HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA:
AN INSTITUTIONAL FIELD APPROACH

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Introduction

Regarded by some as the most successful industry in the U.S., the sector of higher education in this country has succeeded in important ways. A 2008 study conducted in China evaluating 500 of the world's universities found that 17 of the 20 most distinguished research universities were in the U.S., as were 40 of the top 50! (Cole 2009). In popular discourse, the sector is often treated as if it were entirely composed of research universities (e.g., the Harvards, Michigans, and Stanfords) and the elite colleges (e.g., the Wellsleys, Oberlins, and Reeds). This in spite of the fact that the research universities, comprehensive colleges, and baccalaureate colleges make up only about 30 percent of the educational providers in the sector.

On closer examination, the higher education sector is highly differentiated, involving a wide variety of educational providers and other types of players attempting to govern or influence their work, and is beset by problems and challenges. Colleges embrace a diversity of forms, ranging from research universities to community college and for-profit certificate programs. The numbers of these schools have increased rapidly in the last few decades, and their composition has changed over time. Similarly, more and different types of students seek post-secondary education. The sector is beset by a variety of problems including cost escalation, poor completion rates, inadequate standards, misplaced emphasis on rankings, misallocation of public funds from need- to

merit-based student aid, inordinate attention to amenities for students rather than educational improvement, and even fraud.

Contemporary lens devised by sociologists for viewing higher education focus primarily on individual colleges or similar types of colleges; or on individual students or student cohorts. Sociologists have concentrated attention on the role of education in societal stratification systems, exploring the ways in which education contributes to the status attainment of individual students or populations of students (Fischer & Hout 2006: chap. 2; Stevens, Armstrong & Arum 2008). But while these and other approaches are of value, I suggest that we need to craft a wider lens in order to incorporate within our purview the large variety of individual and collective actors, many of whom are not directly involved in teaching or learning, that have evolved over many decades to prod, police, pressure, guide, lead, and control educational services in our society. In sum, I believe that it would be instructive to (re)conceive of the sector of higher education in the U.S. as a complex *organization field*. The proposed approach highlights the role of *institutional processes* in shaping social life and also embraces the insights and approaches of *population ecologists* who focus on the central role played by collections of similar organizations (populations) in modern societies. Most important, the conception of field calls attention to the role played by ancillary players—those other than schools and students—who are simultaneously a part of the problem and who may serve as a part of the solution.

Organization of the Paper

I begin by providing a brief introduction to the concept of organization field as employed by sociologists and management theorists. The major components of a field are the individual and collective social actors, and their relations the beliefs and cognitive frameworks ("institutional logics") that guide their behavior, and the varying types of governance structures that attempt to exercise control over the field. The bulk of the paper is devoted to identifying and briefly describing the major types of actors, logics, and governance systems currently at

play in the field of U.S. higher education. This seemingly simple task proves to be a challenge even though I limit myself principally to those components operating within the boundaries of the field, which ignores the reality that higher education interacts with many other sectors bringing many more and different types of participants into play on any given issue. Still, I believe it useful to lay out the structural and cultural landscape of higher education in the U.S. circa 2010, as a guide to those operating within the sector as well as to those proposing to introduce improvements and reforms. All such confront a daunting challenge!

Organization Fields: An Institutional Ecology Approach

Institutional approaches privilege the role of symbolic systems in social structures. While dominate during the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, attention to institutional elements has experienced a renaissance—receiving renewed attention from anthropologists, economists, political scientists and sociologists [e.g., North (1990), March & Olsen (1989), Powell & DiMaggio 1991)] .

While differences exist in the framing and underlying assumptions of the varying disciplinary approaches, all emphasize the importance of symbolic forces in social life, although different versions accord variable attention to the types of symbolic elements at work—whether rules and regulative systems, normative framework, or cultural/cognitive belief systems are emphasized (Scott 2008). At the same time, contemporary institutional scholars stress that, to be of interest, institutional elements need to be enacted and reflected in the behavior of human actors and to be sustained by the support of valued resources. In the words of Hallett and Ventresca (2006): institutions must be "inhabited" by social actors. Hence, it is useful to couple institutional with ecological approaches.

Human ecologists are concerned about the ways in which humans adapt to their environments—both physical and social—in order to survive. The examination of adaptation processes is usually conducted by ecologists at the species rather than the individual level where it becomes clear that survival is a function of two processes: (1) adaptation, in which the focus is on changes in

individual actions; and (2) selection, which stresses the role of changes in the environment. Organizational ecologists note that *organizational populations* are for individual organizations what species are for individuals (Hannan & Freeman 1989). As Baum and Shipilov (2006:55) point out: "organizational ecologists seek to explain how social, economic and political conditions affect the relative abundance and diversity of organizations and attempt to account for their changing composition over time."

Institutional elements operate at multiple levels of social systems, including group, organization, organization population, organization field, and societal or world-system, but are particularly applicable to the level of *organization field.* The concept of organization field has gradually evolved since it was first introduced by DiMaggio and Powell (1983; see also DiMaggio, 1983), who define it as:

> those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products. (p. 148)

Like the concept of "industry," fields are often constructed around a focal population of similar organizations, but the field approach extends to include others types of organizations who interact or relate to this population. Fields include both relational systems—linking organizations and their participants into networks of exchange, information, and funding flows, status and power relations—and symbolic systems, including the presence of cultural-cognitive and normative frameworks and regulatory systems. The shared meanings contained in these frameworks define the operational jurisdiction of a field. In the world of firms, fields are often formed around specific products or services; in the world of politics, around some specific policy, issue, or interest. Individual and collective actors thus play varying roles in a field, but together constitute and participate in a common "local social order" (Fligstein 2001: 107); they share a common meaning system and "they interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside of the field" (Scott 1994:208-208). The field is a heuristic

device whose boundaries may be limited to a specific territory or a particular time, as required by the interests of the investigator (for a general overview, see Scott 2008: chap. 8; Wooten & Hoffman 2008).

Most fields are not settled but rather are contested terrains. Actors compete within them for various types of capital: physical, human, social and cultural (Bourdieu 1977). Within a field, influence and pressures for change flow in multiple directions: down from broader cultural frames and the power of dominant players, sideways from exchange and competition processes, and upward from resistance, innovation, and the mobilization of suppressed groups. In order to discuss changes in the numbers and types of actors and the pattering of social activities and symbolic systems over time, sociologists employ the concept of structuration *(*Giddens 1979; DiMaggio & Powell 1983). *Structuration* refers to the extent to which the behavior of social actors creates a coherent pattern of interaction and shared meanings. As fields evolve, mutual awareness among actors increases, more information is shared, conformity and competitive pressures increase and status and power rankings develop. Of course, divergent forces may set in motion processes leading to destructuration.

Finally, it must be stressed that organization fields are always subsystems, being affected by the presence of neighboring fields, and subsumed under and influenced by forces emanating from broader societal—and trans-societal--systems: social, economic, and political.

An Institutional Ecology of the Field of Higher Education

In previous work examining the field of health care organizations in one U.S. metropolitan area over a fifty year, my colleagues and I (Scott et al., 2000) identified three components of field structure: actors and their relation, logics, and governance systems. We examined how each of these components was interdependent with the others and how their composition and connections changed over time. I employ these same concepts to guide this survey of the higher education field. I use them to create a kind of anatomy of the elements

comprising the core of the higher education system, describing, if you will, the exoskeleton of higher education.

Institutional Actors and their Relations

The actors of interest include both individual and collective actors that are subject to/engaged in the field of higher education. Relevant types of social actors include:

- *populations of organizations*: organizations sharing the same general structural form
- *associations of organizations*: meta-organizations in which organizations are the members
- *organizations*: e.g., specific organizations such as a university or a foundation
- *populations of individuals*: individuals sharing the same role, e.g., teachers, students, principals
- *associations of individuals*: organizations created to advance the interests of their members
- *social movements*: collections of individuals who organize around a common concern
- *individuals*: specific individuals, such a university president

We discuss each type briefly. While we concentrate primarily on educational organizations and associations and individuals in their educational role—e.g., teacher, student—it is important to recognize that many types of social actors are concerned about, participate in, and attempt to influence educational policies and practices. On any given issue, one or another of these actors may be activated.

Populations of Organizations

Organization ecologists have taught us to recognize the importance of addressing the question: "Why are there so many (or so few) kinds of organizations?" (Hannan & Freeman 1989: 7). Like the biological ecologists who examine the origin and disappearance of species, organization ecologists

study the diversity of organizations. Normative and competitive pressures within fields often create increasing *structural isomorphism,* exerting pressures on organizations to adopt one of a limited number of forms or *archetypes*: "a set of structures and systems that consistently embodies a single interpretive scheme" (Greenwood & Hinings 1993: 1055).

From the earliest period of our nation, centers for higher learning have flourished. Beginning with a handful of religious-oriented colleges modeled on European counterparts, the number and variety of colleges has grown rapidly over two centuries. But, over time, the field has converged around the support of a limited number of college forms. The most influential effort to capture and assess the diversity of colleges was spearheaded by the Carnegie Foundation on the Advancement of Teaching whose Commission in 1970 created a set of categories which have been updated over time. Although each has numerous sub-categories, based on criteria such as type of location (e.g., rural, urban), size, and type of control (public/private; profit, nonprofit), the five major categories identified are:

1. Associate Degree (public or nonprofit) 30 %
2. Associate Degree (for-profit) 12 %
3. Research Universities (including doctoral-granting institutions) 7 %
4. Comprehensive Colleges (Master's Colleges and Universities) 15 %
5. Baccalaureate Colleges (liberal-arts colleges) 18%
6. Special Focus Institutions (e.g., theological, medical, business, engineering, law, art) 19 %

(Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching web site)

Three of these categories are what population ecologists would term *generalist* in orientation: public associate degree programs, research universities and comprehensive colleges. Public associate degree programs, typically offer programs to prepare students to transfer to four year schools, offer terminal associate (AA) degrees in a wide range of vocational fields, offer shorter-term certificates in other fields, provide customized training for workers employed by local firms, and offer courses and programs to serve area residents in basic

education, general education and recreational areas (Osterman 2010). Similarly, research universities and comprehensive colleges serve students at levels ranging from undergraduate to post-doctoral training, host a wide variety of specialized departments, MA programs, and professional schools, and often conduct research and training under contract with governmental and corporate sponsors.

Generalists, by definition, are able to operate in a wider range of environmental conditions (occupy a broader "niche") because they pursue a variety of goals or missions and offer a diversity of programs (Hannan & Freeman 1989). In order to accommodate such variety, these organizations are likely to have highly differentiated internal structures—with numerous specialized programs and personnel focusing on a specific mission—and to be *loosely-coupled*, that is, developing mechanisms which reduce interdependence and the need for coordination or consistency across units.

Relatively *specialist* populations include for-profit associate programs, liberal arts colleges, and special focus institutions, such as law schools. Their mission is more concentrated and, as a consequence, their structures—including staffing, curricular, and support services—can be simpler and more highly coordinated. This implies that although generalists can outcompete specialists in diverse or rapidly changing environments, they can often be outperformed in any given field by more specialized providers. Recent evidence, for example, suggests that graduation rates in two year proprietary schools can be substantially better than those in public community colleges. And, more significantly (for ecologists), private associate programs are outpacing related public forms in rates of growth (Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen & Person 2006; Osterman 2010).

We briefly discuss the major populations of organizations providing higher education.

Associate Degree-Public and Nonprofit Programs (Community Colleges)

This form first appeared very early in the 20th century—the first, Joliet College, was founded in 1901—and the community college has grown rapidly throughout the past century. The decade of most rapid growth was the 1960s; by the year 2000, roughly 6 million students were enrolled, about 35 percent of all students enrolled in college. Created largely in order to allow larger numbers of high school graduates to obtain access to college, the program has fulfilled its promise, having grown more than three times as rapidly as four year colleges and universities between 1960 and 2000 (Osterman 2010)

However, as noted, the form embraces many, sometimes contradictory, missions, including remedial education, vocational preparation, liberal arts instruction, services to both terminal and transfer students, and general adult education. Since the work of the Truman Commission in 1944, it has also attempted to embrace a civic and community function that underscores the value of civic responsibility (Levinson 2005: 6-7) To manage this diversity, community colleges are typically highly differentiated and "loosely coupled," that is programs are allowed to operate somewhat independently of one another (Weick 1976).

In spite of these lofty goals and varied programs, community colleges are increasingly facing scrutiny because of their high drop-out and low completion rates. Some of these problems can be attributed to the characteristics of the students they serve, as well as to declining public funding, as described below.

For-profit Associate Degree Programs

Without question it is for-profit associate programs that have adopted an archetype that differs most from traditional college models. Their focus on profits causes them to concentrate on strategies for growth and the reduction of costs rather than academic prestige or broader missions of liberal arts programs or of educating leaders and citizens. They typically serve non-traditional student markets, offering highly structured and focused programs with few electives. They seek to grow capacity, creating new sections, campuses, programs and delivery modes, to accommodate larger numbers of qualified applicants. Authority is much more highly concentrated in senior managers rather than

involving faculty in significant decisions (Hentschke 2010). As noted, they are the most rapidly growing segment of American education. The number of AA degrees awarded by for-profit institutions more than doubled during the 10 year period 1996-2006. Still, only about 8 percent of college students attend a for-profit school (Gonzalez 2009).

Research Universities and Comprehensive Colleges

We consider these two categories together because they display a number of similar characteristics, providing general education and liberal arts training for undergraduates, more specialized professional training in a number of areas, as well as conducting research and research training. Together the two categories comprise a continuum stretching from an emphasis on general education and the dissemination of skills and knowledge at the lower end to a focus on the production of knowledge and the generation of succeeding cohorts of professionals and scholars/ researchers at the higher. There is considerable status competition within and between the two forms. The goal of comprehensive colleges at the lower end of the hierarchy is to increase the numbers and variety of their professional and research training programs, and to develop more capacity for independent scholarship and research. Research universities compete for top-notch scholars and student and research funding.

The model of the research university was borrowed in the late 19th centuries from German universities, but was rather quickly democratized within the American context to serve not just the more esoteric arts of philosophy, theology, and science but to include the more practical arts, such as engineering, agriculture, and business administration (Bledstein 1976). This project was rapidly advanced by the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862 that established a federalized system of land-grant universities to focus attention on the development of agriculture and the mechanical arts; and, over time, most major professional occupations have connected their training programs to comprehensive colleges or research universities or have created special-focus schools.

Baccalaureate Colleges

These colleges are built around the model of the relatively small and self-contained liberal arts college. As noted, they were the first colleges to be established in this country, were closely modeled on their European counterparts, and they have continued to thrive. Some, (e.g., Harvard, Stanford, Yale) have served as the nucleus for the creation of a research university, but many (e.g., Oberlin, Reed), remain small and adhere closely to their original mission. They typically exhibit high ratios of teachers to students and emphasize the importance of individualized instruction, such as tutorials and small seminars.

Another hallmark of these colleges is their emphasis on residential education. More so than the other types of colleges, students within liberal arts colleges are likely to live on campus in housing provided by the college. They are apt to be provided not only lodging and food, but also medical, counseling, recreational, and religious services. They are, more so than students in other types of colleges, immersed in a "total institution" (Goffman 1961)—an environment that envelopes the inmate, defining who s/he is, and structuring the environment within which his/her life is lived. While the foregoing may be somewhat of a caricature, a considerable distance separates the educational experience of a full-time residential student engaged in a baccalaureate program, on the one hand, from a part time student pursuing a shorter program and living in the community.

Special Focus Institutions

These institutions primarily serve the needs of specialized, professional training in a wide variety of areas. Commonly served area include medical and other health professional programs, engineering, other technology, such as computer training, business and management, art, music, design, and law. The bulk of such training is concentrated in the areas of health, business and art/music/design. Most of the students in these programs have completed

traditional baccalaureate programs and are pursuing advanced training in a specialty of their choice.

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It is important to observe that the creation of categories, such as those developed by the Carnegie Foundation, both reflect reality—being based on observations of real differences in modes of organizing and ways of pursuing goals—but also help to reinforce and even reify these differences. If you suddenly find that you are in an organization considered to be a member of a class of other organizations, you necessarily begin to make comparisons and to seek role models, both positive and negative. And, as categories become established, they encourage the process of *commensuration*—the creation of a set of entities and metrics that "permits the transformation of different qualities into a common metric" (Espeland & Stevens 1998: 114). Thus it comes to be that we can identify and count such varied entities as a "course", "credit hour", and "transfer unit", treating the varied underlying phenomena as equivalent.

As Blau (1974) has noted, categories may be assigned to a "nominal" parameter in which there is no inherent rank order among groups (e.g., kinds of religions or of races) and a "graduated" parameter, which is associated with differences in hierarchical status (e.g., income, education, power). It appears that the Carnegie categories present a mixed case. There is a fairly clear hierarchy of status between associate degree, baccalaureate degree, comprehensive and research universities. (Special focus institutions and proprietary programs are harder categories to rank.) Among the former group, one observes a kind of academic "arms race", as colleges attempt to advance their standing in the competition for qualified students and faculty. As Riesman (1956) observed more than a half-century ago, although colleges within the U.S. vary enormously in numerous ways, a predominant pattern is to form a snake-like line with the smaller and less well endowed schools doggedly attempting to follow the direction set by the more prestigious colleges.

Perhaps most important, viewed collectively, the wide variety of types of colleges operating in this country constitutes an important societal resource.

Diverse organizations offer a variety of different approaches to meeting our educational needs.

A field approach serves to remind us that many other types of organizations play an important role other than providing educational services. Organizations such as federal and state agencies and programs, foundations, publishers of college texts and teaching materials, firms that coach students preparing for entrance exams, corporations that partner with colleges and universities, and educational consulting companies are leading examples of such forms. Since many of these play funding and governance functions, we discuss some of them in more detail below.

Associations of Organizations

These types of associations are what Ahrne and Brunsson (2008) term "meta-organizations"—they are organizations whose members are organizations. While organizations of the same type compete among themselves for scarce resources, they are also likely to seek ways to create mechanisms for advancing their common interests. Meta-organizations serve a number of purposes: they often help members in their own operations; work to enable and enhance collaboration among members; endeavor to regulate competition among members; attempt to forestall or avoid state regulation; engage in standard-setting and enforcement activities; and conduct lobbying efforts on behalf of the interests of their members.

The field of higher education hosts more than a thousand such associations. Among the most important are those that accredit colleges or some component of them. In the U.S., the former operate primarily at a regional level and the latter at a national level. Because we view the functions of these associations as an important component of field governance structures, we defer their consideration to a later section of this paper.

Other types of associations operate primarily to improve the lot of their members, offering consultation and educational services, networking opportunities, and advocacy efforts to influence policy. These associations

operate as “mutual benefit” organizations (Blau & Scott 1962: chap. 2). Most of these programs arise to serve the needs and work to represent the interests of a specific segment of the higher education field. For example, specific denominations of religious colleges (e.g. National Cathloic Educational Association; Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools), colleges emphasizing liberal arts education (e.g., the Association of American Colleges and Universities), state colleges and universities (e.g., the American Association of State Colleges and Universities), or community colleges (e.g., American Association of Community Colleges). In addition, some associations bring together schools serving the same types of students (e.g., women colleges, African American, Native Americans).

Acting as central nodes in networks of similar organizations to convey information and know-how, standards and templates, these associations both enable isomorphic pressures and disseminate innovative ideas and practices. In the words of Ahrne and Brunnson:

> When meta-organizations are formed, organizations create a new order among themselves. If the included organizations have previously been in contact with each other, it has been another type of contact; they have been involved in an order other than that offered by a formal organization. [In forming or joining a meta-organization] …they have, in organization theory terms, constituted an environment for each other (2008: 43).

In short, such meta-organizations or associations play a central role in the structuration of an institutional field.

Many associations other than those linking educational organizations can also attempt to weigh in on educational matters. Depending on the specific issue involved, various associations outside field boundaries will mobilize to exercise influence on decisions.

Organizations

Much of the attention of field-level analysts is devoted to the more macro aspects—populations or associations of organizations, or as discussed below,

broader belief systems and institutional logics. But, it is important to recall that the field of organization studies began with a focus on individual organizations—their characteristics and capacities. Organizations are collective actors, systems for mobilizing resources of all types for pursuing specific objectives. Labor is consciously designed around a set of roles which, together with rules and routines helps to produce reliable processes and outcomes. While these features constitute the advantages provided by organizing, they also create one of its major liabilities—the inertia of organization structures. Many facets of organizations are designed to produce resilience but also resist reforms and change (Hannan & Freeman 1989; Scott & Davis 2007).

Each organization has its own distinctive structure, identity, competence, field location, and relational connections. Each possesses, what resource-based organization theorists term "a distinctive competence." Capabilities are embedded in participants and ongoing relations, in rules and routines. Many individual colleges cultivate these differences in order to distinguish themselves from other similar schools—in order to give themselves a strategic competitive advantage (Rumelt 1984; Barney 1991). They both respond to larger field forces and act in varying ways to advance their interests. In doing so, they not only sometimes reproduce existing field structures but also act to confront, subvert, and change them.

Many important field-level processes are the result of "bottom-up" actions initiated by individual organizations, rather than "top-down" pressures inducing isomorphism and uniformity. For example, it would be hard to understand the history of higher education without taking into account the role played by specific organizations such as Harvard (founded in 1636)—the first college in the fledging colonies to succeed, which provided a model for other liberal arts programs for succeeding centuries. Or the role played by Johns Hopkins University, founded in 1876 and modeled on contemporary German universities, that initiated "the beginning of the great transformation in American higher education" (Cole 2009: 20) by insisting on the central role of research in the mission of higher education.

This process gave rise to the pre-eminence of the research university in American education.

And, to take a more recent case, we have the onset and rise of the University of Phoenix. The brainchild of John Sperling, a tenured professor of economic history at San Jose State University, the idea to create a degree program for working adults was rejected by regulators in California, but was more palatable to authorities in Arizona. Thus arose the University of Phoenix, which now boasts more than 200 campuses, internet connections to many countries throughout the world, and 26,000 faculty members—the largest of the new for-profit enterprises in higher education (Aldrich 2011) Their approach is to provide standardized products which can be widely and inexpensively distributed, exemplifying a new type of educational organization, utilizing a novel archetype as discussed below. The creation of a new type of organizational form is an important event in the life of any field. In this and many other ways individual organizations shape the fields they inhabit.

Populations of Individuals

Here we are on more familiar ground. Because of the intense interest in individuals fostered by our liberal culture, masses of data have been assembled to track the characteristics, activities, and connections among individuals in modern societies. In higher education, key players include students, faculty, and administrators. If we take a historical perspective, we observe important changes in each category.

Students

It is well known that since World War II, there has been a substantial expansion in the proportions of college-age students enrolled in college-level programs. From a level of roughly 15 percent during the pre-war period, enrollments (and numbers of colleges) began to increase under the impetus of the G.I. Bill (1944) and the Higher Education Act of 1965, which initiated the Pell Grant and the Guaranteed Student Loan programs, beginning in 1972.

Enrollments have continued to grow, although at a slower rate. Still they more than doubled from 7.4 million in 1970 to 18.2 million in 2007 (National Center for Education Statistics).

But, as numbers of students have increased, their characteristics have necessarily changed. In general, they are less-well-off economically, older, more likely to be married with children, more ethnically diverse. According to data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study in 2008, about 15 percent were Black and 14 percent Hispanic. Fewer of them have parents with college experience. Nearly 40 percent are over the age of 24 and 60 percent attend part-time.(Osterman 2010). These differences, among others, have adversely affected graduation rates.

Faculty

During the same 60-plus year period, the numbers of faculty have also substantially grown and their educational qualifications have increased, but across the spectrum of colleges, their employment situation has deteriorated. The 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty reported that only 56 percent of faculty held full time appointments. Such a condition necessarily affects the extent of commitment of faculty to their college as well as the degree to which they can participate in the governance of the school

Administrators

The numbers and professional qualifications of administrators have also grown substantially. Specific data are elusive, but all signs are that administrative ratios have increased within colleges through the past four decades, and a higher proportion of administrators have acquired administrative or managerial training.

Associations of Individuals

As with associations of organizations, several thousand associations of individuals have emerged over the past two hundred years. Many of these are

professional associations organized around the disciplinary and sub-disciplinary categories represented in the multiplex curriculum of colleges. The major professional associations organized at the national and even international levels play an important role in university governance, a topic treated below. Another related category of associations are labor unions for teachers and graduate students—which also exercise some governance responsibilities over their members.

The emergence and growth of teacher unions was associated with the rapid growth of universities in the 1960s, and further spurred by reorganization and retrenchment policies that began to occur in the 1980s. In addition, their growth was encouraged by federal and state labor legislation that permitted public sector employees to unionize. By 1995, roughly 40 percent of full-time faculty in American higher education were represented by labor unions (Julius and Gumport (2003). Ninety-five percent of organized faculty are employed in public institutions, and about have of these are full-time employees. Union membership increased by about 24 percent between 1998 and 2006 (*2006 Directory of Faculty Contracts*). The major organizing agents are the American Federation of Teaching (AFT), an affiliate of AFL-CIO, the National Education Association (NEA), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

The organization of graduate students is much less advanced and, unlike faculty unions which occur primarily in less prestigious institutions, unions have been able to establish themselves in the high-prestige sector (e.g., universities such as Yale, Columbia, and Michigan), in part because “this is where the bulk of graduate students work” (Julius and Gumport 2003: 197). However, unlike teachers, almost half of graduate students belong to unions different from those favored by teachers; they belong to industrial unions such as the United Auto Workers and the Communication Workers of America.

Professional associations and unions perform many other functions for their members apart from participation in their governance. They provide multiple services, including organizing conventions and professional

development services, serving as a clearing house for the dissemination of information relevant to their members, placement functions, and outreach and advocacy on issues affecting their members. In providing such services, professional associations and unions are joined by a much more diverse collection of associations that focus on specific functions or positions within higher education, such as college personnel, admissions, development, affirmative action, presidents, trustees, and many others.

In the larger and more prestigious colleges, former students are organized into alumni associations, some of which are highly active. They work to help former students create and maintain connections among themselves, and they encourage their graduates to contribute to the financial support of their alma mater. In many colleges, alumni groups organize on behalf of the college's athletic programs, raising funds and attempting to influence decisions affecting high profile programs such as football.

In addition to the central players within a field—e.g., those who carry out and oversee the work and consume the services—it is important not to overlook a set of actors that play various roles as catalysts, as *intermediaries* affecting the flow of action. Such actors range from independent guidance counselors to book salesmen, to rating and placement agencies. They play diverse roles as enablers and brokers, in shaping and stabilizing the various activities and exchanges among other actors within the field.

As with our discussion of associations with organizational members, it is hard to overstate the impact on field structuration processes of associations with individuals as members. These associations are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the professional identities of their members, reminding them of their occupational investments and commitments, connecting them to individuals with similar concerns and commitments, and informing them of recent developments—threats and opportunities to which they should be attentive. Such networks both channel and reinforce standards, promote "best practice", and serve as an important conduit for the diffusion of innovations.

An example of many of these processes is provided by Kraatz, Ventresca and Deng's (forthcoming) analysis of changes over time in "enrollment management" within liberal arts colleges. Arising as a new strategic approach to improving a college's ability to compete for desirable students in the early 1980s, strategic management involves the creation of a new role to bring into better alignment the functions of the admissions and financial aide officers. Over time, colleges have incorporated these roles and, often created new administrative units to enact the new approaches. Enrollment managers attempt to allocate funds to "maintain desirable enrollment levels, meet financial goals and manipulate the academic and demographic profile of their incoming classes." (Kraatz, Ventresca & Deng, p. 9; see also Hossler, 1985; Kemerer, Baldridge, & Green 1982). The new occupational role and its associated practices have diffused widely to the point where by 2006 nearly half of a sample of liberal arts colleges had adopted the reform (Kraatz et al.: 10). The key professional association orchestrating these changes was the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), an association with more than 10,000 members approaching its 100th anniversary. Describing itself as the "leading provider of SEM [strategic enrollment management] analysis and content," AACRAO has conducted conferences and hosted training seminars on this topic over the past 20 years, helping to widely legitimate and diffuse the new practice (AACRAO web site).

Social Movements

Organizational sociologists are prone to focus attention on existing organizations and associations, neglecting to attend to interactive processes giving rise to new organizations or new pressures on them (McAdam and Scott 2005). Social movement theorists focus on the processes by which formerly unorganized actors come together to pursue opportunities or resist threats, mobilize resources, and create common narratives to enable themselves to act collectively (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald 1996). Some movements arise from within universities, such as the "free speech" movement which began at the

University of California in the 1960s. Many others begin outside higher education, but quickly include colleges and universities among their targets. Thus, large societal movements such as civil rights, women's rights, gay and lesbian rights, and rights for the disabled all have left their effects on a variety of policies, programs and structures within colleges. Movement effects often occur through a multi-stage process as mobilization creates pressure for new legislation, legal action or new administration routines and rules. The more successful social movements also become enshrined in social movement organizations (Zald & McCarthy 1987), such as the National Association for Colored People (NACP) or the National Organization for Women (NOW), which then are better able to maintain sustained pressures for change.

Individuals

Individuals also play an important role in shaping institutional fields to the extent that they work to reproduce or to transform the institutions in which they are embedded. Of course, we are much more likely to pay attention to those to bring in new ideas and introduce innovations such as John Sperling, the founder of Phoenix University, or to those who disrupt and challenge existing arrangements, such as Mario Savio, the leader of the Free Speech movement at the University of California, Berkeley. But it is important not to overlook the equally crucial role played by those who, because of their socialization, training, and commitment, carry on and attempt to pass along to the next generation both the knowledge and know-how they carry as well as the "habits of the heart" that guide their behavior. Institutionalists need to give equal attention to both types of processes: those that maintain as well as those that modify institutional frameworks.

Relations among Actors

By including populations and associations as categories of actors, we have already considered some of the most important ways in which actors relate to one another. However, it is obvious that many other types of relations link

individuals and organizations. Network theorists stress that relations between actors are often more important for predicting their behavior than the attributes of individual actors. Most approaches view networks as "structures of recurrent transactions" (Aldrich 1982: 282). Three types of network approaches may be utilized: that of (1) the *ego network:* consisting of an actor's direct ties with other actors; (2) the *overall network* which includes ties between all actors in a particular domain; and (3) *network position* which examines the location of an actor as defined by the coordinates of the larger network structure (Burt 1980). Many specific measures have been devised to examine networks at these levels, including distance, centrality, and clustering (Scott & Davis, 2007, chap. 11; Smith-Doerr & Powell 2005)

Relational ties among actors are multiplex and include memberships, flows of information, resources, authority, personnel, and affect. Some of these relational connections are deliberately constructed—e.g., the design of the University of California educational system under Clark Kerr prescribing flows of resources and students among participating units as described below (even though the flows may not follow designed patterns). Other networks evolve gradually over time, linking people and resources in unintended ways. Relational systems are subject both to "top-down" forces of design and constraint and the "bottom-up" forces of resistance and innovation. In the field of higher education, numerous critics point to the "problem of articulation" between schools: the difficulties posed for students as they attempt to pursue their training across varying settings with varying structures, procedures, and requirements. Credits acquired in one program may not be accepted by another, and if accepted, may not be equally counted (Lipka 2010).

* * * * *

One may learn much about an institutional field by simply noting the numbers of types of actors it contains and the nature of the relational ties among them as these vary over time and space. As noted, my colleagues and I studied changes in the field of acute health care services that took place in one large metropolitan area over the fifty year period, 1945-1995 (Scott et al., 2000). Our

study revealed that the populations of organizations providing health care during this period moved toward higher levels of specialization, greater concentration, reductions in public and increases in for-profit providers, and increased levels of interdependence. New types of organizations, such as health maintenance organizations (HMOs), came into existence, representing changes in ways of working and ways of thinking about health care delivery.

A similar study systematically describing the changes that have occurred in the field of institutional actors in higher education would, I think, be valuable and informative. We can learn much from observing the changing anatomy and ecology of social systems.

Institutional Logics

Institutional fields involve more than the numbers of types of social actors and relations among them. They are also cultural systems: systems of norms, and beliefs. These are the elements that give guidance, orientation, and meaning to social life. These systems involve combinations of cognitive and normative elements, and operate at multiple levels (Scott 2008). They include background assumptions, ideologies and paradigms as well as foreground frameworks such as specific policies, policies and frames (Campbell 2004: chap. 4). Of necessity, all fields contain such elements, but the field of higher education appears to be especially richly endowed in symbolic regalia. Because of their special role as the creator, carrier, and custodian of the arts and sciences that define the modern world, colleges and universities have been aptly described as “a secular version of religion”. As Clark (1983: 74) notes: as a general type, academic systems are symbolically rich, with participants devoted to bodies of specific symbols, frequently attached to broader robust ideologies, and often uncommonly bounded by affect despite elaborate pretensions to the contrary”. In no other contemporary organization does one find comparable levels of commitment and devotion to one’s “alma mater”, such singular attention to ritual and ceremony, such reverent devotion to the founders and the founding myths, whether of disciplines or of colleges. Educational institutions are our

contemporary temples, devoted to cultivating the virtues of rationality, scientific inquiry, and modernity (Meyer 1977).

While there are many approaches to examining these symbolic systems, we prefer to focus on what are termed "institutional logics." Institutional logics refer to the belief systems and associated practices that operate in an organizational field. They are sets of "material practices and symbolic constructions which constitute [a field's] organizing principles and which are available to organizations and individuals to elaborate" (Friedland and Alford 1991: 248). These sets may vary in type and number of adherents across the system and over time; they are frequently conflicting.

The logics are lodged in several vehicles:

- *organizational archetypes*, as described above in our discussion of types of actors. These structural elements embody a vocabulary of action, the embodiment of values and schema in rules and norms intended to shape the behavior of members toward common goals
- *guiding values*, that provide the criteria by which participants within fields make choices concerning what to do
- *norms,* both formal and informal, prescribing how to take action
- *cultural frames*: symbolic frameworks employed to shape interpretations of events and plans for action
- *repertories of action*: routines that govern and guide the ways in which goals are pursued.

Complex fields often contain multiple logics; they are institutionally pluralistic environments (Kraatz & Block 2008). These logics provide an important foundation for organizational differentiation, both within a single organization and within the larger field, giving rise to distinctive types of organizations. They also fuel controversies and conflicts. We review some of the logics at play in contemporary higher education.

Logics in Higher Education

Liberal Arts vs. Practical Arts and Vocational Training

For many years in this country the logic dominating the American college was the value of a "liberal education." The "core" disciplines of mathematics and the natural sciences, humanities and the social sciences have long held center stage. However, in recent decades it appears that the meaning of a college education is shifting. An emphasis on the centrality of the liberal arts is being undermined by a surge of interest in the more "practical arts." The more practical areas include subjects such as business, engineering, the health professions, public administration, and computer science. The former tends to view learning as an end in itself, as increasing one's knowledge of the world and its variety, as preparation for responsible civic participation, as cultivating refined tastes and sensibilities. Practical education emphasizes its utilitarian value: preparation for an interesting (and available) job, increasing one's earning potential, contributing to economic development. Gumport (2002) has labeled these contrasting logics the "social institutional" and the "industrial," noting that they tend to be associated with different modes of college organization. Social institutional logics privilege the centrality of disciplines under faculty control, whereas industrial logics stress responsiveness to market-driven demands as determined and coordinated by educational administrators.

The two logics are associated with distinctive sets of routines and activity repertories. In liberal arts classes, teachers tend to be more active and students more passive, particularly in larger classes. Lectures, readings and discussions are the tools of choice; cooperation among students is generally discouraged or prohibited. By contrast, in practical arts and training environments, students are more active. They are encouraged to cooperate, and peer learning is stressed. Hands-on and apprenticeship approaches are utilized (Scott and Meyer 1991).

There is no doubt that in recent years the practical arts have made substantial inroads on the liberal arts in four year colleges and universities. Research by Brint (2002: 232) of majors in these colleges reports that since the 1970s, "occupational fields gained significantly as compared to the arts and sciences, with nearly two-thirds of degrees awarded in occupational and professional fields by 1985-86." Kraatz and Zajac (1996) studied a sample of

elite colleges in order to understand the process by which the practical logic successfully competed with the liberal. They found that because these changes were controversial and potentially delegitimating (at least in the eyes of the faculty), they were first adopted by more marginal programs, those with lower status and more dependent on tuition funding, and only gradually were accepted by the more prestigious colleges.

A common response by organizations to the conflicting pressures posed by pluralistic fields is simply to partition the field, allowing some types of forms to specialize in, for example, liberal arts, and others to specialize in more practical or vocational training. Unlike practical arts, which convey some theoretical materials and cultivate some conceptual skills, vocational programs stress more standardized training for more routinized vocations, emphasizing practical skills over theoretical frameworks. Hence, different kinds of instructors, curricular materials, and teaching routines are called for. Programs devoted exclusively to vocational training have long existed in this country and, over time, many of them have moved within the boundaries of firms and public agencies which provide training for their employees. About a third of the training is housed in independent schools created by firms, such as Motorola, Walt Disney, and Boeing corporate universities), on in independent for-profit firms (Carnevale 1993).

With the advent and rapid growth of community colleges, many practical arts and vocational training programs have been added to their offerings, although as noted, many continue to offer liberal arts courses (Carnevale and Desrochers 2001). Also, as described above, the training domain is the primary focus of for-profit colleges, a rapidly growing population. The more successful of these colleges employ more standardized routines and curricular structures. Growth and profits are more important for them than academic prestige, as described below, and their repertories of action do not rely on full-time faculty, geographically-based systems, or, in some cases, on face-to-face instruction methods (Tierney and Hentschke 2007). They focus on a relatively few programs, offer a much more highly structured curriculum with few elective

courses, and often provide highly structured remedial or supportive programs for students lagging behind. Rosenbaum and colleagues (Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen & Person 2006), point out that effective occupational colleges minimize bureaucratic hurdles, reduce confusing choices, offer pro-active counseling services that often rely on peer groups, work to identify students in trouble early, and adjust schedules to reduce conflicting demands on students.

Prestige vs. Profits

Over hundreds of years, colleges have provided enclaves for those attempting to escape the pressures of the hurly-burley of the everyday world and the demands of the market place, providing a sanctuary for study and contemplation. Indeed, early organizational archetypes were provided by monasteries and religious cloisters. Academic values stress the virtues of a commitment to the search for truth, stressing objectivity, insulation from special interests, and a long- term perspective. From early on, academics saw themselves as part of an ongoing body of colleagues, an intellectual community of which they were the inheritors and stewards as well as the preservers and enhancers. The emerging norms and values stressed fidelity to this tradition, a moral obligation to protect and advance it, and esteem for those who best embodied these qualities. It is in this sense that academic prestige should be understood, not as a beauty contest, but as status system that motivates adherence to one's disciplinary missions with the highest rewards for those who contribute most toward its advancement. At its best, actors in these systems embrace what March and Olsen (1989) have termed a "logic of appropriateness": stressing adherence to the rules and requirements of the larger epistemic community and one's role in perpetuating it.

While this is a grand tradition, in recent years it has been tarnished by the intense competition among colleges and universities for top talent in the composition of both student body and faculty appointments. This competition was not instigated but has been fueled by the media rating systems that emerged in the early1980s, as described below. Colleges compete not simply in living

accommodations and recreational programs, but also in the hiring of academic superstars, who increase college visibility and prestige rankings (Kirp 2003).

Viewed more broadly, the alteration or academic logics began much earlier in the late nineteenth century. While educators in the U.S. adopted the classical models of scholarly communities from the ancient institutions cultivated in Europe, under pressure from a growing economy and the rising middle class, they adapted and expanded this model of higher education to include more professional preparation in the "practical" arts. As noted previously, whereas the early universities concentrated on philosophy and theology, science and mathematics, the American versions began to add training in law and medicine, then fields such as engineering, public and business administration. This "culture of professionalism," which matured between the years 1870 and 1900, aligned the university with the growth of the middle class. Together with the burgeoning professional societies, the culture cultivated and celebrated the virtues of expertise and public service, but carefully connected them to career advancement and self-interest. It provided a path for talented and idealistic individuals to avoid the ethos of a crass commercial culture, but still to "do well by doing good." In this manner, the institutions of higher education in America began quite early to be responsive to the needs of the market (Bledstein 1977).

However, new forms have emerged during the last few decades that do not simply bend to the wider pressures of market logics, but directly embrace them, making them central of their mission. Thus, the for-profit colleges seek as their primary goal to maximize profits, either by growing as rapidly as possible or finding new ways to cut costs. Rather than the logic of "appropriateness", these programs are guided by an "instrumental'' logic (March and Olsen 1989), that stresses the value of self-interest and attention to cost-benefit criteria in making choices. Critics claim that such behavior can lead to unethical behavior—indeed, during their early rapid growth period of the 1970s and 1980, fraudulent behavior and various scandals occurred leading to more stringent regulation and the exit of many of the early players. However, proponents of market logics point out that for any for-profit enterprise to long survive, it much perform well enough to

satisfy the needs of its customers (Hentschke 2010). Markets are expected not only to select efficient providers but to distribute productive educational resources so as to benefit the greatest numbers. However, an important question to be addressed is: How are educational benefits to be measured?

Quality vs. Access vs. Efficiency

In our study of changes over a half-century in the field of health care services (Scott et al. 2000; see also, Scott 2004), we observed what appears to be three alternative and somewhat conflicting institutional logics, each dominant during a different "era". The first was a stress on health care quality as defined by physicians, the central professional providers; the second saw a new emphasis on the importance of equity, stressing the value of access to health care services particularly for the needy and for those over 65; and the third privileged cost-effectiveness and efficiency, as defined by managerial and market criteria. While each logic dominated during a different period—quality prior to 1965, access after 1965, and efficiency from the early 1980s—each logic has retained its adherents and continues to be favored by one or another group of participants in the field.

In some ways, the same broad logics may be observed at play in higher education. Educational professionals continue to stress the centrality of educational quality and insist that they have a monopoly on determining what quality is and now it is to be assessed. Public officials and a variety of organized interest groups have focused on the importance of access to college as a primary goal in a democratic society that values opportunity for all. And fueled in part by reduced public spending on schools and the increasing costs of attending college, we observe an upsurge of interest in cost-containment and improvement cost-effectiveness.

Such parallel histories becomes less surprising when we consider that all the forces at work in producing these patterns have been external to the two institutional fields, residing instead in the wider societal environment in which both fields are embedded. The rise of professionalism in American society was,

as we suggested, strongly linked to the rise of the American university, but it nevertheless reflected wider societal processes, both in its origins and its effects. Universities provided a convenient vehicle for a wider "professionalization project" pursued by a variety of occupational groups, and was itself affected by its success, but higher education was not the major instigator of these forces. An emphasis on access to education for all was part of a broader social movement during the 1960s to insure equality of opportunity for all across a broad range of institutional fields, including civil rights, gender equality, equal opportunity in employment settings, gay and lesbian rights, and access for disabled and handicapped citizens. The passage of the Higher Education Act in 1965 provides a bench-mark for the arrival of this logic (an event paralleling the passage of Medicare/Medicaid in the health care sector). Finally, attention to education as a more or less effective and efficient production system commenced during the 1980s with the rise of the neo-liberal logic, stressing the centrality of customers and the importance of the optimal allocation of scarce resources. Market criteria and the recruitment of administrators attuned to managing in response to these criteria were argued to represent the best way to address the shortcoming of an inefficient sector.

We briefly discuss each of these logics.

Quality

Because professionals work on complex and uncertain problems where good performances can often lead to bad outcomes, they have long insisted that they themselves, the experts rather than laymen, should collectively assess the quality of their work. They have relied on peer evaluations and, more broadly, on reputation—the accumulation of evaluations of past performance—as general indicators of quality. They also readily substitute qualifications (for individuals) and capacity (for organizations) as useful, readily available, indicators of quality. Attention is focused on *inputs* and *processes*—on training of faculty, on quality of laboratories and libraries, on adherence to prevailing standards of practice (Donabedian 1966; Scott 1977).

These are the types of indicators favored by accreditation agencies. And, when broader media, most notably, *US News and World Reports,* began to introduce rankings of colleges in the 1980s, they first relied on the assessments of college presidents—the assessments of educational experts. When these judgments were criticized as the biased opinions of insiders and reflecting "old-boy" networks, they introduced more systematic indicators, most of which still emphasized inputs: average score of incoming students, student/faculty ratios, funds devoted to undergraduate education. Over time, other input indicators were included to assess, not educational capacity, but amenities attractive to students.

Other approaches that moved closer to the assessment of student *outcomes* have emerged. Zemsky 2009 (chap. 5) provides useful examples. Business school rankings, conducted by *Business Week,* have relied on assessments by "customers"—graduates and employers. Surveys were conducted of recent graduates and corporate recruiters to gauge their opinions about quality of training and preparation. Other approaches have examined "student engagement"; and still others have developed instruments to test student skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.

One outcome of especial importance for educational institutions is *graduation*. Viewed from one perspective, the major product of schools is not education but graduates. Regardless of the amount learned or the number of credit units completed, those who have not graduated from a school are regarded quite differently from those who have. As Meyer (1970) points out, in modern societies, schools have been granted a "charter" by society to assign individual to new social roles. In general, graduates enjoy privileges not available to non-graduates and, of course, graduates from specific programs, such as medical school, have access to positions unavailable to others. Economists refer to the same phenomenon as a "signaling" effect: graduation signifies to others, such as employers, that their bearers are to be treated differently from non-graduates (Blaugh 1987). The social significance attached

to the role of “graduate” is a major reason why critics and reformers are alarmed by the low graduation rates associated with many types of college programs.

Note, however, that none of these outcome measures attempt to evaluate the effects of inputs on outputs—to distinguish the contributions of student abilities and preparation before college from the benefits derived from the college experience itself—assessing the “value added” by the college. While not widely employed in any profession-dominated arena, there appears to have been much more progress to developing this approach to assessing health care providers. A number of studies have carefully studied patient outcomes, assessed in terms of mortality, morbidity, and quality of life, after controlling for patient characteristics and the nature and stage of disease (see, e.g., Flood and Scott 1987; Institute of Medicine 2001; Kimberley and Minvielle 2000).

In sum, quality is illusive, difficult to measure, and its meaning varies by type of stakeholder.

Access

American values have long placed a high value on equality of opportunity and, as colleges have increasingly been seen as an important gateway toward a better social and economic life, efforts have grown to increase the accessibility of a college education. Zemsky (2009: chap. 7) reminds us of four kinds of barriers. For years, many students were deterred from college by racial, gender, and religious discrimination and, while substantial progress has been made, inequities based on ethnicity and religion remain. A second barrier was presented by a scarcity of colleges and universities, a problem addressed by a large expansion in the number and types of colleges beginning in the 1960s. Third, for many years there was a widespread cultural presumption that a college experience was reserved for the elite classes. This barrier was torn down following World War II as more and more parents began to insist on better opportunities for their children than those available to them. A final barrier, and one which has proved more difficult to overcome, is financial. While financial aid in the form of grants and loans became available in the early 1970s, it has not kept up with the rise in college prices or overcome the increasing disparities of

income among families. Access to college for many students is currently limited to the lower rungs—community colleges and certificate programs—which are often overcrowded, understaffed, and poorly linked to transfer channels.

Efficiency

Pressures for efficiency of operation—attempting to do more with less—are unevenly distributed in higher education. Research universities and elite colleges have been successful in increasing the variety and amount of their resources and have been more focused on expanding programs and attracting high quality scholars and students than on cost-containment. By contrast, colleges depending on public funds have been confronted with diminishing funds, forcing them to either increase tuition and fees or cut programs and services.

For-profit schools have moved into the space created by these forces, and have concentrated on finding ways to improve efficiency and reduce expenditures. However, these approaches have not been undertaken to reduce costs to students but rather to increase profits for owners. The search for programs within higher education that combine attention to quality, access, and efficiency remains illusive.

* * * * *

While logics appear to deal primarily with internalized states of mind, difficult to empirically examine, institutional researchers have exhibited remarkable ingenuity in developing useful concrete indications of beliefs, norms, assumptions. In what is described as the “new archival tradition,” Ventresca and Mohr (2002) point out that advances in computer technology and the analysis of linguistic materials offers new opportunities, currently being exploited, to utilize a variety of sources, including industry directives, government registries, proprietary databases, media coverage ranging from the general (newspapers and popular magazines) to the specialized (professional journals, trade publications), public opinion surveys, and organizational records. For example, changes over time in the meaning of and indicators employed for assessing quality are amenable to quantitative assessment.

The new attention to broader systems such as fields stresses the importance of both (1) the multiple types of actors and the relations among them as they change over time and (2) the multiple arenas of discourse and cultural symbols that provide meanings that underlie and are expressed in organizational forms, social relations, and processes. In sum, data and methods exist to support a more systematic examination of the types of logics at work and their relation to changes in field actors and behaviors than we have evidenced in the above discussion.

Governance Systems

As Abbott (1988: 59) has observed, "jurisdiction has not only a culture, but also a social structure." Fields are made up not only of various types of social actors and institutional logics, but also of normative and regulative structures that exercise oversight and enforce compliance. "*Governance systems* are those arrangements which support the regularized control—whether by regimes created by mutual agreements, by legitimate hierarchical authority or by non-legitimate coercive means—of the actions of one set of actors by another" (Scott et al., 2000: 21). We briefly comment on governance systems functioning at two levels: organizational structure and field-level structures.

Organizational Governance

Mainstream colleges and universities are first and foremost *professional organizations,* settings within which work is governed not only by organizational hierarchies but by disciplinary colleagues. Rather than employing positional authority or formal sanctions, collegial groups rely on internalized norms and on peer controls (Scott and Davis 2007: pp. 147-149). Collegial controls, however are not grounded primarily within an organization but are situated in wider fields, so we pursue this argument below in our discussion of field-level governance.

Chief administrators within public and nonprofit colleges and universities typically are themselves academics. Most of them began their careers on the faculty, and many of them return to the faculty after their term of service within

the administration. Most administrators have not had professional training as managers; and for many years the administrative staff—the ratio of administrators to faculty (the "bureaucracy")—within colleges was quite small. For most of the twentieth century, administrators deferred to the faculty on most academic issues, including decisions regarding research to be undertaken, programs to be initiated, faculty to be hired, and courses to be taught.

During recent decades, however, college administration has expanded rapidly in size. Contributing factors include growth in ancillary services offered to students, expansion of the number and variety of programs offered, and the need to respond to the growing complexity of the funding and the regulatory environment. Complex institutional environments engender elaborate bureaucratic structures within the organizations embedded in them (Meyer, Scott & Strang 1987). But there is also evidence of increasing centralization of decision making and control over academic programs. Administrators are more likely to engage in strategic planning, determining what types of academic centers and programs are to be created, expanded or eliminated. Hallmarks of the changes underway include the observation that more colleges recruit their top officers from other schools rather than from their own faculty, suggesting that more faculty are pursuing careers as administrators, and the increasing disparity between the salaries paid to these officers and to rank-and-file faculty.

In most colleges and universities, top administrators report to a board of trustees composed of representatives of important stakeholder groups such as community leaders, business representatives and public officials, financial and legal experts, and alumni representatives. Some trustees of public universities are appointed by political office-holders while the trustees of many private universities are constituted as a self-perpetuating body. Although for many years, these boards functioned primarily as passive sounding boards to approve faculty and administrative decisions, their relative power has grown over time. Business and financial representatives play a larger role and are more likely to pressure administrators to adopt managerial strategies and approaches (Chait 2002). Administrative and trustee authority in colleges and universities is also

increasing because of a change in the composition of the faculty in recent years. Even in top tier schools, the proportion of full-time faculty who are covered by the tenure system has declined steadily over three decades, while there has been rapid growth in the numbers of nontenure and part-time faculty members (Zemsky 2009 chap. 11). An increasing proportion of the teaching staff of all schools is made up of "adjunct faculty," "instructors," "lecturers," "parenthetical faculty" (e.g., professor [teaching]), "researcher," "senior researcher," and related titles. Such faculty have no vote in faculty meetings and play no role in the governance of their college or university.

All of these trends are magnified many times in for-profit schools. Here faculty are largely disempowered and corporate boards exercise control over all aspects of the program. Administrators, many with professional training in business, employ state-of-the-art managerial methods and techniques. Market and managerial logics hold sway.

Field-level Governance

Public Systems

Whereas many Western democracies have developed their higher education system predominantly under a single public system, from the outset the U.S. has exhibited a mixture of public and private auspices. Federal agencies such as the Department of Education (DOE), exercise little overall control, although this is changing. For example, the DOE now plays a role in college accreditation, as discussed below, and the Department of Labor is increasingly involved in the educational field. Public systems are divided into a federal sector, overseeing the several military academies and War Colleges, and the fifty subsystems of the states. Each of the state systems contains a mixture of state universities, colleges, and community colleges. States vary considerably in mode of organization, but most operate under some type of state board of education, with higher education often overseen by a specialized board. Community colleges are supported primarily by local, often regional, funds and many are under the control of local authorities (Clark 1983: chap. 2). In addition,

in many states, agencies have been created to regulate specific types of schools, including private ones. For example, in California, the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education regulates private postsecondary and vocational schools. Public systems rely primarily on regulative controls backed by funding powers and the authority to enforce rules governing the use of these resources.

During the growth period in higher education during the 1960s, some states, such as California under the leadership of Clark Kerr, crafted elaborate, tiered systems of higher education, with major research universities at the top level, four-year state colleges at the mid-level, and two-year community colleges in the lower tier. Other states like New York and Michigan adopted similar plans. And, while there are no "federal" universities (except for the military academies), since the time of World War II, the federal government has provided substantial funding for research universities and comprehensive colleges in the form of research and research training grants and contracts through agencies such as DoD, NSF, NIH and NIMH. These funding agencies can play a substantial oversight role over specific research and research training programs in universities. The federal government also provides support for individual students beginning with the GI Bill in 1944 and continuing on with financial aid programs through the Pell Grants from 1972 (Cole 2009: chap. 4).

Federal aid, unlike state grants-in-aid, is highly targeted to specific purposes and programs, so that federal support is always accompanied by elaborate accounting requirements imposing administrative burdens on recipients, both individuals and colleges. In studies of K-12 federal programs, such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), enacted during the 1960s, my colleagues and I (Meyer, Scott, & Strang 1987; Meyer et al., 1988) found that such programs—in contrast to state funding—were much more likely to generate heightened levels of administration, both at the state and district levels. In a similar fashion, federal programs targeting higher education are expected to be associated with an expansion of administration at the state or college level, or both.

Most states established their colleges and universities at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries and these systems have expanded considerably in size since the mid-20th century. However, from the 1970s on, state expenditures on higher education have declined steadily, dropping approximately 20 percent as a share of state spending. On average, state funding has declined from over 50 percent of public college revenues in the 1970s to under 40 percent today. Families and students have been forced to assume a much greater share of the financial burden through increased fees and tuition (Longanecker 2006). Universities and comprehensive colleges have also greatly raised tuition charges for out-of-state, including foreign, students. In this manner, the U.S. public system of higher education is becoming increasingly privatized, at least in terms of sources of funding.

Private Systems

Many for-profit systems operate at a sub-field level in the sense that they own and oversee collections of schools. While there are some public systems, such as the University of California and the State University of New York (SUNY), that operate at this level in the sense that they oversee multiple campuses and programs, private systems owned by for-profit corporations are much more likely to operate at a regional or even a national level than nonprofit or public systems. They grow variously by acquiring independent schools, developing new campuses, and partnering with public- and nonprofit schools. We have already discussed the size and organizational complexity of Phoenix with its multiple campuses, and there are many similar, somewhat smaller college systems, such as Kaplan, the Apollo Group, Education Management Corporation, DeVry, and Corinthian overseeing geographically dispersed programs (Hentschke 2010). Their educational efforts are both fueled and enabled by the revolution in information and communication technology (ICT), which allows for distance learning. Once curricular materials are created, they can be transmitted virtually costlessly to widely-scattered consumers.

For-profit schools, as noted, are growing more rapidly than public or nonprofits. Although they account for only about 8 percent of students attending college, they made up 16 percent of all associate degrees award in 2006-7. They currently serve about two million students and are expected to double by 2015. While they operate in ways to reduce costs, tuititon at for-profit colleges averages more than six times that of a community college (Gonzalez 2009).

The most significant governance structures operating at the wider field level with respect to private schools are the accreditation agencies, described below. A large number of associations have developed to connect specific types of private systems—e.g., religious denominations, ethnic groups, for-profits—but, as already discussed, these associations primarily provide services to their members. Many of these associations—for example, the National Catholic Educational Association or the Southern Baptist Association of Christian Schools include elementary and secondary schools as well as colleges and seminaries among their members.

Targeted Governance Associations

In a distinctive American fashion, a number of associations have emerged that have come to exercise significant governance functions over selected arenas of college life. A clear example is provided by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which was organized in 1906 when presidents of five major universities came together to set rules for collegiate athletic sports in the U.S. For many years the NCAA functioned as a loose voluntary confederation of athletic programs within colleges with meager enforcement powers, but the association's importance grew as sports became a national pastime with the onset of championship play (e.g., the "bowl games"), Olympic team participation, and the growth of television coverage with its associated revenues (Stern 1979). Because it served as the clearing house and arbiter of these valued opportunities, the NCAA's power position improved over its constituent members. Spurred by media coverage of sports scandals and pressure from academic authorities, in particular, the American Council on

Education, the NCAA adopted stricter rules and graduated enforcement procedures which, for the first time in allowed them to exercise significant authority over a wide range of athletic programs within colleges and universities.

Another example of targeted governance systems is provided by the national fraternities and sororities which exercise varying levels of control over their individual chapters within colleges.

Disciplinary Associations

As Clark (1983: 29) reminds us, in addition to being a network of varying enterprises, "a national system of higher education is also a set of disciplines and professions". Indeed, the latter aspect—the disciplinary systems are increasingly transnational in structure and operation. The disciplinary associations are especially salient for schools in the upper tiers of the field—the research universities, the comprehensive colleges, elite colleges, and the special focus institutions. For faculty members in these settings, discipline trumps enterprise.

Abbott (2001; 2002) argues that the resilience of the academic disciplines within higher education rests in their "dual institutionalization":

> On the one hand, the disciplines constitute the macrostructure of the labor market for faculty. Careers remain within discipline much more than within university. On the other hand, the system constitutes the microstructure of each individual university. All arts and sciences faculties contain more or less the same list of departments (2001: 208-209)

It is in this sense that the primary work of upper-tier colleges is defined and controlled by professional schemas and practices that penetrate into the core of the organization. In Clark's language, it is helpful

> to recognize the great extent of crosshatching in academic systems. Such systems are first-class examples, written large, of "matrix structures," arrangement that provide two or more crosscutting bases of grouping . . . [--in this case, by discipline and geography] (p. 31).

The disciplinary associations and their members assist colleges in overseeing the quality of their faculty appointments. When a position is to be

filled or an incumbent faculty member is to be reviewed for promotion, colleagues within the academic unit seek letters of recommendation from members of the discipline external to the college. In addition, many colleges routinely enlist members of the wider discipline to serve on advisory and review boards to help them to oversee the overall quality and performance of their departmental programs.

Disciplines exercise their governance powers in distinctive ways. Streeck and Schmitter (1985) argue that these "private interest governments" adhere to neither a "market" nor a "state" model, but to an "associative model" based on the "concertation" of interests. The actors within these associations are interdependent, sharing common understandings and norms. They share the common purpose of "defending and promoting functionally-defined interests" (p. 10). Because one's colleagues and peers are involved in exercising oversight, they are accorded greater credibility than that granted to "outsiders". Because they are based on shared expert knowledge and common norms, their control attempts are more likely to be treated as legitimate. By setting standards and developing systems of mutual oversight and by encouraging self- and peer monitoring, the scientific and academic disciplinary associations exercise a significant amount of "soft power" over faculty within colleges (Brunsson and Jacobsson, 2000; Jacobsson and Sahlin-Andersson 2006). The type of control exercised involves a combination of cognitive and normative controls.

While disciplinary controls remain strong in top-tier schools, the scope of their control has been curtailed by forces encouraging universities to become more "relevant", to give higher priority to the solution of practical problems. Because such problems, by nature, cross disciplinary boundaries, interdisciplinary approaches are increasingly favored, and this strengthens the hand of academic administrators. Unlike disciplines which are governed by academics and only loosely coupled with one another, Interdisciplinary teams require mobilizing efforts and coordination mechanisms, providing greater justification for the use of managerial controls.

Accreditation Systems

Whereas in most countries, educational accreditation is carried out by a governmental agency, in the U.S. until quite recently, the function of quality assurance has been performed entirely by private membership associations. The U.S. accreditation process developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as educators came to recognize the great discrepancies developing among schools and the need for standardization of curricula and requirements.

A collection of six regional accreditation agencies have arisen to serve specified geographic areas (e.g., New England Association of Schools and Colleges; Western Association of Schools and Colleges). They accredit the vast majority of public and nonprofit private educational institutions in the areas served, including elementary schools, junior high schools, middle schools, high schools, and public and private institutions of higher education that are academic in nature. Accreditation teams are made up of volunteers from the programs reviewed, which leads to substantial variation in the strictness and quality of the reviews. In addition to being subject to the review of these public bodies, religious colleges may seek accreditation from one of several denominational bodies. A collection of more than 50 national accreditation bodies has also developed to accredit predominantly for-profit schools and programs that offer vocational, career or technical programs. In addition, a number of accreditation agencies exist to review specialized schools, both free-standing and components of universities, including the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation, the American Bar Association, and the Association to Advance Collegiate School of Business.

The federal government had no role in accreditation for higher education until the reauthorization of the G.I. Bill for Korean War veterans, which provided that only accredited programs could qualify for funding. With the creation of the U.S. Department of Education in 1965, the Secretary was required by law to publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies for higher education. There the matter largely rested until the early 1990s, when a U.S. senate committee investigated a series of scandals involving student loan defaults and

student aid abuses which raised serious questions about the laxity of accreditation processes. As a consequence, the U.S. Congress enacted legislation establishing State Postsecondary Review Entities (SPREs) to work in combination with existing accreditation agencies and licensing bodies in overseeing Title IV student loan guarantees and financial aid. For the first time, the U.S. the federal government assumed a direct role in college accreditation as a part of a "program integrity triad"—consisting of the mandated state SPREs, existing accreditation agencies, and the DOE—to evaluate the quality of institutions participating in the Title IV programs (Glidden 1996; Goodwin & Riggs 1997) .

These developments created much consternation and soul-searching in the existing educational establishment (Glidden 1996). In response, a group of college and university presidents took steps to create a more effective national organization to coordinate accreditation. Their recommendations led in 1996 to the replacement of an earlier association of accreditation agencies, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The most recent attempt to strengthen the federal role in accreditation was led by then Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, whose Commission on the Future of Higher Education, recommended in 2006 a process by which weaker accreditation agencies could be weeded out (Secretary of Education's Commission 2006). However, these proposals failed to receive congressional support (Zemsky 2009).

More generally, although some public and non-profit colleges and their leaders have been active in stimulating reform processes, it remains true that neither the public nor most rank-and-file members of colleges and universities have any clear understanding of either the structure or the processes attending accreditation in the U.S. (Glidden 1996). At the same time, entrenched interests groups within higher education are committed to defending the prerogatives of states and regions and reliance on peer controls.

The ignorance surrounding accreditation for the public and non-profit colleges seems a modest problem when compared with the accusation of fraud

in the form of “degree-selling” and “accreditation mills” recently leveled at for-profit colleges. Estimates made by individual states provide cause for alarm. In 2005, the state of Michigan identified 600 programs alleged to be “degree mills”; Oregon identified 260. With the rise of internet education and training programs, opportunities for the entry of fraudulent operators have expanded (CHEA 2000). Testimony before a U.S. Senate committee in 2010 provided evidence of fraud and misrepresentation by college officials regarding information provided to prospective applications on matters varying from the total cost of tuition to graduate rates and potential salary after graduation (General Accounting Office, 2010) For-profit college and certificate programs and their associated national accreditation agencies are likely to be targets for continued investigation and reform efforts in the near-term future.

More generally, some of the limitations and difficulties accompanying accreditation efforts in the U.S. may stem from the broad purview of the major regional accreditation agencies, which are expected to exercise oversight over schools ranging from primary education through doctoral programs. Critics observe that the agenda and energy of these agencies is concentrated on primary and secondary programs. Even if more of their attention were focused on post-secondary programs, they still confront enormous challenges in dealing with the diversity in mission, resources, and size of colleges they oversee. It appears that there are advantages to specialization: the better-performing accreditation agencies are those dealing with specialized schools, such as law, medicine, or engineering.

Indeed, perhaps the single most effective example of a successful accreditation program in the American context is provided by the reforms initiated early in the 20th century in medical schools. At that time, American medicine was confronted by a growing number of proprietary schools of medicine not capable of providing adequate training to student physicians. The reigning professional association, the American Medical Association (AMA) created in 1904 a Council on Medical Education with the mandate to formulate minimum standards for physician training. These efforts received enormous assistance when the AMA

Council invited the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to join them in reform efforts. Enter Abraham Flexner, whose report published in 1910 led to demise of inferior programs and the institution of a professional accreditation apparatus under the AMA Council. Although other factors fostering reform were at work—rising requirements set by state licensing boards, increasing costs of training—the "Flexner report" has remained the gold standard in accreditation reform (Starr 1982: chap. 3). Moreover, this episode underlines the important role play by foundations in educational reform efforts, as discussed below.

Unions

Unions differ from professional associations in important ways. Unions are more likely to focus on material concerns: on salaries and working conditions; while professional associations tend to concentrate on setting standards for the substance of the work and on protection of academic freedom. Many faculty members refuse to consider union membership, regarding it as contrary to their identity and self-conception as professional scholars. Hence, we would expect union membership to be highly stratified by type of college and employment setting, as it is.

In addition to faculty unions, it is important not to overlook the fact that unions have a strong presence in most colleges because of the unionization of many types of staff employees—administrative and craft workers, such as plumbers and electricians. The City University of New York (CCNY), for example, lists 14 different unions involving some 25 local unions as representing one or another group of employees.

Courts

The courts exercise a unique role in American society, providing an independent route to claim the protection of constitutional rights and a distinctive forum for arriving at judgments. Colleges and universities of any size will house their own legal departments and, at any given time, will be engaged in multiple

types of litigation and legal action. Many of these involve the types of cases confronting any large employer or service provider—e.g., employee protections or negligence matters involving employee or student safety. But colleges and universities are also subject to a number of somewhat distinctive disputes that arise in such areas as:

- protection of free speech
- diversity, both in student admissions and in the hiring of faculty and other personnel
- equal protection issues, for example, support for women athletes
- separation of church and state
- freedom of information, including student and personnel records, alumni giving
- patenting of inventions and protection of intellectual property
- military recruitment

Colleges and their legal representatives are the object of many legal questions and disputes, but they also engage in pro-active attempts to shape legislation and the administration of policies affecting their interests. Both individually and collectively they lobby legislators and pressure administrative agencies to influence their interpretation of the laws and rulings.

But even after legislation in enacted, colleges work to shape its meaning and interpretation. I believe it is helpful to understand both the process and the effects of judicial governance to adopt an approach that stresses "the endogeneity of the law" (Edelman, Uggen & Erlanger 1999; see also Dobbin et al., 1988; Dobbin & Sutton 1998). In this formulation, when a law is passed, organizations in the field affected will attempt to determine what its meaning is and its implications for their situation. Since many if not most legislative acts are somewhat ambiguous, a period of "sense-making" (Weick 1995) ensues, in which relevant actors—often in accounting, personnel, or admissions departments—attempt to collectively interpret what the law means. These processes are often conducted at the field level, involving discussions and papers presented at professional meetings and consultations with colleagues in

similar situations. Over time, some consensus will emerge and one or another party will craft a response they hope will be in compliance with the law. Potential "solutions" are constructed, but then are tested by court cases brought by those affected. As these cases accumulate, some type of legal consensus is developed which reflect both the interpretations of the relevant university actors as well as the reactions of judges to these "solutions." As the law "settles", appropriate structural modifications and procedural reform are rapidly diffused across colleges. The meaning of a law is negotiated over time by actors within the field in dialog with the courts and the wider media.

Foundations and Policy Institutes

No clearer example exists of "American exceptionalism" than the role played by foundations in American life. Unlike most western democracies where policy and planning functions are located primarily within the state, in the U.S., foundations and, more recently, policy institutes or "think tanks" have played a leading role in providing expertise and resources to stimulate specific reforms in many sectors of our society as well as to initiate discussions of broader societal trends and the need to craft long-term policy initiatives. In a sense, the American state has "contracted out" its long-term planning functions to the private sector.

The number and variety of foundations focusing on higher education is large—nearly 60,000 foundations in 2003, although the combined share of college revenues they provide is small, less than three percent of total revenues (Clotfelter 2007). However, their targeted initiatives and policy influence have been influential beyond the scale of funding involved. While many foundation activities simply enhance the programs already underway within colleges, some have supported important new initiatives and reforms. Examples of the latter include the transformation of medical education, as described above, the development of empirically-based social science research, the reform of business schools, and the fostering of interdisciplinary programs such as women's and urban studies programs (p. 214).

Policy centers or think tanks have become much more numerous in recent years. Some, such as the National Center on Public Policy and Higher Education (NCPPHE), have engaged in a wide-ranging set of studies regarding how states can improve higher education. Others, such as the Council for Aid to Education, have developed tools for better assessing learning outcomes in college (Zemsky 2009: 27; 86). Many are generally occupied with funding research, fostering demonstration projects and disseminating results.

Whereas early foundations were either main-stream or cast in the liberal tradition, a significant development during the last half century has been the rise of the conservative movement and the emergence of an influential collection of conservative foundations and policy centers, such as the American Enterprise Institute. (Lenkowsky 2007). These foundations and centers have championed limited government, federalism, free markets, and related educational reforms. Most of their attention in the arena of education has been directed toward primary and secondary programs, but they have supported the rise of forprofit colleges and measures which increase student choice. While all types of foundations recognize that their influence depends greatly on the building of research and educator networks, litigation, and advocacy, conservative foundations have been particularly active in targeting elite opinion leaders and key political figures, providing them with arguments, evidence, “taking points” and even drafts of legislation and staff assistance for politicians to advance their agendas.

In addition to the foundations and policy institutes, a wide variety of advocacy organizations and business groups have sprung up to mobilize pressures and stimulate reforms of one of another type. Among those active in higher education are the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (NCHEMS), Achieve, and the California Campaign for Community College Opportunity. Business groups include the Committee for Economic Development (CED).

Rating Systems

From the outset, colleges of all types have found themselves to be players in a stratification system, competing for resources, faculty, students, and prestige. As first formulated by Bourdieu (1977), actors within a field are engaged in a game in which they compete, and cooperate, with others to improve their "capital"—financial, human, social, and cultural. In higher education, this game was long pursued as a relatively informal contest—a kind of "parlor game" of gossip and invidious comparisons of primary interest to college insiders. However, over time, as contests that had been carried out by institutions within local areas began to expand to be national and even international in scope, measures of performance and quality proliferated, becoming both more explicit and more public.

A sea change occurred with the publication of detailed rankings of colleges and universities in the U.S by *U.S News and World Reports* in 1983. Based on a wide variety of data concerning faculty and student characteristics, varieties of programs, and quality of facilities, these rankings have become more differentiated over time, providing ratings for colleges of the same types and for disciplines and schools within colleges and universities. Research examining the effects of these public rankings of colleges suggests that while they have affected the behavior of external audiences, such as student applicants and resource providers, their largest effects have been on the decisions and behavior of college administrators and faculty members. While there is evidence of denial, of resistance, and of "gaming" the measures by colleges, through a combination of cognitive and affective processes, many participants appear to have largely internalized the judgments reported by the external raters and have increased their efforts to improve the scores awarded to their programs. (Bastedo and Bowman 2009; Espeland and Sauder 2007; Sauder and Espeland 2009; Zemsky 2009).

An important part of the rationale offered by the popular media and its apologists for creating ratings of colleges was to even the playing field between colleges and students. Colleges, it was argued, required students to provide detailed information regarding their background and qualifications while students,

by contrast, were relatively ignorant of the virtues and defects of the schools to which they were applying—a classic case of asymmetric information in which the "buyers" were disadvantaged relate to the "sellers". We pursue the implication of this perspective in our discussion of market mechanisms below.

Corporations

At the present time, corporations enter into the discussion of governance arrangements at the field level in higher education in two ways: as funders of and settings for research and research training, and as providers of for-profit education. We briefly comment on each.

Corporations increasingly serve as sources of funding and as partners with research universities in carrying on research and research training. The clearest example is provided by the life sciences—basic and applied biomedical science—where the world of "public" and "private" science have come together. Powell and Owen-Smith (2002) describe how academic programs dominated by the prestige associated with priority of discovery and open publication have merged with industry programs with a commercial emphasis on profits and the use of patents to protect new innovations. Entrepreneurial faculty increasingly found their own companies, and faculty productivity is coming to be measured as much by numbers of patents as publications. These developments, in turn, have encouraged universities to develop their own in-house technology transfer and licensing companies, and many of these now provide sizable streams of income to both faculty and universities. The logics of the academy and the market now coexist and co-mingle in this part of the university.

For-profit corporations that provide education have increased in numbers and scale of operation since the 1980s. We have described their growing size and influence above in our discussion of private governance structures.

Markets

It is common knowledge that colleges and universities are in competition with one another in the provision of educational services. Market pressures

arrived with the creation of the second college in the 17th century and have been building ever since. Such pressures constitute an important source of governance—indeed, economists would argue, markets provide *the* most rational and reliable agent of control. We have already discussed the rise of market pressures that encourage liberal arts colleges to adjust their offerings to include more practical training of a type that allows their graduates to be competitive in the market-place for employment. And we have considered the competitive pressures which arise among colleges in the same populations to compete for resources, students and faculty. However, to this point our focus has been almost exclusively on the *supply side* of educational services and on those forces mobilized to support and influence its operation.

A *demand side* perspective would begin not with the colleges—the providers—but with their clients—the student. As Illich (1971) argued more than fifty years ago, it is important not to confuse the supplier with the service: the school with education. Education—in the sense of learning and development—has long been available outside of formal schooling to individuals in all walks of life. Lessons are there to be learned in everyday experiences, from friends and strangers, from the media and books, from travel and participating in the arts. Given advances in ICT, these long-available and familiar resources can now be vastly augmented by the reach of the internet. Under such conditions, who needs the colleges and universities? They have no monopoly on information or knowledge.

Kamenezt (2010: chap. 5) cogently reviews these approaches to unleashing what has been termed the "edupunk": the liberated learner at the center of a web of intellectual resources, supported by "community- and practice-based learning" (p. 109). Utilizing resources such as those developed by the Open University in the UK or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with its OpenCourseWare Project, students can design their own curriculum. Freely-available materials can be combined with self-organized groups of learners, both co-located and virtual. In short, students can "build their own university." The edupunk model offers a radical recipe for reforming higher

education: simply leave the old system in place—its many colleges and universities, its accreditation agencies and entrenched associations and interest groups—and allow students to create an alternative approach to education.

While such approaches present an intriguing and heady vision of the future of learning, it is important to point out that it posits a heroic, and probably unrealistic, view of the agency of the individual learner and his or her capacity to mobilize the intellectual and social resources of their environments. Somewhat ironically, the skills and intelligence needed to create one's own educational experience appear to be those that we commonly associate with a highly educated person! (Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, and Person 2006: chap. 5). Also, it was Simon (1945/1997) who first taught us about the cognitive limits of individuals and who suggested that a primary purpose of an organization is to simplify work by subdividing it and to support decision-making by creating formal channels to supply appropriate information to diverse participants as needed. In addition, authority figures select goals, and rules constrain choices. Organizations are needed to support individual rationality.

Alongside the view of the liberated learner, Kamenetz (2009) points out that the other face of market-based education features the redefinition of education as "a privatized commodity provided by for-profit companies." (p. 121). The rise of a population of "edupreneurs"—the promoters of for-profit education—has been described above. And, like most of the previous discussion, this approach returns us to the conventional focus on providers.

* * * * *

It is clear that in the arena of higher education, governance structures are complex, varied and overlapping. They are also multi-layered and contested. Professional standards coexist and interact with public regulatory powers, and authority exercised by administrative officers operates alongside the pressures posed by market forces. The legalistic requirements imposed on schools by regulatory authorities present a very different face of control from the "soft" and flexible standards backed by professional groups. Markets rely on financial

incentives. These three “logics of control” are somewhat at variance with one another.

Any given college will confront a diverse and somewhat distinctive array of governance units depending on the types of programs it offers, its ownership status, it sources of funding, the composition of its faculty and student body, and its geographic location. Those who attempt to intervene, by changing regulations or through manipulating sanctions or other incentives, or demonstrating “best practice” developed in some other setting, would do well to keep this complexity in mind.

Concluding Comments

The conclusion to a long paper should be brief. I stress two ideas: (1) higher education is a subfield of wider societal systems; and (2) organizational and institutional diversity poses problems but it is also a source of strength.

Education and Society

In the words of Stevens and colleagues (2008), higher education is a vital *hub* within a society—“a hub connecting some of the most prominent institutional sectors of modern societies: the labor market, the professions and the sciences, the family and the nation-state” (p xx). While the foregoing discussion has concentrated on the many working parts within the specialized sector of higher education, other necessary and valuable foci would examine the interplay between education and one or another arena. For example, during the current period of economic downturn, many political and industrial leaders are stressing the important role that education can play in job training at all levels. From higher-level professional training in engineering and science to vocational programs that train health care workers and technicians, colleges are key players in maintaining and improving a society’s economic well-being. A focus on this function redraws the boundaries of the field to include departments of labor and related governmental agencies and business and industrial corporations and

their related associations, industrial unions, placement agencies and other intermediaries in labor markets, as well as employers.

More generally, one of the most revealing approaches to field construction is not to focus on a sector or industry, but an *issue* (Hoffman, 1997). Any given issue—student loans, college athletics, the decline of liberal arts programs, graduation rates—can become a vortex that attracts and activates a subset of players within higher education and a collection of groups and organizations in the wider environment affected by the issue. It is within such ad hoc networks that problems are framed and compromises and solutions crafted. The complexity and diversity of these issue networks is usefully illustrated in Slaughter's (2002) examination of the diverse array of forces that shaped the curriculum for instruction in the disciplines of physics and in women's studies. It is also well to keep in mind that there not only networks of organizations, there are networks of issues—one issue can become intertwined with another—and networks that link selected organizations and issues (Laumann and Knoke 1987).

The Uses of Diversity

Our sketch of the arena of higher education in America reveals a complex, multifaceted array of organizational forms, associations and movements as well as a rich mixture of cultural frames and schema. This complexity poses severe challenges to those who work within the field, to those outside the field who relate to it in some manner, and to those who seek to change or reform it. Complexity is challenging, but, on the other hand, it is a major resource. As noted in our discussion of organization populations, a wide variety of types of college offers a spectrum of approaches to providing educational services. As Hannan and Freeman elaborate:

> A stock of alternative forms has value for a society whenever the future is uncertain. A society that relies on a few organizational forms may thrive for a time; but once the environment changes, such a society faces serious problems until existing organizations are reshaped or new organizational forms are created [--a difficult and time-consuming task]. . .

> . Organizational diversity within any realm of activity, such as medical care, microelectronics production, or scientific research, constitutes a repository of alternative solutions to the problem of producing sets of collective outcomes. These solutions are embedded in organizational structures and strategies. (1989: 7, 8).

The existence of diverse organizational populations also provides a wider range of alternative career paths for employees and styles of education for students than does a more uniform system, and it provides many entry points. Students may fail or drop out of one type of programs but subsequently be admitted to another. Failure is not final, as is too often the case in more uniform and tightly-linked systems. Such diversity in educational organizations has long been a distinctive hallmark of the U.S., and is widely regarded as one of our greatest assets.

In the same manner, a variety of institutional logics, while creating conflicts and impasses, is also a source of strength. Societies that are richly endowed in cultural materials offer varied frames, schema, and paradigms to participants. Whereas in simple and stable societies, cultures act to conserve present practices and repress alternatives, in complex and changing societies, cultures provide an elaborate “tool kit” out of which to cobble together new approaches (Swidler 1986). Cultural and structural diversity in higher education are essential for serving the needs of a large, differentiated, and rapidly changing society. Multiple institutional frameworks provide numerous roadblocks but also varied levers for change.

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