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12. HARMONISING THE INTERFACE BETWEEN ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE MIND-SETS

Challenging but Feasible?

INTRODUCTION

In previous years, (Austrian) traditional universities were broadly regarded as institutions characterised by collegial authority, ‘shared governance’, a high level of academic freedom, a rector who was a *primus inter pares* instead of a ‘boss’ and a partial legal status (*Teilrechtsfähigkeit*) which allowed “[...] organisational units and/or individuals [to ...] develop entrepreneurial activities in their own areas of responsibility” (Pechar, 2010, p. 21) without taking into account the university as whole.

In view of the rise of new public management in the 1980s/1990s and related concepts such as ‘new managerialism’ (Clarke & Newman, 1994) or ‘academic capitalism’ (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004), Gumport (2000) states that, on a macro level, the former legitimating idea of higher education (henceforth HE) as a social institution is moving toward the idea of HE as an industry – a shift which influenced several legal reforms of the Austrian university system in the 1990s/2000s and consequently changed the national HE governance system ‘rapidly’ (Lanzendorf, 2006; Pechar, 2010). A major component of these reforms comprises the conversion of university organisations from state agencies to ‘legal persons under public law’ with increasingly powerful rectors and deans and, vice versa, a decrease of power of the collegial academic bodies. From such an angle, reformed universities are “the employers of all academic and non-academic staff. Academics are no longer civil servants, but are employed by private contract” (Pechar, 2010, p. 17). Success and failure are now ascribed to the university as an organisational whole and no longer to the performance of individual academics. Hence, the responsibility of results lies with the university and the HE leaders take actions to ensure organisational performance and success. These developments substantially changed the internal organisational configuration including the relationship and power structures between academia and administration (Nickel, 2012).

Exploration of higher education institutions (henceforth HEIs) with the lens of Luhmann’s system theory reveals that universities have (almost) always been

organisations which incorporate different functional logics of research, teaching and administration: both research and teaching, focus on the overall aim of the creation of knowledge while traditional university administration focus on compliance of norms and establishment of order. Especially in the field of research, universities can be seen as special interest organisations (*Interessensorganisationen*) (Schimank, 2004). This concept describes a merger of individuals who recognised that collaboration can support the accomplishment of their (individual) objectives. This type of organisation is featured by a rather small degree of formalisation, loose, flexible and self-organised cooperation and flat hierarchy. Some similarities apply to the field of teaching, as it is usually executed by the same individuals that undertake research. However, teaching activities are performed in a less directed way by individual interests; rather, they are more strongly based on the superior mission of education. Furthermore, teaching tends to be more formalised than research, conducted on behalf of an organisation and thus, appears to be more manageable by institutional authorities than research, while at the same time still being less steerable than administration. Traditional university administration is geared to the legal system with a pronounced focus on compliance of norms and establishment of order. It is hierarchically structured and administrative university staff tends to act on the basis of highly formalised processes and is bound by instructions. Thus, the functional logic of administrative units differs significantly from those of the academic organisational units of a university. Accordingly, this leads to discrepancies and a certain distance between academia and administration which has been leaving its mark (Nickel, 2012, Schimank, 2004).

Over a long period, HEIs were facing the challenge of uniting these different functional logics under one roof, by implementing a structural distance between research, teaching and administration characterised by a minimisation of the points of contact – a form of interaction which Weick (1998) described as ‘loosely coupled’ and which supports a certain organisational flexibility on the one hand, and a sustainable stability on the other hand (Nickel, 2012).

Recent reforms described above, however, have influenced and changed the collaboration requirements and configuration between the academic and the administrative spheres of HEIs and the role of internal HE administration. First, the development of universities to become autonomous, corporate actors is increasingly requiring enhanced institutional self-steering mechanisms and agency to improve communication to external stakeholders and increase competing power on a research and education market. In view of these circumstances, the ‘loosely coupled’ structure of university organisations turns out as unfavourable, due to its inherently slow decision-making mechanisms and uncoordinated action patterns. The necessity to meet these new requirements calls for a more collaborative, stringent and focused acting of HEIs. In this regard, the function of leading, managing and administrating entities within universities transformed significantly. Their activities are now focused on the implementation and provision of a supportive institutional framework for teaching and research as part of the core tasks of HEIs. Academia and

administration therefore face the requirement to reconfigure their formerly distanced relationship (Nickel, 2012).

Second, these changing orientation of university administration lead to an emergence of new professional roles and areas of activities for administrative staff. Literature points to increasingly blurred boundaries “within and across academic and management domains” (Whitchurch, 2008, p. 2) associated with a change in the functional and professional self-perception of both faculty and administrative staff within higher education institutions (Krücken & Wild, 2010). Meanwhile, an obviously new job description for staff at HEIs has been established – denoted as “third space professionals” (Whitchurch, 2008) or “para-academics” (Macfarlane, 2011). These notions were coined to describe the operational actions performed at an academic, administrative and supportive level. With respect to their hierarchical integration and role taking, Rhoades (1998, 2001) and Teichler et al. (2006) defined these occupational groups as “managerial or support professionals” as hybrid actors in view of their academic qualifications and their professional decision preparation competences. They act either in supportive units for faculty or the rectorate and are localised both in central service units and in administrative functions of schools or departments (Kehm, 2015). Schneijderberg and Merkator (2012) refer to these employee groups in higher education institutions as new “higher education professionals”.

When having a look at the academic side of the HEIs, it comes as no surprise that the encroachment of the market and market-like mechanisms into academia have not taken place without controversies (Tuunainen, 2005).

Not surprisingly, there is a lot of suspicion among academics of the organisational change and the corresponding decision-making structures. [...] Many academics think that the new legislation has imposed the decision-making structures of the corporate world onto universities. They fear and expect a steep hierarchy which could be at odds with academic freedom, an authoritarian mode of leadership which will not allow appropriate faculty influence. (Pechar, 2010, p. 18)

Thus, HEIs are currently facing the challenges of supporting and implementing strategic objectives and decisions, on the one hand, and representing and defending the interests of faculty, on the other hand (Bryman, 2007; Smith, 2005). Accordingly, the relationship between administrative management and academics is known to be challenging and conflict prone (Krücken et al., 2013).

In parallel to the described (legal) reforms of the university system, there was a second development which sustainably influenced the Austrian HE system: namely, the establishment of the Austrian universities of applied sciences sector at the beginning of 1990s. Above others, the overall aims of this differentiation of the tertiary education system to a binary one were the relief of ‘traditional’ universities which struggled with an ever-increasing student intake and the introduction of a counter draft to the traditional university, which focus on vocationally oriented

academic education and training (with limited study duration) in terms of teaching and applied R&D, prototyping and innovation in terms of research (Pichl, 2012; Pechar, 2013; Bruenner & Koenigsberger, 2013). Organisational reforms of HEIs in terms of governance and management structures have gradually come to the fore during the initial negotiation processes for the legislative foundation of this new type of HEI, when experts and policy makers agreed on a governance model which differs considerably from that of traditional universities (Pechar, 2013). Since their establishment, strong interaction between and influence by industry and its relevant vocational fields on the one hand, and well-defined internal steering mechanisms and a powerful president and administration staff with management functions, on the other hand, were prevalent (Nickel, 2011; Leitner, 2006). Considering this, it can be said that some of the reforms imposed to traditional universities were already recognized by and implemented into the new UAS system from its beginning. Therefore (and also due to a more pronounced focus placed on teaching and its inherent functional logic), the configuration of the relationship between academia and administration initially corresponded to the above-described requirements of a 'reformed' HEI allied with NPM and related concepts (Nickel, 2011).

In line with Anderson's definition of 'managerial' HEIs, Austrian universities of applied sciences (henceforth UAS) can be seen as examples of 'managerial' HEIs which he describes as universities with high emphasis on particular forms of accountability, high market-orientation, a focus on securing non-government funding and a strong focus on efficiency and economy. Hence, contrary to traditional Austrian universities and even more so than German UAS (Nickel, 2011), Austrian UAS have ingrained a market logic which is defined by Thornton et al. (2012, p. 57) along the lines of market transactions, status in market, efficiency increase and market capitalism. Accordingly, Leitner (2006, p. 8) identifies the "market-based-model" of Austrian UAS. Nickel (2011) describes their internal governance scheme as the opposite of the traditional (Humboldtian) university. Based on her analysis, [Figure 9](#) shows the differences between traditional universities and the Austrian universities of applied sciences by drawing on the internal relationship between four different governance mechanisms. When looking at the reformed university scheme described above, by contrast, all four governance mechanisms seem to be rather balanced.

In fact, the internal governance of Austrian UAS tends to correspond to corporations in that sense that they are legal entities under private law (often limited liability companies) with a comparatively powerful president or top management team operating in the tertiary education market. In this regard, Nickel (2011) rates the governance mechanisms "hierarchy and steering" and "competition and pressure to adopt" as particularly strong.

In recent years, however, a certain academic drift has been observable within the Austrian UAS sector which is partly expressed by an increasing importance of research activities and recruitment of academics from traditional universities (Sterr et al., 2015) but also by an empowerment of academic self-regulation

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Figure 9. Governance schemes.
Source: Nickel 2011, adapted and translated by the authors

(Nickel, 2011) – a development which challenges the relationship between academia and administration from the opposite angle.

This overview reveals the current parameters of cooperation between academics and administrative staff in two different sectors of Austrian HE system. Still, in line with Fumasoli and Stensaker (2013, p. 488) who have pointed out that current

studies “have disregarded somewhat the point of view of practitioners, or, in other words, the needs of those that, within universities and colleges, have to cope with the reforms being implemented”, it appears to be unclear how administrative managers perceive and perform their current roles within a HE context.

It is for this reason that this chapter presents a case study of an Austrian UAS with the aim to shed light on the personal experiences and subjective perceptions of administrative HE managers in terms of cooperation of faculty and administration, in due consideration of the specific features of UAS organisations and recent developments. The study is embedded in a wider research context of Austrian UAS internal governance structures from the perspectives of manager-academics (Ehrenstorfer et al., 2015) and ‘academic drift’ tendencies within the Austrian UAS sector (Sterrer et al., 2015).

Following the recommendation of Fumasoli and Stensaker (2013) to integrate new institutionalism theory (e.g. Greenwood & Hinings, 1996) in order to focus on intra-organisational processes shaping university actions, the authors decided to particularly explore challenges arising from tensions among different organisational logics (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2013; Kodeih & Greenwood, 2014). Thus, it was sought to draw on concepts of institutional logics (e.g. Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Thornton et al., 2012) and organisational ambidexterity (e.g. Tushman & O’Reilly, 1996) incorporated in hybrid organisations (e.g. Battilana & Dorado, 2010). Accordingly, the integration of market and corporative logic opposing professional academic logic as well as their learning modes (exploration versus exploitation) is essential to ensure long-term organisational success and survival (Güttel & Konlechner, 2009; Simsek, 2009; Tahar et al., 2011).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Competing Organisational Logics

Frequently, new universities, like the analysed Austrian UAS, have a strong focus on entrepreneurialism and external marketing which according to Tuunainen (2005, p. 281) is at the price of “academic vigor”. Gumpert (2000, p. 84) stated that current academic reorganisation is supposed to be defined as a “set of budget issues and management problems, albeit with educational implications”. Hence, challenges for academics arise as they try to fuse their research and teaching activities with marketisation tendencies within their university organisation (Tuunainen, 2005). Institutional logics are defined in line with the provision of “formal and informal rules of action, interaction, and interpretation that guide and constrain decision makers in accomplishing the organization’s tasks and in obtaining social status, credits, penalties, and rewards in the process” (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999, p. 804).

At the investigated institution, namely the UAS Upper Austria, the more entrepreneurial academic identity (Ehrenstorfer et al., 2015) which is more open to corporatist tendencies reflects a stronger corporation logic [hierarchy, market

position of firm, top management, bureaucratic roles, managerial capitalism (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 57)] that results from requirements of the market logic on a macro level. It opposes the traditional professional academic logic [relational network, personal expertise, professional association, personal reputation (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 57)] universities have traditionally been renowned for.

Organisations that incorporate elements from different institutional logics are defined as hybrid organisations (Battilana & Dorado, 2010) and are “by nature arenas of contradiction” (Pache & Santos, 2013, p. 972). Resulting conflicts can be very harmful for organisations because organisation members may resist the influence and impact of less traditional logics (Pache & Santos, 2013). Thus, Greenwood et al. (2014) highlight the most relevant question along the lines of how the resulting conflict influences human and organisational behaviour and not whether motivation and action of organisational members are rational.

In a recent qualitative study carried out at UAS Upper Austria (Ehrenstorfer et al., 2015), academic identity was identified as a significant factor of success in transforming and further developing the institution. In spite of high marketisation endeavours, many academics still feel strongly obliged to their original professional logic. Faculty of UAS Upper Austria highlights academic freedom to still hold a significant value in their academic culture. Thus, they warn against overregulation that may constrict flexibility, creativity and innovation and conclude that universities may not be organised and led like companies. It is generally agreed upon that fresh ideas are crucial in a prospering university context and that new concepts can neither be evolve under pressure nor be sequentially planned and scheduled. At the same time, top-down-processes, which imply predictability, are termed as dangerous and, although the need for efficiency and planning was perceived by academics, “a well-established administrative body has somehow a negative aftertaste” (Preymann, 2014, p. 5). Thus, from an academic point of view formalisation and centralisation tendencies are still seen as a double-edged sword.

Organisational Ambidexterity and Its Potential to Combine Logics

Hybrid organisations may need different response strategies to cope with internal tensions (Pache & Santos, 2013). Current studies (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Binder, 2007; Greenwood, Diaz, Li, & Lorente, 2010; Greenwood et al., 2011; Lounsbury, 2007; Reay & Hinings, 2009) suggest that hybrid organisations may merge competing logics by integrating activities drawn from each logic in order to secure wide-ranging endorsement (Pache & Santos, 2013).

In order to harmonise discrepancies of diverging corporative and professional logics, the concurrent use of explorative and exploitative learning modes (Birkinshaw & Gupta, 2013; Raisch & Birkinshaw, 2008) seems promising. In 1996 Tushman and O'Reilly introduced the notion of organisational ambidexterity to organisational research which generically describes the skill to equally use both hands. They defined it as “[...] the ability to simultaneously pursue both incremental

and discontinuous innovation and change (resulting) from hosting multiple contradictory structures, processes, and cultures within the same firm [...]” (p. 24). Although the appropriate relation between exploratory and exploitative learning may differ among organisations and circumstances, the integration of both learning modes is essential to ensure long-term organisational success (March, 1991; Gupta et al., 2006; Güttel & Konlechner, 2009; Simsek, 2009; Tahar et al., 2011; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004). According to Ambos et al. (2008), HEIs appear to be able to manage the tensions between academic and commercial demands through the creation of dual structures. This means that centralised administrative oriented subunits (exploitative learning mode) which correspond to exploitative structures place particular emphasis on stability, routinisation and efficiency. By doing so, they fulfil the needs for a high number of small, differentiated, non-centralised knowledge-creating subunits (explorative learning mode) under the roof of a common mission, strategy and set of values (Tahar et al., 2011). Finally, HEIs strive to pursue a balance that can ensure academic freedom while at the same time reinforcing routinisation of procedures to such an extent that prospering working conditions are created without limiting the academic mind-set or destroying intrinsic motivation of researchers. In addition, relating to Clark (2004), improved steering capacity considerably depends on collegial connections between academics and administrators in daily operations even more so as “balancing influence across multiple levels is an almost constant problem in entrepreneurial universities” (Clark, 2004, p. 359).

Figure 10. The hybrid higher education institution

Although near consensus on the need for balance exists, there is less clarity on how these conflicting demands arising from tensions among different organisational logics can be dealt with and on how balance can be achieved (Ambos et al., 2008; Gupta et al., 2006; Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2013; Kodeih & Greenwood, 2014). In addition, it is not clear how administrative managers perceive their role themselves (Krücken et al., 2013). Thus, the perspective of administrative managers represented in this research study provides a useful lens from which to study the alignment of discrepancies resulting from tensions between academic and commercial mind-sets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE

Founded in 1993, UAS Upper Austria is one of the first and biggest UAS in Austria (with around 5000 students and a research turnover of €13m p.a.). Situated in the Austrian province of Upper Austria it comprises four schools on four regionally separated campuses. In sum, around 2100 persons are employed at UAS Upper Austria and the ratio between academic and administrative staff is 76 % to 24 %.

Table 4. Characteristics of UAS Upper Austria

<i>University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria (UAS Upper Austria)</i>	
Year of foundation	1993
Student intake	5,362 (2014/2015)
Research turnover	€13.8m (2014)
Employees	2,118 (2014/2015; 916.8 FTE)
Ratio of academic – administrative staff	76%–24%
Principles of teaching and research	Vocationally oriented teaching and applied research in line with industrial requirements

Figure 11 depicts a simplified version of the internal governance structure of UAS Upper Austria.

Basically, it can be said that at the top management level of the UAS Upper Austria there is a duality of both corporate management (president and top management team consisting of chancellor, vice president R&D and academic head) and academic self-organisation (academic board).

The *top management team* (henceforth TMT) of the UAS Upper Austria consists of four different people: the president as head of the organisation, the chancellor, the vice president for R&D and the academic head. Members of the TMT have all their own fields of responsibilities (see Table 5). Having a look at the individual background of the current members of the TMT reveals one the one hand a professional career of the president and chancellor and on the other hand, an academic career of the vice president R&D and the academic head.

Figure 11. Internal governance structure of UAS upper Austria

Table 5. Responsibilities of the TMT-Members

TMT-Member	Responsibilities	Personal background
President	Strategy, controlling, marketing, external representation	professional career
Chancellor	Organisational development, accounting, budgeting, administration, HR, quality management	professional career
Vice president R&D	Strategic planning R&D, coordination of acquisition of R&D funds, superior of research assistants and R&D-related administrative staff, scientific conferences	academic career
Academic head	Teaching and study programmes, HR development in teaching, teaching infrastructure, integration of research and teaching, coordination of the four schools	academic career

An amendment of the Austrian UAS Studies Act in 2011 introduced an *academic board* into UAS internal governance structures on an obligatory basis (Hauser, 2013). This board contains of representatives of heads of study programme, teachers/researchers and students, and is, above others, responsible for the following issues (defined in § 10 (3) UAS Studies Act¹):

The tasks of the University of Applied Sciences Board shall be: [...]

3. modifying the accredited degree programmes [...]
4. establishing or terminating a degree programme and a certificate programme for further education [...]
5. making applications concerning the budget (capital, non-personnel and personnel expenditures) [...]
6. submitting proposals for the appointment and dismissal of teaching and research staff [...];
7. coordinating the content of all teaching and examinations;
8. evaluating all teaching including examination rules and curricula;
9. awarding academic degrees and revoking them, deciding on the nostrification of foreign degrees as well as awarding [...] academic honours common in the university system; [...].

Administrative staff is not part of the academic board, although the board is entrusted with tasks which had been indisputably related to administration and had been performed by chancellor and administrative staff at UAS Upper Austria before the introduction of this new academic self-organisation body.

Central administrative entities. Which are responsible for UAS-wide support and steering activities are incorporated in the central headquarters. This involves for example departments for quality management, marketing, HR, accounting, controlling, etc. All of these units are managed by a head of department.

At faculty level, *deans*, who fulfil the roles of researchers/teachers as well as managers (temporarily elected), head the respective school. Schools also employ their own administrative staff, mainly led by *heads of administration* and *heads of the local Research Centre*. Each of the four schools offers a broad variety of different study programmes, which are, in contrast to the traditional subdivision of universities into different disciplinary departments, the main organisational units at the bottom level of this UAS organisation. Each study programme is managed by a *head of study programme*, a ‘manager-academic’ (Deem & Brehony, 2005) fulfilling the management and leadership position on the one hand and the teaching and research position, on the other hand.

The description of the different governance layers of the UAS Upper Austria reveals the co-existence of both ‘manager-academics’ (Deem & Brehony, 2005) and ‘third space professionals’ (Whitchurch, 2008). To reduce the complexity of the organisation for the analytical issues of this study, the structure was simplified to a certain extent by attributing the term ‘administration’ to the heads of the centralised and decentralised administrative units and the term ‘academia’ to those persons who correspond to the definition of manager-academics (members of the academic board, deans and heads of study programme). Only when it comes to the analysis of bridging links between academia and administration, the incorporation of these two worlds within one position as an integrating feature will come to the fore again.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The overall aim of the investigation was to gain insight into the personal experience and subjective perception of administrative managers in terms of the specific demands and challenges of administrative HE management and to gain in-depth knowledge of current behaviour patterns, formal processes and more informal norms regarding the alignment of academic and administrative mind-sets within a HEI. On a more structural level, the main objective of this research endeavour was to illustrate the main conflicts between administration and academia and the possibilities to align and harmonise discrepancies as well as conflicting and diverse demands from an administrative point of view.

For this purpose, the research team opted for a qualitative design in order to explore underlying motivation and deep-rooted reasons rather than test variables (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In exploring pathways dealing with conflicting demands of alignment and adaptability in the context of UAS Upper Austria, the authors relied on extensive case data. Accordingly, a qualitative case study appeared most suitable to provide insight into the complex structures of interactions and illuminate potentials for harmonising these competing mind-sets in a so-called 'managerial' HEI.

The applied focus group method draws on interactions with the group and the joint construction of meaning (Bryman, 2012). Besides the specific topic of the focused interview that is explored in depth, the researchers "will be interested in such things as how people respond to each other's views and build up a view out of the interaction that takes place within the group" (Bryman, 2012, p. 501). The arguing process contributes to gathering more realistic accounts of what people think, because they are forced to reflect and possibly revise their views.

Overall, the study consists of five focus group interviews with 20 administrative managers of UAS Upper Austria. 'Administrative managers' for this purpose are the heads of the centralised and decentralised administrative units. Table 6 gives an overview of the involved persons describing their organisational assignment, their academic background and the focus group they participated in. Concerning composition of the respective focus group, particular emphasis was put on their homogeneity. The groups consisted of 3 to 5 persons each.

Field research was performed from January 2015 to April 2015 and the focused interviews lasted between 60 and 75 minutes each. All focused interviews were conducted in accordance with an interview guideline and moderated by a facilitator. The interview guideline emphasised the patterns of cooperation and interaction in their daily professional lives, the flow of information, interfaces between administrative staff and faculty and the related upcoming challenges as well as their own self-perception/role within the organisation. All focus groups were tape-recorded and transcribed. Qualitative data were analysed by computer-based software (MAXQDA) and in compliance with qualitative thematic (content) analysis (Silverman, 2013). Moreover, each focus group was analysed separately so as to create descriptions of the cases (case analysis of each focus group).

Table 6. Composition of focus groups

<i>Organisational assignment</i>	<i>Academic background</i>	<i>Group</i>
<i>Centralised administrative units</i>		
Head of international affairs	Master's degree or equivalent	B
Head of marketing	Master's degree or equivalent	B
Head of HR	Master's degree or equivalent	B
Head of corporate controlling	Master's degree or equivalent	B
Head of controlling	Master's degree or equivalent	B
Head of R&D controlling	Master's degree or equivalent	D
Head of accounting	Master's degree or equivalent	D
Head of legal department	Doctor's degree	D
Head of quality management	Master's degree or equivalent	E
Head of software development centre	Master's degree or equivalent	E
Head of IT-services	no academic degree	E
Head of IT-governance	Doctor's degree	E
<i>Decentralised administrative units</i>		
Head of administration (school for informatics, communications and media)	Master's degree or equivalent	A
Head of administration (school for applied health and social sciences)	Master's degree or equivalent	A
Head of administration (school for management)	Master's degree or equivalent	A
Head of administration (school for engineering and environmental sciences)	no academic degree	A
Head of research centre (school for informatics, communications and media)	Master's degree or equivalent	C
Head of research centre (school for applied health and social sciences)	Master's degree or equivalent	C
Head of research centre (school for management)	Master's degree or equivalent	C
Head of research centre (school for engineering and environmental sciences)	Doctor's degree	C

RESULTS

In this section, results are grouped in three parts. First, evidence of the existence of the two different organisational logics within UAS Upper Austria, namely the professional academic logic and the corporative administrative logic, is given. Second, a short overview of the highlighted self-perception of administrative managers is provided. The third part points to challenges for administrative

managers in the context of the dualism of academia and administration. Next, focus is placed on bridging and balancing links between the distinct mind-sets resulting from the two organisational logics mentioned. Since the interviews were all conducted in German, the selected vignettes were subsequently translated into English by the authors.

The Professional Academic Logic vs. the Corporative Administrative Logic

In discussion of their experiences and allied own and perceived (dissenting) other perspectives, the interviewees provided evidence for the existence of two different institutional logics within the case UAS.

Corporative administrative logic. Administrative parts of UAS Upper Austria primarily account for establishing processes and procedures and for carrying out routine tasks. Administrative staff's corporative administrative logic manifests itself in the assigned importance of performance indicators, as the following vignette shows:

I believe that for leadership and decision making you'll need performance indicators – because in a HEI you have to find ratios. (B-151)²

Due to its process driven mind-set, administration insists on an increase in efficiency and thus supports standardisation and formalisation procedures, heightened importance of control mechanisms, monitoring and documentation and formal decision taking (B-71-77, B-105, A-36). The corporative administrative logic feels obliged to bureaucracy and a highly process-oriented structure (B-71-77) as illustrated in the following statement:

If there is no red-tape this will make us slow. Because then we will have to rework everything endlessly. (B-105)

Too much deregulation seems to unnerve some administrative personnel as they fear of getting insufficient information. This is even more so when academic parts of the organisation are involved or affected, as administration cannot control these parts that well and is dependent on academics' goodwill.

How can you be sure that you've got all information that is relevant for you? (B-137)

However, even within an administrative community the right amount of bureaucracy is under discussion (B-79, B-126, B-104, B-119). Some parts of administration call for streamlining and lean management (B-107, B-119, C-130, B-119) and advocate a limitation of "insanity of reporting" (B-148) whereas other parts insist on adding further regulations, especially at the interface of administrative and scientific parts of the institution (B-137) in order to increase control.

This heterogeneity in perceptions seems to result from different tasks and needs of different organisational units. For instance, marketing is supposed to react quickly to changes whereas controlling is supposed to guarantee stability and rule-consistency (B-79). In addition, personal attributes of administrative managers tend to influence their feeling for the right amount of red tape (B-107).

Professional academic logic. Administrative managers at UAS Upper Austria believe that academic freedom still holds a significant value in the academic culture. Thus, from their point of view, professional academic logic is associated with faculty's empowerment and their craving for independence and flexibility in carrying out their tasks (B-152). It is assumed that faculty tries to secure traditional freedom and flexibility and tries to "take it as easy as possible" (B-128). From an administrative perception, there is little commitment to rules and regulations (B-70). From their point of view, faculty may experience a clash between their professional status and traditionally established practices on the one hand, and a feeling of loss of direct influence due to rising regulation from top management, on the other hand. Informants presume that this tendency is perceived as unjust by academics as they might think that "[...] we [faculty] are supposed to be the key players of higher education" (D-30) and "we [faculty] are at a disadvantage, because everything is operated over our heads" (D-30).

Administrators' Self-Perception

As far as their self-perception is concerned, administrative managers at UAS Upper Austria see themselves predominantly as enabler (D-98, C-95, A-89) and service provider (D-97, D-93, D-95) for certain players within the organisational context, especially top management and academics as the following vignette shows.

It's about coordination, it's about knowledge-exchange, it's about knowing about everything. (A-20)

Hence, administrative managers label themselves as "interface-manager" (A-98), "Jack and Jill of all trades" (E-94, A-90), coordinator (E-95, A-89) or moderator (B-158, C-60). Decentral administrative units concentrate more on the needs of their school (C-78, C-130, B-18, E-20) but also keep in mind the requirements of the headquarters (A-35, E-95).

Challenges of Administration

Generally, administration managers attribute tensions between administration and academia to highly contrasting interests of these two different organisational spheres (E-107) and a "two-class-society" (E-107) consisting of faculty as first class and administration as second class. A circumstance which is perceived as typical of HEIs (D-55+58):

The higher education sector is divided in an academic side and an administrative side. And faculty tends to look down on administration, because [...] these are those people who have only a degree but we [faculty] are the great scientists. (D-54)

In addition, administrative managers complain about faculty's limited willingness to change and establish practices that comply more with current contextual changes (D-50, A-53).

Thus, in a working context, they relate their own dissatisfaction to three main factors that appear to have their roots in the relationship of the underlying conflicting institutional logics: minor esteem and appreciation, a minor integration in decision-making bodies combined with a missing understanding of administrative information demands and limited formal power.

Minor esteem and appreciation. A recurring topic discussed within the focus groups is status and prestige of administrative positions. Administrative management claims to be faced with only minor esteem and appreciation in their daily working routine (E-107, D-50). They are confronted with accusations of establishing bloated bureaucracy (E-107) and consequently constrict flexibility and creativity as described in the following vignette:

In administration we are always the bad guys. Because we create so much red tape and prevent others from working smoothly. (B-81)

Some experts perceive a rising service-expectation from the academic side (D-29). One informant feels on some occasions degraded to a mere "writing office" (D-28) that is supposed to act on behalf of academics' needs. The following vignette reflects this opinion strikingly

Don't get cross when something gets complicated because of our [faculty] needs. You have to be happy for having the right of being here – because your reason for being here is us [faculty]. (D-28)

Some informants miss equally assigned status and likewise acknowledgement of accomplishment in both academic and administrative parts of the organisation (D-27). However, they already perceive a change to the positive (D-27, C-88-95). Some think that capability and efficiency of administrative parts of the organisation is highly appreciated, however, feel that some employees tend to refrain from verbalising it as legitimisation of power is still supposed to result from the professional academic logic (E-115). Although some of the administrative managers suffer from poor recognition of their achievements, they are nonetheless proud of their accomplishments of the past years (B-159).

Strikingly, it was found that research centre managers who primarily support researchers in administrative aspects of their research attach particular importance

to be differentiated from administration. For them, administration is a most “emotive term” (C-109) that seems to go hand in hand with minor tasks like making room reservations, writing lists and archiving data (C-108-119, C-43-56). The pure notion of administration seems to touch a “sore spot” (C-154) caused by the feeling that their profession has not received the respect it deserves (C-150-158).

Minor integration in decision making bodies and missing understanding of administrative information demands. Administration managers are not part of the decision making bodies of the UAS Upper Austria. In that regard, two main challenges were identified for administration: First, interviewees complained about a lack of transparency about the decision making processes, the results and the related consequences for administrative operations [B-138+139+152].

I don’t get any information from them [...] and] I have no idea if something is relevant for us. [B-138+139]

Thus, the interface is prone to loss of information because faculty tends to depreciate administrative related information (C-128, A-22) and does not pass on information within a satisfying time span (C-119, B-79).

Second, due to the missing administrative voice in decision making bodies, they criticise a minor recognition of administration needs and an underdeveloped understanding of the consequences of certain decisions on administrative procedures (A-87+104, B-152). Administrative managers complain about limited interest in assigned tasks from the other side “[...] because one side does not know what the other side does.” (E-117).

Limited formal power. Administration seems to dispose only of limited formal power (D-65-70, B-114+159+161+162, A-59+100+152), as administrative staff is dependent on the decisions of top management (A-63), on the one hand, and academics’ good will, on the other hand. Undoubtedly, academics’ good will is all the more relevant since they tend to put forward their academic freedom, especially when they do not feel inclined to act as advised from an administrative angle (A-60). As the following vignette highlights, administrative manager rate TMT’s support as most effective and important to acknowledge their procedure-oriented efforts (B-115, B-81) and to stay informed.

When something is requested from top management to be executed [...] then somebody has to impose sanctions but we [administration] can’t do that. (A-63)

On a more informal basis, some participants even seek dialogue with top management to get an overall impression of the current situation (B-137). Thus, administrative managers do not feel empowered to encourage or initiate changes as shown in the following vignette:

When somebody says, I am not interested in this task at all, I can only put up with it. (A-53)

Another challenge for administrative managers is rooted in the elected status of some of their supervisors [e.g. deans (of the local faculty are seniors of heads of administration)]. Heads of administration mentioned that, in the worst case, they would have to adapt to a different management style of their superior every three years (A-49). As these elected roles and functions allow for a high degree of flexibility, it is up to the manager-academics to define their own field of duties, which, in turn, necessitates equal adaption from the administrative side (A-50-52). This is even more so as deans are increasingly challenged to act as academic managers who discover themselves at the interface of faculty and administration (A-49).

In sum, administration managers point to a number of inefficiencies in HE administration procedures which hint to the struggle of the two different institutional logics within the organisation. To begin with, they highlight minor esteem and lacking appreciation of administrative staff as a valuable source of expertise (instead of a factor of interference). Further, they emphasise the insufficient integration of administrative perspectives in decision making bodies and a missing understanding of the administrative information demands. In addition, due to the missing formal power and the incomplete, informal and slow information flow between academia and administration, administration manager highly depend on formally defined processes, which secure their regulated and compulsory integration in important procedures.

Bridging Links between Faculty and Administration (from an Administrative Point of View)

Although the administration managers stressed the challenges described above, several informants have already observed some improvement in cooperation, as shown in the following vignette:

This yield line that keeps those two groups apart is getting smaller. (E-123)

However, they still see the need for further enhancement. In the course of our research, several bridging links between either professional and corporative logic or explorative and exploitative mind-sets could be revealed. Those bridging links either address cultural, structural or behavioural elements of organisations.

Cultural aspects involve (1) a common organisational identity, (2) a higher appreciation of administrative expertise and contribution to organisational efficiency and success and (3) an increased mutual understanding between academia and administration.

Common organisational identity. Findings indicate that a common organisational identity seems to play an important role in the successful alignment of competing

mind-sets represented by the academic and the administrative part of a university organisation. The interviewees point out that organisational identity has already changed to some extent from a faculty-driven identity to an overall organisational-driven identity (E-116+123+125, A-12+20). Especially, administrative managers of centralised units tend to identify themselves with the overall institution as they have never been associated with one of UAS Upper Austria's faculties (E-107, B-82), as shown in the following vignette:

We try to set a good example. We see UAS Upper Austria as one institution.
(E-116)

Concurrently, they understand that a change of perspective might be much more difficult in academia since, in the first place, academics feel obliged to their disciplines which are represented by their relevant school (E-123+124, B-92), instead of the whole HEI. Younger academic staff tends to work in a more organisation-oriented context and they do not distinguish that strictly between administration and academia (B-117). Still, an overall identification is seen as necessary (E-123) as shown in the following statement:

In the end it does not really matter to which school you belong. [...] It is a rat race and you have to win the game. And all of us have to run for it. (E-125)

Higher appreciation of administrative expertise and recognition of administrative demands. As already described in the challenges for administration, respondents critically assessed that minor esteem and lacking appreciation of administrative expertise were crucial factors in a valuable contribution to the organisational efficiency and success. Based on this perception, they wish for a stronger integration of their expertise (A-45) especially in those cases that impact administration (A-32) and when overlaps with current administrative projects appear likely (B-152). Furthermore, they aim for additional information when topics at the admin-academia interface are concerned (A-87+104, B-152). By the way of improved coordination with academia, administrative managers expect several improvements, like an earlier verification of technical feasibility of planned projects (E-27), a formally correct implementation of new procedures (B-106), a better coordination of existing processes (B-142) and a better exploitation of existing resources at the interface (A-87+104, B-152).

Increased mutual understanding and joint goals of academia and administration. Regarding joint collaborations, it was found that well-established and transparent processes (B-106+109) and clear task definition are most essential, so „that not everybody talks of something different” (B-106). Thus, goals have to be defined beforehand in order to generate a joint “picture of the goal” (E-26) and to ensure that inputs of all participants are considered (E-69). Cooperation tends to get simplified when benefit and long-term additional values are made explicit

(E-26+45+47, C-68), as the readiness to participate constructively tends to rise in these cases (E-45). Still, the need for consensus is rated high [“And I can only solve this on a consensual basis.” (B-161)].

Participants stress the importance of an esteem culture and an appreciative communication style which takes account of the special needs of a modern university culture (C-88). Depreciative behaviour is rated as not conducive to reaching the goal [“to depreciate others (...) that’s not ok” (D-58)].

According to our informants, a supportive atmosphere is an essential requirement for the success of group work. Administrative personnel stress the importance of developing mutual understanding for diverse challenges which impact interactions between academia and administration (E3-117, D-64). In addition, capacity to compromise (E-32, E-28) and persuasiveness (E-28+32+74+76) is considered a prerequisite for task implementation.

A number of alternative solutions are put forward and it is hoped that they might defuse the situation. (E-45)

Structural configurations referred to as bridging links between administration and academia are invoked by the focus groups as (1) support and influence of top management team, (2) crucial role of deans and head of study programmes as manager-academics and (3) cross-sectoral cooperation between administration and academia in hybrid project teams and organisational bodies.

Top management. In order to harmonise the interface between academic and administrative scope of responsibilities, respondents suggest that it is the top management team’s (TMT) responsibility to create a supportive climate that enables alignment of academic and administrative structures (B-115, E-82, B-61, A-50). The management board holds responsible for the implementation of a clear strategy that supports the operationalisation of goals, creates transparency, establishes commitment and thus reinforces ambidextrous thinking (E-116).

In addition, participants point to the necessity of a clear structure and well-established transparent processes (B-106+109) in order to ensure the functioning of administrative support (E-72, B-161). They emphasise that in addition to leadership, organisational structure significantly impacts the institution’s ability to balance ambiguities (D-64).

Dean’s mediating role. Due to their multifunctional tasks, deans seem to be accustomed to building knowledge-bridges between exploitative and explorative organisational units and taking over a managerial function at their school (A-49). However, informants do not appear to be wholly satisfied with the quality of communication originating from their relevant schools (A-52, B-138).

Cross-sectoral cooperation. Informants feel that committee and project work would benefit from administrative know-how in those cases where the topic is

located at the interface between academic input and administrative implementation (E-125). Still, administrative managers hope for stronger involvement in the academic board in order to be able to provide valuable expertise (D-84, B-55+137+142, A-32), as mentioned in the following vignette.

At the end of the day, there is little awareness of the academic board on which topics administration could make a useful contribution. (B-143)

Currently, administrative managers can only participate in the academic board when formally invited by members of the board. Hence, informants believe that academic topics with cross connections to administration cannot be discussed with all relevant information and expertise (B-143-147). Additionally, some respondents point out that continuous participation of administrative and academic staff in service projects and interaction with team members in both domains may enable the development of a fruitful collaboration (E-33+123). Hence, team members have to display both scientific rigour and business relevance concurrently.

On the level of *individual behaviour*, administration managers predominately describe one way to cope with the challenges of administration in interaction with academia, which is pithily described by one respondent as “leadership by competence” (B-92).

Leadership by “competence”. To ensure work progress (C-63, B-162) and to “[...] keep the work relationship up and running” (B-92), service quality of administrative support staff and recognised benefits appear to be essential (B-79).

The more service you offer, the more commitment you will get from the others (faculty), because you facilitate their tasks. (B-79)

Thus, “leading and serving” (B-92) as well as “leadership by competence” (B-92) were found to be an escape route from a fragile position of influence.

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

Overall, the findings of our empirical study suggest that the self-perception of administrative personnel goes hand in hand with a deeply rooted corporative logic that subordinates to the market logic of the macro or societal level. Thus, it opposes the traditional academic mind-set (Ehrenstorfer et al., 2015) as well as the professional academic logic at the organisational level. Drawing from our empirical findings, the professional academic logic is associated with academic freedom and flexibility whereas the corporative administrative logic promotes clear-cut processes and centralised monitoring, which allows for the validation of centrally designed standard operating procedures.

The dichotomy of the different institutional logics and related mind-sets of actors intensify different daily-work challenges for administration. The administration managers perceive minor esteem and lacking appreciation of

administrative competences and knowledge, and hence critically highlight their limited integration in decision making processes and a missing understanding of administrative information demands. To their mind, this leads to an insufficient use of their expertise, an incomplete and slow information flow and therefrom resulting organisational inefficiencies. Furthermore, they described a lack of formal power vis-à-vis faculty. Consequently, administration managers highly depend on the academics' good will to cooperate. The willingness to support administration is constrained by the professional logic and the related academic mind-set and their traditional perspective of administration as a burden, constraint and interference.

This work sought to find ways of how competing logics can co-exist for the benefit of the whole institution. From the theory of organisational ambidexterity it is known that co-existence of conflicting learning modes (explorative and exploitative) is crucial for the success of organisations under complex environmental circumstances (March, 1991; Gupta et al., 2006; Güttel & Konlechner, 2009; Simsek, 2009; Tahar et al., 2011; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004). Thus, HEIs should strive for a balance that can ensure flexibility and innovation in building on academic freedom (explorative learning mode) on the one hand, and reinforces routinisation of procedures to such an extent that prospering working conditions are created (exploitative learning mode), on the other hand (Chang et al., 2009). However, due to a greater application of management business concepts and a rising significance of management tasks (Kehm & Lanzendorf, 2007; Nickel, 2011) top-down processes are perceived as increasingly important (Chang et al. 2009). Yet, a bottom-up, flexible context which is part of a long established and traditional university culture (Ambos et al., 2008; Chang et al., 2009) is critical in the development of innovative and explorative HE structures (Chang et al., 2009; Ambos et al., 2008).

Our findings show how the rivalry between competing logics can be managed through a collaborative relationship at different organisational levels where collaborators still maintain their independence when working together for the sake of the organisation (Reay & Hinings, 2009). From a structural angle, administration managers identify three different configurations that were supportive in their position within the organisation and that strengthened their corporative administrative logic against the professional academic logic.

First, on an institutional level, they identify the *top management's* explicit commitment to administrative assignments as decisive in order to achieve a balance between academia and administration and their goals. In other words, it stays within the responsibility of TMTs to establish a reasonable balance between most diverse interests and assigned responsibilities to define clear and precise processes. Hence, it can be assessed that a strong HE management has the potential to provide a supportive context for aligning dual structures in enabling units to switch between academic and commercial endeavours (Ambos et al., 2008; Birkinshaw & Gupta, 2013; Buyl et al., 2012; Lin & McDonough, 2011; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2013). Thus, it is the top management's task to establish both clear organisational structures and transparent procedures that meet the special prerequisites for hybrid

organisations (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Güttel & Konlechner, 2009) and to foster an organisational culture that allows for cooperation and knowledge-exchange between faculty and administration.

In the latter context, top management needs to translate between exploiting and exploring units where senior executives are supposed “to function as interpreters for the rest of the organisation” (Gumpert, 2000, pp. 77–78).

Second, the participating administration managers point to the crucial role of “*manager-academics*” (Deem & Brehony, 2005) (especially in the role of deans or heads of study programme) as persons who bridge both worlds. Manager-academics unite an academic reputation and socialisation on the one hand, and- due to their high inclusion in administrative procedures- possess an understanding for administrative duties and requirements, on the other hand. It is for these purposes that manager-academics dispose of thorough knowledge of both logics. In addition, they hold a certain formal power over academics, which administrative managers miss. They can therefore be useful allies for administration when it comes to the enforcement of certain regulations and processes. Certainly, the same also applies for the academic side, when it comes to the prevention of over regulation.

Third, on a micro level, administration managers identify *hybrid project teams* as crucial since they enable new collaborative relationships in making use of both academic and administrative expertise and perspectives. Further, they tend to facilitate the exploitation of diverse capabilities and knowledge and to enhance mutual understanding. In doing so, they act as pathfinders that actively support contextually ambidextrous working conditions. Furthermore, there is common ground that project work enables knowledge transfer between the two differing learning modes, as team members are deeply integrated into different business and/ or scientific environments and, hence, have to display both scientific rigour and business relevance concurrently (Güttel & Konlechner, 2009). Additionally, working in project teams enhances group cohesion and “enables the development of an ambidextrous mind-set that favours exploration and exploitation in an equal balance, a shared language, and mutual understanding” (Güttel & Konlechner, 2009, p. 162).

Besides these developed institutionalised working practices that support a co-existence of competing logics, we propose that several cultural and behavioural factors are a prerequisite for the functioning of these bridging links. First, administrative managers strive for a higher appreciation of administrative expertise and recognition of administrative demands on an organisational level. Second and related to that, they demand increased mutual understanding and the development of joint goals of academia and administration, which are pursued by a meaningful combination of the different and complementary capabilities. Third, they consider that a common organisational identity that looks at the organisation as a whole, strikes a balance between the different logics that a hybrid organisation needs to integrate. In the long run, an emerging common identity may prevent the maintenance of subgroups whose different identities “emphasise the tensions between the logics combined” (Battilana & Dorado, 2010, p. 1435).

Finally, the present study points to individual actions of administrative managers aimed at developing new collaborative relationships which simplify accomplishment of work. Correspondingly, leadership by 'competence' was described as an individual behaviour that seeks to appreciate administrative expertise as useful for the support of academic tasks. Thus, it is expected to improve esteem and appreciation of administration at an individual level.

Several features of the UAS Upper Austria support the diagnoses that the corporative administrative logic is more strongly embedded in this organisation than in traditional universities. First, the organisation is led by a president with professional background in the corporate world rather than the academic one. Basically, both logics are represented in a more balanced manner within the TMT. Second, the manager-academics are more strongly committed to managerial and administrative structures in the UAS (Ehrenstorfer et al., 2015), as they, most of the time, draw on prior professional expertise in companies and, from the beginning, got to know the UAS as a rather corporate like institution. Interestingly, this phenomenon is also applicable to most of the teachers and researchers. Third, the organisation has a certain tradition of cross-sectoral cooperation and hybrid project teams for a number of topics (like e.g. quality management issues or IT-related questions).

Nevertheless, the description of administrative challenges at the UAS Upper Austria seems to be similar to those within traditional universities (minor esteem and appreciation of administration, insufficient integration in decision making bodies, missing formal power). This hints to a predominant significance of the professional academic logic and its inherent values and understanding of HEIs. Accordingly, a closer look at the identified bridging links reveals that although there is a certain personal representation of both logics within top management, it is also necessary to shed light on the real and mutable constellations of power within the TMT. Furthermore, it seems to be crucial of whether a manager-academic is appointed or elected in such a position, but also how this position tends to be interpreted from an academic perspective and how strongly it is based on a professional academic logic. For hybrid project teams it can be assumed that the simple pooling of people with different backgrounds and mind-sets will be insufficient to create a mutual understanding, joint goals and a common organisational identity. On closer inspection, it appears to be essential to explicitly reflect on different mind-sets and implicit hierarchies within hybrid project teams.

Finally and in due consideration of the single perspective of administration managers represented in this study, a qualified look must be taken at the claim of an enhancement of the corporative administrative logic within HEIs. From an administrative point of view, this seems to be justified, but shows a distorted picture of resent discussions and attitudes in HEIs.³ In the entire Austrian UAS sector we can currently observe academic drift tendencies (Sterrer et al., 2015) which are assumed to strengthen professional academic logic in UAS organisations. These include, for example, the compulsory implementation of an academic board (which introduces

academic self-governance structures on organisational top level), an increased importance of research and an intensified recognition of academic qualification and success in recruitment processes.

CONCLUSION

In sum, it can be said that at the investigated UAS organisation both professional academic logic and corporative administrative logic are prevalent and become effective, although the latter seems to have more weight compared to traditional universities. Nevertheless, it was found that the tensions between the two different logics and the thereby emerging challenges for administration managers appear to be identical to those at universities. In order to relieve these tensions, several bridging links between different persons, logics and learning modes have been identified at a structural and cultural level of HEIs.

Arguably, the findings of the present study are limited and only present a single case of one specific Austrian UAS organisation. Still, under the consideration of specific national and organisational aspects which are widely disclosed in the introduction and description of the case, several findings seem to apply to hybrid organisations in a HE context. Accordingly, the following aspects were identified: the critical role of structural configurations related to a powerful TMT (as an influencing factor for organisational cultures and balanced conflicting organisational logics in hybrid organisations), a bridge-building function of manager-academics (Deem & Brehony, 2005) and third space professionals (Whithchurch, 2008) and the integral role of hybrid project work within the HEI.

The present findings therefore, although they require further testing and exploration, contribute to current efforts to further understand how agents enact multiple institutional logics within a hybrid organisation. They indicate how a highly market-based and managerial HEI deals with persistently competing logics and which elements of these logics they enact. Hence, this study sets out to provide a better understanding of the functioning of hybrids in an HE context, not only at a structural level but also in consideration of organisational culture.

NOTES

- ¹ Source: https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Erw/ERV_1993_340/ERV_1993_340.pdf
- ² This citation is used to link the vignettes to the empirical data. The letter refers to the respective focus group. The number refers to the transcription paragraph.
- ³ For getting insight in the discussions in the same organisation from the angle of manager-academics see Ehrenstorfer et al. (2015).

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