and institutionalisation, it seems essential to us to go beyond indications of the diffusion of new practices at different levels of the universities and arrive at a concrete idea of the conceptions of the university, its missions and the ways of implementing them. Institutionalisation does not depend solely on the adoption of a social practice; it relies on a group of standards, representations and visions of the world which give it meaning and, once they become natural, serve to guide the actors' behaviours in a fundamental way. Ethnographic studies allowing us to decipher the underlying meaning of the actors' social practices would provide valuable input here.

The third issue for discussion, echoing this last point, deals with the very nature of change. It might be summarised as follows: is change fundamentally organizational or institutional? Does it concern the way of organising (by moving towards greater purposive/means-end rationality) or the sense of the missions the universities carry out or should carry out (by seeking greater value rationality)? At first glance, the identity-related approach deals primarily with a movement towards value rationalisation. However, a significant portion of the literature (most of the articles included in the strategic type) deal with the identity issue, and in particular the images or reputation of university organizations, from a mainly organisational viewpoint. We would suggest that it is important to place

the institutional nature of change in the centre of the investigations, but without dissociating it from the organisational transformations under way. What links can be established between the increased power of the universities as organizational actors (even though this is limited in practice) and the way the universities deal with the multiple institutional logics at work in the institutional field? Can we argue that the universities which have most actively taken on the institutional logic of the organizational actor are those which have managed to adopt a clearer institutional positioning and arbitrate in a more stable way between the multiple demands and missions they receive from the institutional environment (e.g., by renouncing involvement in activities such as international competition, regional economic development or service to society)? Or is it the opposite? Or is there only a much more modest link between movements towards value rationality and purposive rationality?

### Institutional Field, Market and Organizational Identity

Our literature review amounts to a call for paying greater attention to the institutional nature of change and organizational identities. Some groups of studies (especially Types 1 and 4) visibly equate the changes in higher education with a marketing of the organizations. Such a view is clearly oversimplified and the Type 5 and 6 studies in particular demonstrate that the

transformations of the institutional field are much broader and, for another, that competition between organizations cannot be limited to a market-type competitive relationship; rather, it also entails the definition of standards and stakes, the more symbolic dimension of the social and not the economic one alone. In some ways, as indicated above, we are witnessing the emergence of the university as a field and not simply as a market. Or in any case, the enlargement of the field, to the extent that it was until now essentially confined to limited geographical territories (national or even regional).

The question of autonomy also needs to be addressed. Has the university field been transformed into a service space? Is its autonomy waning or being reduced? Is the university logic colonised by that of the economic field? As Lemieux indicates, “. . . the economic field [is the] only field whose principle of internal hierarchical organization is based on the agent’ differential capacity to satisfy external demands and which, as a result, manages to impose its specific stakes and particular mode of *illusio* on all the other fields” (Lemieux, 2011, p. 92). Assuming that the autonomous field is becoming a heteronomous one, what is new would not necessarily be the emergence of competition between agents within the field (i.e., if the field existed, in principle there would already be competition). Rather, what would change “is only – but this is already a great deal – the possibility

of an autonomous definition of the specific stakes of the activity, which the shift from the form of the field to that of the service space calls into question: just as art can no longer have art as its sole purpose, science, law, sports or religion can no longer be justified in and of themselves. These activities must now be used for something other than their own practice. They are obligated to *meet the demands of customers, users or funders*” (Lemieux, p. 93).

In order for the field to be transformed into a service space, the economic logic theoretically has to find interlocutors within the university field: “It is inside each field that we find the agents who have the most interest in accelerating this change, namely those who are, by virtue of their position in the field and their practice of the activity, inclined to play down the symbolic prestige of the internal principles of hierarchical organization in favour of external recognition. For such agents, the growing pressure exercised by the economic, journalistic and/or administrative fields on the field in which they operate tends to be seen as a positive opportunity; by developing strategies for co-operation with these external powers, they can in fact count on reducing, if not reversing the symbolic power relationship which presently subordinates them to those of their peers who are best endowed with specific capital” (Lemieux, p. 93). It should be noted that these actors are not just pursuing their self-interest; they can

also be motivated by critical intentions which are quite respectable: “The endeavour they undertake is a veritable symbolic revolution which entails focusing the legitimate definition of the activity proper to their field on the necessity for that activity to be *justified* with regards to the expectations of those financing it (customers, taxpayers, shareholders or sponsors, as the case might be). In other words, these agents are indignant about the fact that *the field is closed in on itself*. Even if they identify with its history and revere its past, what they contest is the very principle of its constitution as a production space which is only accountable to itself” (Lemieux, p. 94).

We believe that it is important to pursue the development of this research agenda initiated by the Type 5 and 6 studies. Its neo-institutional view of organizational identity aims above all to understand how institutions are born, persist, resist, but also crumble, coexist or even collapse, as well as the role played by organizational identities in these processes of institutional change (Kodeih & Greenwood, 2014). We would suggest in particular that the theory of institutional logic could be further developed through micro-sociological studies of the university actors and their social and professional practices based on the sociology of work and organizations; at the same time, this theory could be combined with approaches considering the role of individual and collective agents for maintaining and transforming the institutions. Here, we are thinking in

particular of the theoretical current dealing with institutional entrepreneurship, which could permit a better identification of the agents or facilitators of change in the university field, their positions, action logics, identities and values. Another theoretical avenue would include the recent developments in the ecological theory of organizational populations, which maintain that the development of new populations, like the persistence or elimination of old ones, entails the constitution and legitimation of a social identity defining the meaning of the population’s organizational activity and what distinguishes it from the social identities of similar organization groups most often related to a single institutional field.

### The National Setting of the International

To conclude this discussion, we come back to the globalisation of the literature dealing with the organizational identity of the universities. The image of the actor, which serves as a strong reference for the universities, implicitly supposes the abandoning of two major ideas found in studies on higher education: the specificity of the universities as organizations, but also the specificity of the national contexts (Krücken & Meier, 2006).

Through this literature review, we have seen that the national contexts help to give more or less meaning to the fact – and relevance – of speaking of “organizational identity”. Beyond global political and

institutional conditions favouring the emergence of the identity question in many countries because of the new expectations weighing on the universities, there are more specific, more local conditions relevant to the growth of research on the organizational identity of universities. This was especially clear in the case of the US. As Czarniawska and Genell (2002) argue, US universities initiated the marketization of the universities in response to a coercive isomorphism (owing to quite clear, persistent transformations of national politics). In other countries, by contrast, these practices have been fed by an isomorphism which is normative (the new activities have been undertaken because of the universities' active participation in the worldwide community of higher education institutions) and/or mimetic (following the logic that in times of uncertainty, the "desirable" model provided by the major US universities constitutes a beacon for a large number of universities elsewhere). It may be noted in passing that as a result, some national models are from the outset more international, internationalised and internationalisable than others.

It is also clear that the international issues can only be understood in relation to the national ones. It is sometimes said that the universities, as actors of the world of research, have always been internationalised. Admittedly, science and the scientific community have long defied national borders, but this is not necessarily true for the university institutions housing the researchers. And teaching,

unlike research (whose globalised nature should probably not be overemphasised either) remains strongly territorialised. A university's primary environment is constituted by its clientèle, the environment where it recruits those whom it serves. And the institution's political environment was also essentially national for a long time.

Within each national framework, distinctions must be made between several types of universities: on the one hand, the research universities which can quite naturally consider their relevant environment to be international and, on the other, much more modest institutions whose involvement is above all local. In this respect, the relevant environment would largely be determined by the nature of the university as it exists or as it claims to be (given that these claims remain subject to constraints of legitimacy). It must thus be assumed that in every country there are generally several types of universities, some of which, given their original calling, are better prepared for and adapted to today's new institutional environment – which implies demands for internationalisation, excellence, quality, and so on. The model underlying the current demands is one which takes its inspiration from the dominant institutions with the aim of extending it to all institutions without distinction, which is to say, regardless of their identities, status, histories and local or national contexts.

In our view, the current situation is one of multi-regulation, of an intertwining of

institutional logics and an entangling of national and international stakes as well as levels and arenas of interaction. The game remains local but at the same time, it is becoming more international; each university has to deal with increasing numbers and kinds of arenas and actors, and with benchmarks and criteria of legitimacy which vary in function of the arenas and intermediaries. This situation

explains the pervasiveness of questions about identity, in both existential and strategic terms, at a time when the majority of the universities are faced with the challenge of rethinking their positioning within a higher education field undergoing enlargement and restructuring on the basis of institutional logics which are partially new and a priori in tension with those underlying the academic world until now.

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## Appendix 1

### *Keywords in Scopus (and Number of Articles per Search)*

<	“Organizational identity”	“Organizational culture”	“Organizational Image”	“Organizational Reputation”	“Organizational Branding”
Universit*	38	264	18	14	8

Research in SCOPUS® limited to: [1972, 2014]; ‘Article’; ‘English OR French’; ‘Social Sciences’.  
Universit\* as keyword alone; other terms in article title, abstract and keywords.

## Appendix 2

### *Articles Coding*

Process (Hatch & Schulz 2004)	Mirroring	Reflecting	Self-Expression	Self-presentation
Theorisation of concept (Glynn 2008)	Essentialist	Strategic	Neo Institutional	
Status of concept as a variable	Independent variable		Dependant variable	
Epistemology	Normative		Analytical	
	Inductive		Deductive	
Methodology	Qualitative		Quantitative	
	Cross-Section	False longitudinal	True longitudinal	
	Theoretical sample		Representative sample	

### Process Examined (Reference to Hatch & Schulz 2004)

We have categorized as “Mirroring” research focusing on image (or brand, or reputation) perception of the university by external or internal constituents. We have considered students as external constituents, since they do not belong to the very structure of the organization, even though they are part of it for a period of time. Employees, academics, administrative, managers, are considered as internal constituents.

The category “Reflecting” gathers studies examining, within organizations, members’ reactions to images projected onto them, to what others think about them or how they view their organization. Organizational culture and scripts available inside the organization influence these reactions.

Studies accounting for the construction of narratives, or debates and controversies taking place inside the organization, regarding the way of presenting the organizational self

towards the outside, have been categorized as “Self-expression” studies.

Finally, the category “Self-presentation” consists of research analysing universities’ efforts to get known vis-à-vis the outside, by means of communication, marketing or branding activities.

### Theorisation of The Concept (Reference to Glynn 2008)

We have relied on Glynn’s distinction of organizational studies on identity in three categories: the essentialist category gathers research considering identity features of an organization as given, identifiable, emerging either from the past or from organizational culture. They are somewhat frozen and remain buffered from managerial-like manipulations in the short-term. The strategic category differs from the previous one inasmuch as works belonging to it consider identity features; whether or not they come from the past, as a lever managers could draw on to steer change. They are modifiable to a certain extent, in order to reach organizational goals. Finally, the neo-institutional approach analyses identity features as identity claims made by organizations facing pressures to conform to an organizational field’s legitimate categories, or to institutional logics.

Concretely, this classification is easier to use if one defines “strategic” with a willingly limited scope: indeed, one could argue that an organization trying to conform to institutional pressures, does it also for strategic motives, to gain legitimacy and resources. Therefore, we categorized as “strategic” articles that explicitly examine how universities try to “sell” their outputs, to think of their “offer”, their “marketing mix” etc. These articles most of the time are published in marketing journals. We have set them apart from the papers that do not study directly such preoccupation for selling or developing.

### Status of Concepts As a Variable

This dimension originally refers to causal research studying the impact of an independent variable on a dependant one. In the case of process studies (as opposed to variance studies), when the research examines a process explaining image, identity, reputation, we have coded the concept as “dependant variable”. When the research examined a phenomenon in which these concepts play a role, we have coded the concept as independent variable.

### Epistemological Approach

**Normative/Analytical:** we have defined as “normative” studies that explicitly, from the beginning of the article, display the objective to “help” or “provide tools” for universities, in a market-like competition context that is taken for granted; by contrast, “analytical” studies concentrate on a given phenomenon, without taking for granted any “doxa” about a market-like, commercial environment of the universities; some of the latter might, at the end of the article, dedicate a specific paragraph to “managerial implications of the results”

often for editorial reasons, but in our view, their main approach remains analytical and categorized as such.

**Inductive/Deductive:** deductive studies aim at checking if collected data support a set of hypotheses, or a theoretical model previously presented in the article. By contrast, inductive studies examine the dimensions intervening in a process or a causal mechanism, but without relying on a pre-existing theoretical model.

### Methodological Approach

**Quantitative/Qualitative:** some studies start with a qualitative exploratory inquiry, in order to determine links of causality that will be tested later in the article on a larger scale using statistical methods. These have been classified as quantitative studies, since the qualitative part is only a step, the main methodology being quantitative.

**Temporality:** « cross section » category gathers studies in which the data have been collected at one point in time, in order to study a static event or phenomenon. “False longitudinal” studies collected data at one point in time, but on a phenomenon that unfolded overtime in the past (research exploiting narratives about the past, or statistical data over a period of time are typical of this kind of studies); finally, “true longitudinal” characterizes studies relying on data collected over a period of time, with the objective to follow the unfolding of a phenomenon overtime.

**Representative or Theoretical Sample:** some studies in their sampling methodology, display the objective of being representative of a certain population of organizations, on given dimensions (status, prestige, age, size of universities for example). There is an explicit will to study how a phenomenon varies along these dimensions. Other studies select one or even several cases because they are interesting on their own, or because they illustrate an extreme case, but do not display an objective of being representative.

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Appendix 3

Coded Articles

Article	Research Question	Research Setting	Country	Process		Theorization		Variable		Epistemology			Methodology		Sampling: Theoretical (T) Representative (R)
				Hatch & Schultz	Glynn (2008) Essentialist (E) Strategic (S) New-Institutionalist (NI)	Dependent (D) Independent (I)	Normative (N) Analytical (A)	Inductive (I) Deductive (D) Inductive/Deductive (ID)	Qualitative (Q) Quantitative (QT)	Cross section (CS) False longitudinal (FL) True longitudinal (TL)					
1 Alf-Choudhury et al., 2009	Main elements of a university brand that universities' marketing directors believed prospective students take into account when evaluating institutions	Interviews with 25 universities marketing directors	UK	1	S	I	A	I	QL	I	A	I	QL	CS	R
2 Alves & Raposo, 2010	Influence of image on students' loyalty and satisfaction	Quest tomaries to 2,687 students	Spain	1	S	I	A	D	QL	D	A	D	QL	CS	R
3 Angelopoulos, 2013	Determinants of students' choice of university	Drivers of student participation in the academic programmes of a South African university department.	South Africa	1	S	I	N	I	QL	I	N	I	QL	CS	T
4 Arpan et al., 2005	What explains variations of image perception among individuals from diverse background	Image variations of 10 major US universities among two groups of respondents: students and non-students	US	1	E	D	A	D	QT	D	A	D	QT	CS	T
5 Aspura et al., 2014	Power struggles involved in a new brand adoption within a university.	A university rebranding itself in accordance with a new market-oriented, service-dominant logic; triggers contradictions and contradictions among stakeholders	Finland	3	S	D	A	I	QL	D	A	I	QL	TL(3 y.)	T
6 Atikhan & Eker, 2007	How does a university manages its corporate identity	University's launch of a CSR program as an attempt to change its identity and image in response to competitive pressures	Turkey	4	S	D	N	D	QL	D	N	D	QL	CS	T
7 Avila & Tenari, 2011	Reputation-building during merger and acquisitions	Activities of reputation building during the merger of 3 universities.	Finland	3	S	D	A	I	QL	D	A	I	QL	FL(4 y.)	T
8 Baker & Brown, 2007	How public image of a university (prestige and traditional character) determines choices made by non-traditional students (working-class, immigrants etc.)	14 non-traditional students attending traditional universities	UK	1	E	I	A	I	QL	I	A	I	QL	CS	R
9 Balmer & Liao, 2007	How business schools students identify with corporate brand of university, school and overseas partner	Investigates student corporate brand identification towards 3 corporate brands: a UK university, a leading UK business school and its overseas collaborative	UK and Asia	1	E	D	A	I	QL	D	A	I	QL	CS	T





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18	Beyer & Stevens, 1977	organizational identity and image 4 models of possible predictors of changes are advanced and tested	US	1	E	D	A	D	QT	FL (5 y)	R
19	Bolin & Robinson, 2013	Examines the emergence and consolidation of marketing practices in universities, beginning in the early 1990s, with a focus on student recruitment and the articulation and promotion of institutional identity	Canada	4	S	D	A	I	QL	FL (20 y)	R
20	Bond & Senegue, 2012	Influence of organizational identity on change trajectory. Underlines power struggles during change	South Africa	2	S	D	A	I	QL	TL (10 y)	T
21	Borden et al., 2014	Correlation between propensity toward giving and personal and positional characteristics of faculty and staff Link between organizational identification and giving	US	1	S	I	N	D	QT	TL (3 y)	T
22	Bowman & Bastedo, 2009	The variations affecting the causal link between college ranking and subsequent admissions indicators, according to institutional type and other factors	US	1	NI	I	A	I	QT	CS	R
23	Britt et al., 2006	The dynamics of identity and aspirations in the higher education organizational field	US	3	NI	D	A	I	QT	CS	R
24	Brown & Mazarol, 2009	Role of institutional image, amongst other factors, on students satisfaction and loyalty	Australia	1	S	I	N	D	QT	CS	R
25	Bulotaitė, 2003	Role of the past (museums, building, ceremonies) in image formation.	Lithuania	4	E	D	N	I	QL	CS	T
26	Burnett & Husman, 2009	How organisational culture influences universities' responses to globalisation	Canada	2	E	I	A	D	QL	CS	T
27	Chaplo, 2004	University Chief Executives' understanding.	UK	4	S	D	A	I	QLQT	CS	R





43	Farrugia & Lane, 2013	Process of identity and legitimacy construction by International Branch Campuses, mixing home campus country and branch campus country. Who IBC consider as their main stake holders used as an indicator	45 IBC mission statements from universities web sites	All countries	4	S	D	A	D	QT	CS	R
44	Fortunato, 2008	University's public relations actions after a scandal is revealed in the press, to frame the story and to restore its reputation	Duke University's case of lacrosse team scandal	US	1	E	D	A	I	QL	FL	T
45	Fuller et al., 2006	Influence of perceived organizational prestige loss on their employees' on their attachment to their university	University employees' (n=325), staff administrators and faculty surveyed	US	2	E	I	A	D	QT	CS	T
46	Garcia & Hardy, 2007	The construction of organizational identity at individual and collective level through discourses and narratives - insist on differentiation between groups	Australian university going through a reform	Australia	2	E	I	A	I	QL	CS	T
47	Gaspard, 2013	To what extent do universities manage to build and display a distinctive image and positioning	18 European universities' presentation on their websites	Europe	4	NI	I	A	I	QL	CS	R
48	Garfield & Graham, 1999	Effectiveness of advertisement made by Australian universities regarding informations expected by prospective students	Study guides for international students	Australia	1	S	D	A	I	QL	CS	R
49	George, 2000	How can universities use marketing tools to build institutional image and attract students	Texas University's use of several techniques: public relations, marketing and communication to attract students	US	4	S	D	N	I	QL	CS	T
50	Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991	Role of leaders in universities during strategic change towards organization's members - focuses on symbolic dimensions: sensegiving and sensemaking	A large public research university attempting to belong to "Top-Ten" public universities over a period of several years	US	2	S	I	A	I	QL	TL (2.5 y)	T
51	Gioia & Thomas, 1996	Role of image (future) and identity (present) in how universities leaders	One ethnographic study of a large public research university followed by	US	2	E	I	A	ID	QL/QT	CS	R





## Organizational Identity of Universities: A Review of the Literature from 1972 to 2014

70	Kosmitzky, 2012	The actual uses of mission statements by German universities - the story of a 'Successful failure' - Role of the shaping of the organizational field of higher education	Missions statements of 45 German universities, press releases and historical facts	Germany	4	S	D	A	I	QL	TL (8 y.)	R
71	Krücken, 2003	How path dependency (structures, identities, practices) explain North-Westphalia in integration of new management tools within universities	Technology transfer offices development in universities of North-Westphalia in Germany	Germany	2	E	I	A	I	QL	FL (30 y.)	R
72	Lahavna et al., 2001	How do universities select the universities they want to emulate, and how does this feed a dynamic of strategic sub-groups formation	Presidents, Vice-presidents and presidential team member surveyed in 372 US universities and colleges	US	3	E	I	A	D	QT	CS	R
73	Leister, 1975	How marketing can be applied to universities' positioning issues	Market study and positioning of one particular university within its regional competitive field	US	1	E	D	N	I	QT	CS	T
74	Lejeune & Vaz, 2011	Identity change dynamic triggered by failure to comply with accreditation process in European Business Schools - articulation between identity and claims	4 European business schools	Europe	1 & 2	E	D	A	I	QL	CS	R
75	Len-Ribos, 2010	Analyzes a university's discursive strategy to restore its reputation after a crisis	Duke University's case of lacrosse team scandal	US	1	E	D	A	I	QL	FL	T
76	Lowrie, 2007	University's identity development analyzed as an attempt to articulate language of higher education and marketing constraints, through branding	Long-term ethnographic study in one business school	UK?	3	E	D	A	D	QL	CS	T
77	Luque-Martinez & Del Barrio-García, 2009	Suggests a methodology for identifying main dimensions determining university image, useful for distinctive and competitive positioning	Teaching and research staff of University of Granada, while strategic planning process	Spain	1	E	D	N	D	QT	CS	T
78	Mabokela & Wei, 2007	How do senior management deal with existing historical, divergent	In South Africa, one black university, one white, undergoing merger under the	South Africa	2	E	D	A	I	QL	CS	T



							identities during a merger decided from top-down?	directive of the Minister of Education				
79	Mael & Ashforth, 1992	US	1	S	I	A	An all-men, private, religious college explaining identification with alma mater?		D	QT	CS	T
80	Manning, 2009	UK	2	E	D	A	6 UK universities integration of internationalization function and processes within universities with diverse institutional culture		D	QL/QT	CS	R
81	McLaren & Mills, 2013		2	NI	D	A	Relations between institutional logics, organizational legitimacy and identity	An academic association confronting a plurality of logics	D	QL	FL (30%)	T
82	Melewar & Aiel, 2005	UK	4	S	D	N	Conditions for a successful new Corporate Visual Identity launch in a university	Laudatory presentation of new Corporate Visual Identity initiative at Warwick University	D	QL	CS	T
83	Mendoza & Berger, 2008	US	2	E	D	A	Impact of academic capitalisation on academic culture	Interviews of faculty members (n=10) from an academic with significant industrial funding – impact on academic culture considered weak	D	QL	CS	T
84	Mills et al., 2005	US	2	E	D	A	How do academic unit's members engage in a new identity construction, in the context of faculties merger. Difficulties associated with the process	Journals held by 5 faculty members during the reorganization and merger of their faculty	D	QL	HL	T
85	Murphy & Hartley, 2006	US	4	NI	I	A	Do institutional types (public or private) reflect in differentiated mission statements? Are these ceremonial or do they somewhat reflect reality?	Missions Statements of 300 US universities	D	QT	CS	R
86	Mourad & El Karanshawy, 2013	Egypt	1	E	D	A	Understanding brand equity (value ascribed by the consumer to the brand) in higher education; implication for management practices	Egyptian higher education institutions members surveyed	D	QL	CS	T
87	Munisamy, 2014	Malaysia	1	S	I	N	Factors determining students' choice to study in a given university -	First-year Malaya university students (n = 880) surveyed	D	QT	CS	T









Appendix 4

Articles by Types

Type 1 N = 32	Type 2 N = 20	Type 3 N = 15	Type 4 N = 25	Type 5 N = 7	Type 6 N = 14
Ali-Choudhury et al.	Barbosa & Cabral-Cardoso	Aspara et al.	Atakan & Eker	De Jordy et al.	Barats
Alves & Raposo	Burnett & Huisman	Aula & Tienari	Bernardo et al.	Ishikawa	Bastedo & Bowman
Angelopulo	Clark	Bond & Senque	Bulotaite	Kleinman & Osley-Thomas	Bowman & Bastedo
Arpan et al.	Davies et al.	Gioia et al. (2010)	Carrocci & Robinson	Kodeih & Greenwood	Brint et al.
Baker & Brown	Elsbach & Kramer	Gioia & Chitipeddi	Chapleo (2004)	McLaren & Mills	Czarniawska & Wolff
Balmer & Liao	Garcia & Hardy	Hensley-Brown & Goonawardana	Chapleo (2005)	Saifon	Czarniawskaa & Genell
Bastedo et al.	Gioia & Thomas	Kletz & Pallez	Chapleo (2011)	Stensaker & Norgard	Gaspard
Beerti Palacio et al.	Gunasekara	Lowrie	Chapleo et al.	Huisman et al. (2002)	Huisman et al. (2002)
Belanger et al.	Hsu & Elsbach	Schrecker	Curtis et al.	Labianca et al.	Labianca et al.
Bennett & Ali-Choudhury	Kezar & Eckel	Smart	Deem et al.	Morphew & Hartley	Morphew & Hartley
Beyer & Stevens	Krücken	Stiles	Dholakia & Acciardo	Othman & Othman	Othman & Othman
Borden et al.	Lejeune & Vas	Vásquez et al.	Farrugia & Lane	Waggoner & Goldman	Waggoner & Goldman
Brown & Mazarol	Mabokela & Wei	Waraas & Solbakk	George	Washington & Ventresca	Washington & Ventresca
De Jager & Soontiens	Maringe	Wan & Peterson	Gray et al.	Wilkins & Huisman (2012)	Wilkins & Huisman (2012)
Drezner	Mendoza & Berger	Wells & Picou	Hartley & Morphew		
Helgesen & Nessel	Mills et al.		Humphreys & Brown		
Kazoleas et al.	Pitman & Vidovich		Idris & Whitfield		
Leister	Singer & Cunningham		Ivy		
Mael & Ashforth	Smart & Hamm		Judson et al.		
Mourad & Karanshawy	Stensaker		Kosmitzky		
Munisamy et al.			Melewar & Akel		
Nguyen & LeBlanc			Oplatka		
Pampaloni			Peluso & Guido		
Polat			Quinton		
Priporas & Kamenidou			Varma		
Rudd et al.					
Russell					
Stephenson & Yerger					
Sung & Yang					
Terkla & Pagano					
Wilkins & Huisman (2013a, b)					

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### **2014**

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