UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATIONS IN CONTEXT: GLOBAL-LOCAL DYNAMICS OF POLICY PROCESSES AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN CHILE

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THESIS DECLARATION

I, Victoria Constanza Valdebenito Mac Farlane, certify that:

This thesis has been substantially accomplished during enrolment in this degree.

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The research involving human data reported in this thesis was assessed and approved by The University of Western Australia Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval #: RA/41/7954. Written patient consent has been received and archived for the research involving patient data reported in this thesis.

The following approvals were obtained prior to commencing the relevant work described in this thesis: Research Proposal Presented to the Graduate School of Education, Research Permit from each of the three universities studied in Chile and Human Research Ethics Approval from the University of Western Australia.

The work described in this thesis was funded by the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) and its program ‘Beca Chile’, and the Adolfo Ibáñez University.

This thesis does not contain work that I have published, nor work under review for publication.

Signature: ____________________________
Date: 23/4/2019
Located within in the context of accelerating globalisation in the 21st century knowledge society, the primary focus of the study presented here were three universities in Chile at which radical curriculum policy changes have been taking place over the last decade. The aim of the study was to analyse associated policies and practices in the universities undergoing radical curriculum changes in Chile from the perspective of participants. University curriculum transformations are moving to a centre stage in the higher education reform agendas of many countries, as they strive to strengthen their positioning in a competitive global knowledge society. Consequently, development of quality university curricula to attract the ‘best and brightest’ students in a mobile world has become a significant feature. These international trends are underway in universities in Chile, although specific curriculum transformations are shaped within the unique contexts of localised Chilean settings. A number of the nation’s universities are prominent in their engagement with curriculum policies which resonate strongly with those in Europe and the United States. International reforms, such as the Bologna Agreement, have also posed challenges for higher education in Chile. Rising to these challenges requires a strong evidence base to support curriculum policy development in Chile universities in a competitive knowledge era.

Using a ‘policy trajectory’ framework, and guided by the interpretivist approach to research, interview transcripts and documents were analysed in relation to the macro (national), the meso (university administration) and the micro (academics) level. In total, 33 participants were included. A further analysis guided by both a grounded theory and a critical theory approach was then undertaken to reveal ‘bigger picture’ issues related to curriculum transformations in Chile.
The research results consist of several major themes in each of the four contexts of the ‘policy trajectory’. Regarding the context of influences and the context of policy text production, themes relate to hegemony exercised by universities in first world countries and international organisation such as the OECD in the higher education field, the effects of globalisation and its associated neoliberal ideology in universities in Chile, and the local responses to those pressures. Regarding the context of policy practices and effects (enactment) themes emerged around the impacts of the curriculum changes on university staff and on student. Finally, regarding the context of longer-term policy outcomes themes relate to issues around the notions of quality, equity and social justice. The major themes in each policy context and propositions are presented in Chapter 9. The thesis concludes with a number of recommendations that potentially provide ‘food for thought’ beyond the localised settings of this study, as well as possibilities for further research.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CNA: National Accreditation Commission, Chile.
CRUCH: Council of Rectors, Chile.
CSE: Higher Education Council, Chile.
DIVESUP: Department of Higher Education, the Ministry of Education Chile.
EHEA: European Higher Education Area.
EU: European Union.
HE: Higher education.
IMF: International Monetary Fund.
LOCE: Organic Constitutional Law on Teaching in Chile.
MECESUP: Improvement of Quality and Equity in Tertiary Education Program, Chile.
MERCOSUR: The Common Market of the South.
MINEDUC: Ministry of Education Chile.
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
PSU: University Selection Test in Chile.
UA: University A.
UB: University B.
UC: University C.
UK: United Kingdom.
US: United States.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study reported in later chapters of this thesis was to analyze contemporary curriculum policy and practices in universities in Chile which are engaged in a radical policy of adopting a liberal model of curriculum at undergraduate level, with professional preparation being offered only at the postgraduate level. The specific focus of the study was on three universities within the country, considered against a background of global and national contextual influences, in the contemporary competitive higher education landscape. Other national settings that historically have been influential in ‘policy borrowing’ on the part of Chile, especially the United States (US) and the United Kingdom, were also considered. Equally, the influences of such international bodies as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) were considered because, while they are not official policy makers, they have had a growing influence on higher education policy processes both nationally and internationally in recent years (Sellar & Lingard, 2013).

Internationally, new developments in university curriculum policy are currently evident. These relate to such matters as the range of curriculum objectives; the nature of associated values and beliefs; the extent to which various objectives are prescribed for some or for all; the pattern of components into which the ‘whole’ curriculum is divided and how lecturers and students are grouped in relation to this; the content, pedagogical approaches and modes of assessment outlined; and the methods used to evaluate the success of the work (Stabback, 2016). Associated outcomes include the deconstruction of the traditional university curriculum by subjects through modularization, the cross curricular key generic skills movement, and competency-based developments (Harpe &
Thomas, 2009). These and other policy outcomes have been fostered by such developments as the Bologna Agreement which has emphasised the importance of establishing a strong relationship between employment and education. A related idea is that in the global knowledge society where, many hold, information and skills can become obsolete quickly, the provision of a general education may be the best way to promote such competencies as analytical and problem-solving skills. This, in turn, has led to an interest in promoting ‘general education’ at the undergraduate level (Vidovich, 2012), with this being understood as constituting “a broad background in the disciplines, along with critical thinking skills” (Altbach, 2011, p. 131).

Developments along the line of those noted above have led to decisions being more ‘high stakes’ than previously in terms of universities meeting government and employer accountability requirements in order to attract the ‘best’ students from around the world and to respond to the growing recognition of the importance of higher education in a knowledge era (Grumet & Yates, 2011). Moreover, new forms of curriculum policy have weakened the control of university academics over their work and placed it in the hands of university administrators (Vidovich, 2012). Specifically regarding Chile, over the last three decades there has been a shift to a neoliberal agenda in higher education and to the adoption by some universities in the country of associated international models of curriculum, pedagogy and administration. This process commenced early in the 1980s, when the country had a military government under the dictator, Pinochet. The changes brought about during that era were directed towards achieving three main goals. First, there was an attempt to seek to open-up the higher education system to market forces. Secondly, there was an attempt to clearly differentiate between various types of higher education institutions. Thirdly, changes were aimed at partially transferring the cost of
running state-financed universities to students or their families, through cost recovery (Brunner, 1993).

The dictatorship in Chile, which lasted from 1973 to 1990, was brought to an end through a process of negotiation between the military government and a section of the political opposition entitled the Coalition of Parties for Democracy. The resulting ‘alliance’ held power for more than twenty years (Cox, 2006). Over this time a series of changes to the education sector was introduced in order to open up higher education much more than previously to market forces. While these changes had a neoliberal thrust, there was some resistance. In 1997, for example, a historic mobilization of the Confederation of Chilean Students managed to stop a package of laws being introduced simultaneously which had been aimed at deepening privatization in the sector. The name given to the legislative project upon which they were based was the ‘Framework Laws’ and these were later approved.

Amongst the acts emanating from the ‘Framework Law’ are the ‘Accreditation Law’ and the ‘Finance Law’ (Rebelion, 2012). Between 2004 and 2014, these resulted in a process of accreditation being introduced in Chile regarding the quality of higher education (Cancino & Schmal, 2014) to replace what had previously operated under the National Commission for Accreditation of Undergraduate Programs scheme. In particular, ‘Law No. 20129’ of 2006 led to the establishment of a national system of quality assurance for the higher education sector. The institution which now continues to oversee the process is the National Accreditation Commission (CNA). Its main roles are institution accreditation and program accreditation (Ministry of Education Chile, 2006).

Viewed internationally, what is happening in Chile is not unusual, with globalisation being an enormous associated influence. World trends in higher education in recent
decades have also been framed by the necessities created by the economic situations in various nations and by the influence of neoliberal economic models (Adams & Demaiter, 2008). This situation, in turn, has had an impact on higher education curriculum, and not just in Chile, but throughout Latin America.

Universities in Chile have especially been affected by the neoliberal character accompanying globalisation. Furthermore, as in many other countries in relation to their higher education institutions, the Bologna Declaration of 1999 in Europe was also influential (Amaral & Neave, 2008). In particular, nations and their higher education systems are seeking to elevate their positions in international rankings of ‘quality’ universities. Associated with this is the trend in universities around the world to compete with each other for the ‘best and brightest’ students.

Developments in Chile have also reflected a broad trend in certain constituencies internationally where some universities are adopting a generalist model of curriculum at undergraduate level, with professional preparation taking place at the postgraduate level. This has European and North-American influences. One result is that because professional degrees are often now not delivered at the undergraduate level, students in certain countries often have to be enrolled at university longer than previously. This means also that they have to spend more money than previously on their education (Vidovich & O’Donoghue, 2011).

A particular new curriculum approach in many countries is where undergraduate studies are provided under a ‘college’ system, while postgraduate studies are provided through graduate schools. This long-standing trend in the United States (US) is now to be found in certain universities and colleges in a variety of countries, including Scotland, England, Singapore, Australia, and China. Specifically regarding Chile, three universities have
been undertaking curriculum changes along such lines over the last decade. These universities are the central focus of the study reported later in this thesis.

**Key Bodies of Informing Literature**

The study reported in this thesis is underpinned by three bodies of literature, each related to key conceptual terms associated with the particular area of research. These bodies of literature relate to the ‘history of university curriculum’, ‘curriculum policy in higher education’, and ‘globalisation, internationalization and education policy borrowing and policy learning’. Each of these is examined in detail later in Chapter 3. A brief consideration of them, however, is appropriate at this point.

In relation to the ‘history of university curriculum’, pioneering work by Frank and Gabler (2006) on change in university curriculum internationally over the last one hundred years provides the broad setting. Specifically in relation to Chile, however, there is a lack of studies in the field. This deficit is addressed later in this work in relation to three universities in Chile, since current developments need to be seen in relation to historical trajectories in the country itself, as well as in relation to the history of university curriculum internationally (Friedman, 2000).

Regarding ‘curriculum policy in higher education’, the concept of curriculum is now used regularly not only in relation to the schooling sector, but also in relation to such key higher education issues as contestations over core knowledge in particular disciplines, the establishment of US-style graduate schools in a number of European countries (Powell & Green, 2007), the spread of the strongly-embedded US civic engagement practice to universities further afield (McIlrath & Mac Labhrainn, 2007; Watson, 2007), and initiatives on internationalizing the curriculum (Jones & Killick, 2007; Knight, 2004;
OECD, 2008). Also, higher education and policy are now seen to be closely linked concepts.

Throughout this thesis the meaning of the term policy is based largely on Ball’s (2006) definition and particularly his argument that policy is not only a text but also consists of actions. In other words, what is enacted is to be regarded every bit as much as policy as what is intended (Ball, 2006). This definition is relevant not only in relation to economically developed countries, but also in relation to such nations as Chile which are moving towards developed-world status. It is also recognized that a policy represents a particular configuration and allocation of values, involving a combination of global, national and local procedures (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). As a result, policy is considered to be not only what a document explicitly indicates, but as also including enactment. In other words, it can include active negotiation, resistance, and transformation into new practices (Vidovich, 2007). Also, policy needs to be seen as something that is continuously evolving (Vidovich, 2013).

A third body of literature that informed the study relates to ‘globalisation, internationalization and education policy borrowing and policy learning’. These concepts are used regularly in literature on contemporary higher education policy development as it relates to dynamic interactions taking place simultaneously at, and between, the global level, the national level, and the local university level (Marginson, 2007; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Vidovich, 2004, 2009). Theories of globalisation in particular form part of their conceptual framing. While these are elaborated in Chapter 3, at this point it is highlighted that the OECD has, for well over a decade, been taking an increasingly powerful role as a key policy actor in what is now a globalised higher education policy community (Henry, Lingard, Rizvi & Taylor, 2001; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Here also it is important to clarify that, unlike some who prefer to see globalisation and
internationalization as distinct processes (Knight, 2004), throughout this thesis they are conceptualized as being very much interconnected processes.

The OECD has defined the ‘internationalization of higher education’ as “the full spectrum of educational programs and activities that contribute to internationalized learning, ranging from the internationalization of programmers’ content and delivery to the mobility of students and scholars” (2008, p. 238). More specifically, this international organization has defined ‘internationalizing the curriculum’ in terms of “strengthened foreign languages teaching and enhanced international perspectives in the substantive content of tertiary curriculum” (OECD, 2008, p. 257). Also, attenuated global and international interconnections have been accompanied by enhanced education policy borrowing across different jurisdictions (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2004). This phenomenon is referred to both as cross-national attraction (Ertl, 2006) and as the cross-cultural transfer of concepts and practices of education (Tanako, 2005). Much of the associated literature on this is concerned with the nature of education theories, models and methods transferred transnationally for academic or practical purposes, as well as with the processes by which this takes place (Hoyler & Jons, 2008).

Cognizance is also taken throughout this thesis of the importance of those works which emphasize that different national and sub-national jurisdictions often deal with policy challenges in different ways, because “global policy agendas come up against the existing priorities and practices” (Ozga & Jones, 2006, p. 2). Of particular importance in this regard is the literature on policy transfer between Europe, the US and the rest of the world. For example, while some have argued that the Bologna process simply represents direct policy borrowing from US universities, others hold that this Europe-wide perspective is now powerful, not only in shaping policy parameters in higher education throughout the continent, but also in other jurisdictions (Hartmann, 2008; Robertson &
Keeling, 2008). Equally, it is important not to overlook the strong resonance of policy discourses across regions, in part associated with a desire to internationalize university curriculum for global citizenship and in part also associated with ideology.

Finally, the notion of hybridity in curriculum policy as a result of policy transfer also informed the study reported in later chapters. This was deemed to be justified on taking account of Hartmann’s argument that “a new form of global hegemony’ is taking shape as a hybrid of a US and European Empire” (2008, p. 217). In relation to this, the concept of ‘policy learning’ is preferred over ‘policy borrowing’ (Vidovich, 2009), as it emphasizes the active agency of policy actors in negotiating site-specific policies and practices.

Overall, then, as expressed above, the notions of globalisation, internationalization and global knowledge society are key to understanding current trends in higher education. Regarding the former, globalisation is characterized by an increased interconnection and interdependency between markets and societies which has resulted in blurred boundaries between nation states. On this, internationalization refers to the interconnection between different nations and their higher education systems (Vidovich, 2004). Also globalisation has resulted in the imposition of a market ideology in a number of constituencies. Thus, competition has become a core value in higher education. Furthermore, it has resulted in the mobility of people, objects, images, information, ideas, and waste, amongst other phenomena, around the world (Vidovich, 2007). Finally, globalisation, has different foci, including not only economic ones, but also those of a cultural, political, social, technological, managerial and environmental nature. Other outcomes of this situation are the polarization of rich and poor countries (Williamson, 1996), and the growth in the role of supranational organizations.
The current nature of the higher education system in Chile reflects the influences of globalisation already noted. Also, as with education policy around the world, what has taken place has been based more on beliefs than on research, or on evidence of impact (Raczynski & Muñoz, 2007). Furthermore, consideration of education in Chile reveals problems and inequalities in society (Levin, 2011). On this, Gutierrez (2012) suggests that neoliberal reforms in the education field in the country has been aimed at reproducing social segregation.

In 2014, a major debate took place across the education sector in Chile. Pressure from social movements over the previous decade caused the new administration of President Michelle Bachelet to propose an education reform in order to end the operation of the profit motive in the public education sector (Tome, 2015). This proposal was approved by the National Congress in January 2015. However, the transformation that took place did not apply to the higher education sector. This had to wait for ‘Law Number 20.882 for the provision of Gratuity’ to be passed, which has resulted in the State now playing a more important role than previously in supporting the enrolment of students from low socioeconomic classes in universities.

Finally, it is apposite to consider here the notion of a global knowledge society. This refers to transformations which are the product of economic globalisation, the reorganization of work, and the compression of space, time and knowledge transmission through an information and communication revolution. Relatedly scholars point out that knowledge and information have become far more central to economic production and social relations than previously, and that the locus of the relationship between power and knowledge has moved away from the nation state. Thus, knowledge production and transmission have become ever more central in hegemonic projects (Carnoy & Castells, 2001).
Research Design

In the study reported in this thesis, university curriculum changes in Chile were analyzed using a ‘policy trajectory approach’ (Ball, 1994; Rivzi & Lingard, 2010; Vidovich, 2007, 2013). This refers to the notion that policy development cannot be divided into clear stages of formulation and implementation (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). Instead, it consists of four interrelated contexts: the context of policy influences, the context of policy text production, the context of policy practice and effects (enactment), and the context of longer-term policy outcomes.

An analysis of policy in relation to the first context, namely, the context of influence, involves examining influences on the origins of a policy. An analysis of policy in relation to the second context, namely, that of policy text production and of the text itself, can inform understanding about how a particular officially prescribed policy text emerged out of the background influences (Vidovich, 2013). An analysis of the context of ‘policy practice’ focuses on how a policy is interpreted and practiced in action, often within a climate of continuous change and competing demands. Finally, analyzing the context of longer-term policy outcomes, which is interrelated with political strategies, involves observing second-order influences in relation to social justice and equity (Rivzi & Lingard, 2010; Vidovich, 2013).

Using the ‘policy trajectory’ approach described above, national and institutional level policy processes in higher education in Chile were analyzed to examine the context of influences, the context of policy text production, the context of practices, and the context of longer-term outcomes. The international and ‘national’, or macro level, comprised the national government in Chile and other stakeholders in higher education in the country. The more local level of research involved studying three universities, with university administration participants being seen to be working at the meso (university
administration) level, and academics within faculties and schools being seen to be working at the micro (academics) level.

Specifically, the study presented in this thesis sought to investigate the following research questions, each of which is based on the different contexts within the policy trajectory framework:

1. What are the key influences from global, national and local levels on curriculum policy transformations at the universities studied?

2. What are the key characteristics of the context of policy text production at the three universities studied and how are they produced?

3. What are the policy practices and effects (enactment) of curriculum policies at the universities studied in Chile?

4. What are the longer-term policy outcomes of the new curriculum policies and practices in the three universities, and for changing higher education policy-scapes, nationally in Chile, and globally?

**Theoretical Framework**

As outlined above, a policy trajectory approach (Vidovich, 2013) underpinned the study. Two theoretical paradigms were employed at different points in the study. These are interpretivism and critical theory. Interpretivism allows the researcher to understand processes, relationships, group life, adaptations and motivations in small-scale, everyday life (Woods, 1992). Its concern is with understanding the subjective world of human experience, with ascertaining the intentions of actors, and with sharing in their experiences in order to understand their meanings and the actions they take in the light of them. The second position, critical theory, requires engagement in ideological critique and investigating which political and economic interests influence the cultural production
of policy (Ingram, 2014). The use of two theoretical lenses allows one to engage in comprehensive policy analysis, spanning global to local levels.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Considering the nature of the research issue, a qualitative research approach, using semi-structured interviews and document analysis was deemed appropriate to study the universities chosen. The particular focus on the three universities as separate cases of curriculum policy transformations was deemed to be in accord with growing calls for detailed ‘situated case studies’ (Marginson, 2007) to better understand the dynamics of globalisation in higher education. Such an approach entails the investigation of “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p.13).

Because the overall approach adopted throughout the study was one subscribing to the notion that it was essential to fully contextualize the universities studied, curriculum policy transformations were examined in relation to both time (temporally/historically) and place (spatially). The longstanding policy questions of ‘who, what, why, when, where and how?’ (Simon, Olssen & Peters, 2009) informed the investigation, as did Creswell’s (2005) recommendation that multiple sources of evidence be gathered when conducting case studies.

Data collection took place between October 2015 and March 2016. It involved engagement in in-depth interviews with a total of 33 participants. Also, institutional documents at the university level were gathered to complement the analysis.

**Significance of the Research**

By investigating significant new radical curriculum policy transformations in Chile, and particularly in three research-intensive universities which are situated within a
background of accelerating globalisation and internationalization, the study makes an important contribution to knowledge in both theoretical and practical ways. The analysis is both temporal (highlighting key changes over time) and spatial (highlighting key developments in different jurisdictions which have been major sources of policy borrowing for higher education in Chile). Furthermore, the focus is both macro (studying ‘bigger picture’ curriculum policy transformations) and micro (in-depth institutional analysis). Such work is timely as universities not only in Chile, but internationally, are, as indicated already, accelerating their engagement with a competitive global knowledge society and seeking to transform their curriculum policies and practices to attract the ‘best and brightest’ students.

The thesis is also significant and innovative since it builds a much-needed evidence base to inform university curriculum policy development in Chile for a global knowledge society at a time when curriculum is becoming a focal point of national and international competition. This should strengthen the position of those universities in the nation that are engaging with the competitive global marketplace, where ‘quality’ curricula are increasingly being defined in terms of their international and intercultural curriculum dimensions (de Wit, 2009).

Also, university curriculum policy transformations in Chile are located within wider contexts of international trends, as policy borrowing and learning were investigated across different jurisdictions. Thus, the research necessitated examining the relationship between developments in Chile and those in other regional and national jurisdictions, especially in Latin America, Europe and the US, which have been influential sources of policy borrowing for higher education in the nation (Holm-Nielesen, Thorn, Brunner & Balán, 2005). Such international comparative analysis is also an important source of policy learning for Chile (Gaete & Morales, 2011). Contemporary curriculum policy
transformations in Chile are also located within historical patterns, both in terms of the universities studied and internationally. On this, the study was designed to facilitate an analysis of the nature and extent of influences and changes in curriculum policy over time (Lowe, 2009).

Furthermore, the research reported offers a more holistic approach to understanding the phenomenon of ‘internationalizing the curriculum’ than hitherto has existed by incorporating an analysis of curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment. In the domain of internationalizing university curricula, the concept of ‘curriculum’ is most often understood in the narrow sense of relating primarily to content (de Wit, 2009; Knight, 2004; OECD, 2008). While there has also been a nascent interest in internationalization through such pedagogical innovations, as ‘inclusive pedagogy’, other components of teaching and learning in universities has barely registered on the research agenda (Moore, 2012).

The study employed an analytic framework which foregrounded both potentially homogenizing global pressures, as well as local agency, in the development of university curriculum policy. This framework could be applied in other areas of policy research. All too often, analyses of higher education policy developments in a background of globalisation make the assumption that institutions passively respond to an omnipotent force of globalisation ‘from above’. The approach adopted in the study reported in this work conceived of globalisation more in terms of complex two-way relationships extending between global and national (macro), university administrations (meso) and local (micro) level policy processes (Vidovich, 2013).

Finally, the research that underpinned the study involved conducting a detailed ‘situated case study’ analysis of curriculum policy transformations to provide a basis for theory
building. It was a response to the call for empirical policy research in ‘situated-study’ institutions to examine the way globalisation pressures may manifest differently in individual universities (Marginson, 2007). Furthermore, since similarities and differences exist in the policies of the universities studied, the development of finely-nuanced understandings regarding ‘local’ curriculum transformations within ‘global’ and ‘national’ trends was possible.

**Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis contains 10 chapters. The present chapter has provided an overview of what follows. It has indicated that the central aim of the study reported later on was to analyze the curriculum transformations in higher education in three universities in Chile. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two establishes the background of the research by exploring both international developments and developments in Chile in relation to higher education curriculum policy.

Chapter Three examines the literature on key concepts used throughout the study. These include ‘university’, ‘curriculum’, ‘higher education transformations’, ‘education policy’, ‘equity’, ‘globalisation’, ‘neoliberalism’ and ‘global knowledge society’. Chapter Four examines the qualitative research design and the methodology that informed data collection and analysis. The theoretical frameworks underpinning the policy trajectory concept used in the study reported in this thesis are also considered. In particular, it is indicated how interpretivism and critical theory were both used in the analysis of four policy contexts: influences; policy text production; policy practices and effects (enactment); and policy outcomes.

Chapter Five presents the results of the study in relation to the macro or national level, while chapters Six, Seven and Eight, present the results in relation to the meso (university
administration) and micro (academics) levels for each university studied. Chapter Nine is a qualitative meta-analysis of results along the policy trajectory from global to local levels. Finally, Chapter Ten provides an overview of the study and makes recommendations for theory, for further research and for practice.
CHAPTER TWO
THE CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction
This chapter is concerned with the background within which the policy study reported in this thesis on curriculum transformations at three universities in Chile, was located. Specifically, it focuses on three higher education curriculum settings: the international setting of higher education, the Latin American university setting, and the university setting in Chile. The first section provides a background to the history on higher education internationally and a broad overview on the international situation in relation to higher education currently. The second section provides an outline of higher education in Latin America currently, both historically and currently. The third section provides an outline of higher education and university settings in Chile, again opening with an outline of historical background and going on to focus on current structures and what has been termed the ‘crisis in the education system’ in the country.

The International Situation of Higher Education
The first universities in the world were established in the East, and particularly in what today is India and Pakistan around the 5th century (Lowe, 1998). From the 12th century, universities began to appear in the West. Since then, the institution has undergone various transformations. In the beginning, the Latin word ‘universitas’ was used to refer to any group or body of adults with common interests in education and having an independent legal status (Brunner, 1990). Thus, universities were initially conceived of somewhat as vocational schools for professional education. In particular, they were created to provide education activities in response to the professional, ecclesiastical and government needs of society (Perkin, 1991). Also, over centuries, new universities were established around
the world. Thus, as an institution, the university continued to grow and has remained part of society to present day.

In many countries, there were important changes in the university at all levels during the 20th century. For example, over the last three decades, there has been a decline in the study of such areas as philosophy, the classics and botany, while there has been an increase in the study of social sciences and engineering (Frank & Gabler, 2006). Concurrently, there has been an increase uptake on programs in economics, history and business. Also, the university’s teaching and research agenda has changed in various ways.

According to some scholars, the very idea of a university is now changing (Chow & Leung, 2016). The old concept is being challenged by different groups, ranging from national governments to students. Some have suggested that there are three main trends that are having an effect on universities and reshaping them, namely, the knowledge economy, globalisation, and the digital revolution (Chow & Leung, 2016). Accordingly, these are considered at various points throughout this work.

**Current international trends in higher education policy**

Internationally, recent decades have been characterized by rapid changes in higher education, influenced especially by economic circumstances (Adams & Demaiter, 2008). The impact has been felt in higher education curriculum in Latin America as much as anywhere else. Universities in Chile have been particularly affected by such circumstances.

Some scholars argue that the design of policy in higher education in various countries after the Second World War has been driven by three interrelated phenomena (Teichler, 1992). These are the quantitative expansion of institutions, the increase in belief in the
need for, and the potential of, macrosocial planning and steering of higher education systems, and concerns about teaching and learning and ‘reform’ efforts in curriculum, teaching and learning.

Globalisation has also been an enormous associated contributor. This phenomenon is defined as the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values and ideas beyond borders (Knight, 2013). This phenomenon has been experienced by every country in different ways, due to traditions, culture, and priorities (Knight & De Wit, 1997). In higher education, an example of a globalised policy is the European Bologna Agreement (Crosier & Parvera, 2013). This is an agreement arrived at in 1999 between ministers of education and university leaders from 29 countries in Europe. Its main aim was to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. After its establishment, it promoted a major reform initiative which has been embraced by more than 46 countries.

In taking part in the Bologna process, each country is meant to make a voluntary decision that its higher education system will endorse the principles of the European Higher Education Area (European University Association, 2015). In the case of European universities, some have pointed out that they have had certain unbreakable alliances since medieval times (Hotson, 2016). This indicates that some structures generated by the Bologna Agreement are not new in every regard.

The Bologna process has not aimed to harmonize national education systems. Rather, it has offered tools to connect them. The initial intention was to allow for the diversity of national systems and universities to be maintained, while the European Higher Education Area would help to provide transparency between higher education systems, as well as facilitate recognition of degrees, academic qualifications and mobility, and encourage exchanges between institutions (European University Association, 2015, p. 1). The
agreement is based on ten objectives. An important feature also is that all participating countries have agreed to introduce a three-cycle degree system (of bachelor degrees, master degrees and doctor of philosophy degrees).

Of particular interest within current considerations is the literature on higher education policy transfer between Europe, the United States (US) and Chile. While some have argued that the Bologna process represents direct policy borrowing from US universities, others hold that a Europe-wide perspective is now powerful in higher education globally, not only in shaping policy parameters throughout the continent, but also by way of having an increasing impact on other jurisdictions (Hartmann, 2008; Robertson & Keeling, 2008; McEldowney, Gaffikin & Perry, 2009). Equally, it is important not to overlook the strong resonance of policy discourses across sites, including a desire to internationalize university curriculum for global citizenship.

Equally important in terms of international policy trends in higher education is The Lisbon Strategy (Garben, 2012). This is also known as the Lisbon Agenda or the Lisbon Process. It consists of a development plan, devised in 2000, by the European Council in Lisbon, to assist the economy of the European Union. The strategy was aimed at making the European Union “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”, by 2010 (European Parliament, 2000). It was set out in March 2000. However, by 2010, most of its goals had not been achieved (Rodriguez, Warmerdam & Triomphe, 2010). By 2015, its Implementation Report pointed out that there were still four key priorities for the future: 1) enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching; 2) fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives; 3) making education systems more inclusive; 4) implementing agreed structural reforms (European Commission, 2015).
The policies considered so far reflect the commodification of higher education. On this, the use of the economic model of education in the international setting means that, for more than three decades, there has been a questioning of the university's purposes and responsibilities in society. Indeed, some have suggested that this had led to a crisis related to the very concept of the university (Chow & Leung, 2016).

A survey conducted in 2013, by the Boston Consulting Group identified five long-term trends in higher education (Wilson, Pagano, Henry & Puckett, 2014). Even though the inquiry related primarily to the US, it is instructive to detail these trends as it is likely that they are also having an influence on developments in other countries. The first trend relates to revenue from key sources, which, like tuition and fee revenue, is continuing to fall because of a decline in enrolments and putting many institutions at severe financial risk. Secondly, demands are rising for a greater return than previously on investment in higher education because of the decline in earnings of some graduates. Thirdly, greater transparency than previously about student outcomes is becoming the norm. Fourthly, new business and delivery models are being used in universities, and new forms of curriculum provision are gaining ground. Finally, the globalisation of higher education is accelerating and has led to a growth in the internationalization of student bodies.

**The Latin American Setting**

Higher education commenced in the Latin American sub-continent with the creation of universities. The first Latin American university was established in 1538, in Santo Domingo, which today is the Dominican Republic. At the time, only a few universities existed in the world. In the ‘new world’, they were conceived in terms of their origins in Europe (Jiménez, 2007). Since then, the university system in most South American countries has been related closely to elites in society, being aimed at preparing students
in a manner that involves the concentration of the cultural capital of society (Brunner, 2007).

During the struggles by the Latin American colonies for independence, universities promoted the ideals of freedom, justice and equality as being necessary for the construction of governments independent of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns. Nevertheless, only a minority of the population throughout the sub-continent attended university for a long time (Esquivel, 2007). Also, massification of universities became evident in the second half of the 20th century with a doubling of enrolments taking place from 1975 to 2005 (Holm-Nielesen, Thorn, Brunner & Balán, 2005). Nowadays, Latin American higher education systems can, as in other parts of the world, be characterized in terms of two trends, namely, expansion and diversification. After World War Two, the schooling rate grew from 2% to 18%. Also, the number of higher education institutions increased from around 75 in 1945, to 700 during the 1990s (Casanova, 1999).

**Structure of higher education in Latin America**

In terms of structure, higher education systems in most of the countries in Latin America consist of university higher education institutions and non-university institutions (Castro & Vazquez, 2006). The former have, as their primary objective, vocational training, engagement in research, dissemination of research, and deepening national and universal culture. Non-university education consists of centres that offer a lower level of education to prepare students for technical careers in response to the needs of the productive sector. According to some scholars, the main features of the higher education system in Latin America over the last 25 years have been the advent of widespread growth, differentiation, regulations, accreditation, articulation between institutions, post graduate studies, commercialisation of education, virtual education, and internationalization.
(Lopez, 2008). Also, as they see it, curriculum changes are the by-product of this new reality in higher education in the region. Each of the characteristics outlined above is now considered.

The widespread growth of enrolments in higher education throughout Latin America has been accompanied by a change in the elite character of the previous university curriculum. Also, a significant increase in enrolment of females took place during the 20th century. Furthermore, there has been a regionalization of the curriculum. This implies that curricula have been adapted to make them relevant for different geographical, social and economic spheres. Moreover, the incorporation of gender perspectives, of minorities, and of other social groups, has also had an impact on Latin American university curriculum. As a result, some institutions have experienced a transformation of curriculum content, with attention being paid to equity issues, identity and multiculturalism (Rama, 2012).

The last decades of the 20th century were also characterized by high levels of curriculum policy borrowing from other countries. Slowly, also, a trend towards institutional and curriculum specialisation in higher education institutions emerged. This has particularly been the case in relation to those curriculum areas with the greatest potential to have an impact on the economy and where suitable professional equipment associated with the curriculum subjects in question, is available. Notable in this regard is the enormous expansion of private curriculum being offered, with many of them not been certified following quality control inspections (Rama, 2012).

The last decades have also witnessed the beginning of a loss of autonomy amongst higher education institutions because of government initiatives related to the sector. This, in many cases, has meant the subordination of the development of curriculum offerings to
the authorization of external bodies. Also, in many South American countries there has been an incentive for researchers to gain qualifications by going abroad (Rama, 2007). In some cases, this has resulted in graduates obtaining high wages, thus increasing the desire by individuals to achieve qualifications overseas. On return, they are then inclined to promote the parts of curriculum in which they were educated.

Accreditation has also become an instrument to promote the transformation of the curriculum worldwide. Regarding curriculum accreditation in Latin America, the majority of countries have established legally-based regulations which universities have to abide by in order to obtain accreditation, and they have also created accreditation agencies. The composition, vision and mandate of these agencies can determine the profile of future curriculum (Espinoza & González, 2012).

Some scholars have also suggested that a dislocation exists between the school system and higher education institutions in Latin America (Rama, 2007; Lopez, 2008). This phenomenon has been driven by the mercantilization of education. This is explained by some by pointing to what they see as a rigidity and irrelevance of the university curriculum in various situations. Moreover, such separation highlights the need for the renewal of higher education systems and a search for improved quality within them.

The establishment of postgraduate studies is also a new feature of Latin American university systems. Furthermore, there has been an expansion in this area related to the internationalization of higher education. The ‘market supply’ of graduate courses is differentiated into diploma courses, specialisation (undergraduate), master degrees, doctorate degrees and post-doctorate degrees. In terms of curriculum, in some cases growth has been accompanied by an increase in disciplinary specialization and the emergence of transdisciplinary offerings (Rama, 2012). As a result, evaluating the quality
of programs has become more important than it previously was. Also, international rankings such as those of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and the Academic Ranking of World Universities, also known as Shanghai Ranking, are examples of international evaluation approaches that are heeded in the Latin America. At the same time, postgraduate offerings in Latin America diverge greatly from one country to another, making engagement in comparisons a difficult exercise (Ramirez, 2012).

Another characteristic of higher education currently, not only in Latin America, but around the world, is commercialization. This implies that, because of competition for students, demand is strongly influencing the supply of university programs. In other words, commercial logic has generated a positioning of Latin American universities based on advertising rather than on academic merit (Rama, 2012).

Virtual education has also become popular amongst universities in Latin America (Rama, 2012). Indeed, there has been an enormous development of curriculum offerings under the modalities of virtual and distance education in the interest of promoting commercial flexibility. This has been accompanied by greater access than previously to information for students and teachers. Concurrently, the increase has also resulted in greater attention than previously being paid to intellectual property issues in curriculum development. Moreover, in Latin America the expansion of virtual education has major limitations, including those associated with a lack of crucial organizational structures, especially in the public education sector. The private sector, on the other hand, has benefited much from this form of education (Rama, 2012).

Regarding funding, universities in the Latin American region have two main sources. On the one hand, there is public funding from national and local governments; public resources are provided in most countries for public universities. On the other hand, there
is private funding available to private higher education institutions. This comes largely from families and from student loans. Because of this situation, it is possible to clearly distinguish between public and private universities. Also, such differentiation can reproduce inequalities because only families with higher incomes can afford to attend the most expensive private universities (Livert & Gainza, 2017).

The funding of higher education has become a particularly important topic of discussion in Latin American countries. The latter can be related to a tendency in a number of them towards decreasing the amount of public finance being made available for the higher education sector in relation to gross domestic product (GDP) (Marín-Gutiérrez, 2016). Recognition of this raises critical questions about evidence indicating that social development can be built on the intellectual capital of societies (Dudin & Lyasnikov, 2013; Amaya, Samaniego & Armada, 2017).

Internationalization is another important aspect of current higher education systems in the Latin American region. This is a strategic process in which all sectors of higher education are involved. It started in the 1990s and led to expansion and diversification in international higher education enrolments, with Chile leading the way (Holm-Nielsen, Thorn, Brunner & Balan, 2005). Also, it is now recognized that the international dimension of higher education is a two-way-phenomenon. On the one hand, it can act to try to bring about improvement in the quality and positive impact of higher education within societies. On the other hand, it can lead to emigration of the ‘best and brightest’ minds. However, universities in many parts of the world are adapting to these conditions, mainly because of the influence of globalisation. At the same time, only a few institutions are undergoing such transformations in Latin America, mainly in Chile and Peru (Colleges and Institutes Canada, 2014).
In terms of power distribution and policy, important differences can also be identified between Latin American countries and their higher education systems. During the second half of the 20th century, there were military dictatorships in several countries. All of them had an effect on the education field. In some cases, democratic restoration after periods of military rule resulted in the reinstatement of democratic government in universities, the removal of restrictive access for students, and the restoration of free education (Rodriguez, 2006). Chile is an exception in this regard. Here, the end of the dictatorship of Pinochet did not mean the restoration of democratic participation within universities or the end of a profit-seeking approach in higher education. On the contrary, there has been a deepening of privatization and authoritarianism.

**Current policies in Latin American higher education**

In the late 1990s, Casanova (1999) noted that Latin American policies in higher education were framed in a triangular manner. The triangle points are the state, the market and the professional system. It is arguable that the same pattern exists today. Likewise, policy, regarding governance of higher education in the Latin American region seem to conform to an international trend taking place that emphasises bureaucratic and political authority to the detriment of academic authority (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002). Moreover, in Latin America, higher education coordination mechanisms are located between market strategies and autonomy. In the case of Chile in particular, coordination systems are certainly closer to the former than to the latter.

From a broad historical perspective, three important university reform processes can be identified as having taken place in the Latin American region during the last century (Lanz, Fergusson & Marcuzzi, 2003). The first one occurred in 1918, in Argentina, and was called the Córdoba Reform. Associated changes were oriented towards promoting university autonomy in governance. The second reform took place between the 1970s
and 1990s. The outcome of the associated processes was that foundations for the establishment and expansion of private education were consolidated and enrolment expansion took place. These took place at a time of deep crisis in public education. The third reform process emerged during the 1990s, and related to pressures of globalisation and the advent of new technologies increasing in influence.

Regarding legislation, the majority of Latin American countries have constitutional provision for higher education, Chile being an exception in this regard (Bernasconi & Gamboa, 2002). In all of the other systems, there are similar legislative standards. Procedures for the creation, modification and dissolution of higher education institutions are expressed either in the political constitution of each national state, or in laws and decrees. Furthermore, some scholars have pointed out that the establishment of universities in Latin America is related to the historical, political and economic development of each country (Castro & Vasquez, 2006).

Over twenty years ago it was suggested that there were four aspects of higher education systems in Latin America that were highly problematic. These were structural imbalances, institutional paralysis, malfunctioning systems, and an exhaustion of the institutions’ coordination and financing models (Brunner, 1994). While in some cases reforms were undertaken by national governments to quench those issues, in other cases institutions developed their own reform processes themselves.

Over the last number of decades, accreditation has become an important area of activity in higher education in the sub-continent. Chile, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil commenced the implementation of mechanisms for evaluation and accreditation in the 1980s and 1990s. This development was linked to the proliferation of private universities in the region. Some governments, through their ministries of education, generated
education policies that have aimed to raise the efficiency of institutions and to eliminate those institutions that do not meet quality requirements. Nevertheless, in many countries there is still no definite legislation on the matter. Indeed, due to the lack of legislation around issues of accreditation and quality assurance, some scholars began to argue at the beginning of the present century that international organizations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) should intervene (Castro & Vasquez, 2006).

Some international organizations have, however, played an important role in initiating higher education policies in the region. First, the World Bank has promoted the reduction of government involvement in education. This institution is driven by a market logic and by economic functionality. Also, it has a preoccupation with efficiency, thereby promoting the establishment of management systems for the administration of higher education institutions. Secondly, UNESCO has promoted the need for a relationship to exist between the state and higher education. At the same time, it advocates for the importance of maintaining such principles as academic freedom and institutional autonomy (Lopez Segrera, 2010). Thirdly, over the last number of years, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has become an important stakeholder and agent in higher education in Latin America, especially in Mexico and Chile.

Overall, a major feature of Latin American higher education systems is that they display equity problems. The implementation of private institutions and associated education costs have accelerated inequalities. This is because students from low socioeconomic classes are often unable to gain access to quality higher education (Castro & Vasquez, 2006). In this regard, Chile is a pioneer, albeit in a negative sense; in the country there
has been an increase in participation in higher education but at private cost, mainly through bank loans (Espinoza & González, 2011).

**The University Setting in Chile**

Within Latin America, Chile has a large higher education system in quantitative terms. Also, it is complex in qualitative terms (Bernasconi, 2015). During the 1980s, it underwent a radical redefinition and is now one of the most cited cases in research work on Latin American higher education.

To understand the current setting, it is necessary to consider the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. In 1973, through a military strike, a socialist government was ended, and a military dictatorship assumed power, deeply affecting the political landscape of the country. Following this, Chile was one of the first countries in the region to implement a neoliberal political and economic model (Brunner, 2015).

The military regime introduced a series of modifications of a neoliberal character during its 16 years in government and brought about a critical transformation of the education system. Government action was characterized by privatization and decentralization (Cox, 2003). Amongst the main political decisions taken during this period were the transference of public schools to municipalities, the introduction of a voucher-per-student funding system, the loss by teachers of public employee status, the introduction of a national evaluation system, and a progressive decrease in national education expenditure. Subsequent studies which have evaluated associated developments during this period stressed the negative consequences that ensued, especially for teachers and students (Raczynski & Muñoz, 2007).

In 1981 the General Law of universities was promulgated in Chile, when the higher education system consisted only of universities (Brunner, 2015). With this new legal
framework, the dictatorship not only initiated the privatization of higher education, ensuring the possibility of creating private universities without state dependence, but also completely disarticulated the network of public universities existing at that time by regionalizing them and dividing them into a number of universities without major links to each other. Before 1981 there was a one-level, one-sector system, comprising of two state and six private universities, all of which were funded by the public treasury, even though in 1923 under the presidency of Arturo Alessandri Palma, Parliament approved public financing for all universities, both public and private (Ugarte, 2014).

Prior to the legislation by the dictatorship, universities were entitled to establish their own faculties and particular career paths for students, and to grant professional titles and academic degrees (Jiménez & Durán, 2011). The funding of higher education was largely through public incremental financial support based on budget allocations of previous years and a distribution formula loosely arranged according to the number of student enrolments. Students paid no fees. Selective admission was undertaken on the basis of results of applicants on a national standardised academic test. Also, there was no general higher education law. However, to receive public funding and obtain the right to award education certificates and degrees, new universities had to be recognized legally (Brunner, 1986).

As mentioned above, by 2003 three university reform processes had been undertaken in Latin America since the mid-1960s (Lanz et al., 2003). The first period of reform is known as that of the Córdoba Reform. In Chile, the impact of this consisted of a substantial modification of university functions in the eight institutions that comprised the higher education system. Also, it led to the establishment of a new structure of authority and power that allowed for the participation of the university community in
governance. These changes were pursued, it was argued, in the interest of promoting the integration and modernisation of the country (Huneeus, 1988).

During the second period of reform, between the 1980s and the 1990s, higher education in Chile underwent a drastic transformation (Elacqua, 2011). Changes were directed at achieving three main goals. The first sought to open-up the higher education system through a liberalisation of rules for the creation of new institutions (Cox, 1993). The second aimed to differentiate institutional structures, creating institutional diversification in a vertical three-tier system consisting of universities, professional institutes and technical training centres. The third aim sought to partially transfer the cost of state-financed institutions to the students and/or their families, thus forcing them to diversify their funding sources (Brunner, 1993). Following the initiation of these reforms, private universities and professional training centres became a lucrative business in the country (Gregorutti, Espinoza, González & Loyola, 2016).

The dictatorship of Pinochet ended in 1989. This resulted from negotiations between the dictatorship administrators and a section of the political opposition, namely, the Coalition of Parties for Democracy (Concertación). The alliance consisted of the Christian Democratic Party, the Radical Party, and the Socialist Party (Cox, 2006). The 1990s in Chile started with an important change taking place in the education system. The military regime approved of, and published, the ‘Organic Constitutional Law on Teaching’ or ‘LOCE’ in its last day in office, namely 10 March 1990 (Cox, 2006). This legal framework still acts to regulate primary, secondary and higher education. It was designed to ensure the permanence of the changes established in the 1980s. Developments took place against a background where, with the return to democracy in 1990, the new government was the inheritor of a system that functioned with deregulated market
mechanisms, little state intervention and a diversified funding model for public universities (Brunner, 1994).

The coalition government triumphed in five of the last six presidential elections: in 1990 with President Patricio Aylwin; in 1994, with President Eduardo Frei; in 2000, with President Ricardo Lagos, and in 2006, and in 2013 with President Michelle Bachelet (Cox, 2006). Following the election of the right-wing president, Sebastian Piñera, the coalition of political parties, with a new name, ‘New Majority’, came to power in 2014, with Michelle Bachelet as prime minister. Her administration introduced a series of modifications in the education sector which have maintained the neoliberal core of previous policies. In March 2018 the right-wing politician Sebastian Piñera returned to power, retreating from the reforms in higher education promoted by the last government of Bachelet.

Structure of higher education in Chile

The higher education system in Chile is characterized by transformations that occurred during the 1980s. With the return of democracy in 1990, several changes were rapidly introduced. The period was characterized by the governing parties identifying education as a national priority (Raczynski & Muñoz, 2007). The associated developments in the education field can be seen as having been organized in three stages. The first stage was from 1990 to 1995. This was characterized by the construction of a ‘new foundation’ for the education system. The second stage was the period from 1996 to 2000. Here, efforts were made to support teachers’ professional development and school improvement. The final stage, with its focus on improving the quality of teaching within the classroom, was initiated at the beginning of 2000 (Cox, 2003).
Chile, like many countries during the 1990s, conducted a comprehensive curriculum change with regard to the primary school system. It sought to address challenges of globalisation, the knowledge society and national challenges, as democratic recovery came about after more than a decade-and-a-half of authoritarian government (Cox, 2006).

A new stage started in 2015, with education changes being introduced specifically in relation to higher education by the government of Michelle Bachelet. Tax reform also took place in the country in 2014, in order to finance the new education policies (Benedikter, Siepmann & Zlosilo, 2015). However, the role of the national state as guarantor of the right to education did not change (Huerta, 2016).

Currently, the higher education system in Chile consists of 182 institutions, with four types of establishments. First, there are 77 technical training centres, whose courses are each of two years duration. These centres confer the qualification of ‘senior technician’. Secondly, there are 43 professional institutes which confer higher level technical qualifications. Also, they grant professional qualifications in those programs which prepare people for occupations that do not require that they hold the degree of bachelor. Third, there are 59 universities which offer a wide range of academic degrees. Finally, there are military institutions of higher education. These, which have recently been ‘incorporated’, can also grant degrees since they are part of the higher education institution system (National Centre Tunig Chile, 2007).

Students who want to study at a university in Chile can choose between ‘traditional’ and ‘private’ universities. The traditional ones were created before 1981. They are in receipt of several types of national state funds, including direct fiscal contributions and indirect tax contributions (Valenzuela, Labarrera & Rodríguez, 2008). Traditional universities or state universities are part of the Consortium of the Universities of the State of Chile
(CUECH). According to current legislation, all universities in the nation are considered to be non-profit organizations.

The higher education sector in Chile is also characterized by an increase in the number of postgraduate programs on offer and an increase in terms of the evolution of enrolments. In particular, there has been a growth in enrolments in both master and doctoral programs in the last decades. Regarding master programs, there was a growth of 66%, from 24619 in 2009 to 40890 students in 2018. Regarding doctoral programs, there was an increase of 58.6% in the period 2009-2018 from 3738 to 5930 students (Sistema de Información Educación Superior, 2018). Moreover, it is expected that the number of doctor degrees will double in Chile by the end of the present decade (Gonzalez & Jiménez, 2014).

**Recent Higher Education Policies in Chile**

The current state of higher education in Chile can be understood by considering its history and associated international policy trends. Chile is a unitarian republic, divided into 15 regions with one national government. During the first half of the 20th century, the main aim of education policy in the nation was to expand access. However, quality problems arose from this (Leihy & Salazar, 2017). Consequently, as on the rest of Latin America, policies related to programs and institutional accreditation have been emphasized over the last two decades.

In 1999, the National Commission of Undergraduate Accreditation was established. Its main purpose was to design a national system for quality assurance in higher education and to conduct experimental processes of accreditation. Moreover, during 2006, Law 20.129 was enacted. This resulted in the establishment of a national system for quality assurance in higher education. Also, it established the National Accreditation
Commission (CNA). This is an autonomous public body responsible for verifying and promoting quality in universities, professional institutes, and technical training centers. Its main objectives are institutional accreditation and program accreditation (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 2006).

During September 2009, the General Education Law (20.370) was published. This partially modified the ‘Organic Constitutional Law on Teaching’ or ‘LOCE’ inherited from the dictatorship period and led to the National Council of Education being created to replace the Higher Education Council. This new council continues to license and accredit decisions taken by its predecessor.

Another important institution in the higher education sector in Chile is the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities (CRUCH), which was established in 1954. It is a collegial body with a legally-constituted membership. It is composed of the presidents of 20 universities both public and private. Its main aim is to coordinate the work of those institutions that comprise what in Chile are termed ‘traditional universities’. Moreover, the Consortium of the Universities of the State of Chile also plays an important role in the higher education sector. This group, which brings together the 16 state universities, from Arica to the Magallanes regions, was incorporated as a non-profit corporation on 13 May 1993, and it obtained its legal status by decree No. 31 on 7 January 1994.

Chile is also a member of MERCOSUR, or the Common Market of the South. This is an economic and political agreement which was signed in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela to promote the free movement of goods, services and people amongst member states. The primary interest of its members is to eliminate such obstacles to regional trade as high tariffs and income inequalities.
In Chile, as in many other countries, discussion also took place following the Bologna Agreement of 1999 (Amaral & Neave, 2008) with a view to elevating the positions of the nation’s universities in international rankings. Associated with this is a trend amongst many universities around the world to compete for the ‘best and brightest’ students. In 2011, however, research indicated that the Bologna process was only having a low impact in MERCOSUR countries (Veglia & Perez, 2011), even-though it was serving as a reference point in the design and development of programs and projects related to accreditation and academic mobility through the MERCOSUR Higher Education Area project. The low impact in question was related to a general rejection of mercantilist considerations in higher education in the region, although Chile was considered to be an exception in this regard (Veglia & Perez, 2011).

In 1999, following the advice of the World Bank the Ministry of Education in Chile launched a higher education policy-program entitled Improving Quality and Equity in Tertiary Education, or MECESUP, which introduced a competitive fund (Universidad de Chile, 2015). The program is aimed at improving quality and equity through strategic planning and providing information for decision-making based on evidence and performance indicators. These matters became the subject of public discussion and informed the conditions set by the national government of Chile at the time for distributing resources across the higher education system. With the introduction of an associated policy, institutions moved from having their allocation of resources based on historical criteria without public accountability, to a new allocation scenario based on performance indicators.

MECESUP 2 was the name given to a new fund program in 2011, influenced by the Bologna Agreement process and the Latin American Project Tuning. This involved a development and scaling of the incremental funding system based on ‘performance
agreements’ (Reich; Machuca; López; Prieto; Music; Rodriguez-Ponce & Yutronic, 2012). In 2013, scaling to MECESUP 3 was undertaken. Its main aim was to improve the quality and relevance of higher education through the expansion of funding based on a performance system. It also aimed at funding-by-results to be a main feature in the higher education system in Chile in order to support the quality and relevance of higher education programs and to be a tool that can be understood by those in all higher education institutions in the country.

As stated already, the impact of the Bologna Agreement has been significant in Chile. During 2005, Project Tuning was implemented based on the recommendations of the Agreement in 2000. It promotes the adoption of a system of easily recognizable and comparable degrees, a structure based on two cycles, and the establishment of a system of credits. During 2003, a system of transferable credits was established under an agreement entitled the ‘Valparaiso Declaration’ and was signed by members of the CRUCH. However, associated changes have only been implemented slowly in universities in the nation.

Historically, policy from the US, Spain and the United Kingdom has been influential in ‘policy borrowing’ in Chile (Zuñiga, 2013). Nowadays, the influences of such international bodies as the OECD is also considerable. Even though it is not a nation state nor an official policy maker, the influence of this organization on higher education policy processes nationally and internationally has been growing for some time (Sellar & Lingard, 2013).

Historically, in Latin American countries, most financial support for higher education institutions came from central governments. By the middle of the 2000s, this was being seen as a weakness (Castro & Vasquez, 2006; Rama, 2007; 2012). Again, however, Chile
has been an exception in this regard over the last 30 years. Here, financing has been diversified, with basal contributions from the State being maintained at a minimum. Concurrently, the country has promoted a wide program of student scholarships and loans to extend access. Likewise, to address quality issues generated by privatization, the government established approaches to stimulate the quality and efficiency of institutions. Nevertheless, as a result of education changes in the higher education framework which were approved in 2015, the financing approach for the education system changed again. With this transformation, students coming from low socioeconomic classes can get access to a gratuity, while the country also began an active policy of promoting the internationalization of higher education (Usher, 2017).

Influential also has been the practice in certain universities in various parts of the world of adopting a liberal education curriculum model which has European and North-American influences. The structure of the model is characterized by the fact that the professional degree is not delivered at the undergraduate level. This means that people have to stay on at university for longer than previously and also spend more money than previously on their education (Vidovich & O’Donoghue, 2011).

The new curriculum pattern being referred to is one where every student receives a general education during their undergraduate studies. In other words, the new course structures are characterized by students having to complete a generalist degree before moving to professional courses (Collins, 2011). To this end, there is a college period, which is for undergraduate studies, while university graduate schools provide postgraduate studies. It is also at the postgraduate level that people obtain a professional degree. In some cases, the model has resulted in the addition of a year of study to every undergraduate degree. This policy trend is expanding in a range of countries, including Scotland, Singapore, Hong Kong and Chile.
The education crisis in Chile

Over the last decade the education system in Chile has been severely criticized at home and abroad. Some scholars have spoken about what they have called a ‘crisis in education’ (Mönckeberg, 2005; OECD, 2009; Espinoza & González, 2011). As they have seen it, the education system has major contradictions and problems, mainly in terms of the quality of education (OPECH, 2006; Espinoza & González, 2011). The perceived poor quality has been revealed through the results of students on standardized tests, both national and international, with deep gaps having been shown to exist between the performance of students in the public-school system and that of those enrolled in the private system (Peña, 2002). Also, the education system in Chile has problems of inequity. This is a reflection of the social inequities in other areas of society; Chile is one of the two OECD countries in the region where there are extremely high levels of unequal distribution of wealth (OECD, 2014), with Mexico being the one where there is greatest inequality.

To address the challenges posed by inequity in higher education, student aid from the government was, until 2015, targeted by using both loans and scholarships according to socioeconomic needs. The government of Chile provided two types of funding: a direct tax contribution and an indirect tax contribution. The former was the most important instrument of State funding for CRUCH universities. It was a freely available subsidy allocated on the basis of historical criteria, with a small amount also being allocated according to annual efficiency indicators. A second lot of funding was made available for all institutions of higher education (both traditional and private universities, and for professional institutes and technical training centers) and was awarded following the conducting of a competitive application system. Also, there was an institutional development fund, whose purpose was to raise returns from the use of resources by
improving operational, administrative, and financial management, along with introducing quality information systems and strengthening the management of teaching. This funding was available for those universities in the CRUCH (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 2015). However, as stated above, with changes taking place in higher education funding at the end of 2015, because of the introduction of the ‘Law Number 20.882 for the Provision of Gratuity’, this structure was modified.

The government’s student aid system consists of three schemes that provide loans and grants of financial support, while also covering the essential education expenses of poor young people. These schemes are the ‘National Scholarship Fund’, the ‘University Credit Solidarity Fund’, and the ‘State-Guaranteed Loan (Law 20.027)’. Also, to promote the development of scientific research in the country through the allocation of public resources, and through competition, the National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development or FONDECYT was created in 1981. This fund is administered by the National Commission for Research, Science and Technology or CONICYT. It provides finance to encourage individuals and research groups to engage in research projects, regardless of discipline areas.

Despite all of the efforts noted above, the education system continues to be criticized, especially in relation to the funding of the traditional universities. The University of Chile, which is one of the two universities in the country listed in the top 500 in the world according to the ‘Academic Ranking of World Universities’ (Shanghai Ranking) and ‘Scimago Institutions Ranking’ (La Tercera, 2018), is one target in this regard. Until 2015, the State in Chile directly financed only 8% of the university’s activities, even though it had the highest level of academic productivity and scientific research in the country. Some claim that the State has forgotten its traditional universities and that, in its support for private universities, it is undermining public higher education. The adoption
of the ‘Law 20.882 for the provision of Gratuity’ in 2015, was a response to such criticism.

Regarding the above also, a report of the Comptroller General Office in Chile indicated that in 2012, only 42% of State funding went to the 16 public universities, while 32% went to the 9 traditional private universities, and 26% went to private universities (Perez, 2013). Also, some of the private universities have been mentioned in the media as being concerned with promoting profit before access or quality education. Furthermore, reports have indicated that of the ten universities that received most government funding in 2012, more than 60% were new private universities (Perez, 2013).

What is termed the ‘education crisis’ has led to the emergence of various protest movements in Chile. The most significant amongst these has been the student movement and the teacher movement. Since the return to democracy in Chile in the 1990s, social movements have been slowly rearticulated. Dissatisfaction with learning methods and results was highlighted in the media in the first half of 2006 (Donoso, 2013). At the time, a new social movement, consisting mainly of primary and high school students, focused on a series of such related education problems as quality, equity gaps within the system, and disputes on the provision of both private and public education.

In response to the demands of students, the first government of President Bachelet drew up the new General Law of Education in 2006. It was drafted by the Commission for Education (Stromquist & Sanyal, 2013), a group formed by the government that year, and included a small number of personalities from academia, from the primary school sector and from the secondary school sector. The proposed law aimed to improve the education system, but it did not change the ‘Organic Constitutional Law on Teaching’ or ‘LOCE’. It was organized around four axes: teacher development, institutional
frameworks, financing, and superintendence. By 2015, however, significant changes had not taken place (Benedikter & Siepmann, 2015).

Between 2014 and 2015, the teachers and students were back protesting. This was considerable in terms of the amount of time involved and the number of people participating. The revival of the teachers’ movement was influenced by a government project of 2015 called the ‘National Teaching Plan’ (Cooperativa, 2015). The teachers’ union did not agree with this plan due to its historical demands not being addressed by it. These related to a number of matters. First, there is an historical debt. This refers to the payment of retroactive salaries, as teachers’ wages were reduced during the dictatorship of Pinochet. Secondly, there was the matter of the importance that teachers attached to the need for a recovery in public education. This refers to the demand of the social movement in Chile to end privatization and strengthen public and state education. Also, during the same period, students were mobilized to demand the improvement of public education and the end of the profit motive in education (Tome, 2015).

The approval of the ‘Law 20.882 for the provision of Gratuity’ in 2015 was a response to these demands. Currently, President Piñera continues a populist discourse about quality of education. However, there have been no significant changes to the system.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the background with which the study reported in later chapters in this thesis was located. It focused on the international higher education setting, the Latin American setting, and the university situation in Chile. Within Chile, higher education has particularities unlike those in other countries in the region, being one of the first countries to have implemented neoliberal policies. This resulted in important changes in funding for higher education which have led to a deep crisis. Also, while such
international trends as the Bologna process have not had a significant influence in most of Latin America, Chile again is an exception in this regard.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, locates the exposition to date within the framework of the relevant academic literature. In particular, it considers the research undertaken on history of university curriculum, the conceptualization of curriculum policy in higher education, recent discussions on education policy, and the informing literature on globalisation, internationalization and higher education policy borrowing and learning.
CHAPTER THREE

OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The previous chapter detailed three aspects of the background within which the study reported later in this thesis is located. It introduced the international sector of higher education, gave an outline of Latin American higher education systems, and described the background regarding higher education policy in Chile. This chapter now presents a review of key concepts underpinning the study. It also is organized in three main sections. The first section of the chapter is based on research on the history of university curriculum on the international setting, especially in relation to Europe, the United States (US), and Chile. The second section addresses the conceptualization of curriculum policy in higher education and education policy, highlighting the notions of equity and quality. The third section focuses on the ever-changing macro level phenomena of globalisation (including its associated neoliberal ideology), internationalization and education policy borrowing and policy learning, in relation to higher education.

Overview of the History of University Curriculum in Europe, the US and Chile

Universities first appeared around the 5th and 10th century AD in the Eastern world and in the 12th century in the Western world. During the Middle Ages, the university in Europe was conceived of as a corporation organized for the purpose of higher learning. This learning was in such areas as theology, law, medicine and arts (Ridder-Symoens, 1992). Also, at this time the institutional establishment of liberal arts education commenced (Kimball, 2010).

The Western universities evolved from the Christian cathedral schools and the monastic schools (Wollhuter, 2007). It is difficult to define the exact date at which many of them became ‘real’ universities, although scanning the lists of studia generalia
(general studies) for higher education in Europe as outlined by Vatican scholars, provides a useful guide. The Cathedral School of Paris is considered by some scholars to be the first modern university (Wolhuter, 2007). This Western-style organizational form gradually spread from the medieval Latin West, eventually replacing many other higher-learning institutions and becoming the preeminent model for higher education in various parts of the world (Ridder-Symoens, 1992).

In the beginning, the curriculum of European universities consisted of study for a first or undergraduate degree. This degree was awarded after completing the third or fourth year of studies. The program was organized within a faculty of arts, where the seven liberal arts were taught: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music theory, grammar, logic, and rhetoric (Powicke & Emden, 1936). In terms of the language of instruction, all lectures were given in Latin and students were expected to be able to converse in that language (Rait, 1912). The trivium was the title given to the three subjects of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, which some scholars hold were the most important of the seven liberal arts for students in the Medieval era (Rait, 1912).

Once a degree had been conferred, the student could leave the university or pursue further studies in one of the higher education faculties. These were the faculties of law, medicine and theology, the last being the most prestigious. Studies in higher faculties could take up to twelve years for the award of a master degree or a doctorate (initially the two were synonymous), though again a bachelor and a licentiate degree could be awarded along the way (Pedersen, 1997).

The university curriculum in Europe remained almost unchanged up to the beginning of the 19th century, while accommodating in various ways influences resulting from the developments in the New World, Renaissance humanism, the Enlightenment,
the Protestant Reformation, and the political revolutions of the 18th and 19th century (Rudy, 1984). With the establishment of the Von Humboldt University in Berlin in 1810, however, the modern university evolved in a new direction. Basic and applied research were added to the classical teaching activities as fundamental required practices. In 1871, with the unification of Germany, this curriculum model started to spread, and not only in Germany, but also to other parts of Europe and to North America (Wolhuter, 2007). In turn, the university developed a number of functions in society, including training for vocations, the conducting of basic and applied research to solve problems experienced by society, and being a conscience of society by critiquing both government and civil society. The latter was possible in many cases as universities in most countries were often free from government control (Wolhuter, 2007).

Throughout the 19th century, courses offered were based on books, rather than subjects or themes. For example, a course might be on a book by Aristotle, or a book from the Bible. Also, electives as we know them today were rarely offered. Rather everyone had to take the same set courses (Pedersen, 1997).

Things started to change, albeit slowly. By the 1950s, universities were still concentrating very much on the humanities, the sciences and research. However, during the 1950s and the 1960s, a new wave of university transformations occurred. This change was characterized by an increase in the number of people attending higher education institutions. Also, the increase in enrolments was rapid and the student population became more heterogeneous than previously in terms of social background. The increased funding that governments began to allocate to higher education was another development. Further, a demand increased for more precise planning of higher education provision and for more technically competent individuals who would be thoroughly
familiar with the complexities of the university situation to guide its activities (Frank & Gabler, 2006; Wolhuter, 2007).

Returning to considering its origins, the university was, from the outset, strongly connected to religion. Progressive education and political philosophies, did, over time, lead to changes in the role of religion in higher education. Nevertheless, as late as the 18th century, most universities in Europe were still connected to either the Roman Catholic Church or to a Protestant church. Thus, the professors’ and students’ religion had an influence on both students’ enrolment and their future employment.

During the 19th century, however, religion came to be dislodged from the ‘compulsory curriculum’ in many new secular universities. This movement started in France, with Napoleon’s secular Université de France, and it troubled Roman Catholics in particular, because it threatened the Church’s power in education. Concurrently, in the United Kingdom, new universities, such as the University of London, were non-denominational, and the passing of the Oxford Act of 1854, meant that control of the Church of England over Oxford and Cambridge was loosened (Rudy, 1984).

Also during the 19th century, the purpose of many universities evolved from that of teaching so that there would be a regurgitation of knowledge, to encouraging critical thinking (Röhrs, 1987). The development of the German university model and of the post-Revolutionary French Grandes Écoles reflected this new trend. Both models have been considered to have been a symptom of the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment, the rise of the bourgeoisie during industrialization, and the decline of classical medieval Scholasticism (Rüegg, 2004). The new institutions also used new pedagogical approaches, particularly with the rise of science in the university curriculum. Starting in Prussian universities, students began to engage in practical activities, including in
seminar and laboratory situations, and to produce doctoral theses based on more scientific content than previously (Feingold, 2008).

Nowadays, different types of curriculum models exist in universities in Europe and around the world. Recently, however, the Bologna Agreement, as pointed out already, has had a strong impact in terms of promoting curriculum change toward a certain amount of harmonization. Also, internationally, some universities have begun to return to a liberal model of education, long espoused in the US. One such model is where the professional degree is not delivered at the undergraduate level. Rather, students have to complete a general degree before moving to professional courses (Collins, 2011). The system is often one of an initial ‘college’ period for undergraduate studies, while graduate schools provide postgraduate studies. This trend has been expanding from Europe to other countries, including Singapore and Chile.

It is clear that the foundations of the traditional idea of the university have been shaken. The privileged position the university had for centuries has been eroded by new trends. Its monopoly over knowledge has also been undermined. The roots of its mission from the Middle Ages have collided with such contemporary forces as marketization, competition, and values related to neoliberal ideology (Chow & Leung, 2016). While this situation is more pronounced in First World countries, it has also become evident since the early decades of the 1980s, in some developing countries, including Chile.

**Overview of the history of university curriculum in the US**

As expressed already, the US is one of the main sources of policy borrowing in Chile. Here, the core curriculum and the liberal arts education model have predominated throughout the history of higher education at the undergraduate level. The first colleges were established by the colonial legislature in the 17th century. Religious denominations
established many of them in order to train ministers. One of these was Harvard College, created in 1636. In the beginning, Harvard focused on training young men for the religious ministry, but many alumni later went on to pursue studies in law, medicine, government and business (Harvard University, 1902).

During early colonial times, most of the colleges in the US were established by Protestant denominations. However, during the 19th century, many Catholic colleges were also opened. Furthermore, most, regardless of religious denomination, were small and offered a limited undergraduate curriculum oriented towards the liberal arts.

Although the liberal arts system was born in Europe, it was further developed in the US (Jung, Nishimura & Sasao, 2016). Students were usually taught Greek, Latin, geometry, ancient history, logic, ethics and rhetoric, with little discussion, little ‘homework’ and no laboratory sessions. Also, many students were often younger than 17 years of age when they commenced their studies. This is why most of the colleges also operated as preparatory schools. Moreover, while the cost of tuition was very low, scholarships were rare (Rudolph, 1991).

Regarding curriculum, in the US during the 17th century, Hebrew, along with the *trivium*, was the main subject on the curriculum. Its pole position, however, was taken over by mathematics in the 18th century (Hornberger, 1968). At that time also, the rise of science in the curriculum started. Also, during the 19th century, science was further developed in the recently established research universities (Jung et al., 2016).

The core curriculum of the universities was deemed useful for forming American citizens after the War of Independence. However, the long-standing core curriculum model eventually came to be disputed, with a modular system being proposed instead. This consisted of an elective structure which promoted specialisation. Modularization
became very popular during the 19th century. This related to a paradigm change regarding what should constitute a liberal education in the English-speaking world (Kimball, 2010). It developed to become a liberal education ‘sampler’ as the elective system implied student choice, with students being able to move between modules.

During the 19th century, two main lines of reform were experimented with within the older colleges (Rothblatt, 1993). First, there was a continuation of a reaction against the notion of the independent course and the free elective system. Secondly, there were efforts to establish liberal arts programs in colleges within state universities. The associated debate remained alive until the 20th century, when the modular system came to predominate. Nevertheless, advocacy for a core curriculum continued, while the disputes between those who favoured a specialist education and those who favoured general education, which started in the 19th century, continued. In the mid-1960s, for example, scholars such as Bell (1966) were suggesting that changes to the general education curriculum in the liberal arts were important, but they also argued strongly that the overall liberal arts curriculum structure should be maintained.

Currently, in the US, there are different conceptualizations and meanings of the concept of a liberal arts education. One of them defines it as a system or a course of education suitable for the cultivation of a ‘free’ (in Latin liber) human being. The roots of this approach to a liberal education are in late Classical and Hellenistic Greece. Also, the concept was featured during the Roman Empire. At that time, a well-educated person was deemed to be someone who had mastered the quadrivium, or the four scientific arts: music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy.

The medieval concept of the liberal arts was also influential. Later, the definition liberalism of the Age of Enlightenment took a central place (College of Letters and
A contemporary definition of a liberal arts institution states that it can be defined as a ‘college’ or university whose purpose is to offer a general knowledge and develop general intellectual capacities, thus being different from an institution that specialized in offering a professional, vocational or technical curriculum (Britannica, 2016). Similarly, the Association of American Colleges and Universities conceptualized a liberal education as “an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity and change” and which “provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2015, p. 1). During the first quarter of the 20th century such views had continued to thrive, driven by arguments that the results of science and rapacious capitalism need to be contested (Tachikawa, 2016). Humanism and its values were deemed essential to save society in the aforementioned conceptualization of liberal arts.

Regarding the curriculum for a liberal education, in the early 1990s, Rothblatt (1993) drew attention to the associated notion of the co-curriculum. This refers to such developments in higher education institutions as the numerous campus services available, with their advisory and student assistance components, which had grown into a union of academic and non-academic functions to create a total learning environment. The co-curriculum was related to the non-intellectual side of the liberal education model. Its influence also continued to grow.

At present, higher education in the US is an optional final stage of formal learning, following compulsory secondary school education. It is also referred to as post-secondary school education, third-stage education, third-level education, and tertiary
education. It is delivered either in colleges or in universities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Indeed, the terms school, college and university are often treated as being synonymous in the US (Kimball, 2010), but usually when one is referring to colleges and universities, one is referring to institutions in the third-level system.

In 2012, there were 4,726 title IV-eligible, degree-granting institutions, 3,026 4-year institutions, and 1,700 2-year institutions in the US (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Amongst these were public universities, private universities, liberal arts colleges, and community colleges. New technologies such as the Internet were, by now, having a great impact on the provision of education within them. For example, there had been a massive opening of online courses in previous years and competency-based education had come to be emphasised very much. Alongside this has been a cutback in state spending at third-level, rapidly rising tuition fees and increasing in student loans.

Strong research records and funding have helped make colleges and universities in the US became amongst the world’s most prestigious education institutions, thus making them particularly attractive to international students, professors and researchers (Baty, 2010). Currently, in the US, many education institutions are trying to strike a balance between the two curriculum models mentioned above. On the one hand, there is the belief that students should have a common knowledge foundation, often in the form of a core curriculum. On the other hand, influenced by a belief that students should be able to pursue their own education interests, there is the model of early specialism in a major subject area. This model is usually offered as a set of courses in which students have choices they can make. The resulting tension has received a large amount of coverage due to some universities, including Harvard (Harvard Gazette, 2013), reorganizing their core requirements.
In some research-intensive universities outside of the US, a particularly radical curriculum policy direction, in light of their histories, is being taken at the undergraduate level. This resonates with both the European Bologna model and the emphasis in the US on a ‘general’ and ‘liberal’ undergraduate education. The shift can be understood as having led to the emergence of new paradigms (Vidovich, 2012). The universities that are taking the new route share features related to such radical curriculum policy transformation, as a focus on internationalizing the curriculum, an increase in curriculum breadth and depth through placing a stronger emphasis than previously on research, and a commitment to promoting communication skills, community service, study abroad components, engagement with a range of disciplines to obtain a ‘well-rounded’ education, interdisciplinarity and the integrating of knowledge across different disciplines, and policy flows between the universities undertaking the reforms (Vidovich & O’Donoghue, 2011).

It seems then that, contrary to Breneman’s (1990) prediction over sixteen years ago that liberal arts colleges would disappear, internationally the liberal arts education model is growing. Evidence from around the globe now points to the fact that liberal arts institutions were reintroduced in parts of Europe from the 1960s (Labi, 2011). Also, liberal education models are being adopted in universities in settings as diverse as Japan, Taiwan, China and Chile. Scholars have suggested that, overall, this movement is a consequence of both de-regulation of universities by the state and the influence of the Bologna Agreement (Jung et al., 2016). It is also predicted that the movement has a bright future, especially for countries in East Asia (Lewis, 2012).

Overall, two distinct patterns are discernible in the changes within the universities involved in the movement. One is that of a generalist undergraduate program separated from specialist and professional education at the postgraduate level. The second pattern
is that of a generalist compulsory core program which runs in parallel with specialist and professional education at the undergraduate level (Vidovich & O’Donoghue, 2011).

Finally, the term academic capitalism (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) is valuable in deepening the understanding of what is taking place in relation to the logic of contemporary universities. The notion implies a decrease in the extent to which higher education is considered to be a public good and an increase in the extent to which higher education is obligated to the extra-academic market. Market money comes with the expectation that there will be returns from the investment in the form of profitable products or processes. In this setting, continuous training, which converts staff in self-programmable labour (Castells, 2011), has been installed.

Overview of the history of the university curriculum in Chile

Chile was conquered by Spain between 1529 and 1536. During colonial times, instruction and education were in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. The first university in Chile was the University of San Felipe, created in 1747. This institution had faculties of theology, philosophy, law, medicine and mathematics. It became an important center for learning in South America. However, due to political changes in the first half of the 19th century, it underwent changes.

Independence in Chile presented a need to form a new type of citizen who was open to patriotic and national ideals. Universities in the country were expected to form students with such ideals. Thus, the university took a turn away from a colonial mentality to a republican one (Serrano, 1994). An outcome was the founding of the University of Chile in 1843. This was considered to be a move which would lead to the development of a middle-class population with cultural and education ideals appropriate for the new republican society (Memoria Chilena, 2015).
The University of Chile was officially inaugurated in 1843. During its early years it expanded its curriculum and created new faculties, becoming the main institution of higher education in the country (Serrano, 1994). The training of professionals was linked to the rise of the urban middle-class. This resulted in the early 20th century in the emergence of new ‘actors’ both at the University level and in the country more broadly. In 1906, the University of Chile Student Federation was created. This is an organization that has participated actively in many social movements up to the present day.

The University of Chile continued to expand over the next decades. In the first half of the 20th century it initiated a process of establishing provincial offices, which resulted in its confirmation as a national university. However, bureaucracy, growing demands for democratization, and ideological trends of the 1960s, led to demands for university change. Students played an important role in this movement. The required reforms sought, in general, a greater commitment by universities to research and to engage with social problems than had previously been the case (Universidad de Chile, 2002).

The implementation of the reforms at the University of Chile was difficult due to opposing views about the role of the State and of the university in society. This reflected the deep political differences in the country which reached their peak with the military coup of General Pinochet in 1973. Military authorities intervened in the workings of the institution. This meant the dissolution of student unions in different centers of higher education. During this period also, the University of Chile suffered drastic changes in its structure as well as losing its provincial offices and its pedagogical institute.

New winds of change blew in the mid-1980s. The University of Chile Student Federation was restored and legalized. In particular, the return to democracy in 1990,
brought an end to the system of unelected delegates governing at university level. The latter system replaced the University of Chile Student Federation during the military government.

In terms of curriculum, historically universities in Chile were based on the models used in universities in Spain. However, after Independence a new model was promoted. Andres Bello, Venezuelan politician and intellectual, was the first chancellor of the University of Chile. He promoted a model emphasizing the cultivation of science in universities and doing so in a practical way. The scientific program that he implemented was specifically designed to address the reality of life in Chile (Serrano, 1994).

Since the 1990s, there has been pressure from new professional and socioeconomic quarters which has had an influence on the university curriculum (Perez, 1996). Many institutions are now undergoing a process involving the establishment of an education model based on competencies (Salgado, Corrales, Muñoz & Delgado, 2012). International trends, such as those which favor the liberal arts system of undergraduate education, are also being promoted in the country as being important.

**University privatization in Chile**

During the 1980s, Chile underwent a series of reforms of a neoliberal character. These led to privatization of many of the institutions in the country. The higher education sector was not an exception in this regard.

In 1981, a neoliberal ‘reform’ in education was initiated in Chile. The associated policies were implemented without any discussion or democratic debate taking place (Rodriguez, 2012). The ‘reform’ was designed and imposed ‘from the top-down’. Subsequent democratically elected governments after 1990, followed the same thinking that had been introduced by the military administration. Overall, the executive power of
the new ‘democratic authorities’ in the nation only brought about minor adjustments to the model introduced in the 1980s.

A licensing system for private higher education institutions was generated. Licensing did not guarantee compliance with standards of excellence because this was not its aim. Rather, the new system validated the work of private institutions, giving them a license to operate legitimately. Also, it gave them a license to make a profit. This situation slightly changed when in 2006 ‘Accreditation Law Number 20.129’ was enacted to monitor and to promote quality within the higher education system.

The accreditation processes introduced have had an impact on how institutions manage issues related to leadership and strategic management, quality, curriculum relevance and flexibility, and ‘education outcomes’. However, the ‘Accreditation Law’ has not contributed to the development of a culture of academic excellence. Instead, institutions work towards an achievement of minimum standards to meet the requirements of external assessment processes (Rodriguez, 2012). Moreover, challenges relating to equity exist. In particular, Chile has disparities in higher education which relate to social inequalities (O’Sullivan & Tsang, 2015). On this, Bourdieu and Passeron’s (2001) understanding of an education system playing a major role in reproducing other inequalities in society is instructive. As it has been put, pedagogic work can act in a way that perpetuates inequalities “more lastingly than political coercion” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2001, p. 33).

The consolidation of the national system of higher education in Chile has been achieved by a strategy based on a demand-oriented funding system. While in 1981, universities were funded only through direct fiscal contribution, nowadays there is income diversification. Since 2005, a system of credit provision guaranteed by the State
in Chile is available to students to pay university fees. Private institutions argued strongly that their students also need loans, so the State now also provides these, with the financial market determining the interest rate that has to be paid. Thus, there is a consumerist view of students (Roberts, Gentry & Townsend, 2011).

The provision of loans guaranteed by the State has largely been the only mechanism used to develop the market of higher education. The fundamental tasks of the university, namely research, development and innovation, have also been approached with a neoliberal logic. While the amount of research produced in Chile is a third of the average produced amongst the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries as a whole (Rodriguez, 2012), the situation is being addressed with the changes introduced in the financing system of higher education at the end of 2015. The catalyst was the introduction of ‘Law Number 20.882 for the Provision Gratuity’, which has resulted in the State now playing a more important role in supporting the enrolment of students from low socioeconomic classes to universities, specifically those coming from the bottom six income deciles, which represents about a third of all students in the system (Usher, 2017).

Privatization has also meant that Chile has one of the highest tuition fees for university attendance in the world relative to average national income (The Economist, 2012). This has had an enormous impact on how Chile is located in a competitive global knowledge society. It also has had an effect on how it can have a competitive edge on the world stage.

**Conceptualization of Curriculum Policy in Higher Education**

The second body of literature informing the research reported in this thesis is an international corpus of scholarly work on curriculum policy in education. For many
years, the concept of curriculum was centred mainly on the schooling sector (Elmore & Sykes, 1992). More recently, it has expanded to focus on such key higher education issues as contestation over core knowledge in particular disciplines, the establishment of US-style graduate schools in a number of European countries (Powell & Green, 2007), the spread of the strongly-embedded US civic engagement practice to universities further afield (McIlrath & Mac Labhrainn, 2007; Watson, 2007), and initiatives on internationalizing the curriculum (Knight, 2004; Jones & Killick, 2007; OECD, 2008). What these associated policies have in common is a focus on introducing curriculum innovations within existing university curriculum structures.

Bridges (2000) drew attention to a variety of policies being adopted across many universities at the turn of the millennium, including the deconstruction of the traditional university subject through modularization, the cross curricular key skills movement, and competency-based developments. These involved developments related to ‘whole curriculum’ change as understood by education theorists like Scott (2003) and Gleeson (2010). Furthermore, the transformations related to such matters as the following: the total range of curriculum objectives sought by an institution; the nature of the associated underlying values and beliefs; the extent to which the various objectives are prescribed for some, or for all, students; the pattern of components into which the ‘whole’ curriculum is divided and how lecturers and students are grouped in relation to this pattern; the nature of the content, the pedagogical approaches and the modes of assessment outlined; and the methods used to evaluate the success of the work (O’Donoghue, 2018). Such a notion of ‘whole curriculum’ underpins the study reported later in this thesis and relates to an area where no other research exists on university curriculum policy transformations in Chile.
The focus of the research reported later is also on the undergraduate curriculum. This curriculum is generally defined as relating to the stage of formal academic experience of students pursuing baccalaureate and subordinate degrees (Ratcliff, 1992). Nowadays, in many countries in the world, there is debate on what should be the purpose, content, and structure of the curriculum for them.

The term curriculum is rooted in the Latin word *currere*, which means career. It relates to a path or route to be taken (Gimeno & Pérez, 2000). In the 20th century, this classic concept entered fully into the language of education, including that to do with schooling and universities. It relates to one of the components of the education system about which policy makers would like to see consensus amongst members of a society. As a social construction, however, the curriculum can be subject to modification and change, including in relation to the requirements of such other areas as those related to the political, economic and cultural spheres.

Curriculum issues can also be considered in terms of their varying degrees of generality. On the one hand, there are general curriculum or macro-curricular issues, which traditionally have been elaborated upon within the philosophy of education and the sociology of education (Gimeno & Pérez, 2000). Generally, these elaborations relate to the structure of the whole curriculum. There are also micro-curricular issues. These are related to individual academic subjects and/or particular subjects. Furthermore, micro-curricular issues are also often related to didactic concerns.

The study of curriculum covers topics related to the justification, articulation, implementation, and testing of education programs. Also, curriculum definitions need to be understood in relation to the setting in which they are produced. Therefore, it is not helpful to think in terms of any single meaning of the term, because the curriculum is a
social process in which multiple contexts interact. This reality is reflected in different social constructions, including those related to policy texts. These texts, in turn, can form the basis for engagement in curriculum research (Gimeno & Pérez, 2000).

For the study reported later in this thesis, curriculum was understood in a general sense, namely, as the objectives content, pedagogy and assessment involved in current policies in higher education institutions, and also in relation to the perspectives about surrounding power distribution. The notion of the hidden curriculum was also considered (Torres, 1994). This refers to all knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are acquired while participating in the interactions that occur daily in the education process. These acquisitions are usually never stated as explicitly as are formal goals of education.

According to Torres (1994) a major myth about how an education system is structured in capitalist societies relates to the “the neutrality and objectivity of schooling” (Torres, 1994, p.14). Education and its institutions, he argues, are social and historical artifacts. For these reasons, ideology and power should also be seen as influencing the curriculum. These are manifested in ideas and in education practices. Thus, the university curriculum can be seen as having a dual dimension, namely, its theory and its practice. This means that there is an explicit curriculum and a curriculum that goes beyond what is expressly stated in the written definitions. The latter is addressed by theorists through the use of the concept of the ‘hidden curriculum’ (Bandini, Mitchell, Epstein-Peterson, Amobi, Cahill, Peteet, Balboni & Balboni, 2017).

Globalisation and its elements have also had an impact on the curriculum. One important related pressure on higher education institutions is that which seeks to expand the number of enrolled students (Bridges, 2000). This has forced institutions to change their structures and functions. Many of the associated changes are reflected in the formal
curriculum institutions established. On this, five influences struggling to shape the undergraduate curriculum have been identified (Bridges, 2000). The first one is the deconstruction of the academic subject, with the ‘modularization’ of the curriculum being a reflection of the effects of this influence. Secondly, the cross-curricular ‘key’ skills movement is influencing formal curriculum around the globe. Thirdly, the ‘learning through experience’ movement and the shift of the seat of learning to outside of the academy has had a huge influence on many curriculum structures. Fourthly, the anarchic potential of web-based learning is expanding in power and influence. Finally, there is a reaffirmation of the ‘subject’ as the core academic and organizational identity (Bridges, 2000). Such influences are still shaping undergraduate curriculum in different higher education systems around the globe, including in Chile.

**Latin American theories in education**

As the study reported in this thesis focused on a Latin American setting, and in particular on three universities in Chile, it is necessary to provide a brief overview on related theories in the social sciences developed in this part of the world. In fact, both education and education policy processes have led to the generation of local theories. This is partly because universities here have their own particularities as socially and culturally situated institutions responding to specific and distinctive backgrounds. Some of the theories generated are known as Latin American theories of development because they aim to identify the socioeconomic conditions and economic structures that can contribute to local human development and sustained economic growth. This led to the studying of underdeveloped economies, which pertain in the majority of countries in the region (Cupps, 2013).

An important branch of Latin American theoretical writings is influenced by critical theories and Marxism (Scott, 1993). This is especially the case regarding theories
of development. Also, as stated already, it is apposite that these be considered here as the study reported later in this thesis drew upon critical theory insights. In particular, cognisance was taken of critical Latin American theories that refute neoclassical theory and its modernization paradigm.

Many Latin American countries since the 1950s promoted an industrialization policy of import-substitution to reach their development aims (Wanderley, 2015). However, this policy was aborted in Chile after the military coup in 1973 (Olmos & Silva, 2010). The same happened in other countries for similar political reasons. Also, the introduction of new neoliberal changes introduced resulted in processes related to industrialization being slowed down.

An important Latin American scholar who produced a theory of development was Raul Prebisch. During the 1960s, this Argentinean economist proposed the center-periphery paradigm. He suggested that development and underdevelopment constitute a single process. That, he argued, is why inequalities between the center and the periphery are reproduced through international trade. Thus, the problems of the periphery are to be seen within the framework of the global economy (Baffes & Xiaoli, 2015).

The Economic Commission for Latin America is an organization whose programs and actions were based on Prebisch’s ideas. Established in 1948, this institution, backed by empirical evidence, promoted his line of thinking. For example, related education policies were developed for the higher education sector during this time. Many Latin American national states acted to generate a structure that would enable national integration to take place, while also educating people as individuals (Aprigio & De Carvalho, 2018). Moreover, it promoted a view that a physical infrastructure should be provided capable of making viable the desired level of modernization and development.
Also, policies to promote public universities were fostered by national governments allocating more funding to them than previously, and especially during the 1960s (Novaes, 2015). Furthermore, many new higher professional institutes were established.

Regarding universities, a major theoretical debate took place in Latin America after the First World War. On this, the contributions of Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre and José Carlos Mariátegui during the 1920s and 1930s, are fundamental to understanding the contemporary history of universities there (Aquino, 2000). During the end of the 1910s, certain events fostered a particular view amongst these theorists about education in the region. Since the early 20th century, there have been many attempts associated with it to build a new concept of the university in Latin America. The aim of some was to create a university that would serve the common people and not just the elites (Novaes, 2015). One of those attempts was the Cordoba Reform in Argentina in 1918, and its extensions in Brazil and Chile. Haya de la Torre and Mariátegui were influenced by this movement.

Mariátegui is considered to be the founder of *indoamerican* socialism in Peru (Cabrera, 2012). This concept refers to the recognition of indigenous aspects of life as a particularity of the composition of Latin American population (Mariatégui, 1995). Mariátegui’s ideas had a big influence on university reform processes in the region. He was influenced by the work of Antonio Gramsci (Vanden, 2014). Mariátegui’s book, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (Mariategui, 1995), first published in 1928, had an enormous influence on Latin American critical theorists. In education, he provided an understanding of the education systems as being in crisis in Latin America. Also, he recognized the role of political power and class dynamics in this field. He argued that there was a need to address education organization, content, methods, the situation of teachers, and the performance of the university reform student movement (Cabrera,
The latter was linked to vanguard currents developed in Europe and North America, in the heat of the global post-war crisis in the early 20th century. In addition, Mariátegui proposed a political and controversial practice, namely, the ‘teaching of life’. This involves democratizing education and suppressing the privileges of elites over low socioeconomic classes (Mariátegui, 1986).

Haya de la Torre, the founder of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance in Peru, also played an important role in developing local academic knowledge on education. His approach was directly influenced by Marx’s ideas and the Argentinean Cordoba Reform in the late 1910s (Sandoval, 2014). Haya de la Torre argued for the need to find a particular way for Latin American societies to become transformed and he held that Marxism provided the best position to help them to reach this (Haya de la Torre, 2010). To put it simply, he proposed a transformation of society.

Both Haya de la Torre and Mariátegui characterized the production mode in their country (Peru) as being feudal or semi-feudal. Both pointed to the landlord class and to imperialism (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2009) as causes of the underdevelopment of Latin America, and both advocated industrialization for countries in the region. Also, they both agreed that the development process in Latin America differed from the classical European model and argued that the bourgeoisie class in Latin America was unable to perform the progressive role that it did in Europe (Vanden, 2014). Recognition of this limitation, they argued, is important in order to better understand the reality of Latin American education systems.

In Cuba, Julio Antonio Mella was another intellectual who was both an influencer of, and was influenced by, the Cordoba Reform. For him, a socialist concept should underpin political changes inside universities. There were three main aspects to what he
advocated (Alfonso Tejeda, 2014). First, he advocated autonomy because, as he saw it, universities were suffocated by corrupt governments, especially in Cuba. Thus, he proposed a reform aimed at achieving democratic government in universities and also to ensure that the university would come to be understood as a democratic organization. Secondly, he proposed faculty renewal through shared government amongst students, academics and university staff. Finally, he proposed changes aimed to address the social function of universities so that they could have a positive influence on social life (Novaes, 2015). In 1923, Mella also declared the rights and duties of students. His view, which was novel at the time, was that students should have a duty to be perennial seekers of truth (Mella, 1928).

Most of Latin American critical theories, including those noted above have highlighted the necessity of political struggle for university transformation. Nowadays, however, universities in Chile seem to be distanced from social movements promoting such changes. Indeed, there is a general lack of social movements in the country and political ‘apathy’ or ‘conformism’ prevails in many quarters. This has allowed for decision-making to be left in the hands of a few senior people inside universities (Mayol & Azócar, 2011). The recent curriculum changes that have taken place in Chile have exacerbated the situation. According to some scholars, in the last decades there has been a theoretical ‘cleaning out’ of questions on social class being aired in Latin America (Novaes, 2015). This means for some that inside universities professors are engaged in producing alienated work (Stromquista & Sanyal, 2013).

Nevertheless, some scholars in Latin America have continued to address the nature of the relationship that exists between universities and society, especially in Brazil and Argentina. In this regard, Novaes (2015) has provided an interesting work on the relationship that exists between the university and the world of business. On this, he has
highlighted the importance of exposing ideological discussions that lie behind curriculum policies in this relationship.

Latin American thought on dependency and structuralist theories have also led to a new development theory in clear opposition to the neoliberal paradigm. This new neo-structuralist paradigm proposes a shift to world markets through development from within (Pinazo & Pique, 2011). To put it succinctly, the argument is that developing countries should improve their competitive advantages in terms of quality, flexibility, and combination and efficient use of resources, rather than in terms of those suggested by neoliberal policies (Wanderley, 2015). For some time now, some scholars have held that this is “the only feasible and credible alternative to neoliberalism in the present historical circumstances” (Kay, 1998, p. 14).

**Education policy**

In the last decades, education policy has been influenced by such globalisation forces as those outlined above and also by a neoliberal discourse (Apple, 2003; 2011). Also, the definition of the concept of ‘policy’ has changed over time. In the past, policy was defined as “a web of decisions and actions that allocate values” (Easton, 1953, p.129-130). Also, it was held that policy “is a bit like an elephant; you recognize one when you see it, but it is somewhat more difficult to define” (Cunningham, 1963, p. 229). Post-modernist and post-structuralist influences, such as Foucault’s concept of biopower (Foucault, 2006), which denotes social and political power over life, have also disputed the concept of power as being something exclusive to macro levels of institutions, and have justified engagement in micro analysis when seeking to understand power relationships.
Arriving at one definition of policy is not an easy task. Ozga regarded education policy as “being found everywhere within education” and explained that there is “no fixed single definition of policy” (Ozga, 2000, p. 2). Rizvi and Lingard suggested that policy is “the authoritative allocation of values” (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p. 44). The debate about policy definition continues in an attempt to approach a complete and universally accepted definition of policy. Also, public policy is an ambiguous term. In the study reported in this thesis, however, the notion of public policy was defined as being the actions of government and the intentions that determine those actions (Cochran et al., 2009).

A ‘policy trajectory framework’ was used in the study detailed later. The concept of policy in this framework is based largely on Ball’s definition (2006), which states that policy is not only written a text but also involves actions; is not only words, but also involves deeds. In other words, what is enacted is to be regarded to be every bit as much policy as what is intended (Ball, 2006), while we must also acknowledge that policy is a process (Ball, 1994; Vidovich, 2007). Ball (2006) adds that policies are textual interventions in practice. Also, within the frame of policy as a process, a policy is constantly being reproduced and changing through interpretation in practice (Heimans, 2012) as policy actors make sense of, reinterpret, recontextualize and/or modify it according to their needs. The notion of ‘enactment’ allows one to characterize this as an ongoing process.

Also, while undertaking the research reported later in this thesis, it was recognized that policy represents a particular configuration and allocation of values, involving a combination of global, national and local procedures (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). As a result, policy can be seen to not only be what a document explicitly indicates, but as also involving enactment. In other words, it includes active negotiation, resistance
and transformation into new practices (Vidovich, 2007). Thus, various contexts and values, from policy and from policy actors, can be mutually influential in the policy process.

On the latter matter, higher education curriculum changes in Chile were analyzed using a ‘policy trajectory approach’, as initially proposed by Ball (1994) and further developed by Rivzi and Lingard (2010), and by Vidovich (2007, 2013a). This approach recognizes that policy development cannot be divided into clear stages of formulation and implementation (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). This study envisages policy process as four interrelated contexts. These contexts are as follows: the context of policy influences, the context of policy text production, the context of policy practices and effects (enactment), and the context of policy outcomes.

Conducting the research in relation to the first context, namely, the context of influence, consisted of examining the factors and interests of groups influencing the origins of a policy. Studying the second context, namely the context of text production, involved an analysis and understanding of how a particular officially prescribed policy text emerged out of the background influences (Taylor et al., 1997). Studying the context of policy practices and effects (enactment) involved focusing on how a policy is interpreted and practiced in action (i.e., its enactment), often within a climate of continuous change and competing demands. Finally, analyzing the context of outcomes, which is interrelated with the political strategy, involved paying attention to longer-term and ‘bigger picture’ issues of social justice and equity (Rivzi & Lingard, 2010).

Using the ‘policy trajectory’ approach described above, the national and institutional levels of the policy processes in Chile were analyzed to examine the context of influences, the context of policy text production, the context of policy practices and
effects (enactment) and the context of outcomes. The focus at the ‘national’ level was primarily on the government of Chile. The focus at the local level was on three universities, selected to represent a diversity of university settings in the country. The global level was also accounted for through consideration of notions of globalisation (and its accompanying neoliberal ideology) and their effects, and by analyzing the policies of such global institutions as the OECD and the World Bank.

Braun et al.’s (2011) proposed organizational framework was also used in the thesis reported later in order to describe the local setting (‘institutional’ level). This analytical tool allows one to reveal institutional influences on higher education policy processes. While much of Braun et al.’s work centres on schooling as the ‘institutional’ level, the relevance of setting also applies in the case of higher education. The four contextual dimensions of this are as follow. First, there are situated contexts such as a setting, its history and intake, all of which refer to those aspects of context that are historically and locationally linked to a university. Secondly, the professional contexts refer to somewhat less tangible ‘context’ influences than in the situated dimension. Here, considering university teachers’ values, commitments and experiences along with policy management within the institution, and how they relate to policy enactments is relevant. A material dimension is also proposed for analysis. This refers to the ‘physical’ aspects of an education institution and consist not only of buildings and budgets, but also levels of staffing, available technologies and surrounding infrastructure. Finally, there is an external dimension. This encompasses pressures and expectations from such broader local and national policy matters as standards’ ratings in universities in the US and Europe, league table positions, and legal requirements and responsibilities, as well as the degree and quality of local authority support and relationships with other education institutions.
Furthermore, the study was informed by the notion of hybridity in curriculum policy as a result of policy transfer, especially in a climate of accelerating globalization and internationalization. This refers to a relatively recent model of global hegemony exercised by the US and European countries in higher education (Hartmann, 2008). Specifically, the concept of education hegemony refers to an education relationship which occurs not only at a national level, but also at an international level (Gramsci, 1971). Related to enhanced internationalization of policy flows the concepts of policy ‘learning’ and policy ‘borrowing’ have been elaborated (Vidovich, 2009). The former emphasizes the active agency of policy actors in negotiating site-specific policies and practices, while the latter describes actors as simply imitating policy models or receiving them passively, from elsewhere.

Accountability is another concept that has become a dominant discourse in higher education policy. Regarding accountability in education broadly, Vidovich and Slee (2001) have identified a typology of different types of accountability mechanisms according to the direction of the accountability relationship. These are ‘upward’, ‘outward’, ‘inward’, and ‘downward’ accountabilities. Also, they acknowledge that there is often a hybridization of these, rendering accountability relationships increasingly complex in a global knowledge society.

At the university level, ‘upward’ or vertical accountability, which is also referred to as managerial accountability (Vidovich, 2008), sees academics accountable to their line managers within universities, and universities, in turn being accountable to governments. ‘Outward’ accountability involves being answerable to groups in the community. This includes, academics and universities being accountable to employers and other ‘customers’. Together ‘upward’ accountability and ‘outward’ accountability, are focused on matters external to an organization like a university. By contrast, ‘inward’
accountability and ‘downward’ accountability, are centred more on accountability within the organization, with the former including accountability to self and to the profession, and the latter including accountability of senior staff members to more junior staff members in providing necessary conditions to optimise performance.

Vidovich (2018) has argued that ‘upward’ accountability and ‘outward’ accountability in higher education are the forms which have developed and diversified most over the last decades, and that they are associated with a prevailing neoliberal ideology and a quantitative logic focused more on ‘proving’ than actually ‘improving’ quality. Some commentary in the literature on education in Latin America broadly (e.g. Rezende, 2010) has pointed to positive effects of increasing managerial and market accountability in higher education. However, the introduction of management approaches from the business world, with an underpinning neoliberal ideology, still needs to be carefully examined in relation to universities and their functions in society.

Equity and social justice in education policy in neoliberal times

In the last decades, neoliberalism has accompanied globalisation and influenced the ideological orientation of education policies. Indeed, it has defined the agenda of economic and social transformation under the sign of the ‘free market’ (Connell, 2013). In Latin American countries, including Chile, neoliberal changes in education have predominated in recent years (Gregurotti, Espinoza, González & Loyola, 2016).

Since the 1980s, a concern about quality led to the development of associated competitive neoliberal policies in different countries, with such international organizations as the OECD and the UNESCO guiding authorities on how to enact them (OECD, 2008; UNESCO, 2017). International competitiveness in education, especially through the use of standardized tests in the school sector, indicated that countries performing better (conceived as having higher ‘quality’ outcomes), also had better
‘equity’ indicators. Such data pushed issues of equity to centre stage in the education policy agenda in various countries. By the early 2000s, a quality-equity policy couplet came to dominate policy discourses across the globe (Vidovich, 2013b). Thus, throughout the first decade of the 21th century, it was possible to observe a mix of neoliberal ideologies as well as voices pushing for equity. This push for both quality and equity has been labelled as ‘inclusive liberalism’ or ‘democratic liberalism’ (Rubenson, 2008). On this, it can be said that there has been an ideological hybridisation, which has translated into hybrid policies at both national and university level in various jurisdictions.

Various researchers assert that as nations are participating and competing in a globalised, neoliberal-based knowledge economy, they need to have suitably knowledgeable citizens (Apple, 2006, 2011; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Savage, 2011; Clarke, 2012; Connell, 2013; Sellar & Lingard, 2013). The associated human capital theory became important between the 1950s and the 1960s, mainly through the work of Theodore Schultz (1960) and Gary Becker (1993), both Nobel Prize winners in economics, who adapted the notion of ‘capital as wealth capable of generating surplus value’ combined with people acting rationally in their own economic interest.

Basically, human capital investment consists of investing in education and training. The argument is that the more education the nation has, the greater will be its labor competencies, and the greater the labor competition, the higher productivity and growth will be, and the greater will be the capacity for social mobility (Shultz, 1960; Becker, 1993). This is one of the central ideas that has guided the development of education policies in Chile. Such a conception brought the language of economics into education. On this, Brunner's work Guide the Market: Report on Higher Education in Chile (Brunner, 2005), mentions a series of functions that higher education must fulfill.
Amongst these, he says, is the formation of the capital that Chile requires to achieve adequate development within a background where the financing of institutions must be through the market, guided by public policy. This sort of thinking led to enhanced contestation over the concept of equity.

The pursuit of social justice can be seen as being a search for a fair distribution of what is valued in a society (Sen, 2010). Equity is a specific form of social justice. In education, ‘equity’ encompasses a wide variety of education models, programs, and strategies that may be considered fair, but not necessarily equal (Anagnostopoulos, Lingard & Sellar, 2016). One definition of ‘equity’ focuses on inputs, which translates into providing equality of access to education. This approach seems to be predominant amongst many developed countries (OECD, 2008). By contrast, a second approach to ‘equity’ is one of providing unequal inputs, and allocating resources according to needs. This, it is argued, could translate into equity of outcomes, and has been described as ‘treating unequals, unequally’ (Vidovich, 2013).

In Chile, equity policies, and discourses of social inclusion and social cohesion in higher education, were promoted by the government of Michelle Bachelet (2014-2018), especially through a new law for the provision of a gratuity for university students coming from the low socioeconomic classes. Currently, the government of Sebastián Piñera seems to have other priorities.

Globalisation, Internationalization and Education Policy Borrowing and Learning

The third body of literature that informed the study reported in this thesis is that on globalization (with accompanying neoliberal ideology), internationalization and education policy borrowing and learning. Particularly important in this regard is the literature on contemporary higher education policy development in terms of dynamic
interactions taking place simultaneously between global, national and local (university) levels (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Vidovich, 2004, 2009; Marginson, 2007).

Globalisation, internationalization and education

Globalisation can be defined as the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas beyond borders (Castells, 2011). It has also been closely associated with an accelerating neoliberal ideology in public policy. Most countries in the world are being influenced by it. In particular, culture, politics, economy and social relations are affected (Vaira, 2004). Also, it influences every country in different ways, including in traditions, culture and priorities (Meyer, Bushney & Ukpere, 2011). Furthermore, globalisation is understood as an increasing integration of national economies since a global economy has been established which includes the globalisation of financial markets (Lau & Yuen, 2014).

Some scholars consider globalisation to be a meta-myth related to a constellation of other myths (Mayo, 2014). Furthermore, they see it as a myth that is socially constructed to make sense of social transformations. Globalisation is a contested concept about which there is still no clear agreement on definitions of its main features.

The debate about how to define the phenomenon is structured around two main currents of thought. First, there is the convergence thesis. This emphasizes a trend toward homogenization. Then there is the thesis of divergence, which highlights the heterogeneity of globalisation’s effects and outcomes (Vaira, 2004). Also, there have been various attempts to reconcile these opposed versions. One of those is that of Marginson and Rhoades (2002). Through the concept of glonalcal agency (which stands for global+national+local agency of collective actors), they promote a notion of the blending of global tendencies with the local responses to them. The main aim of their
‘glonacal’ construct is to try to achieve a complex and multifaceted view of globalisation’s features and outcomes, while overcoming the dualities characterizing the debate (Vaira, 2004). Here the notions of ‘context-productive’ and ‘context-generative’ (Ball, Hoskins, Maguire & Braun, 2011) complement their analysis.

The operationalisation of concepts associated with globalisation and internationalization has meant changes in the way universities are structured (Marginson & Considine, 2000). New forms of power and governance have been established for their organization, influenced mainly by managerial styles of administration. On this, Marginson and Considine (2000) recognized five trends in governance, namely, new types of executive power, structural innovations, enhanced flexibility of personnel and resources, a decline in the role of the academic disciplines in governance, and new methods of devolution.

It is arguable that globalisation is the main structural characteristic of the contemporary world (Meyer et al., 2011). Also, in higher education it has had a huge impact; higher education institutions now have new tasks to perform and new social, political and economic demands. As a result, policy-making, governance, organization and academic work and identity are affected by globalisation and associated neoliberal ideology. Specifically in the Latin American region, globalisation has posed particular challenges for higher education. One of the most significant has been the weakening of public education (Livert & Gainza, 2017). This has resulted in the establishment of new relations between higher education, the world of work and societies in that part of the world.

The internationalization of education is a new priority with which Latin American higher education institutions have to deal. Another important challenge is offered by new
technologies and new demands on the curriculum, as well as the adoption of new teaching and learning strategies (Rama, 2012). Countries have started to respond to these challenges, with many being at different stages. Also, universities have matured in their approach to internationalization, having put a lot of effort into developing strategic alliances and networks with clear purposes and outcomes (Knight, 2011).

Specifically in Chile, globalisation and neoliberalism have had a particular impact on education. This effect is of a decisional, institutional, distributional and structural nature (Brunner & Ganga, 2016a). The decisional impact has altered relative costs and benefits of diverse policy options. First, international trends have been a major influence in the reduction of public expenditure on education in the country. This has led to a move to the ‘privatization’ or ‘commodification’ of education. Also, international comparisons of education outcomes are generating pressure on public decision-making. Secondly, institutional impacts are those which shape the agenda of options available to policy makers. An example of this is the fact that globalisation has increased the political pressure to give budgetary priority to education, working in opposition to the pressure to reduce public sector spending (Brunner & Ganga, 2016b). Thirdly, distributional impact consists of the influences that shape social forces (groups, classes, communities) within societies and between countries. Here the impact of globalisation has meant a decrease of the central power of the state on education through decentralization.

Finally, there are structural impacts. These determine organizational patterns and the political, economic and social behaviour of a society that can result from conflicts over adaptation and resistance to globalisation forces (Brunner, 2000). In this regard, higher education institutions in Chile are witnessing a process of deep institutional and structural change (Livert & Gainza, 2017).
Returning to the international scene, the OECD has been taking an increasingly powerful role as a key policy actor in a globalised higher education policy community in the last decades (Henry, Lingard, Rizvi & Taylor, 2001; Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). It provides advice on higher education, including recommending the creation of networks and providing effectiveness in the delivery of public policy (Shiroma, 2014). On this, the term ‘governance’ is appropriate, with some arguing that “these new global structures of governance and political power have transformed world politics into a global politics of agenda setting, coalition building and multilateral regulation” (Mundy & Murphy, 2001, p. 88), beyond regional institutions (Bevir & Rhodes, 2011).

It is also important to clarify that globalisation and internationalisation need not be conceived of as being distinct processes (Knight, 2004). Rather, they can be conceptualized as being increasingly interconnected. The OECD has defined the ‘internationalization of higher education’ as “the full spectrum of education programs and activities that contribute to internationalized learning, ranging from the internationalization of programmers’ content and delivery to the mobility of students and scholars” (2008, p. 238). More specifically, it has defined ‘internationalizing the curriculum’ as to “strengthened foreign languages teaching and enhanced international perspectives in the substantive content of tertiary curricula” (OECD, 2008, p. 257).

Attenuated global and international interconnections have also been accompanied by enhanced education policy borrowing across different jurisdictions (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2004). This phenomenon is referred to both as ‘cross-national attraction’ (Ertl, 2006) and the ‘cross-cultural transfer of educational concepts and practices’ (Tanako, 2005). Much of the literature on these areas is concerned with the nature of
education theories, models and methods being transferred transnationally for academic or practical purposes, and the processes by which this takes place (Hoyler & Jons, 2008).

Policy borrowing and learning

In the study reported later in this thesis cognizance was also taken of the importance of those works which emphasize that different national and sub-national jurisdictions often deal with policy challenges in different ways because “global policy agendas come up against the existing priorities and practices” (Ozga & Jones, 2006, p. 2). Of particular interest is the literature on policy transfer between Europe, the US and Chile. On this, while some have argued that the Bologna process simply represents direct policy borrowing from US universities, others hold that a Europe-wide perspective is now powerful in higher education globally, not only shaping policy parameters throughout that continent, but also having an increasing impact in other jurisdictions (Hartmann, 2008; Robertson & Keeling, 2008; McEldowney, Gaffikin & Perry, 2009), including Chile. Thus, it is important not to overlook the strong resonance of policy discourses across the universities, including an imperative to internationalize university curriculum for global citizenship.

Finally, the notion of hybridity in curriculum policy as a result of policy transfer informed the research reported later as noted above. This was justified by Hartmann’s argument that “a new form of global hegemony is taking shape as a hybrid of a US and European Empire” (2008, p. 217) and cultural hegemony from the US (Marginson & Ordorika, 2011). On this, the concept of policy ‘learning’ is preferred over policy ‘borrowing’ (Vidovich, 2009), as it emphasizes the active agency of policy actors in negotiating site-specific policies and practices.
Conclusion

The previous chapter contextualized the three background fields in which the study reported later in this thesis is located. It outlined the curriculum transformations that have taken place in higher education around the globe, in Latin America and in Chile. This chapter has presented a complementary body of research.

The chapter was organized into three main sections. It began by foregrounding broad trends in the history of university curriculum, particularly outlining the European, American and Chilean settings. The second section detailed the conceptualization of curriculum policy in education, including Latin American theories in the field, and reviewed the concepts of policy, quality and equity which dominate the field. The ever-changing macro level phenomena of globalisation, neoliberalism and internationalization, and the education policy borrowing and learning processes were described in the third part. Several converging and diverging themes were highlighted. It was also emphasised that the impact of globalisation on localized settings is the focus of a developing field of study, and that within it only a limited amount of empirical research has been conducted on the relationship between international curriculum policy and how it is adapted to suit local settings. The study reported in later chapters was conducted as a response to this observation. The next chapter now outlines the methodology of that study.
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The study reported in this thesis is an analysis of curriculum transformations in higher education in Chile. As expressed already, it was conceptualized in relation to the broad background of globalisation and internationalization. A qualitative study was judged to be most appropriate for the research given that the desire was to focus on the social and political setting in exploring the perspectives of key actors (Yin, 2011).

Building on the theoretical framework described in Chapter 3, this chapter now outlines the research design, participant selection and methods used for data collection and analysis. The chapter is divided into five sections. First, the interpretivist paradigm underpinning the empirical dimension of the study, and the critical theory paradigm informing the meta-analysis along the ‘policy trajectory’, and discussion, are considered. Secondly, the research aim and research questions are presented. Thirdly, the data collection and data analysis processes employed are explained. Fourthly, the chapter elaborates on the way quality was ensured when conducting the study. Finally, ethical considerations which arose during the research are detailed.

Theoretical Paradigms

The following section outlines the theoretical framework used in the study reported later in this thesis. This framework underpinned the policy trajectory model generated the research questions and focused the research both in relation to documents analyzed and key people interviewed. As indicated in the previous chapter, an interpretivist approach supported the empirical part of the study. Thus, it informed the methodology and the research methods. A critical theory lens was later brought to bear on the initial interpretivist analysis to provide a second level of analysis.
Interpretivist theory

As the study presented in this thesis explored policy actors’ perspectives, the interpretivist paradigm was deemed appropriate for the empirical component of the investigation. This paradigm helped to generate understandings of the human and social reality of policy actors engaged in curriculum changes. Kuhn’s (1996) definition is used in order to clarify what is meant by a paradigm. In his work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* first published in 1962, he conceptualized a paradigm as being a basic framework underpinning a science. It allows one to define what should be studied, what questions to pose, how to ask the key questions, and what rules to follow to interpret responses. In summary, a paradigm is the most general consensus unit within a science and serves to differentiate one scientific community from another. It serves to subsume, define and interrelate objects, theory, methods and mental tools (Kuhn, 1996).

For some, interpretivism has been identified as one of four major paradigms in social sciences (Connole, Smith & Wiseman, 1993), the others being positivism, critical theory and postmodernism. According to Habermas (1972), interpretivist studies are oriented towards an interest in understanding the meaning behind any phenomenon. Moreover, in the interpretivist model the individual and society are seen as being inseparable units. The relationship is considered to be a mutually interdependent one. Also, the underlying view is that all human actions are meaningful and that it is necessary to consider the level of social practices in order to understand them (O’Donoghue, 2007).

The relatively recent origins of interpretivism are in Europe in the 19th century. Some undertaking research in education and other aspects of the social world at that time were trying to imitate research approaches adopted in the natural sciences by embracing positivism. Interpretivism was a reaction to this. A fundamental approach to understanding the distinction between those adopting the positivist position of the natural sciences and interpretivism when
doing social research is to consider Weber’s differentiation between *erklären* or ‘explanation’ and *verstehen* or ‘understanding’ (Weber, 2011). He insisted that research in the humanities and humanities-oriented social sciences should be aimed at understanding phenomena instead of explaining causal relations (Weber, 2011). This assumption was appropriated by some to underpin interpretivist social science research.

Interpretivism is not a united and homogenous position. Rather, various theoretical positions within it share four main assumptions. These are related to the notions of ‘everyday activities’, ‘freedom’, ‘meaning’, and ‘interaction and negotiation’. First, ‘everyday activity’ is considered to be the foundation of social life. Secondly, ‘everyday activity’ is permeated by ‘freedom’; this means that ‘everyday activities’ are not totally imposed. Thirdly, people interact with others, and when acting they give ‘meaning’ to their own and to other people’s actions. Finally, there is ‘negotiation’ of ‘meaning’ in ‘everyday activities’. Through this ‘negotiation’ we can modify our understanding of reality (O’Donoghue, 2007).

A major theoretical position within interpretivism is symbolic interactionism. This current was initiated with the work of George Herbert Mead at the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920s. Within this position, the concept of ‘self’ is paramount. Mead stated that individuals develop an idea of the self by interacting with others. Embracement of this notion is fundamental, he argued, in seeking to understand social phenomena and how people make sense of them (Charon, 2001).

Herbert Blumer, Mead’s disciple, stated three principles of symbolic interactionism. The first principle notes that people act towards things on the basis of the meaning those things have for them. The second principle states that social action is the source where meaning is created. The third principle is that meaning is handled in, and modified by, an interpretive process, in which objects and situations intervene (Blumer, 1969).
One of the strengths of symbolic interactionism is that it provokes the researcher to consider the importance of an insider view at the micro (institutional-based) level of policy analysis. Also, the concept of perspectives is central in this position. A perspective can be defined as a conceptual framework through which people make sense of the world (Woods, 1983; Charon, 2001). In this regard, perspectives are filters for what humans experience. Furthermore, perspectives are situational and people develop them when having to choose between alternatives (Woods, 1992).

A related and important concept in symbolic interactionism is that of ‘action’. This concept is preferred over the concept of ‘behaviour’. For interpretivists, human actions do not come from external forces. Instead, people have reasons to act and intentions which justify their actions. Thus, human actions are guided by perspectives (O’Donoghue, 2007). This is to argue that within the interpretivist view, humans are active beings and not passive receivers of ideas from social structures. The fundamentals of this view were adopted to underpin the planning of the study reported later in this thesis.

**Critical theory**

Critical theory also played a part in the design of the research reported later in this thesis. The origin of critical theory is in Karl Marx’s work in the 19th century (Antonio, 1983; Bohman, 1999). It was developed more fully during the 1920s and 1930s through the work of Adorno (1963), Horkheimer (1932) and Marcuse (1964). It continued to evolve through the work of Habermas (1990), Bourdieu (1970), and Bowles and Gintis (1986), amongst others.

The theorists mentioned above are all located within the Marxist paradigm of investigation and understanding of reality. They all share a conception that education practices can reflect the existence of a structured society, with antagonistic social classes and conflict. One of the main conflicts, as they see it, is class struggle (Gil Rivero, 2002). On this, a central
critique conducted by Marxists is aimed at those who embrace functionalist theory assumptions and principles. They criticize what they see as the reality of the education system serving to reproduce the social relationships of the capitalist system. Also, critical theorists observe that elite groups appropriate schooling spaces to suit their own interests.

Critical theorists have four main criticisms of functionalist theory, especially when applied to studying education. First, they criticize Durkheim’s idea of the reproduction of a determining social order (Fernández-Enguita, 1999). They see this reproduction negatively, as opposed to functionalists, for whom it is a neutral, if not always positive, feature; functionalists have no problem seeing the school system as maintaining social and economic differences, especially in relation to cultural capital.

Secondly, critical theorists criticize human capital theory. They do so on the grounds that this approach accepts that the economy works in an autarchic manner (Gil Rivero, 2002). Also, they claim, the interpretation of social phenomena under human capital theory becomes ahistorical and does not have a relation to other human areas.

Thirdly, critical theorists debate the traditional Marxist assumption that individuals are moved primarily by economic interests (Gil Rivero, 2002). This, they argue, is not the only motivation people have to act. On this, they point to many social movements and to many actors who choose and develop options that are not necessarily profitable economically.

Finally, critical theorists criticize the assumption that job skills should be objectified (Gil Rivero, 2002). They question the education model whereby credentials are promoted as representing the way people join the world of work. On this, they argue that credentials alone do not guarantee entry to the labour force because other factors, including discrimination, can also play a part (Valdebenito, 2010). With regard to equality, a concept which the functionalists such as Parsons (1937), used to characterize the education system, Bourdieu argued that there
can be an absence of equality at a baseline level (Bourdieu, 1970). Therefore, he attached a central importance to considering cultural capital when studying education processes, which he criticized for its role in legitimizing social inequalities.

Bourdieu and Passeron’s book, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2001) originally published in 1970, was a key work on critical theory when it first appeared. After investigating the French university system, they argued that inequality can exist for people located in education structures. This is explained by them in terms of *habitus*, ‘field’ and ‘symbolic violence’ differences. People from low socioeconomic classes, they hold, can be disadvantaged in terms of linguistic and cultural capital. This can determine how students fare within the education system. Moreover, these differences can predispose people with more capital to study certain types of degrees with high social status. In conjunction, they say, the school system works through differentiating mechanisms in the institution which can act to select and separate students through every stage of schooling. Bourdieu and Passeron (2001) also contend that pedagogical relationships, or education activity, constitute ‘symbolic violence’. Furthermore, they refer to the operation of this system as being a ‘black box’ (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2001).

Bourdieu’s theory of education is a proposition of domination in social relationships in society. He tries to make ‘the black box’ transparent. On this, he states that young people enter the education system as heirs to capital and that this is not justified as it comes from their families’ status and class. Thus, high class heirs legitimize their position and differences through diplomas. Also, university and higher education can act to legitimize these differences (Valdebenito, 2010). All this led Bourdieu and Passeron to conclude, in relation to the French Republic’s public education system, that the promises it held out for all citizens in that country were not being met.
School, Bourdieu and Passeron argue, rewards those who have a high cultural capital through a system of legitimizing inequalities. In this process, dominant structures are reproduced. Also, the education system is the main reproductive apparatus of the ruling classes and elites of society; it imposes symbolic violence, concealing the fact that it corresponds to illegitimate power relations through different approaches (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2001). In doing so, it adds to the illegitimacy of symbolic violence.

The education system’s own symbolic violence, in this view, can reproduce and increase the imbalance of power (Bourdieu, 2000). For the purpose of the research reported later in this thesis, it was assumed that university curriculum can act as mechanisms to legitimate differences with regard to all kinds of capital, but especially social capital. This view is opposed to the human capital theory approach, which today is seen as promoting a view that education is a major way of gaining social mobility (Brunner, 2005).

Overall, critical theory offers an additional broad lens that can be used when undertaking policy analysis. Within it, the notion of power is central. The view is that the policy elite sustains hegemonic ideology and power in order to dominate all policy processes. The associated critical theory model can be described as one which facilitates an ideological critique, allowing one to uncover economic and political interests behind cultural productions (Vidovich, 2013). The focus of the model is on revealing ideologies and hegemonic power behind productions and decisions. It does so in order to contest the reproduction of social inequalities, emancipate the oppressed, and seek social democracy (Au & Apple, 2009).

**Research Questions**

The aim of the study reported later in this thesis, as already indicated, was to analyse the dynamics of the policy process involved in curriculum transformations in higher education in three universities in Chile. As outlined already also, the nature of the research aim led to the
decision to use a policy trajectory model coupled with a qualitative research design. The research questions were designed to generate understandings on how university actors and authorities decided upon, and made meaning of, the curriculum transformations at their universities.

The research questions themselves were designed specifically in relation to the concept of a ‘policy trajectory’ and to its contexts (Ball, 1994; Vidovich, 2007; 2013; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) at three levels: the macro (national) level, the meso (university administration) level and the micro (academics) level. In considering the policy trajectory approach in terms of levels, the assumption was that people located at the macro or national level are those working at the government level and those academics influencing higher education debate in Chile. People located at the meso (university administration) level are university staff in important positions within universities, while people located at the micro level include staff and academics within each school and faculty in the studied universities.

The four research questions were as follows:

**Context of influence:**

Research Question 1: What are the key influences from global, national and local levels on curriculum policy transformations at the case-study universities?

**Context of policy text production:**

Research Question 2: What are the key characteristics of the context of policy text production at the three case-study universities and how are they produced?

**Context of policy practices and effects (enactment):**

Research Question 3: What are the policy practices and effects (enactment) of curriculum policies at the selected case-study universities in Chile?
**Context of Outcomes:**

Research Question 4: What are the longer-term policy outcomes of the new curriculum policies and practices in the three universities, and for changing higher education policy-scapes, nationally in Chile, and globally?

**Data Collection and Analysis**

This section describes the research approaches used to collect, analyse and interpret data within the theoretical frames adopted. Two major qualitative research approaches, namely, interviews and document analysis, were used. The rationale for this choice, and a brief discussion of their respective strengths, is now outlined below. The sources of data are shown in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1 Sources of data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro level</td>
<td>No national documents on curriculum policy in higher education.</td>
<td>Government institutions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(national data)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Member of Ministry of Education (MINEDUC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 participants</td>
<td></td>
<td>Representative of MECESUP. Program, Ministry of Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Member of Higher Education Division of the Ministry of Education (DIVESUP).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Government institutions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Representative of Teaching and Learning Centre (CEA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Member of Centre for Comparative Education Policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Member of Accrediting Agency Qualitas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Member of Interuniversity Centre for Development (CINDA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academics from other universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meso level</td>
<td>1. Educational projects.</td>
<td>Administration and academics in power positions from the three studied universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(university administration data)</td>
<td>2. Internal resolution documents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University A</td>
<td>3. Funding contest bases MECESUP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University B</td>
<td>4. Performance agreements DIVESUP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University C</td>
<td>12 participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro level</td>
<td>11 participants</td>
<td>Academics staff from the three studied universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(academic data)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative research

Scientific research can be defined as a systematic orderly process, whose aim is the testing of hypotheses, the search for, or confirmation of, theory, or the development of existing theory (Green, Camilli & Elmore, 2006). In this regard, science has its own method for generating knowledge. This is known as the scientific method.

There are different approaches to scientific research. Specifically, within social science, there are two major approaches, namely, the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for the research reported in this thesis. Qualitative research can be understood as research regarding the meaning and the sense that people make of social reality (García Ferrado, Ibáñez & Alvira, 2002). It is a research approach that produces data based on people’s own words (spoken or written), observable actions and artefacts (Taylor & Bogdan, 1986).

There is no single qualitative approach. Rather, there are many traditions. Scholars suggest that the qualitative paradigm emerged from the intellectual heritage of Western knowledge, such as contributions from Descartes, Kant, Engels and Dilthey, from the development of empiricism in the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), and from reviews of the Cartesian and Kantian research traditions (Hamilton, 1994). As a general research approach, it has its own characteristics that define and distinguish it from other paradigms.

The rationale for using a qualitative approach was to enable the researcher to collect descriptive, contextually-based data for analysis in order to generate theory. This is consistent with the interpretivist position which guided the initial methodological component of the empirical part of the study. For this purpose, data collection, analysis and theory generation took place concurrently. Also, contextual features were described and interpreted. A detailed
description of each setting in which the studied universities are located is provided, including the geographical, economic, environmental and demographic backgrounds.

The universities studied

As stated above, the main purpose of the study was to investigate three universities in Chile. The focus of these was in accord with growing calls for detailed ‘situated case studies’ (Marginson, 2007) in higher education research. A case study can be defined as “a study of a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (Punch, 1998, p. 152).

Studying cases entails the investigation of “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and setting are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p.13). Also, because the rationale for the study being reported here subscribed to the notion that it is essential to fully contextualize cases studied, curriculum policy transformations were examined within the framework of both time (temporally/historically) and place (spatially). Thus, the longstanding policy questions of ‘who, what, why, when, where and how?’ (Simon, Olssen & Peters, 2009) influenced how the investigation was conducted, as did Creswell’s (2005) recommendation that multiple sources of evidence should be gathered.

It has been suggested that the study of individual cases can present a particular problem for researchers, namely, a risk that the group studied is known in depth, so that answers to the studied issues are foreshadowed. To deal with this, a research plan using the following steps was used to try to avoid bias: establishing a theoretical framework from the beginning of the study, categorizing and defining the key terms to guide the study, and clarifying methods of data collection and analysis (Goode & Hatt, 1970).
Selection of universities

Three universities in Chile were studied in depth, regarding the phenomenon in question, namely, the transformations of curriculum policy. Pseudonyms were used for each university to protect anonymity. They were chosen because in Chile they were adopting what for them is radical curriculum changes. At the same time, each of them was at a different point in implementing its new approach.

The first university ('University A') studied is a private university, which was established in 1982. Today it has more than 14,000 undergraduate students. It is divided into nine faculties and a community college, in which two doctoral programs, 30 master programs and 28 undergraduate programs are offered. Regarding its education model, it is referred to in public documents as being based on a “complex competency approach”, and its curriculum structure is based on Tarfid’s (2008) competency model. In 2010, the university established the country’s first community college according to their record, with support from a community college in the US. It is defined as being a top-level institution that provides both youth and adults with training opportunities to enter the labour market. Those who wish to study for university degrees at higher levels can also transfer their credits taken at the college level.

The second university ('University B') studied is one of the oldest universities in the country. It was founded in the late 19th century. Its curriculum change has been entitled the ‘college’ reform, corresponding to the notion in the US where undergraduate studies are often taken in the ‘college’ sector of a university. It was implemented in 2009. Currently, the ‘college’ program has over 1,300 students. Not all students, however, are enrolled under this system, as some are still under the old curriculum program. At the same time, people enrolled under the older curriculum can choose to transfer to the new one, and some have done so.
In the University’s publicity material, the offerings have been defined as being an innovative range of undergraduate university education options, which are based on successful international models. According to the material in question, this allows students to gain a broad understanding of the various disciplines that make up an area of knowledge, leading to a solid comprehensive education, deepening into an area of knowledge in a stimulating and flexible environment. According to this latter statement, the transformation can be seen as a response to international trends in higher education. The new undergraduate program is taught over four semesters entitled ‘formatives’ (I-IV), four semesters entitled ‘deepening’ (V-VIII) and two semesters entitled ‘degree’ (IX-X). The postgraduate program is undertaken over two semesters (XI-XII). It leads to the master degree, which then opens the door to PhD studies if the student achieves at a high enough level.

The third university (‘University C’) studied was established in 1988. Currently, it has more than 8,000 undergraduate students. The curriculum there is entitled a ‘liberal arts program’. There are linkages shown between each program and discipline and the study of liberal arts. Overall, the university offers liberal arts education with a specialty major and it also offers a master degree. The new curriculum was initiated in 2001 and all students are enrolled in it.

University C claims it has created an education model which is unique in Chile. It seeks to educate people to be successful in a world which is marked by change, globalisation and fragmentation. The study-plan for enrolled students is divided into two stages, as is the case in relation to the university system throughout various other countries, with an undergraduate degree curriculum and a specialist master degree curriculum. Taken concurrently, they enable students to gain a professional degree.
Documents

Documents provided an important source of data for analysis. This was judged to be appropriate because of the nature of policy, which, as proposed by various scholars (e.g. Ball, 1994; Fairclough, 2003; Taylor, 2004; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Vidovich, 2013) can be considered to be both text and discourse. Historical and contemporary documents are a rich source of data for the study in the field (Punch, 1998). They can complement results yielded through such other methods as interviews. Other strengths are stability of meaning, potentially broad coverage and their unobtrusive nature (Yin, 2010). The later idea refers to the fact that documents are social constructions not deliberately created as part of a research project (Fairclough, 2010). Also, in qualitative research, preliminary document analysis is an appropriate point at which to start gathering data and laying the foundations for subsequent interviews. Another important strength of the approach is that opportunities for scrutinising data are abundant and one can proceed from different sources.

Most of the documents used in the research are located in the public domain and are also available online. The search for these documentations was undertaken throughout the research process. Private institutional documents were requested in Chile by the researcher when the interviews were being conducted.

Interviews

Data were also gathered using semi-structured interviews. This approach is valuable for collecting individuals’ perspectives (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). Thus, it was deemed appropriate for the study. Also, it is an approach that is consistent with both the interpretivist paradigm which framed part of the conceptualization of the study, being one of the two informing theoretical positions.
One of the features of the approach which made it suitable is that conducting semi-structured interviews is a flexible and open process even though the research questions can direct content, order, depth and formulation of follow-up questions when interviewing. On this, Punch has concluded that semi-structured interviews are “one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others” (1998, p. 175).

A well-designed qualitative study can ensure the interviewer helps participants to reflect upon their social world. In order to facilitate this, part of the preparation for the research reported in this thesis, included addressing Anderson’s (2002) recommendations on interview protocols. These include being cognisant of the interview location and its physical arrangements, and using effective communication to facilitate the free flow of information. Conducting effective interviews also requires having a mastery of such basic interviewing skills as active listening, using open-ended questions, being open, being empathetic, paraphrasing, and controlling the process (Anderson, 2002). Such recommendations and skills were applied while conducting all interviews. The present researcher also questioned situations and statements. As recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008), nothing was taken for granted.

Participants interviewed at each of the three universities were selected through both a snow-ball technique and purposive selection (Dixon-Woods, Agarwal, Jones, Young & Sutton, 2005). Also, prior to the study being conducted, ethical approval was obtained from the Human Ethics Research Office of The University of Western Australia. Permission was also given by senior authorities at the three studied universities. In total, 33 people were interviewed between October 2015 and March 2016. Preliminary contact was made with the participants by the researcher through email. Each participant was contacted and received a letter outlining the research and two copies of a consent form, one of which had to be returned to the researcher. Of the 62 contacted, the 33 mentioned already agreed to participate. Following this, mutually
convenient times were arranged for conducting the interviews. These were conducted in casual settings such as café’s so that the participants could speak in a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere. On average, each interview lasted for approximately one hour.

Ten interviews were analyzed in relation to the macro or national level, namely, those of five females and five males. The benefits of interviewing 10 participants at this level are that they have a ‘big picture’ view of changes at national and global levels.

Regarding the meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels of policy, both, interviews and documents were analyzed. In the case of the first university, seven interviews were analyzed, namely, those of four females and three males. In case of the second university studied, six interviews were considered, namely, those of five males and one woman. In the case of the third university studied, ten interviews were analyzed, namely, those of seven males and three females. It is also necessary to point out that students were not interviewed during the conducting of the research presented in this thesis. This area merits a separate study.

As stated in previous chapters, participant codes are used throughout the results chapters. These are shown in Table 4.2 below.
Table 4.2 Participants identity coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Sampling criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro (national) level</td>
<td>CG1 to CG4</td>
<td>4 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CG1</td>
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<td>NG1 to NG6</td>
<td>6 participants</td>
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<td>NG6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meso (university administration) level and Micro (academics) level</td>
<td>UA</td>
<td>7 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UA1 to UA7</td>
<td>UA1</td>
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<td>UA7</td>
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<td>UB</td>
<td>6 participants</td>
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<td>UB1 to UB6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UC</td>
<td>10 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UC1 to UC10</td>
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<td>UC10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Codes. CG: Chilean Government; NG: Non-Government; UA: University A; UB: University B; UC: University C.

Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing process. While conducting the research reported here, specific analysis techniques were selected in order to generate theory.
In particular, two main approaches were used: a grounded theory approach and a critical discourse analysis approach. Both strategies are now considered.

A grounded theory approach was selected to assist in the initial analysis in the study reported in this thesis. This method was developed by Glaser and Strauss in their work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* originally published in 1967. It involves using a systematic set of procedures to generate an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The idea is that, through analytic induction, a central theoretical idea would be generated from the concepts and categories generated.

The particular approach used for the study involved the transcription of each interview and continuous re-reading to identify themes and subthemes. Appropriate notes, including field notes, were made. The aim of the analysis was to generate concepts based on the data. Code notes were written, or typed, throughout the data analysis process. Applying grounded theory methods in the data analysis stage required that each of the transcripts and interviews was coded on a line-by-line and paragraph-by-paragraph basis.

Both critical discourse analysis and grounded theory were used in the document analysis. The whole group of documents consisted of a mix of national policy documents and private institutional documents. The first group was mostly available in public domain and they were obtained online by the researcher. Private institutional documents were asked to participants and they were all given to the researcher. The whole conglomerate of documents was organised in an analysis matrix. The themes and subthemes emerged from this procedure were triangulated with the themes and subthemes emerged from the analysis of interviews.

At this point, it is important to clarify issues regarding language. As the study reported in this thesis was undertaken in Chile, the interviews were conducted in Spanish. This presented no difficulties for the researcher as she is a native speaker of Spanish. However, the researcher
underwent a rigorous translation process of interviews for the purpose of analysis. Therefore, the quotations are presented in English.

Critical discourse analysis was the other qualitative research approach used. This type of analysis has become popular in policy studies in the last number of years (Vidovich, 2013). It focuses on how language can shape social practices, and how social practices can shape language. It is considered to be a holistic approach suitable for policy trajectory studies. Fairclough (2003, 2006) is one of the founders of this approach. He has argued for analysing the relationship between textual content and the social conditions which produced and interpreted it, and also on how power manifests itself through language.

The critical discourse analysis framework used in the study reported in later chapters consists of two main elements: contextualising policy and deconstructing policy (Hyatt, 2013). Contextualising, according to Hyatt (2013), has four properties. First, he argues that we should analyse the immediate socio-political setting, that is, where and when is the new policy produced. Secondly, the analyst should consider the medium term socio-political setting. This implies examining other influential backgrounds that have had an impact on the policy text after a period. Thirdly, the framework promotes analysing contemporary socio-political individuals, organizations and structures. Finally, the framework promotes study of the ‘epoch’. This concept of the ‘epoch’ is related to Foucault’s concept of the ‘episteme’. It refers to what it is considered as knowledge and that determines ways of understanding and interpreting the world at certain times (Balibar, Osborne, Sandford & Alliez, 2015). Deconstructing policy implies the use of different analytical lenses and tools derived from critical discourse analysis and critical policy analysis.
Quality of the Research

Issues relating to reliability and validity of data were carefully considered when conducting the study reported in this thesis. Trustworthiness was addressed with the purpose of maintaining reliability and validity in the sense that these concepts are understood in qualitative research (Schwandt, 1997). Trustworthiness is that quality of an investigation and its results that make it noteworthy and ‘ring true’ to audiences. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative studies must satisfy the criteria set for trustworthiness. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Each of those aspects is now considered.

Credibility concerns the truthfulness of the data collected. To ensure that data are credible, a number of research strategies can be used. First, an extended period of data collection is needed. As a result, data were collected intensively over a period of six months. The second strategy was that more than one data gathering method was used. Finally, ‘peer debriefing’ was carried out regularly throughout the data planning and data gathering phases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The second criterion, transferability, refers to the generalizability of the study in a qualitative sense, as opposed to in a statistical sense. In particular, it refers to whether or not there is sufficient data about the study to allow the reader to establish the degree of similarity between it and other situations to which the findings might be transferred (Schwandt, 1997). One approach that was adopted to meet this criterion was to illuminate ‘generalizations’ with thick descriptions of the setting. Also, detailed notes of the analysis of data were maintained.

The third criterion, dependability, pertains to the rigour associated with the process of inquiry (Schwandt, 1997). On this, Guba and Lincoln (1985) have advocated the use of an audit trail. This is an approach whereby the reader can be taken through the process of the study, step-by-step, so that he or she can determine whether the process and conclusions of the study
are dependable. For the study being reported here, the reasons for, and the processes used in, collecting and analysing data were made explicit to respond to this criterion.

The final criterion, confirmability, relates to the degree to which the data and interpretations of the study are based firmly on evidence collected, rather than being based solely on the imagination of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure this, the researcher kept in mind the following questions while analysing the data: Are the findings grounded in data? Are the data-derived inferences logically? Do the categories fit the data?

**Positionality of the researcher**

The undertaking of research where an author has been a participant in some form or other has both advocates (Carter, 1993; Anderson & Herr, 1999) and detractors (Fenstermacher, 1994; Richardson, 1994; Metz & Page, 2002). It is therefore necessary to indicate the professional background which the researcher brought to the study being reported in this thesis. Having been employed as an academic at both public and private universities in Chile, she had first-hand experience of the processes relating to curriculum changes in higher education in the nation. This experience provided a thorough understanding of the meso and micro level (university-based) setting in the policy process. Moreover, the researcher has views about issues of social justice and equity in Chile. These have been set-aside in the reporting of the findings, although those issues are raised again in the concluding Chapter 10.

The ‘insider’ status of a researcher can reduce many of the problems associated with conducting research in terms of gaining access, establishing rapport with participants and dealing with ethical concerns (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). However, it may also raise issues of potential bias. Further concerns have also been raised in regard to research conducted by researcher practitioners being appropriately rigorous. This relates to epistemological, ethical and political considerations (Metz & Page, 2002).
Guidelines for research conducted by researcher practitioners have been developed (Anderson & Herr, 1999) and were observed during the course of the present study. However, a difficulty has been raised regarding a criterion for worthwhile research, namely, the diversity of approaches used in published practitioner studies (Anderson & Jones, 2000). This has led to a continuum of ‘positionality’ being recognized, whereby the researcher can be considered to be an ‘outsider’, an ‘outsider within one’s own site’, an ‘insider studying self-practice’, an ‘insider in collaboration with other insiders’ or an ‘insider in collaboration with outsiders’. In this regard, one also needs to note that embedded in the concept of qualitative research is the notion of relationships and power between the researcher and the participants.

In the study being reported here, some of the participants had previously met the researcher. However, the researcher believed that, overall, this was an advantage (Ganga, 2006) because it provided an enhanced opportunity to gain access to participants from two of the three levels of the policy trajectory (meso and micro). The positionality of the researcher also provided a degree of ease between participants and the researcher during interviews. Furthermore, approval to use university documents, some of which could have been deemed to contain sensitive material, might not have been afforded to an ‘outsider’.

As the researcher was conversant with relevant condensations and contextual influences evident across all of the levels of the research, participants were generally able to give more in-depth responses than might otherwise have been possible. The responses were noted by the researcher without the flow of data being interrupted for the purpose of clarification (Mullins, 1999; More, 2012).

In contrast to this positive experience was the issue of participants wishing to engage the researcher in discussions relating to other topics relating to education policy in Chile. Some of the areas of discussion that arose during the interviews were deemed by the researcher to
fall outside of the boundaries of the research. Conversation was also sought by participants relating to the preliminary findings of the study during the data collection interview stage. This difficulty was overcome by the researcher insisting that such discussions would be held at a later date when analysis was complete. Furthermore, the potential for lack of openness due to a level of familiarity between some participants and the researcher was foreshadowed as a potential issue. This was addressed by ensuring that data were collected from multiple participants, to ensure an appropriate blend of different experiences and working relationships with the researcher.

**Ethical Considerations**

Appropriate ethical criteria were adopted throughout the research. The confidentiality of all participants and institutions was ensured at all times. Thus, the names of participants and institutions are not revealed. Codes for people and institutions have been used.

Prior to commencement of the study, ethical approval was obtained from the Human Ethics Research Office of The University of Western Australia. Permission was also given by the authorities in each of the three universities included in the study to conduct the research. The data collected through document analysis and interviewing were treated as confidential. The participants were informed about the nature and the purpose of the research and were assured that their participation would be anonymous and voluntary. They were also told they could withdraw at any time without giving any reason for doing so. The interviews were recorded digitally, except where the participants preferred notes to be taken. In the latter case, the interviews were transcribed. The records and transcriptions have been stored safely and will be kept for a period of seven years before being destroyed.
Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research approach taken to analyse the policy process involved in curriculum changes in higher education in Chile. The research questions were based on Vidovich’s (2007, 2013a) conceptual framework for analysis derived from Ball’s (1994, 2006) policy contexts: the context of influence; the context of policy text production; the context of practices and effects (enactment), and the context of longer-term outcomes. Also, the study reported in this thesis used a global-local span along the policy trajectory (macro, meso and micro levels). This design allowed the researcher to capture interconnections between contexts and levels of the policy process.

The chapter has described the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the research. Both interpretivism and critical theory were drawn upon in conjunction with a policy trajectory study. The research questions were also presented. The qualitative design and case study approach used were outlined. Grounded theory and critical discourse analysis approach were used to analyse data. Also, the chapter outlined considerations relating to the quality of the data and to ethics. The following chapter, Chapter 5, is a presentation of results on the macro or national level of the policy trajectory.
CHAPTER FIVE

MACRO LEVEL OF POLICY

Introduction

This chapter is the first of four chapters presenting the results of the research reported in this thesis. It relates specifically to the results on the research undertaken in relation to perspectives on curriculum policy transformations at the macro or national level in Chile. Regarding the outline of the chapter, the same structure is adopted here as is used in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, in which the focus is on the results of the research undertaken at the meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels at each of the universities studied. Thus, the presentation follows the policy trajectory framework detailed in Chapter Four. Unlike in the following chapters, however, this chapter only considers the context of influences, which, it will be recalled, relates to influences at both the national level in which the studied curriculum policies were developed and such ‘bigger picture’ phenomena as globalisation and internationalization. The context of policy text production and the context of policy practices and effects (enactment) are not considered. This is because these two contexts relate to the individual universities, and these are dealt with in the later chapters.

The Context of Influences

Research Question 1: What are the key influences from global, national and local levels on curriculum policy transformations at the three universities studied?

This section of the chapter details the perspectives of participants at the macro or national level on influences on curriculum transformation within the three universities in Chile that were studied. Both international and national influences are considered. In doing so, it is recognized that while an influence is not something linear and
unidirectional, it is still possible to identify influences in terms of forces affecting university curriculum policy changes.

First, four main influences were identified as coming from the international arena. These are as follows: the Bologna Agreement; the proposals of international organizations; the influence of ‘top’ universities around the world; and changes within various disciplines. Secondly, three major influences were identified as originated at the national level. These are the absence of higher education curriculum policy, accreditation processes, and the participation of some Chilean universities in the Alfa Tuning America Latina Project. Each one of these is now considered.

1. International Influences

1.1 The Bologna Agreement

As stated already, the curriculum policy change processes experienced in recent years in Chile are not unique. Rather, they have a correspondence with social transformations taking place in other parts of the world. On this, there was both recognition and consensus amongst participants located at the macro or national level that a major influence that has driven curriculum transformations is the Bologna Agreement, which was drawn up in Europe in 1999.

Historically, as stated already, education policy in Chile has largely been influenced both by the United States (US) and by some countries in Europe. Thus, it is not a surprise that one main influence identified was the Bologna Agreement. Indeed, it was expressly recognized as being influential by all of the participants operating at the macro or national level.

The general view of participants on the Bologna Agreement was put by one of them as follows:
The Bologna Agreement had more in common with Europe's Economic Community but spread to Chile. It has had a tremendous influence. Whether it's positive or negative, I would rather not say but I will say with certainty that it has greatly influenced organizational schemes. (NG6)

Participants stated that developments in relation to the European Higher Education area over the last three decades promoted transformations in different parts of the world. At the same time, it was held that the curriculum policies in Chile were not an exact replica of those in Europe. Rather, they believed that there has been an appropriation of those policies and influences, with local developments both within the country and within each university studied, also being influential.

It was also argued that the Bologna process, and its derivates, such as the Lisbon Strategy, had been stimulating decisions to engage in policy reviews of higher education in Chile, and that these have been reinforced by the positions adopted by other international organizations. As one participant put it:

The transformations which occurred within the European Higher Education Area was a way of updating the curriculum to be more flexible and contemporary. It was also done to meet conditions made by the World Bank to insure Chile would continue to receive loans. There was no choice but to revise the curriculum to meet these new conditions. (NG5)

This view suggested in particular that the World Bank demand encouraged other associated initiatives relating curriculum policy.

One development which took place in the latter regard was the Alfa Tuning América Latina Project (Reich, Machuca, López, Prieto, Music, Rodríguez-Ponce & Yutronic, 2012). This project was established to help to contribute to the creation of a common higher education area in Latin America through curriculum convergence fostered by some Latin American and European academics in 2003, inspired in the IVth follow-up meeting of the European Higher Education Area for the European Union, Latin America, and the Caribbean. It also seeks to generate an approach to designing,
developing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing quality in first, second and third cycle degree programs in higher education institutions.

The implementation of the Alfa Tuning Latin America Project had gone through three phases, and according to participants located at the macro or national level, universities in Chile have been active contributors in each phase, especially through these universities that are members of the Council of Rectors of the Chilean Universities (CRUCH). In particular, it was recognized that the project had been influential in triggering university curriculum reforms in the country. The following statement illustrates a view on this:

There have been other developments that are directly related to the Bologna Agreement namely the Tuning project throughout Latin America. The results of the Tuning surveys have made an impact on a curriculum level. As well as in Chile, I've been to other universities throughout Latin America and the consensus seems to be positive as we've made insights and have worked in partnership with some colleagues in the European Union. What came out of the Tuning project was that people value the acquisition of generic and entrepreneurship skills to help improve their employability. (NG1)

In light of statements like the above, the general view of participants appeared to be that what had taken place is the establishment of a strong relationship between local initiatives and the global higher education phenomena of the Bologna agreement and the Tuning Project.

1.2 International organizations

There was also recognition amongst participants working at the macro or national level that pressure from global stakeholders influenced the curriculum policy changes that have taken place within the universities studied. Regarding this, some stated that it is undeniable that such international organizations as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have had a major influence on Chile’s higher education system. In particular, it was argued that reports and information
produced by the OECD were studied and were drawn upon in curriculum policy design.

On this, a former politician and academic stated:

*Another important factor to consider is that during the creation process of these curriculum policies, UNESCO, a number of international conferences as well as the recommendations made by the OECD were all important contributors and in full agreement.* (CG1)

The above comment suggests that for some participants the position taken by international organizations was valuable in guiding universities in updating their curriculum policies. They also stated that it may be that authorities within universities were seeking to obtain funding from those international agencies and, as a result, they wanted to demonstrate that they were positively influenced by their thinking. Specifically, in this regard, one academic stated:

*In other words, the OECD certainly has a huge impact in defining organizational models for higher education. From an institutional point of view, it all comes down to funding. Curriculum and its relevance are also very important. The entire model is of importance for example the need for more full-time teachers. I think their influence is slowly but steadily growing.* (NG1)

Also, in emphasizing the pressure and the power exerted by this international body, participants operating at the macro or national level of the higher education system seem to recognize that the influence of such organizations has been growing over time.

**1.3 The influence of ‘top’ universities around the world**

Participants operating at the macro or national level also drew attention to those universities overseas that are located at the top of international league tables and to their influence in various developed and developing countries. Especially influential for some, they said, were certain North American and European universities. In this regard, the University of Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, came in for special mention. One participant gave voice to this as follows:
I recently undertook a yearlong scholarship at the University of Harvard. The president there spoke about the American education system and how it was undergoing seismic changes. We know all about earthquakes in Chile! I think what was said was completely true and the same situation was reaching us here in Chile. (CG4)

The influence of higher education institutions from the US on Chile is not a new phenomenon. At the same time, it is also recognized that Chile is currently also being influenced more and more by Australia.

Some Australian higher education institutions came in for special mention, especially the University of Melbourne. Commenting in this regard, one vice-chancellor said:

*We could see that there was enough of an affinity for the role that Melbourne (University) plays within the Australian university system. We were very interested in Melbourne, somehow, trying to make a synthesis of university formats in, let's say, the issue of liberal arts and making training more connected, more holistic. This is the little step we are taking.* (CG4)

The above comment also suggests that the curriculum reform implemented by the University of Melbourne from 2008, which is the highest ranked Australian institution in the Times Higher Education Ranking (2019) and is regularly located in the list of ‘top’ 100 universities, had inspired some of the curriculum changes studied in the research reported here. This university, it will be recalled, introduced a model which draws on the three plus two plus three, or three-cycle structure, proposed by the Bologna process, and aligned it with the objectives of many North American undergraduate programs and related blueprints in Asia (McPhee, 2009).

1.4 Changes within disciplines

Changes within academic disciplines or area of knowledge were also considered by participants working at the macro or national level in the higher education system in Chile to be an important external influence informing new curriculum policy in universities. What is reported by fellow academics internationally on specific subjects
and fields, including on new theories and scientific evidence, is readily available to them in our current global knowledge society. On this, one participant commented:

(...) but I would say that that is not the only thing, the reflections that arise from various disciplines in each area within each university faculty and school. Those reflections each have importance when you think of the graduate profiles of each discipline. (NG4)

The above comment suggests that it was not only policy trends, but also the process of academics reflecting on them within each field of knowledge and their research and studies, that constituted a major force motivating curriculum policy reforms.

Participants working at the macro or national level of the higher education system in Chile also stated that a commitment to updating one’s knowledge and dismissing that which seems to be obsolete, were also important influencers on the promotion of curriculum change at the university level in the nation. One participant expressed a view on this as follow:

And all those things are of fundamental importance, because these are ways which universities are using to adapt to new environmental demands, knowledge, knowledge management, global phenomena, etc. It's a mistake to think that this is going to come from national politics, because it has never happened, but it will come incrementally from below, not because we say it, and not because of an ideological choice, but because of a sociological order of power in Chile. (NG1)

What this academic appeared to be proposing is that the increased speed at which knowledge is circulating and changing is also generating a commitment to regular change within universities. According to participants like this, this movement within the academy has an impact on policy development.

On a related matter, there was also a view that the concept of what constitutes a university is also changing. On this, one academic stated:

The university is an institution that has a history of almost 1000 years. The university model, maintains its role as a place of tradition, the giving and receiving of knowledge, an environment of continual academic reflection, staying true to its core tasks as an institution. Maintaining all of this, it has been able to evolve very dynamically over time relying on the context of its place in society. We now have to take care of a fully relevant generational change in the course of the entire university. I see this new approach being
absolutely essential in maintaining the validity of the university as relevant within the social fabric. (CG4)

What this person seemed to be contending is that there was a perception that the notion of what a university is has always been changing. Therefore, as some participants working at the macro or national level within the higher education sector in Chile saw it, the studied curriculum changes constitute just another set along a very long path, being just the latest response by the university to expectations of it by society.

2. National Influences

2.1 Higher education curriculum policy absence

The national influences on university education have been filtered by the Chilean Government, mainly through the actions of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and its Higher Education Division (DIVESUP). Administratively, Chile is divied into 15 regions. In relation to policy, each region follows the regulations of the national government and its Ministry of Education, as Chile is a unitary republic. Also, it is at the national level that the actions and ideas expressed at other institutional levels are considered.

Participants located at the macro or national level of the higher education system in Chile argued that the system within which they work is characterized by autonomy and deregulation. As a result, each university, they claim, is trusted to engage in its own curriculum design and revision. At the same time, it was recognized that the most important government institution of higher education is the Division of Higher Education (DIVESUP), which is part of the MINEDUC. It was pointed out that while officially it is only meant to provide general guidelines, in the ‘real world’ it uses economic incentives as a strategy to invite universities to undergo curriculum change processes.
Regarding the latter, a view was expressed that universities in Chile have great autonomy with regard to the influence of the central government. According to participants working at the macro or national level, this can be attributed to the neoliberal changes introduced by the military government in 1981. Indeed, some consider such deregulation to be almost a *laissez-faire* in curriculum policy. The following statement illustrates the concern of one member of a non-profit organization on this:

*I think there's a risk there if we don't define policy. Chile has never had a policy of higher education. It has only made decisions on higher education without policy... In its public institutions, Chile does not have anyone defining long-term policy. We have a chief division of Higher Education, which rarely lasts four years as the person appointed hasn't lasted a full presidential term. They have tended to make decisions based off of their own understanding which isn't always the best course of action especially if it comes from the [University of] Chile or the Catholic [University]... I don't think that there's any guideline. I think one of the things that characterizes higher education in Latin America, especially in Chile, is the unrestricted respect for autonomy* (NG2)

Autonomy, it is held, while seeming to be a key feature of the university system and an influencer of curriculum policy production, may also be a risk.

Those located at the macro or national level hold that there was no national policy in terms of a legal framework on higher education in Chile to undergo curriculum reforms. Specifically regarding the current curriculum changes that some institutions are undergoing, there was consensus that this is not a response to a mandated national policy, with related actions for implementation being laid out. On this, one academic stated:

*What happens is that when you say ‘curriculum policy’ and understand it as I am understanding public policy at the system level, I would say there has never been, in that sense, something you could really identify as public policy to orient or to structure curricula.* (NG1)

Comments like this suggest that the lack of a national higher education curriculum policy is not new. Also, it was argued that changes that take place are were born inside each university. On this, one participant from the government sector said:

*Since deregulation, universities and higher education systems in Chile have operated autonomously. Each institution manages their educational offer as they see fit. Any changes that are made are at the discretion of the university. The law says that*
universities can freely create courses with their own grading system. This means that the curriculum is wholly owned by the university, meaning there are as many models as there are institutions. There is no way of control. That makes things very difficult. You cannot speak of "curriculum" as if it were one all-encompassing framework. The ministry has sent guidelines out but these are merely suggestions rather than directives. (CG2)

The person in question was arguing that the role of the national state in the process of curriculum policy transformations is limited, although various guidelines have been offered by government institutions and have had some influence over the situation. Also, they do not see these as being part of a homogenous initiative. One academic stated a view on this as follows:

At the university level there are multiple initiatives of curriculum character and curriculum innovations, but one would have to go from department to department within universities for it to truly be effective and consistent. (NG1)

In other words, it was argued that no one direction or formula has been followed to guide changes of policy. Rather, each institution has been deciding on its own path, and indeed, even multiple paths in some cases.

On the other hand, participants working at the macro or national level argued that while the concept of curriculum traditionally used in Chile referred to the content of what is to be taught, nowadays it may also be used to refer to new teaching methods by which the content is to be presented. Commenting on this, one person stated:

The new teaching strategies should work to highlight the student, in which the focus is put on them and not on the teacher. It has to do with training in teaching and the system cries for experts in didacticism. We don't have any of those here. Curriculum relates to what is taught and how it is taught, so this could incarnate skills in students. (CG1)

What this participant also seemed to be claiming was that even though systematic developments characterize the curriculum policies studied by the present writer, there are still weakness in this regard, especially because of a lack of lecturers who are experts in teaching strategies. At the same time, participants working at the macro or national level claimed that the curriculum policy transformations have generally been well accepted by all actors within universities.
The limited documentation available about curriculum change in Chile supports the views outlined above. There has been no national curriculum policy for higher education. Neither has there been any law or document indicating how to conduct or orient the curriculum changes being undertaken. Regarding the latter matter, the period of the military dictatorship of Pinochet was a watershed one in the history of higher education in Chile. The current national Constitution of Chile, which has been inherited from this era, details matters of provision and governance regarding higher education and universities. However, there is an absence of guidelines on how to generate a public policy in higher education and that is inherited from military times. At the same time, the government of Chile, through the Ministry of Education, has financially supported some of the curriculum policy changes taking place within certain universities. Furthermore, a strong view held by those working at the macro or national level is that not all universities have been responding to all aspect of what has been advocated by the ministry.

Participants located at the macro or national level also observed that policy development in the field had been removed somewhat from party politics. On this, they pointed out that ideological discussions and debates around associated issues have been largely avoided. One participant explained the situation as follows:

Due to Chile being so deregulated, this comes as a result of when classification began, and at the time that private universities were established during the Dictatorship, it was declared that autonomy was extended to all new institutions. We went from a few institutions to a large number nearly overnight. As a result, we are in the current situation. There were many more, but there has been a reduction with some institutions closing their doors. This has all occurred over the last 40 years. We have a system which has given institutions complete autonomy whilst simultaneously removing any political discussion or involvement. (CG2)

Overall, the participant was arguing that the lack of political debate about higher education in Chile has served the interest of the political class and the powerful classes
in the country, whom consolidated their power during the military dictatorship of Pinochet.

Participants stressed that while there is no national curriculum policy for higher education in Chile, certain public programs have been introduced in the field. One of those initiatives mentioned by participants is the Improvement of Quality and Equity in Tertiary Education Program (MECESUP), run by the MINEDUC. This program was introduced for the improvement of quality and equity, and it involves universities in winning competitive funds in order to fund projects within universities. It also requires engagement in strategic planning and providing information for decision-making based on evidence and performance indicators.

According to some participants working at the macro or national level of the higher education system, the national state has fostered some curriculum policy changes through the MECESUP. This, in turn, they claimed has been a major national contributor promoting those changes. One participant expressed a view on this as follow:

*All of this is the result of public policy, the MECESUP projects, coordinated by the Ministry of Education and the World Bank... (NG5)*

Similarly, it was held by others that the program is in line with requirements imposed on Chile by international organizations, including the OECD, in order for associated financial aid to be made available to the nation for education developments.

It is not surprising then that some participants working at the macro or national level considered that government economic incentives for universities, through the MINEDUC, have been a significant force influencing certain types of changes in higher education in Chile. On this, they also pointed to DIVESUP, part of the MINEDUC, which had developed other programs, including that entitled the *Curriculum Harmonization Agreement* (Ministerio de Educación Chile, 2016). This is an initiative that aims to
promote and encourage strategic analysis and institutional change to improve the quality and relevance of higher education in accordance with identified demands of national development and the knowledge society. In practical terms, it is an agreement between the DIVESUP and each higher education institution, with the former organism providing funding to universities to undergo curriculum revision (Ministerio de Educación Chile, 2016).

The following statement by a participant who took part in the study being reported here illustrates the perceived importance of initiatives like that noted above:

_In 2011 I was invited by the head of the Department of Higher Education institutional funding to be part of a team (Performance Agreements instrument) which was incorporated into the higher education system. Under this instrument, I was invited to participate with those who were assigned to work on harmonization of curricula within universities in Chile. We worked together in the areas of teacher training, technical and vocational training, and a scope of internationalization of doctorates._ (CG1)

On this also, other participants suggested that while the program has provided support and funding for curriculum policy transformations in some universities in Chile, there has been no clarity on the ideological perspectives that lie behind it.

At the same time, one person working at the macro or national level argued that curriculum reforms in Chile over the last two decades can be identified in relation to four landmarks. First, he identified a redefinition of curriculum which took place in the country in the early 2000s, with an emphasis being placed on the competency-based model. The second landmark identified was that point when curriculum policies were influenced by a redefining of graduate profiles that emphasised quality indicators. The third landmark in curriculum changes identified was when a system of transferable credits was drawn up to allow students to move freely from a course at one university to a similar course at another university. The fourth landmark, it was argued, was when
university curriculum design became more student centred than it had been previously.

The view of the participant referred to above on the matter was stated by him as follows:

Well, most of the curriculum changes are related with reviewing the adequacy of quality and the relevance of training plans with certain guidelines which are located in the educational model of the institution. These were approved a few years ago, and it asks us to investigate the training process, using students as the centre of the initiative. It requires us to look at the working time of students in relation to the system of transferable credits, and it asks us to use active learning methods. It forces us to look at the competency-based training and not strictly skills, but with a base in the development of competitions in achieving skills... I would say that transformations have to do with relevance, quality and contribution. (NG4)

Such a perspective suggests that a clear relationship has been emerging more and more between curriculum change and the world of work. At the same time, on the other hand, there was also agreement amongst participants working at the macro or national level about quality being an important aspect in new university curriculum policies.

Another key feature of the university curriculum changes taking place in Chile, according to those interviewed operating at the macro or national level of the higher education system, were that changes taking place in relation to pedagogy. New policies on this, they argued, promote a perspective where the student, rather than the teacher, is at the centre of all concerns. On this, one participant stated:

In addition, the curriculum and our actions called for institutions to make a paradigm shift from teacher-centred teaching to student-centred learning. That is the imprint of all initiatives that have been supported by the ministry. (CG2)

This academic also argued that universities have undergone what he sees as being a necessary transformation in terms of how education and learning have been conceived and practiced. This change, he argued, also seems to be one of the key features of the current curriculum policies at the university level due to fund coming from government to do so.

In general, those working at the macro or national level also considered that curriculum policy reform in universities in Chile has been related to the massification of
higher education that had been taking place internationally over the last three decades. According to one university authority, the larger number of students enrolled in higher education in Chile compared to previously has presented new challenges in order to provide what many now consider to be a good ‘service’. On this, one participant stated:

*The reality of the university system, the social, cultural and economic reality of the country, the international environment is radically different, so then, one has to make structural changes... So, I think if you look, we went from an elite university to a university in which two thirds of young people are entering higher education, versus a university attendance which was less than 10% in the past.* (CG4)

Overall, the general view was that the structure and demography of the student body at universities has been subject not only to social and economic changes in Chilean society, but also to globalisation and changes in technology, and that these are posing huge challenges on university policy.

### 2.2 Accreditation processes

Participants located at the macro or national level in the higher education system in Chile also said that they recognize that curriculum policy change has also taken place because of the adoption of new accreditation processes by their universities. Indeed, from as far back as 2006, when Law N°20.129 was promulgated, accreditation of universities has been a major issue for them. Since then, all universities have been required to be accredited nationally. One of the early aspects of this accreditation process is that curriculum within all institutions needed to be revised. On this, the view one participant from a non-government organization was expressed as follows:

*Well, I think that on the one hand, the experience of the accreditation, the accreditation process that began to demand and to assess, for example in the degrees based on exit profiles, and that was when he had to start defining graduate profiles. That was a job that was not trivial. At the time I was in the accreditation commission, I remember that there was a technical committee, for example, is trivial, the technical committee of nursing for example, worked hard to make a profile of nursing graduation.* (NG2)
This is indicative of a general recognition by participants working at the macro or national level of the accreditation processes and the National Accreditation Council as national agents, external to the universities and whose requirements are non-negotiable. Indeed, in some cases, accreditation has led to the closure of institutions such as the University of Mar, which closed in 2012.

Participants working at the macro or national level also argued that accreditation regarding the quality of education has become a particular issue within the higher education system in Chile. This situation has been created, they held, by the perception that there is an education crisis, with certain research bodies and social movements stressing that the education system needs to be improved greatly.

It was also held by participants located at the macro or national level that the introduction of accreditation processes for quality assurance has been a fundamental influence on those deciding curriculum policy. On this, one academic stated:

*One of the first things that occurred during the processes of quality assurance which begun around 2009, was to emphasize the need to define graduate profiles as they are a fundamental element. Instead of saying 'we will train professionals designed to meet the requirements of the third millennium' we said 'we will train nurses who can do A, B and C'. I think that was an important part of the results processes for quality assurance. This led to a whole other focus of redefining or at least reviewing the curriculum.* (NG2)

What was being suggested by this person is that a stronger and direct relationship exists between quality assurance requirements, the curriculum and the demands of the world of work than previously. Also, a related view of some participants was that the requirements of employers forced the government into adopting its quality accreditation systems.

The National Accreditation Commission has laid down the guidelines that institutions have to follow for gaining accreditation (National Accreditation
Commission, 2010). As a result, the processes have promoted change in curriculum policy, in terms of content and practices. At the same time, participants located at the macro or national level argued that the national state gives the impression that it is keeping a distance from the process by ensuing it is conducted by external agents. One participant expressed a view on this as follows:

*There is no document as the Chilean way dictates institutional autonomy. Another reason is because there is a lack of information from the point of view of the processes. There are accreditation reports. These are the rules of the MECESUP programs, but these were always concrete projects and not a system. Adding and subtracting, this exists when you have projects with State money and you need to evaluate them. There is no single document. And this is not a desirable situation.* (CG3)

Comments like this exemplify how those at the macro or national level consider the lack of curriculum policy as a structural characteristic of the higher education system in Chile, and that that is why the introduction of accreditation requirements has become so important. A result is that even though there is no national curriculum policy, each university has documentation about its own curriculum reformulations. At the same time, DIVESUP has also laid down guidelines for conducting revisions of curriculum (National Accreditation Commission, 2010) and has produced a set of rules on competition that institutions are required to follow when applying for curriculum revision funding. Equally, universities have instituted internal specialised groups of academics to produce texts and documentation regarding those processes.

The perceived crisis in the education system in Chile, already detailed in earlier chapters, was also recognized by participants working at the macro or national level as being an engine promoting curriculum policy change in the universities studied. One academic expressed a view on this as follows:

*We have known for quite a while that there absolutely exists a crisis in the education system. From the year 2000 and onwards, the World Bank opened up competitive funds which forced institutions towards certain standards and defined conditions, i.e., the pressure from public policy. The conditions setup by the World Bank placed universities in the position they are in today.* (NG3)
At the same time, it was stated that Chile lacks a government institution with the authority to define longer-term curriculum policy in higher education. This is why, participants located at the macro or national level said, that the universities have had a lot of power and autonomy when deciding on what to do in the field.

2.3 The Alfa Tuning Latin American Project in Chile

Participants working at the macro or national level in the university system in Chile also pointed to the participation of some Chilean universities in the Alfa Tuning Latin American project as having influenced curriculum policy changes. Specifically, its ‘transferable credits system’ (TCS), was considered to have been very significant. Also, the adoption of an associated competency-based model has been required in some cases as a condition for participating in this project. One academic expressed a view on this as follows:

One thing I noticed, on a ministry level, was the focus on competencies. I think there was, and still is, an obsession with the Tuning survey within the Ministry of Higher Education. Obsessions is the best word I can use but beyond that, I cannot really explain it any further. (NG6)

However, the notion of ‘competencies’ is a complex and contested one, and it has multiple definitions. This had not escaped the attention of participants working at the macro or national level. Some of them saw competencies as being learning achievements of students. For others, competencies are skills that can allow students to perform well in the labour market. Others were less clear and dismissed the notion as being just yet another passing fashion. These perspectives highlight the heterogeneity of curriculum policy changes in Chile.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the perspectives of participants located at the macro or national level of the higher education system in Chile on the research focus of this thesis,
namely, current curriculum transformations in the country. In particular, the context of policy influences was considered. On this, both the international and the national context of influences were analysed. With regard to the international influences, certain phenomena including the European Bologna Agreement and the importance being placed on having universities located in top positions on international league tables, were identified as influencing local transformations. Also, the suggestions of international organizations, especially the OECD, were deemed influential. Furthermore, regarding national influences, the development of accreditation processes and the participation of some institutions in the Alfa Tuning Latin American Project were identified. Participants working at this level also observed that there is an absence of a specific body to formulate explicit higher education curriculum policy in Chile. Perspectives garnered in relation to those working at the (university administration) and micro (academics) levels of the universities studied will now be considered in the next three chapters.
CHAPTER SIX

UNIVERSITY A

Introduction

This chapter, Chapter 6, presents an analysis of the results on the research undertaken at ‘University A’, one of the three universities studied for this thesis. The analysis deals with curriculum policy changes at the University at both the meso (university administration) and the micro (academics) levels. The meso (university administration) level, it will be recalled, relates to the broad university administration, while the micro (academics) level relates to academics of faculties and departments within it. The exposition in relation to each level is organized around each of the contexts of the ‘policy trajectory’ framework, namely, the context of influences, the context of policy text production and the context of policy practices and effects (enactment).

The Meso Level

The context of influence at University A

This section of the chapter considers the perspectives of participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’. They highlighted what they saw as the four main international influences on curriculum change in the University. These are as follows: the rapid development and obsolesce of knowledge; the influence of the Bologna Agreement; the competency-based curriculum model; and the impact of various international organizations. Participants at this level also identified influences they considered to have originated at the national level. These are influences from other institutions within Chile, the massification of higher education and associated demands of society, and the influences of the national government. Local influences within ‘University A’ were also identified. These are as follows: changes in the role of the
1. International Influences

1.1 The influence of rapid obsolescence of knowledge

Current curriculum policy changes which universities are undergoing in Chile were viewed by participants operating at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ mainly as responses to international trends. In particular, they argued that the accelerated speed at which knowledge and information is advancing is a major influence that has driven associated curriculum policy transformations. The general view on this was put by one of the participants as follows:

*The second thing has to do with modern day curriculum versus the accelerated speed in which knowledge is developing. For curriculums to stay relevant, they need to be renewed every 3 to 7 years.* (UA1)

This view incorporates a notion that there has been an awareness by the administration personnel within this University that the obsolescence of information and knowledge has forced them to foster the promotion of curriculum policy transformations.

Specifically regarding the accelerated speed of development of science and information, a participant stated that concepts such as Bauman’s (2000) ‘liquid modernity’ and ‘information society’ may also have influenced curriculum policy developments. As he put it:

*...this requires us to develop new methods to be able to face this new age which undoubtedly is having a major impact on education. We also have to consider that in order to live reasonably well in this new age which is in a state of transformation with its revaluation of knowledge, values, ethics, citizenship, the way we interact, political parties, etc., it's imperative that we develop new ways of looking at ourselves as well as the way we envision professionals in the 21st century...* (UA3)

This comment indicates a belief amongst participants working at the level under consideration that being members of a globalised knowledge society brings particular
challenges with it, including within the academic and university domains. Coupled with it was a view suggesting that it is important for universities to review the way they structure curriculum to prepare students for life within such a society.

1.2 The influence of the Bologna Agreement

As with participants located at the macro or national level, those working at the meso (university administration) level identified the European Bologna Agreement and related developments since 1999, as being a force influencing the curriculum policy transformations taking place at ‘University A’. This agreement established a model for the development of new curriculum policies which were taken up in Chile. The following statement illustrates the general view on this:

*What happened in Europe well after the creation of the Bologna Agreement, created a sort of dynamic situation which influenced us.* (UA7)

A related view expressed was that the situation referred to above is not only in relation to ‘University A’, but also in relation to other universities in Chile. ‘Bologna’, as one participant put it: “was our benchmark of what was happening, and what we thought was very necessary” (UA6).

There was also consensus amongst participants working at the meso (university administration) level in this university that European initiatives have been a significant influence on the curriculum policy change taking place there. On this, a participant commented as follows:

*It was ordered that degrees within schools should progressively implement their training plans based on competency from international trends such as the Bologna Agreement.* (UA3)

Amongst participants at this level, there was also agreement that the Bologna process stimulated not only the revision of curriculum policy at their university, but also at other universities throughout Latin America.
1.3 The influences of the competency-based curriculum model

There was recognition by participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ that the competency-based model of curriculum design has had an enormous influence within this institution. This, according to them, and the associated cross curricular key generic skills movement, have provided guidelines to which the curriculum changes conform. Specifically, in this regard one university administrator stated:

With the complexities of today's society and the speed in which the global knowledge is moving, we need to develop competency rather than an accumulation of knowledge. Fostering competency will develop the various professional fields and truly is the most effective way of doing so. The concept and definition of competency hasn't been able to be strengthened due to the varying definitions by authors. (UA3)

This comment also suggests that there was a perception that the interpretation at the ‘University A’ of the notion of what constitutes the competency-based approach has been ambiguous, even though the term ran throughout the discourses of participants.

A participant also went into detail about the definition of ‘competency’ adopted in the institution. On this, the participant argued as follows:

Following Levy-Leboyer's proposal, the competency concept has a wide spectrum and can be understood in many different ways. On the one hand it is a operative vision in which it centres around the ability to complete tasks which is viewed as a commodity. On the other hand, competency can be defined as the future graduate who is a sophisticated individual. (UA7)

According to the same participant, the model developed by Claude Levy-Leboyer provided an important reference point and offered a professional conceptualization of a ‘competency’, while the approach used by the University in its curriculum policy change is not a competency-based model in the pure sense. Another participant expressed this idea as follows:

It's important to understand that we do not have a model based on competency, but what we do have is a model which is a hybrid between curriculum content and one based on competency. We understand that a curriculum based purely on competency is one that
the University of McMaster in Canada and the University of Sherbrook are utilizing... But we do not have a pure curriculum based on competency. (UA7)

At the same time, most of those working at the meso (university administration) level in the University saw the use of a competency-based model, no matter how undefined it is, as being a positive influence.

Coupled with this, there were those in the University who critiqued the competency-based curriculum. One participant did so in the following comment:

In Europe now, there are discussions about going back to the curriculum previous to the competency one. What happens is that the epistemological discussion has to take place, which always seems to happen and that's a good thing. (UA1)

Another participant, also working at the meso (university administration) level, stated that these epistemological disputes taking place are not relevant. On this, he stated:

Whether they are called competencies or not isn't that important but what is important is that there exists a curriculum alignment, in the Pixi's line, so that we all know which way is north and can adjust accordingly based on that unified direction. Whether the graduate profile is expressed in the form of competency, or in another way, does matter but it's not fundamental. (UA7)

It was sufficient for this participant that the competency-based model gave guidelines to engage in the curriculum policy change process.

1.4 The influence of international organizations

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level in the University considered that there are two types of international organizations which have been influencing the new curriculum policy. These were international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and other universities around the world.

In the last two decades, pressure and recommendations from international organizations have become a major force influencing the development of education policy in Chile. On this, participants deemed that the OECD has been a particularly
important influence in the higher education domain in the country. One director expressed this view as follows:

Well, there is the influence somewhat of the World Bank, which during the nineties and two thousand influenced policy in higher education, and a turn to the new look of the OECD. In other words, since we have fully subscribed to the OECD, we have been reorienting the logic of the system towards this type of policy, abandoning a bit what has to do with World Bank and IDB policies. (UA1)

This comment illustrates the general view that currently the OECD has a very large influence on higher education in Chile, surpassing that of the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. Associated with this was a view that a combination of the OECD and European influences have also been at work. As one participant expressed it: “Then there is certainly the influence of the OECD Report, the Bologna process, from Europe. That is, that influences that is being felt” (UA7).

To this, others added a view that the fact that other universities in the world have been engaged in curriculum developments, similar to those taking place at their university, has also been influential. On this, they also argued that they are not necessarily referring to universities, such as the University of Harvard, that are at the top end of international league tables. Rather, they were referring to other universities located lower down the tables. One participant gave voice to this as follows:

At one point the University of Deusto had a major influence over universities around the world. In our case, Deusto had a great influence on us as did Brno College. Over the past 40 years, Brno college has been working on a competency model. (UA7)

The University of Deusto referred to is located in Spain, and the Brno College is in the Czech Republic.

Universities in the United States (US), Australia and other countries in Latin America were also mentioned. On this, one vice-chancellor stated as follows:

We researched universities in the United States, Australia and Spain. We didn't really base our model on any one in particular but, we did take pieces from each university that we found was similar to ours. In saying that, we did look at universities in Latin America such as in Peru as well as in Mexico. (UA6)
Such comments suggest a belief that practices in universities across these countries were considered at ‘University A’. This participant concluded by stating that he believes that trends in the US and Europe are the most influential of all on the curriculum policy changes taking place in ‘University A’.

2. National Influences

2.1 The influences of other institutions and universities

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level in ‘University A’ argue that other higher education institutions in the country have had an influence on their university with regard to curriculum policy reform. In doing so, they return to the matter of the competency-based model, pointing to its presence at other universities in Chile. The following statement illustrates a view on this: “Because national incidents also have to do with the fact that several universities were also involved in this proposal of a competency-based curriculum” (UA3).

Statements like this suggest that the adoption of the competency-based model has been a national trend, which has been manifest not only at ‘University A’ but also at other universities in Chile. Another participant working at the meso (university administration) level mentioned that the trend has also led to the emergence of associations being established between universities. He expressed his view on this as follows: “And that with the fact that they are beginning to create networks of universities that are doing these processes of renewal” (UA7). Comments like this suggest that, as participants at the meso (university administration) level saw it, the curriculum policy review which ‘University A’ was undertaking reflects a national trend.

2.2 The influence of massification and demands of society in Chile

The second national influence identified by participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ on the curriculum changes is the
massification of the higher education system in Chile, which has translated into larger enrolments being provided and more diverse students cohorts than previously. On this, one academic stated:

_The first influence was the massification of higher education. This phenomenon creates external demands and problems such as student retention rates and failure._ (UA7)

Comments like this suggest that the growth in student numbers’ over the past few decades has generated its own new challenges for universities and a recognition of a need to change curriculum policies to respond to new demands and issues.

The massification of higher education, it was stated, has also led to changes in the traditional age groups that attend university. Traditionally, people between 18 and 22 years of age finishing the last year of secondary school constituted the principal university enrolments in Chile. More and more, however, other age groups have started to enrol. Regarding this, a participant argued that because this is the case, it has been important for the University to review the curriculum to prepare future professionals “for new times”. His view on this was expressed as follows:

_The curriculum change aims to train professionals to meet the demands of the community. I think that's been one of the big outcomes of the change. One of the first components of this model is to give student's practical experience. The model aims to equip graduates with the skill set necessary to successfully join the labour force._ (UA6)

Overall, the argument is that an analysis of what society currently demands was undertaken to inform the curriculum policy changes taking place. This, it was held, was essential because the constant renovation of knowledge, which has had an impact on the nation’s labour structure, is characterized now by mobility and flexibility. One major outcome, it was claimed, has been a constant evaluation of degrees offered at the University.

In Chile, university education for many has, historically, led to employment in professional positions. Participants working at the meso (university administration) level
at ‘University A’, however, maintained that there has been a need to update the way those ‘careers’ have been structured as part of the new curriculum policy. One participant gave the following explanation for this:

*We undertook this study so as to find what the job market needed in each particular field. The study that we did was not only internal it also had an external component. As part of this external evaluation, we included the views of students, graduates and working professionals.* (UA2)

Comments like this reaffirm a view that there is a direct link between the labour market, the advancement of knowledge and what this university has been doing, changing its curriculum policy.

### 2.3 State and national government influences

The third national influence identified by participants located at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ on curriculum policy change was that of the government. Some participants at this level also stated that the government, mainly through the actions of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), had initiated the curriculum policy changes undertaken, specifically through its program entitled Improvement of Quality and Equity in Tertiary Education (MECESUP). This program is funded both by the government and the World Bank to support the transition of the economy of Chile to a knowledge-based one through developing higher education. To this end, the State provides funding for institutions to engage in associated practices (MINEDUC, 2017). One participant expressed a view on this as follows:

*In Chile the Ministry of Education promotes these transformations. One of the strategies to help implement these changes was to establish a funding award for universities to undergo curriculum transformations. Universities had to define their educational model otherwise they could not compete for funding.* (UA7)

What the participant seemed to be claiming is that the national government in Chile has considered that it is important to encourage universities to make explicit their
curriculum models and that ‘University A’ did so through engagement in an MECESUP project. Another commented on this by stating:

*Due to MECESUP 0101 project, the first thing we did was to promote the improvement of student learning outcomes. In saying this, we also needed to consider the demands of a professional in the 21st century.* (UA6)

Indeed, unlike participants working at the macro or national level, those located at the meso (university administration) level considered that the government of Chile has played a very explicit role in setting new curriculum patterns aimed at supporting economic change nationally.

3. Local influences at the studied university

3.1 Changes in the role of the university teacher

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level in the ‘University A’ also highlight that job descriptions and the roles played by faculty members and academics have undergone transformations. They saw this as being both a cause and an outcome of curriculum policy change. Traditionally, faculty members adopted the role of experts in teaching and research at the University, but, as indicated, this has been changing. One participant stated her view on this as follows:

*We as teachers are no longer the sages who know everything. We are now facilitators in the learning process for example we guide students towards reliable sources of information whilst facilitating the development of their mental learning structures.* (UA6)

The move, participants considered, has been driven by authorities and university teachers. Also, the view was that scholars now have to be more responsible than previously for guiding their students. This, as some participants working at the meso (university administration) level put it, means that university professors have to spend much more time than previously preparing their work so that they take account of students’ backgrounds and prior knowledge.
3.2 Feedback from graduates

Another major local influence on curriculum policy changes, which was held by participants located at the meso (university administration) level, is the feedback that graduates provide. On this, one participant went on to elaborate:

*There are several aspects influencing this. Two important factors are the characteristics of the new generation enrolling and the generation graduating. We received feedback from graduates which indicated whether the training was relevant (UA2)*

This comment suggests that the University’s graduates have influenced the work that has taken place on the revision and elaboration of new curriculum policy. One way in which they did this, it was held, was by observing their employability rates. Regarding this, one participant stated:

*If you generate a curriculum plan that is not consistent with what is required in a particular field and/or with the labour market, this will affect employability of graduates. (UA7)*

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also stated that the curriculum policy has to take account of the likely future of their students, especially in relation to the nature of the labour market.

3.3 Accreditation and quality assurance

Accreditation processes in operation in Chile for participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’, it was held, have been another important local influence on curriculum change. On this, one dean said:

*I believe that accreditation is a major factor impacting changes. The National Accreditation Commission gives guidelines for curriculum updates to universities in order to receive accreditation. (UA2)*

Indeed, it is a requirement of the system that a university has to be accredited. Participants like this one working at the meso (university administration) level also argued that accreditation here is fundamental not just to protect the position of the
We already have cases at the national level where this has been badly handled, and it has brought severe consequences. The ones who have been greatly impacted are students. Institution can always be restructured or in the worst case they can close. But when students are negatively affected, that has an impact for life. (UA7)

Such comments highlight the importance placed by those working at the meso (university administration) level in the University on the welfare of students.

The context of policy text production at ‘University A’

This section of the chapter details the perspectives of participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ on the context within which the curriculum policy and its associated texts have been produced. It is undertaken in relation to the following features of the curriculum policy change: structure; ideology; accountability; idiosyncrasies; policy elite; and policy processes.

1. Features of the curriculum policy change

1.1 Major change in curriculum structure

Each policy has particular characteristics that relate to the setting in which it is developed. On this, three structural features stand out regarding participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’. These are macro-curricular issues; changes in the demography of students; and key concepts in the policy.

According to participants, macro-curricular transformations commenced at ‘University A’ in 2005. Since then, associated issues have been predominant for those operating at the meso (university administration) level. These issues relate particularly to the structure of the whole curriculum. In this regard, participants operating at this level argued that the new curriculum policy is part of a large education project of the institution. As one participant stated:
Along with the Educational Project, there are documents and among them are two called Strategic Plan and Education Plan. The other documents were written based on those two. Fundamentally what guides all of this is the Institutional Educational Project. (UA1)

In the University, the curriculum change has been entitled ‘the change to a college structure with a competency-based curriculum’. Coupled with this, there was a view that there has been a continuous review of programs, plans and graduation profiles in the institution.

Commenting on the latter, participants pointed out that the institutional plan established a process of continuous revision for each degree course. One director expressed this as follows:

*The curriculum changes are seen as updates to the courses being taught. They consist of updates to the competencies that are being delivered to students.* (UA2)

Also, returning to the matters of the curriculum policy change as being encapsulated in a new ‘college structure’, specific characteristics were identified. The use of the term ‘college’ itself, it was held, denotes an administrative structure emphasising technical degrees. A participant located at the meso (university administration) level referred to this as follows:

*At this university there is a college faculty which refers to its degrees as 'technical degrees'. Currently, we call ourselves 'technical careers'. Our structure is similar to that of other faculties within the university. This faculty named 'college' was modelled after the Community Colleges in New York.* (UA2)

The participant also declared that this move to the ‘college’ nomenclature and structure has taken place because of international alliances undertaken to facilitate the obtaining of national accreditation.

Those working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ also stated that the demographic profile of the student population has had an impact on curriculum policy. Because of a move towards the massification of higher education,
students with lower qualifications than their predecessors, it was argued, now get a place at university. On this, a participant said:

*This is happening because of the change in students. In my time, university students were those who obtained 650 PSU point or higher. Now it's quite different with university admission scores being lowered to 430 PSU.* (UA1)

In the above comment, PSU stands for the University Selection Test that students at Year 12 in schools in Chile undertake to gain access to university. Overall, the participant was highlighting that the curriculum policy change had to happen because of a need to respond to the demands of a new student cohort.

Another feature of students that was identified relates to their socioeconomic classes. Many now come from lower socioeconomic classes than previously. One participant expressed a view on this as follows:

*I believe this is improving the quality of vocational training thus making it more relevant and at the same time promoting equity. The latter is very important as we have students with limited resources. When we started, we were one of the few universities the process of innovation to this day, the percentage of those who were first generation university students is still around 75% to 85%.* (UA7)

Also, participants argued that the majority of their students are the ‘first generation’ of their families to attend and receive university education, and that this needed to be considered in developing the new curriculum policy.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ also considered that there are key concepts in the new policy. They stated that the ‘change’ is characterized by clearly defined procedures to review the curriculum. The work of defining what is involved was undertaken by the central administration of the University. On this, one participant declared:

*We could certainly update it more however, we have an internal procedure which states that every two years we need to review the process.* (UA2)
One of those procedures was the definition of specific times for reviewing and renewing the curriculum.

For students undertaking courses of more than four years duration leading to a qualification to embark on a professional degree, course reviews are not undertaken so frequently. Referring to this, a participant stated:

*We have a permanent process of curriculum updating. For example, when we designed the degree of commercial engineer, we included a graduation profile and training pathways where necessary competencies are obtained so that students can graduate.* (UA1)

The process of curriculum revision seemed to start with the production of a profile of what was sought and the construction of a set of competencies which students should attain in order to achieve the profile that was desired. According to testimony from those working at the meso (university administration) level, it seemed that each faculty decided for itself when to conduct a review. On this, a participant pointed out:

*The university states you have to carry out this process. The how and the when are decided by each academic area. They review and decide when to do it and follow the guidelines.* (UA2)

This participant was highlighting the autonomy that academic units within the University have had with regard to the decisions they can make on the content of their curricula.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ also held that the process of curriculum revision was undertaken in collaboration between an administrative unit, namely the University’s ‘Curriculum Update Management Unit’ and each faculty. One participant described this process in the following way:

*The Curriculum Update Management unit has all the parameters, the steps to follow, it even states when it needs to be done, and is supported by the unit that is in charge of institutional accreditation. Therefore, the two areas talk a lot about what the parameters are and what are the times and processes that must be met.* (UA2)
The outcome of adopting this approach, the participant held, was that consensus had to be reached between all of those working at the meso (university administration) level who were involved in the process of revision.

1.2 A Liberal humanist ideology

Those working at the meso (university administration) level in the ‘University A’ also recognized that a set of core beliefs lies behind the policy text production. Furthermore, they held that, notwithstanding the curriculum policy changes that have taken place, these beliefs have continued to be influential. On this, one participant stated:

*It relates to the institutional values of the university which are excellence, integrity and ethics, freedom and tolerance, country commitment, independence, pluralism and participation.* (UA1)

It is considered that the University’s fundamental role is, as one participant stated, primarily developing “professionals who will really felt in the development of a fairer Chile in which there will be solidarity” (UA3). Thus, the overall view amongst those working at the meso (university administration) level is that the University curriculum policy is a humanistic one with a neoliberal component.

1.3 Market and external accountability

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level argued that there is also accountability to different agents in relation to the curriculum change. First, there is market accountability. This relates to the idea of universities being managed as enterprises. Thus, participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ recognized that this involves preparing professionals for the labour market. Commenting on this, one director argued:

*If the task is to prepare a professional, because what we do at the university is to train professionals to work, and you are not meeting the requirements of the labour market, they are not going to be hired, and therefore future students will not enrol with us, because we are giving curriculum that is outdated.* (UA1)
While the value of this ‘training’ for the market is recognized, the extent to which there is less emphasis on ‘educating’ more holistically is a cause of some concern. The general view on this, was expressed by one participant as follows:

*It is very important to make curriculum updates and it should be incorporated into all institutions. We have done this. But beyond being an obligation, one does it because the obsolescence of knowledge which seem to be occurring every two years. We cannot be delivering tools which have no use, or give them solutions which no longer hold validity in the market.* (UA2)

The use of words such as ‘tools’ by participants working at the meso (university administration) level may even have derogatory connotations, suggesting that placing nearly all of the emphasis on the acquirement of practical knowledge is inappropriate.

Regarding the ‘training’ emphasis, another participant argued:

*I believe that disciplinary development is important but has to be translated in the training, it has to be relevant to what students want to do in their working life. That is, I believe that there is a greater emphasis on training professionals as a concrete result. Before it was all about the search of knowledge and today there is a little more pragmatism with respect to students.* (UA1)

He concluded by saying that the main concern of students is “asking how long the degree will last and how much money they will make”.

Another aspect of accountability, namely, performance indicators, were also recognized by participants working at the meso (university administration) level as a matter that has received great attention. In the last decade, concern about comparable research-related data and other sources of information regarding the performance of universities has become of central importance. According to some located at the meso (university administration) level, ‘University A’, like other institutions of higher education in the country, is having its performance increasingly measured by indicators.

One participant expressed concern on this as follows:

*Nowadays institutions are part of a system where they are measured by standard indicators, in which we only have to train professionals. When I studied it was different, a quarter of the population attended higher education. Therefore, today universities have to respond to the labour market and to national and international certification...*
mechanisms. They set standards of quality for the training, labour insertion standards, and standards of the effectiveness of the formative process. (UA1)

Another participant referring to indicators of accountably put it as follows:

We have done a lot of work that was not done before, not because the people were worse or less worried, but because it was another moment of historical development, another system, and things became different, not better just different. Now universities have to respond to other things, and I have to respond to indicators of the system. Before, universities had their own indicators and responded to their own indicators, but not today. Today there are indicators of the system. (UA6)

The general view was that curriculum policy change at the university level was being framed by the need to respond to certification mechanisms, both national and international, rather than in relation to newly generated principles of education by individual universities and accountability from within the institution (internal). Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also held that this is a new experience for universities. In other words, participants stated that universities were more independent in the past and worked according to their own individual visions, but currently accountability is mainly outward, to outside constituencies and upward or managerial accountability.

2. The role of policy elite

2.1 Power in decision-making

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also identified, as they saw it, the main policy actors involved in the context of policy text production at ‘University A’. Specific individuals were highlighted in this regard. On this, one participant stated:

The Director of this unit [Curriculum Development] is the one who does the process of updates. He reviews and if there is any issue, before passing to final approval, it is him with another person the ones who carry out the process. They accompany each school, not only in the final report, but also in the process of curriculum updates, and they review that each of the section is complete, especially the review the relevance of the degrees and the relevance of the curriculum updates regarding the market. (UA2)
Comments like this suggest that those working at the meso (university administration) level were aware of the existence of a policy elite within the University.

3. The policy process

3.1 Top-down policy process

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level in the ‘University A’ also held that institutional guidelines promoting the curriculum policy change came from ‘the top’. In this regard, one director stated as follows:

*The proposal, along with its assessment, is presented to the Chancellor and its committee, and the Chancellor presents it to the Board of Directors. The Board approves it and the implementation begins... To make a new curriculum there are different levels involve such as the Board of Directors and the Higher Academic Council within the faculties. In fact, there are Faculty Councils and the School Councils. Any curriculum change has to be approved by the Faculty Council.* (UA1)

Comments like this indicate that some working at the highest levels within the University were the ones making the final decisions regarding changes in curriculum. Nevertheless, it is also recognized that there are academics influencing the situation from the ‘bottom-up’. On this, the curriculum policies of the University were drafted in the faculties before they gained the approval of senior authority figures within the University.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also explained that while the policy was decided at the top, there was also a process of passing information to the lowest levels. One participant commented on this as follows:

*There is a policy of permanently lower institutional guidelines, and to train and to inform, because there are many asymmetries of information and competencies amongst the managers that the university has.* (UA1)

Also, participants operating at the meso (university administration) level held that the process of curriculum policy change taking place in the University has been directed by a central power. Reflecting on this, one participant expressed his view as follows:

*It was a centralized job. The project contemplated hiring a team to observe and to provide some feedback to schools, but it was very centralized process.* (UA6)
Comments like this suggest that not all faculty members were involved in the policy text production, and also that those individuals having the highest level of authority in the institution guided the curriculum policy changes.

Some participants operating at the meso (university administration) level perceived that there have been policy detractors, due to the fact that the curriculum policy change has been guided mainly by top-down direction. On this, one academic stated:

*There was a lot of open opposition when we started, people who said it was another trend, or things like that, asking why we were going to change things, if we have done things like that for 20 years and students have learnt. All that kind of statements. Four years later till this date... they have realised that it is very positive because it was able to generate a movement of change, to ask the questions and to say we have to do things in a very different way. That for me is very positive.* (UA7)

Another argued that there has been a move towards greater acceptance than previously. On this, one participant claimed:

*At the Councils meetings there are deans from different schools who are fighting to generate more curriculum updates, with the purpose of not staying behind. This year I haven’t seen detractors who do not want to promote these modifications.* (UA2)

Overall, according to participants working at the meso (university administration) level, detractors became supporters and there is now more acceptance than opposition within the University to the new curriculum policy.

**The context of policy practices at ‘University A’**

This section considers the perspective of participants operating at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ in relation to the context of policy practices and effects (enactment). At this level, the policy has been having an impact on staff and on students in the institution. In considering this, perceived strengths and weaknesses of the process are outlined.
1. Impact on staff

1.1 Differences in policy practice

The adoption of new policies in ‘University A’ has transformed the role of its employees. This sub-section relates to the idea that, in the view of participants located at the meso (university administration) level, the curriculum policy changes have had effects on the functions of academics and other staff at ‘University A’.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level in the University considered that there have been constant changes in their roles and functions due to the introduction of the new curriculum policy. On this, one participant stated:

*Every day the role changes. Because things are dynamic, every day they change. Today this position has a greater emphasis on academic subjects, working with the different schools permanently.* (UA1)

Also, changes in roles are not the only outcome of the new policy. Regarding their professional development, for example, participants working at the meso (university administration) level argued that they often do not teach in their area of specialisation. Thus, their role description, they held, can be based on something other than that which was provided by their own education. On this, one participant stated:

*I am a medical technologist and I participated in the original curriculum committee that started the process in medical technology. I came here to the Undergraduate Vice-Chancellery last year in 2015, and from 2011 to 2014 I was the director of the undergraduate unit, who is also a part of this vice-chancellor. It was my first step into more management issues.* (UA6)

This comment suggests that participants working at the meso (university administration) level have assumed a much more managerial role than previously.

According to participants located at this level, a greater importance than previously is being attached to administrative work, especially in relation to the curriculum policy practices. On this, one interviewed argued:
There are professors who are interested, but it is also true that many times that interest responds to a strategic logic of the teacher, that is, they think “I have to show interest for this to be considered next year, I have to attend workshops or activities proposed by the school or the faculty, because I have to comply...”. (UA3)

In light of comments like this, it is clear that there is a perception about the role of academics changing, and that there is a view that they are more accountable than previously due to the curriculum policy change, and their position within the university is not secure. Such comments also suggest that for participants working at the meso (university administration) level, academics also engaged in the new process because they have to acquire new knowledge and pedagogical skills. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

Traditionally, university teaching has been done by interest, vocation or the status that gives me to say that I am university professor. Most of the times what we do is to simply replicate the way we were taught. But, as we understand it, to really help the other to learn and to actually achieve deep learning, as Henry Levin said it, rather than teaching one has to become an expert in learning and that implies to train teachers permanently. (UA3)

Many, it was held, found the new expectations on university teachers difficult to address. However, they also stated that most faculty members are now convinced that the new curriculum policy has benefits. On this, one participant pointed out:

Today, I would tell you that you find more academics saying “good students are more demanding, students now demand you to prepare classes more and you have to be more innovative”. (UA7).

Also, participants like this suggest that students have higher expectations and demands on teachers and the University than previously, and that cognisance of this has motivated lecturers to respond positively to the policy practices.

1.2 Practical and theoretical changes

Regarding the context of policy practices, participants working at the meso (university administration) level at the University recognize the existence of two types of associated changes. The first one has to do with practical and concrete transformations
that are taking place in their work practices, including in relation to management styles and teaching strategies. The second type relates to theoretical changes in the paradigms guiding work inside the University.

Regarding the latter, participants acknowledged that the new policy has brought a shift in paradigm, which involves much more participation and commitment on the part of staff members within the university than previously. In practice, this has meant that university teachers have to engage with much additional preparation. This was highlighted by one participant who stated:

*In general, there are lots of curriculum updated, a lot of innovation. But there is an issue which has to do with teachers, that is, how they get updated on what we are doing. That is a critical knot... We offer inductions, training, a thousand of things. But it is difficult to change pedagogical practices. That is a critical issue.* (UA1)

Comments like the above indicate that, according to participants working at the meso (university administration) level, it has been necessary to prepare university teachers to think differently in order to put the new curriculum policy in practice effectively. Also, it was held that it necessary to involve staff more in the policy practices. One participant referred to this as follows:

*From our experience we are sure that this is the most effective way to achieve change. If one does not involve people, if one does not accompany them and does not guide them it doesn’t work. Not because we are an ´divine light´ or anything like that, but because we are supposed to have more information about that. But the idea is not to impose but to convince them and share...* (UA3)

This comment also suggests that the curriculum policy changes have required that more information than previously has had to be disseminated and that new modes of communication have had to be used within the University.
2. Impact on students

2.1 Involvement in decision-making

There was also a very strong view amongst those working at the meso (university administration) level that the policy practices of the new curriculum policy at ‘University A’ has had a major impact on students. Specifically, it was recognized that there has been student participation in the enactment of the new curriculum policy. This view, however, was tempered by pointing out that this did not happen in all the faculties or schools.

A major instance of students being able to present their opinions was their involvement in the ‘School and Faculty Councils’. On this, one participant stated:

*Inside the faculties there are Faculty Councils and School Councils. Any curriculum change has to be approved by the Faculty Council which is composed by academics, students, graduates and administrative staff. It is quadripartite, multistate. Although it is not decisive unit, they can approve or disapprove proposals.* (UA1)

Furthermore, student participation was valued positively by participants working at the meso (university administration) level.

Another participant gave voice to the latter when stating:

*They are members and they participate in the discussion of the curriculum committee. Not only they can attend but they also can say “look, I have this experience”, or “when I was in my third year, I had to repeat what I had been taught in the first year”. In other words, their experiences are very valuable because they are precisely what is collected on the ground. Therefore, decisions have often been made from their contributions such as to verify and to revise the proposals.* (UA3)

In relation to students’ involvement in the policy process some, however, recognized that a deeper political involvement in decision-making on the part of students is considered to be undesirable. On this, one director argued:

*Today, the problem is that we are in the conjuncture of the student movement and what they want is co-government. Then, I mean, I think there's a limit to that.* (UA1)

This indicates that some academics also are keen that radical students’ voices be kept silent.
The political interests and aims of the student movement in Chile may explain the latter. Regarding such political involvement, a participant stated:

*Although University A has at the moment high levels of students’ participation in its different instances, students are in the fight to achieve the famous 'tri-stationality'. The schools or the faculties not always have incorporated them in these processes. In some of these faculties we have worked with the curriculum committees in which students are included. We suggest them that students of different levels participate in these proposals. Because we believe that it is undoubtedly good and healthy to incorporate their visions.*

(UA3)

Comments like this suggest that some working at the meso (university administration) level mistrust students and have been fearful of power being given to them. Another participant gave voice to this as follows:

*I have to acknowledge that I am not one of the ones that push for more student participation, perhaps because I see their commitment degrees, because they are finally part of a long process, they stay here for five years and then they leave. In the first year they cannot talk because they do not even understand what the university is. In the last year they leave and they are not interested. Thus, you have a brief period in which students could participate in a slightly more stable way. So, I think it is important to listen to them but is also complex to give more stable participation to a member of the community who has a more ephemeral presence compared to the rest.*

(UA7)

At the same time, some working at the meso (university administration) level consider that students' views can be beneficial for the University in relation to curriculum policy. On this, one academic stated:

*At times students were invited. For example, when the education model was being developed, we used a methodology called the fish bowl and students were invited to participate in the discussion process. In the renewal processes of each degree, students were usually invited to validate the graduation profiles, etc. Students also participate in the processes of accreditation, because obviously accreditation looks at the graduation profiles and to what you were doing.*

(UA7)

This participant concluded by saying: “Then in different instances, their participation is rather consultation in that line”.

There was also recognition by some operating at the meso (university administration) level that while students have had some form of participation in such
processes as accreditation, this is not enough and could be improved. This was alluded
to by one participant who commented:

*This is an issue that needs improvement. They have participated more in terms of
information delivery, we have not incorporated them properly. I think this is a cultural
issue. There are policies that promote participation. We should include them more and
we would have more inputs. The view that a student has no expert has it. Sometimes you
underestimate it because you think they have no experience. But there is a change in this
and it is a very valuable vision.* (UA6)

Comments like this exemplify a view amongst some academics and
administrative staff located at the meso (university administration) level that students
have a valuable insight to provide, and not just about the means of education but also
about its ends.

### 2.2 Improving education quality

According to participants operating at the meso (university administration) level, the new curriculum policy has improved the quality of education that students receive in
‘University A’. At the same time, they also hold that the impact the new curriculum
policy has had on students at ‘University A’ has been not uniform. One participant
explained this as follows:

*I would say that a better quality of learning coincides with what Biggs calls the `deep
learning, which is that learning that allows the subject to continue learning in a
meaningful way, where learning is not only an accumulation of information, but rather
is something that allows them to build new knowledge, increasingly larger and more
complex...* (UA3)

This participant was identifying quality of education with complex thinking. For
another participant, quality seems to be synonymous with providing students with the
required aptitudes to successfully performance in the future. He commented on this as
follows: “… more than that, is whether or not they will have the necessary skills at the
time of graduation” (UA2).
The competency-based curriculum model is central in this view. Furthermore, participants working at the meso (university administration) level considered that this approach has been beneficial for students. On this, one participant expressed his view in the following way:

*I am convinced that it is a very good thing. I have high expectations, that students will achieve better quality learning with this vision than only with a traditional approach. (UA3)*

Overall, the practices of the new curriculum policy were seen as appropriate for preparing students to operate productively in Chile in the future.

**2.3 Big expectations**

Another impact of the curriculum policy practices identified by participants working at the meso (university administration) level at the University, relates to the expectation that teachers have of their students. A major perspective in this regard was expressed by one dean as follows: “The expectation on students, I believe, has changed in the sense that we expect even more from them than we have ever done before” (UA2).

For some operating at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’, the new demands of students related to them having more independence in organising their studies. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

*At the beginning it was defined that the model considered and propitiated an increasing autonomy. Thus, for example, the ratio between face-to-face and autonomous hours increased autonomy levels. So, in that sense you expect more autonomy, you expect a student who participates more. The expectations over students changed, the method changed, and it was a challenge for students themselves, because they like a more directive style. (UA7)*

According to this academic, students were more passive when working under the previous curriculum model. As a result, the new curriculum policy clashed with some traditional cultural patterns and practices. This observation was expressed by another participant as follows:
In the new education model students are expected to be more committed to their role. The model demands a more proactive student than that who we received before. Teachers have to educate students in their responsibilities and in how positive all of this is for them. (UA6)

Conviction on the positive impacts of this move existed amongst participants located at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also held that university teachers’ perspectives on their students had changed. One participant gave voice to this view in the following way:

*It has also changed in the other end. I believe that if the teacher's expectation is something like “well students are not studying today”, almost like a paternalistic thing, that is also a challenge of entering into a model like this. We have to do it without a paternalistic perspective.* (UA7)

This participant was suggesting that there has been a change in academics’ perspectives, from a protective view to one in which more trust is placed in students than previously.

4. Overall strengths

4.1 Positive change

There was recognition by some participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’, that one of the strengths of the new curriculum policy was that it has a ‘positive orientation’. Indeed, the simple fact of engaging in a curriculum revision, as they saw it, has been a positive activity. Commenting on this, one director stated:

*Firstly, I think it has generated a very positive impact. Regardless of the fact that one can eventually look back and see things that could have been adjusted, that we could be done better. Especially positive for helping academics to become aware that they had to change the ways in which curricula were being taught and how they were teaching.* (UA1)

In general, those located at the meso (university administration) level evaluated the curriculum policy changes as being constructive for their university. Commenting on
this, another participant said that there are still aspects that need to be improved, and that “there are things that may not have worked as expected, but fundamentally it really takes care of students” (UA7). This view was shared by other participants working at the meso (university administration) level.

4.2 Responding to challenges

Participants operating at the meso (university administration) level also expressed concern about higher education institutions having to respond to challenges presented by such phenomena as globalisation and competitiveness. For them one of these challenges is to improve on such performance indicators as employability. Regarding the latter, some have come to recognize that they have done it successfully up to this point in time.

One participant gave voice to this view as follows:

*Those under the curriculum updated will be professionals with better levels of employability. We have high levels of labour insertion, very high. Our students, especially in certain courses, enter directly into the labour market, they are doing well. If you shape them accordingly, they stand out amongst others. So that's very important. So, I think the most important thing about curriculum implementation has to do with the employability issues of those who graduate, which at the same time is your indicator of whether you are educating them well or you are doing it badly.* (UA1)

Similarly, according to some participants working at the meso (university administration) level, by responding to those challenges other aspects such as performance rates have also been improved.

Commenting on the latter matter, one participant argued:

*On the one hand, there are results that we are seeing now such as the improvement in first-year retention rates, improvements in approval rates and significant improvements in the time of graduation rates.* (UA7)

Furthermore, participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ considered that another strength of this policy is the impact that their students can have on the future of society in Chile. On this, one dean stated:
I believe that it will certainly be a contribution as it is going to produce professionals who can effectively contribute with the reality of the country at the time of graduation... The idea is that they can directly contribute with solutions according to the moment in which they are living in the country. (UA2)

There was also a view amongst participants working at the meso (university administration) level indicating that their graduates have better levels of employability than do those of other universities in Chile.

4.3 Positioning of the university in Chile

Regarding institutional impact, those operating at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ considered that the policy practices of the new curriculum could contribute to positioning their institution at the top of university rankings in the country. One participant gave voice to this when stating:

The influence is positive, especially in the position that the university can occupied in relation to the rest of the community, because the idea is that students not only contribute here till the moment of graduation, instead we are trying to make them participate more, so that students can give back to the community the knowledge they get studying... Therefore, in the future the social contribution that we are trying to make will be quite important. (UA2)

Comments like this suggest there was a view that the University could also have a social impact on the nation in terms of social justice.

Coupled with this, there was recognition that the curriculum policy practices have had a positive impact on students’ perspectives about university teachers. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

I think there are clear improvements. A very interesting thing was that during six consecutive semesters the mark that students give to teachers in the ‘Opinion of Teaching Performance Survey’ went up while the model was being implemented. The students’ perception of teachers improved and they can spread their voice. (UA7)

Furthermore, participants at the meso (university administration) level held that another important strength of the policy practices has been that of placing students at the centre of the learning process. In this regard, one participant commented, stating that:
“For me the subject of working centred on the student, is obviously fundamental. The option of training by competencies seems to me to be an option that is having and has positive results” (UA1).

5. Overall weaknesses

5.1 Micro-curricular issues

The following section identifies perceived weak points of the curriculum policy practices according to participants operating at the meso (university administration) level at the ‘University A’. Regarding this, they argued that policy practices have design errors. Concern about this was expressed by one participant who stated: “It also happens that in this, the subjects are poorly installed. Then, you give a course where you realize that you had to do another one before”. (UA2). This participant was suggesting that the enactment of the policy is not faithful to the theory expressed in official policy documents.

Even though there was recognition of such problems, however, some participants working at the meso (university administration) level supported the curriculum policy change. The view of one participant exemplifies this position as follows:

_All those things, the ones we foresaw initially and which were not necessarily well evaluated, however we see consistency in the curriculum._ (UA1)

The comment above suggests that participants working at the meso (university administration) level recognized weaknesses and issues in the new curriculum policy. Nonetheless, there is an overall positive and shared perspective about the new curriculum policy.

5.2 Resistance to innovation

Those operating at the meso (university administration) level argued that another weakness in the policy practices is the presence of detractors to this policy change within
the University. On this, the position of certain academics came in for special consideration. The following comment expressed this view as follows:

*It is very difficult to change teachers’ perspectives. Today, we can have greater levels of innovation in the new generations but you have teachers who have been teaching for 30 years, so how do you install an inverted classroom of a teacher who has been teaching in a certain way for 30 years? Not all disciplines require that, but we were formed, even my generation, by a focus in objectives.* (UA1)

This participant also suggested that the majority of the resistance has come from certain senior academic faculty members.

**5.3 Lack of resources**

Participants operating at the meso (university administration) level also stated that a lack of resources is another problem affecting the implementation of the curriculum policy change. In particular, staff numbers are considered not to be sufficient to enact the policy. On this, one participant expressed his view as follows:

*If you look at the configuration of the Curriculum Development Unit, we are only three people here. So, even if you have the willingness to implement certain innovations, you need a deep understanding of the required human and material resources for such innovation. In the medium term there would be certain noises with this kind of things... to enrich the proposal and make it more coherent, more consistent, this obviously requires more resources and means.* (UA3)

The above comment suggests that the complete implementation of the curriculum policy reform requires further resourcing. Further, another participant stated:

*I would say that the problem here is the lack of clarity of those who make the decisions, about which are the human and the material infrastructure to take these proposals seriously.* (UA2)

At the same time, it is worth noting that not all of the participants working at the meso (university administration) level drew attention to the lack of resources.

**5.4 Disjunction between administrative units and curriculum**

Participants operating at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University A’ also identified the existence of a gap between the intended curriculum policy and administrative work. Some argued that at the macro or national level there is ignorance
about the resources needed for the implementation of the policy. One participant gave voice to this when stating:

That shows that those who have made the decision do not have a comprehensive and global understanding about the curriculum talking with the administrative aspect, and most importantly that the administrative aspect must be at the service of curriculum and not the other way around. (UA6)

The participant was suggesting that ‘University A’ lacks the appropriate administrative structure required for the new curriculum policy to properly work.

There was also recognition by those located at the meso (university administration) level about the competency-based model clashing with the evaluation system in place at ‘University A’. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

Of course, it is more practical to have on a milestone and to know that on such date you have to have marks, but that mark is not representing what students really know, or the level of competency that students have developed. (UA3)

This comment in relation to the marking system suggests that there is a gap between the new curriculum policy and the teaching strategies that were used in ‘University A’ previously.

The Micro Level

The context of influence at University A

This section considers the perspectives of participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’. According to them, three major sets of influences have been operating: international influences; national influences; and local influences at ‘University A’. With regard to the international level, two main influences are identified. These are as follows: European influences and a Canadian competency-based curriculum design. Regarding national influences, three main influences are identified: government influences; the influence of reforms in other Chilean universities; and non-government
influences. Finally, one local influence is identified. This is the effect of the competency-model which is spreading across all universities in Chile.

1. International Influences

1.1 The European influence

Participants operating at the micro (academics) level held that the curriculum policy change at ‘University A’ reflects a global phenomenon influencing higher education institutions and associated international trends, especially within Europe. In this regard, one authority stated: “The sources come from one side of the international literature, which starts from Bologna onwards and with the Tuning project”. (UA5).

This participant was suggesting that those working at the micro (academics) level, as with those operating at the macro or national and meso (university administration) levels, identify that the Bologna Agreement and related developments as having a major influence on the development of a new curriculum policy at their university.

1.2 The Canadian competency-based curriculum

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ also stated that Tardif’s (2008) Canadian competency-based has had a major influence on the policy. On this, one participant pointed out:

*We used a theoretical approach that comes mainly from Canada. Tardif is being used, he has a whole theoretical conception around the approach by competency, and they opted for that approach and began to apply it here in the university.* (UA4)

The Canadian model was also explicitly identified by others working at the micro (academics) level. Another participant gave voice to this when stating: “That is the approach that was taken and that began to work here in the university. The model they used was this Canadian model of competencies by Tardif” (UA5). Some located at the
Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ also recognized national influences on the curriculum policy change at their university. Regarding government institutions, they expressed that the MINEDUC and its associated program MECESUP, has had an undeniable influence. On this, one participant expressed her view as follows:

*The national sources are basically the policies that have been undertaken by the Ministry of Education through the MESESUP, which here began to be implemented from 2006 onwards, and that relate to the theme of the curriculum reform in higher education under the competency approach.* (UA5)

Such a perspective from participants working at the micro (academics) level differs from that of those operating at the macro or national level in that the former recognize government influences. Commenting on this, another participant said:

*There are certain orientations from the Ministry but in general they are broad curriculum bases and the role of the State in this is blur.* (UA4)

Such comments also suggest that participants working at the micro (academics) level considered that there should have been a stronger and clearer government influence. Going further on this, one academic stated:

*I would tend to think that of course, here we are in a private university, there are higher degrees of freedom evidently, but I would expect that there would also be a more active role of the State with respect to what is expected of students, higher education, and also primary and secondary education. I believe in the role of the State, I believe that the State has to be stronger and regulating more what universities do, especially in private ones.* (UA4)

The comment above suggests that participants operating at the micro (academics) level expected a more active and committed role to be played by the national government in education.
2.2 Reforms in other universities in Chile

There was also a perception amongst participants working at the micro level at ‘University A’ that other national influences have also been at work. One such perspective relates to the impact of similar policy reforms in other higher education institutions and universities. On this, one academic expressed a view as follows:

_There are others influencing, such as a professor from the University of Chile. I made a research on everything I found from the MECESUP and there are some interesting topics, for example at the Catholic University of Temuco, the University of Talca... (UA5)_

On this, the work that has been undertaken by the University of Chile comes in for special mention.

The influence of national and international academics on university curriculum change was also identified in relation to the policy change at ‘University A’. The view of one participant identifies this as follow:

_Tobon, a Colombian author, and Gustavo Howes, they have been influential. Other academics in the Faculty of Medicine from the University of Chile worked with those. (UA5)_

On the other hand, there was also recognition by some located at the micro (academics) level that national trends have not been very influential. They attributed this to the lack of national policy and lack of a legal framework for curriculum in higher education in Chile. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

_I am not so sure if there are national influences, because there is no law that obliges to mutate to this type of system. It is rather an institutional decision. Now, curiously not only the University A, now the University of Chile is doing the same. It is modifying its curriculum systems to a competency-based approach. Therefore, there is also a trend towards that logic in the country. (UA4)_

This participant was suggesting that for some working at the micro (academics) level the curriculum change was isolated, institutional, and a private initiative rather than articulated with a national strategy.
2.3 Non-government influences

According to participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’, the curriculum policy change had also been influenced by such non-government institutions as the Council of Rectors in Chile (CRUCH). The following statement illustrated this view as follows:

*I would say that there are many initiatives that are not sufficiently articulated. Because at the bottom what articulates is the CRUCH and within it there are trends.* (UA5)

Other organizations such as the National Accreditation Commission (CNA) which regulates accreditation processes, were also considered to have been influential in the curriculum policy change that took place at ‘University A’. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

*The interesting thing is also to look at the Council of Rectors and also the CNA. Because accreditation is the force that has started engine of changes. The need for accreditation has mobilised universities and degrees to change. The engine of change has been the accreditation.* (UA5)

Another participant located at the micro (academics) level explained further this perception of the influence of the CNA on the ‘University A’ as follows:

*In August 2015 there was another document from the CNA, which again ratified the need of schools having to define their graduation profiles. A greater emphasis is placed on the importance of curriculum and that is an engine for faculties. That’s a big issue. If you enter to the website of the CNA, there you will find many of the reasons that have mobilised the different institutions.* (UA4)

At the same, those working at the micro (academics) level also specified that another important influence has been the establishment of a transferable credits system in some universities in Chile. One participant explained the influence of the transferable credits system over the curriculum policy change at ‘University A’ as follows:

*If we don’t do it, we’re going to stay out. Because it has also to do with globalisation of all universities, to be able to transfers students from one place to another, so it has to be made on the basis of the transferable credit system.* (UA5)

This innovation, as the participant saw it, has been also inspired by the processes generated by Bologna Agreement in Europe.
3. Local Influences

3.1 Competency-based curriculum

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ also considered that the competency-based curriculum which represents a trend in Chile, is highly influential locally. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

*The analysis revealed that there is a worldwide trend toward a competency model, which today is also a questioned approach. The option we made was to take that approach by competency, I think that this is the trend worldwide and that therefore the university should also be in the mainstream of higher education.* (UA4)

Participants operating at the micro (academics) level also considered this development to be important because globally both the higher education system and the labour market are adopting it. However, they also point out that currently, criticisms of the model internationally are now being voiced also within the university.

**The context of policy text production at ‘University A’**

This section of the chapter details the perspective of participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ regarding aspects of the context within which the curriculum policy and its associated texts were produced.

1. Features of the curriculum policy change

1.1 Neoliberal ideology

Those working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ argued that a desire to have a better quality of education for students is a core belief that lies behind the curriculum policy changes. As they saw it, changing the curriculum was related to a larger commitment by the university to the education of its students. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

*It [the curriculum] also hinders the possibility of a competency approach in which you have the formation of an appropriate graduation profile effectively or in which you effectively give education opportunities to be able to reach the graduation profile that you have promised to students...* (UA5)
Such comments suggest that the curriculum reform was undertaken to facilitate the preparation of students specifically for the labour market. Referring to this, another participant expressed a similar view as follows:

_The value motivating this is that students can achieve better learning in a setting of population aging, globalisation, etc. Either you renovate it or they are going to be professionals of the nineteenth century in the twenty first century. The most complicated thing it is to do it without too much rhetoric around the concept of competency. If we do not do it our students will be unemployed and indebted._ (UA5)

In the comment, ‘indebted’ refers to the fact that most students in Chile fund their higher education studies with loans and credits provided by both the national government and private banks. At the same time, some participants working at the micro (academics) level also claimed that the new curriculum policy should promote collectivism over such neoliberal values as individualism. They also stated that it is important to resist such beliefs. On this, one participant stated:

_What I would like is to prepare professionals with skills to be effectively inserted in the world of work. Make them interested and committed to the professional work. But I also wonder, will they love their profession and the world? The ideology of individualism is very strong._ (UA5)

The participant concluded by saying: “we need to train good professionals with collective feeling”.

Some located at the micro (academics) level also held that the new policy is a reflection of a depoliticised education debate in Chile. One this, one academic stated:

_The country is also in the same logic that universities, losing some of the political sense of training students. This has been left out, prioritising a labour insertion that responds to a market issue. Thus, a longer-term impact will be only technical, which has no greater impact and which has no greater theoretical elements to allow a broader perspective of the issues._ (UA4)

Such comments exemplify the political perspective of some participants at the micro (academics) level in relation to the new competency-based curriculum. Another academic put it as follows:
It is already a hegemonic logic. I have worked on topics related to the formation of work as well, and what one can see in international experiences is precisely that all students are going to be training by competency. Now, that is basically bound to the labour issue, but also the universities are becoming part of this, and I believe that this will last till some hegemonic countries say enough and we will all change paradigm. Then those countries are going to start to do something else and probably the rest will start following them in that direction. (UA4)

The comment suggests that the competency-based model has been imposed from universities from first world countries which exercise a neo-hegemony in the higher education field.

The questioning of the competency concept also takes other forms. On this, one participant at the micro (academics) level argued that the model brought a ‘merchant’ approach to education, and that it is becoming dominant. The participant explained:

*I have several objections about the competency approach. I think it is an approach that has inserted effectively into a main stream logic, but comes from a mercantile view of education, functional to a certain market logic. Because what is behind it is to get students inserted in the labour market, which effectively demands certain skills. That is not the problem but the fact that it leaves out all these elements that are important, such as a deeper reflection around issues, which allows not only to know how to do, but also to think about some things that are associated with your training process, and probably also a more critical view of spaces in which you are going to be insert, especially in the labour market. So, I think the competency thing is functional to the market logic...* (UA4)

Some working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ also argued that such fundamental 21st century skills as critical thinking, have been left out in the new curriculum policy. One participant explained this as follows:

*Now, this is clearly a demand from the labour market. One has to think a lot about the employability of students and that is a logic which one cannot ignore. But at the same time, that functionality plays against the formation of a more comprehensive students and against what involves to be a university.* (UA5)

Participants also shared a belief that a more holistic curriculum would be more appropriate for students. One academic stated this as follows:

*I would expect a view with more understanding, with more critical formation, probably with a view in how to be a citizen, such as the ability to become politically involved, not politically partisan, but to play a role in society, a role of social transformation. And that implies critical students, students who are not thinking exclusively in the market but also*
in a longer-term view of how to build a society, more democratic, more solidarity, with respect for human rights, etc. (UA4)

Furthermore, there were arguments that hidden agendas exist in the new curriculum policy.

One of the hidden agendas, it was held, had to do with the national state providing funds to private universities, which is the case in relation to ‘University A’. In this regard, they questioned the gratuity reform commenced in 2016, with one participant stating:

*Strictly speaking about the reform of gratuity, the State should not have to finance private universities and it should not be necessary to transfer gratuity to private universities. Even though we have vulnerable students in private universities. My personal opinion is that the State must finance public institutions exclusively and there should be a more democratic access for most of the vulnerable students to enter public universities... However, I think it is not appropriate to apply gratuitousness to private institutions, because they are private projects, thus, that is not in concordance with the logic of the public and the State.* (UA4)

Comments like this suggest that participants working at the micro (academics) level had a clear understanding of the political influences that lie behind the new curriculum policy in their university.

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also stated that the new curriculum represents a move in ideology towards a neoliberal approach, in which education is conceived as being about preparing students for work, as opposed to being driven by a liberal-humanist education perspective. As they saw it, the competency-based model is a curriculum geared towards work preparation of students. One participant explained as follows:

*This is like the big paradigm shift, quite important in relation to the traditional way of working, because this also meant changing the practices of teachers, their teaching practices, the type of class that is usually done. It has meant a very important change.* (UA4)

Regarding this new ‘market oriented’ focus, another academic elaborated further:

*Since July last year, we have been working on a curriculum reform which purpose is to build, under the competency model, a curriculum that is capable of being adapted for the twenty-first century. Therefore, there is a concern about students really learning and
whether this is a learning that can effectively develop in the labour market, enabling them to develop themselves in the market, to continue learning. In that sense, the focus is always placed on the development of students' skills. (UA5)

Comments like that above suggest that participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ considered that pressures from the market and the interest on students’ employability are greatly valued by those involved in policy text production.

1.2 External accountability

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ also argued that accountability to two main stakeholders in relation to the curriculum policy change has been a significant influence. First, there is accountability to the MINEDUC. Regarding this, participants working at the micro (academics) level stated that an agreement was drawn up between the MINEDUC and their university to implement the new policy. One participant explained his view on this as follows:

There are plenty of publications talking about this. In fact, there is an experience that was made between 2010 and 2012, from a project funded by the MINEDUC, which was precisely the formation of learning communities and the competency approach. (UA4)

At the same time, participants located at the micro (academics) level considered that the curriculum policy change involves accountability to students, and that this is important because most of them come from the lower socioeconomic classes. Furthermore, as the following quote from one academic put it, students expect and need this accountability:

In context, students expect this. It is difficult to generate autonomy between the curriculum and their entry profiles. The majority of students of this university come from subsidised public and private schools (90%) ... their average mark in high school is between 54 and 55 and their PSU average score between 560-540. (UA5)

This participant was stating that the socioeconomic background of their students was taken into consideration during the production of the new curriculum policy because is a form of social justice to provide them with a better education.
2. The role of policy elite

2.1 Bottom-up discourse

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also identified, as they saw it, policy actors at ‘University A’ who were involved in the context of policy text production. They argued that, in the process, each school within the university, through a curriculum committee, presented a draft document which gave the illusion of the policy being decided from the bottom-up. The general view on this was put by one participant as follows:

*The reform is done by degree. There is one curriculum committee per degree. These committees do the work. There was a first document that established the need of making a change. A second document explained procedures and timelines. The third document defined domain areas. A methodology was produced in a short time, raising preliminary ideas, we did not start it from scratch.* (UA5)

Those operating at the micro (academics) level also claimed that certain individuals in ‘University A’ operated with the highest level of authority in the process.

3. The policy process

3.1 Resistance

As at the meso (university administration) level, participants working at the micro (academics) level also recognized that detractors were operating when the policy text was being produced. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

*In general, many teachers do not know how to make a class that responds to a competency approach. It is a more methodological question, how to do it? Because in theoretical terms it sounds very good, we know how to do, etc., all those things, but at the time of doing a class, teachers continue to do practically everything they have been doing all their lives. Then, there is no correlation between your practice and what is indicated by a competency approach.* (UA4)

Participants also argued that the resistance came from ignorance about specific strategies being adopted to implement the competency-based curriculum proposed as part of the new policy at this university.
The context of policy practices at ‘University A’

Regarding the context of policy practices and effects (enactment), participants operating at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ considered that the new policy was having an impact on staff and on students. Each of these is now considered in turn. This is followed by an overview of participants’ perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

1. Impact on staff

1.1 Continuous training

The new curriculum policy at ‘University A’ is perceived to have led to transformation in the role of employers. In particular, participants working at the micro (academics) level argued that one such impact on faculty members is the need for university teachers to obtain further training. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

*Something has been done, I think they did some workshops in this faculty, which are usually during winter and summer holidays. On the teachers’ day they did certain trainings, certain workshops so that the professors could achieve a greater appropriation of this approach.* (UA4)

The participant also claimed that the authorities at ‘University A’ made a major effort to include everyone in appropriate training in order to ensure the effective enactment of the policy.

1.2 Gap between theory and practice

According to participants operating at the micro (academics) level there had also been reform lag between what the new policy documents declared and what is happening in practice in the policy enactment. On this, one participant commented:

*You can declare a competency approach, but if you do not have a monitoring system of what happens in the classroom, the implementation of the curriculum, if there is no actual change of methodology, if there is no difference, you have a good document and nothing more. And that’s what happens in most cases.* (UA5)
He concluded by saying that while in “education the rhetoric is fantastic”, in practice there is a lack of resources to effectively implement it.

2. Impact on students

2.1 Students do not participate

Participants working at the micro (academics) level held that the curriculum change at ‘University A’ has had some negative impact on students. Specifically, according to participants operating at this level, there had been a lack of students’ participation and involvement in the policy practices. On this, one participant explained:

*It is being hard to make students to participate... We did a focus group and invited them to participate. It's hard for the kids to get involved. When you ask things to small groups, they care. In their assemblies it is difficult. They see it as something that doesn't concerns them. The query is more personalised. But it depends of the situation of each course.* (UA5)

Comments like this suggest that participants operating at the micro (academics) level saw that students have been passive during the enactment of the policy, even though they were invited to participate, being referred to as ‘kids’. The following statement illustrates this view as follows:

*I believe that students had to surrender to the logic of competition. I'm not sure if there has been participation in the genesis or in the same learning communities. It seems to me that there is not, it was restricted exclusively to professors, but if it affects them directly... Students are not very active.* (UA4)

Another participant at the micro (academics) level offered the explanation that this situation is an outcome of student’s culture, stating:

*To be honest, there is little participation, I am not sure if there is a formal position in the subject, even within the student unions. I do not think so. And I would tell you that logic is already installed and that the same students are used to operate that way. I would tell you that there is not much questioning of what is happening.* (UA4)

This academic was also suggesting that students have not been critics of the new policy.
2.2 Expectation of autonomy

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also argued that the expectations put on students have changed. In particular, they are expected to be capable and proficient. On this, one academic elaborated:

Indeed, it is expected of students to be competent. The probable outcome of all this is that they are going to be competent in several things, particularly in approaching concrete and practical cases, and in the resolution of problems that are presented daily once they enter the professional world. (UA4)

Comments like this suggest that the competency-based curriculum has changed the expectations of students and their academic performance, which used to be one where they followed their tutors in a highly dependent manner. This, it was held, is particularly revealed by the gap that exists between the new and the previous curriculum, with one participant stating:

In the traditional model this did not happened because it had a different aim or goal, a different purpose. I believe that the purpose now is to directly link reflection to practice, and the ability to resolve practical issues, which is precisely what a competency is. That is, I am competent, therefore something is done, and that allows solving certain things. Probably, the previous model was more about theoretical knowledge. (UA4)

In other words, it is held that while in the past the main prospective was that students should become scholars, at the time the present study was conducted the aim was that they should acquire competencies for employability.

3. Overall strengths

3.1 Formalise processes

Regarding assets of the studied policy, participants operating at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ valued positively such policy practices as the implementation of specific systems and processes in their university. As one academic pointed out:
We expect that the reform will be effective, that there will be a system of monitoring in terms of orientation and performance evaluation processes. To do the study programs has made us think differently, which accounts for the competency approach. (UA5)

Comments like this suggest that the practical side of the curriculum policy change was seen by participants working in this level as being positive.

3.2 Work placement of students

In terms of strengths, higher graduate employability rates were also considered valuable by participants located at the micro (academics) level. The view on this was expressed by one participant as follows:

*I think in general, here indicators such as employability in the first years have improved, then I think that effectively the same market has been organized in that logic. That is why, it is welcoming professionals that work in that same logic. I would say that at this point the university has managed to promote the labour insertion of its students and that is a plus point.* (UA4)

Comments like this highlight a view amongst participants working at the micro (academics) level on the importance placed by authorities of the university on establishing a major link between education and work through the new policy.

4. Overall weaknesses

4.1 Isolated initiatives.

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University A’ also argued that the curriculum policy change has been weak because, as they saw it, it had been an isolated initiative and not part of a policy promoted by the national government. The following comment of one participant illustrates the general view on this:

*My impression is that this change is not something that is very clear and that each institution has done what they could... My criticism is that this change is more in rhetoric and that the CRUCH acts like mafia. This does not work. It is more speech than practice.* (UA5)
This comment suggests one reason as to why the enactment has not been totally effective. For most of the participants operating at the micro (academics) level this type of change in policy should be driven by the national state, as one academic manifested:

*I am convinced that this is either done nationally or it will not work. There are initiatives but not everything is articulated. They have to converge and that is not going happen with the institutionality that we have...* (UA4)

In using the term ‘conviction’, this participant was suggesting that participants working at the micro (academics) level placed a major importance in the role and involvement of the national state in higher education.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the perspectives of participants working at the meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels at ‘University A’, regarding current university curriculum policy changes. In particular, the context of influences, the context of policy text production and the context of policy practices and effects (enactment) were considered. Regarding the former, four international, three national and three local influences operating at the meso (university administration) level were identified, while at the micro (academics) level, two international, three national and one local influence were considered. Regarding the context of policy text production, such features of the curriculum policy change as structure, ideology, accountability, and idiosyncrasies, along with the policy elite and policy processes, were considered in relation to both, the meso (university administration) and the micro (academics) levels. Concerning the context of policy practices and effects (enactment), the perspectives of participants on the impact that the new policy has had on staff and students, and the strengths and weaknesses of the processes, were also considered in relation to both meso and micro levels.
CHAPTER SEVEN
UNIVERSITY B

Introduction

This chapter, Chapter 7, presents an analysis of the results on the research undertaken in relation to ‘University B’, the second of the three universities studied. The analysis deals with curriculum policy in the university at both the meso (university administration) and the micro (academics) levels. As explained in previous chapters also, the meso level relates to university administration, while the micro level relates to academics. Furthermore, as in the previous chapters, the exposition in relation to each level is organized around each of the contexts of the policy trajectory framework, namely, the context of influences, the context of policy text production and the context of policy practices and effects (enactment).

The Meso Level

The context of influence at University B

The following section of the chapter considers the perspectives of participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’. Four main international influences on curriculum policy change were identified. These are as follows: the influence of international organizations and universities; international accreditation; international employability; and changes in the concept of university. Influences from the national level were also identified. Again, these consist of four major influences. These are the influence of government and related historical influences; changes in students’ demography; and the influences of employers. Finally, three local (institutional-based) influences were identified. These are as follow: the history of ‘University B’; the experience of academics; and the credits system. These sets of international, national and local influences will now be considered in turn.
1. International Influences

1.1 International organizations and universities

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ held that the studied curriculum policy changes in their institution have been influenced by international universities, including the University of Melbourne in Australia, and Columbia University and the University of Virginia in the United States (US). One participant expressed this view as follows:

*I was one of those who participated in the commission that worked with Australian teachers, from Melbourne and from other places, in the creation of the college. What we did in this faculty is essentially a college. We looked at the rest of the world, those were the influence at that point. We looked and saw that The University of Virginia was going in the same direction that Europe was moving.* (UB3)

On this, another academic stated: “the University of Melbourne for the college case... But the main influences were the American universities and Melbourne” (UB1).

Some people working at the meso (university administration) level also recognized that the experience of having been international students themselves was a driving force in the process. Some, for example, studied at universities in the US, including the University of Harvard. On this, one participant stated: “...and of course most of us are graduates, we have studied in the United States and Europe. The curriculum model that we had in the head was that” (UB3). Commenting in like manner, another participant stated:

*The general education program was incorporated by the vice-chancellor at the time, who was an academic at Columbia University and New York University for many years. He took over the area of research in Medicine at the university, he was the dean of the School of Medicine and later rector of the university. He was soaked with his international experience at the American college, with its academic management, undergraduate, graduate and all its formats. He was a great leader of this process.* (UB4)

Overall, participants working at the meso (university administration) level also identified the liberal arts system they had witnessed in the US as being influential in their
thinking on the new curriculum policy. One participant expressed a view on this as follows:

*Because I lived and studied in the United States, where I began my career, I always had that restlessness of seeing the experience of the college. College is the remnant of the medieval university faculty.* (UB2)

The participant concluded by saying that “the liberal arts college is a very valuable institution”.

Specifically, regarding the liberal arts system, another participant expressed an opinion as follows:

*I was in the United States at Boston College and there I met Kara Goodwin, who is part of a program called CIHE, and who finishes her doctorate with a research on the proliferation of liberal arts programs in the world. She has some ideas on how these programs are spreading.* (UB1)

The aforementioned comments indicated a belief amongst some working at the meso (university administration) level that a move towards liberal arts programs has represented a trend in the academic world internationally. The reasoning behind this was put by another participant working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ as follows:

*When we were establishing it, we used spurious data, such as that a person in the United States has seven different occupations during his or her life. So, we had to generate a training that allows adaptability. That is a characteristic of the liberal arts.* (UB1)

Some participants also expressed an awareness of particular universities in other parts of the world where the trend is apparent, including the University of Melbourne. As one participant expressed it:

*We were highly interested in the University of Melbourne, which was somehow attempting to synthesise a more professional-looking university, one that ventures into the liberal arts with a more holistic training. That is the little step we were taking.* (UB4)
Furthermore, they considered that international organizations have been influencing the trend. These include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank. On this, one participant stated:

During the ministers’ discussion meetings at the Bologna Agreement, the World Bank Report and OECD studies of higher education were mentioned repeatedly, it was part of the literature which supported this implementation and invited to us to participate in this. (UB4)

Comments like this highlight a view that recommendations from the OECD and the World Bank lie behind the structure of the new curriculum policy.

Commenting on the latter matter, another administrator stated:

The OECD report about higher education in Chile came out in 2008 and it was super critical, revealing that degrees are very long and that we have very rigid curricula. That is not adequate to face the current challenges and there is little preparation in skills such as teamwork and little adaptability within the system. (UB1)

He concluded by saying: “That was the motivation of the program and what the OECD report said. It responds to the problems identified by the OECD and solves problems of traditional programs”. In using the term ‘problems’ the participant was referring to issues in the higher education system in Chile which are reflected at ‘University B’.

1.2 International employability

There was also recognition amongst participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ that performance indicators such as employability have had an influence on the new policy, specifically international employability. One participant explained this as follows:

Engineers are getting into key industries not only in Chile but around the world. Yes, I have graduates who are working at Google, I have several graduates on Facebook, I have several in Engy and I have several in some world pharmaceuticals. That network obviously begins to be very relevant for the internal development of Chile and if they return, they want to have relations with the Chilean industry, they want to see how they can help their country. (UB3)
This participant was highlighting a view about the importance of creating international networks in order to further the development of the economic system in the nation. According to this authority, students at the university in question are playing a part in that role. Going further on this, the participant also stated:

*It has been working quite well because I have offered to Nestlé a student who is comparable to that one offered by MIT. If not, they cannot compete... We have been working with different industries producing this demand for our young graduates... This does not affect us at all because what we are doing today is essentially looking for these links with other industries in the world and within Chile as well... (UB3)*

Comments like this suggest there was a view that international employability of graduates of this university was possible due their being comparable with graduates from other international universities at the top in league table rankings. Furthermore, there was the view that this is the case because of a deliberate effort by the university with the new curriculum policy.

1.3 International accreditation

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ also considered that the new curriculum policy was developed to respond to challenges presented by the need for international accreditation. On this, one agency in particular was mentioned, namely Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology in the US. As one participant put it:

*We were interested in having our student accepted outside of Chile; if they do four years of studies those years should be recognized outside as four. We are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, an American accrediting agency. They give you an accreditation of five and a half years in engineering, like in the United States and we got it for four years. That homologation is key for students´ mobility. There is a kind of synchronicity between the curricula with other universities of the world, and that has allowed us to facilitate internationalization. (UB3)*

Comments like this highlight the perceived influence of higher education institutions from the US on this university.
The latter is especially the case in relation to engineering courses. On this, one participant stated:

*In the case of Engineering, the creation of majors and minors was under the criteria of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology. Each school within the university had to generate a major or a minor that could be accredited by ABET. Then, as with all the international programs accredited by ABET, especially in the US, at end what you are doing is to be one more within this pool.* (UB3)

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ also held that there is a trend towards international homogenisation of curricula, and that this has equally become a major influence at their University. As one participant stated:

*The world has changed, the labour market has changed, the academic environment is beating with a very powerful pulse, then the sooner than later the system will re-engage in that line. I had to promote the topic of international recognition of degrees in the national politics. That leads to a more universal language of what criteria and categories you use in these curriculum trajectories, which competencies and professionals’ skills you include to be able to have that international validation.* (UB4)

In particular, the participant was referring to the international move of curricula being design on a competency-based model. On this, another participant stated as follows that international validation is fundamental for international employability:

*Basically, the first of reasons to make the change had to do with that international homologation. We were interested in having our student understood outside.* (UB3)

The process of international homogenisation or harmonisation is related to the internationalization of higher education, not only of students and graduates, but also of academics.

1.4 Changes in the concept of a university

There was a recognition by participants located at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ that, following events such as the Bologna Agreement, the notion of what constitutes a university has changed in many parts in the
world. Commenting specifically on the influence of the Bologna Agreement upon Chile, one participant stated:

There was a political vision to move towards the model of the Bologna Agreement, with shorter cycles and articulating the undergraduate level with the postgraduate... from then there was a certain consensus that the Bologna model was as interesting for both the Chilean reality and for Latin America. (UB4)

This participant was suggesting that the Bologna Declaration provided the spark in Chile leading to change in relation to the concept of what is a university and what the curriculum should be. Another participant expressed this view as follows:

The university is a 1000 years old institution and its role as a place of generation, transmission, memory of knowledge, an environment of permanent academic reflection, that is, maintaining its fundamental tasks has evolved very dynamically over time, with variations, of course, in each contexts and reality. (UB2)

Another participant yet again stated:

We must take responsibility of a generational change regarding the course of the entire university as an institution. I see that this new orientation is absolutely essential to keep the university valid and socially relevant. Otherwise it will only be considered as a training agent or will be like a spokesperson without reaching a public voice, and it will stop being a reference in social construction. If one looks back, each generation has to be very important actors of this evolution, some generations more than others. (UB4)

This participant was suggesting that the university as an institution might disappear in the longer-term.

2. National influences

Some national influences were also identified as affecting the curriculum policy change at ‘University B’. These influences will now be considered in turn, although there was not always agreement amongst participants. Rather, some located at the meso (university administration) level considered that what was taking place was a result of more local (institutional-based) initiatives. One participant expressed this as follows:

I think there are no national influences. My impression is that the program was born from the combination of a certain history, linked to the intention to generate a more general training. I do not see any development within the system in the country that could anticipate this. (UB1)
Comments like this are suggestive of a view that the influences originated more within the university itself in Chile. Another academic commented as follows in this regard:

*If you ask me, I think the whole system it’s moving. As the University B is very important in the local system, any move that it does in that strategic direction obviously helps the system.* (UB3)

Another yet again added:

*It has been progressing very well. It has been progressing a lot. As this was a radical change, radical in 2013 because the history of universities in Chile is of more than 140 years. When we said that we were going to change a curriculum to two cycles, one of four and one of two, the rest of the system reacted slowly. I did not want the University of Chile to change. But for example, there are already several universities in Chile that are doing the same thing that we did. Then you are producing a movement of the system in that direction.* (UB3)

Such comments indicate a view by participants that they were pioneers in the system. The perspective of those who saw national influences as also being influential are now considered.

### 2.1 Governments and historical influences

One participant working at the meso (university administration) level identified the influence of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in Chile as being influential when stating: “In the first place it results from an external pressure. In the case of Chile, the Ministry of Education.” (UB1). This academic concluded by saying that MINEDUC supported the university through an Improvement of Quality and Equity in Tertiary Education Program project (MECESUP) to reduce the length reduction of degree courses.

Further regarding national influences on the new policy, some participants at this level also argued that Chile has had a traditional university culture based on the teaching of disciplines, which has clashed with the notion of a general curriculum. Some also held that in Chile there is a national political agenda of transformation, which has been
captured by discussion about financial matters and funding of universities. One participant expressed a view on this as follows:

The agenda was captured by the topic of financing and gratuity. The focus of public policy and the actions of higher education went to the chapter of the student movement. For a moment the theme of the curriculum transformations was a priority in the agenda, but with the subject of the gratuity went to second place, it lost focus. It was not interesting anymore in compare with 10,000 young people in strike on the street and 25 traditional universities paralysed. (UB4)

This participant was referring to university funding through the Law Number 20.882 for the Provision of Gratuity for students coming from the lowest socioeconomic classes in 2015. The participant concluded by stating that this, in turn, raised issues that need to be addressed.

Some also took the larger historical view, seeing curriculum policy changes as having had its origin in the 1960s, when an academic exchange agreement between Chile and the University of California was signed during the government of President Eduardo Frei Montalva. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

During the 1960s Chile signed an agreement of academic exchange with the United States, with California more specifically, during the time of President Eduardo Frei. In that agreement our university led that agenda, establishing a very radical transformation of curriculum structure, academic careers, etc. Particularly that experience expanded our faculty and the whole university, and was an invitation for other Chilean universities. America influenced the system from the 60’s. (UB4)

Such comments also suggest that universities in Chile have been making efforts to engage in internationalization for more than four decades.

At the same time, there was also a recognition by others operating at the meso (university administration) level that there has been an unclear political discussion in Chile about curriculum in higher education. On this, one participant stated:

Today in politics in Chile we are lost, discussing for example issues such as student funding and where to place resources. The issue of degrees shortening was installed in Chile but it has not taken place as part of the course format. What we are doing is like accommodating the same clothes to a smaller suitcase, which is meaningless, it is like
subtracting, adds nothing... We can say that today the system is in a neutral gear, moving by inertia and continuity. (UB4)

According to this participant, the political dispute on the funding of higher education and of universities in the country has had an influence on the curriculum policy change, albeit indirectly, but the discussion has been rather barren.

2.2 Changes in the demographic profile of students

A second national influence on curriculum development identified by participants working at the meso (university administration) level is the changes occurring in the demographic profile of students. Commenting on this, one authority stated:

*What has changed is the students’ demographics. If you incorporate for example students with greater inclusion and diverse political logics, the schools also change. Thus, you are confronted to situations in which students vote in favour of a strike which would not happen before, but today they will approve a strike.* (UB2)

For participants like this one, the growth in the enrolment of students, who were more politicised than their predecessors and who come from low socioeconomic classes, has had a significant impact.

Some also identified other phenomena as affecting the curriculum policy changes at ‘University B’. This includes women now being more interested than their predecessors in studying degrees courses like engineering. On this, one participant expressed this view as follows:

*The other thing that is remarkable about the curriculum change at the School of Engineering, is that 30 years ago, when I came here, it had 18% of women studying, and thanks to this change in 2013 there is an increase to 27%. The world standard not globally, but in the United States is close to 30%, which makes us very happy because if we reach 30%, we already reached the standard of a society that is a more inclusive in that sense.* (UB3)

Developing this argumentation further, the participant commented:

*It seemed to us that it could happen and we have made enough efforts for women to understand that the engineering courses are not degrees only for men, which is a mistake. There has been a 10% change. Something that had been changing systematically for 40 years, while the rest of Chile is still stuck at 20%.* (UB3)
It was also held by participants working at the meso (university administration) level, that another new characteristic of the student population is that they have a larger involvement than their predecessors in student political movements.

Participation in student strikes and related activities was not common in the past at ‘University B’, according to one participant who stated as follows:

_I think that this is still a process. It began in Chile in 2006 with the ‘march of the penguins, with schoolchildren, and with the 2011 mobilisations in higher education. The educational agenda of the current government is dominated by the contingency and therefore it is very difficult to predict when the system can again face challenges that are more relevant to it._ (UB4)

Comments like this also suggest that administrative staff held a negative view of the student movement and associated political agitation, considering it a distraction from more relevant issues such as curriculum policy.

### 2.3 Employers

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ also held that employers have had a significant input to informing new curriculum policy. Meeting with employers took place, it is held, and was most important. On this, one participant stated:

_There was also consultation with employers as they saw the limitations of the current training and overall the program seems very positive. We have heard that repeatedly._ (UB1)

Such comments suggest that this university attaches great importance to the establishment of a link between university education and the labour market.

### 3. Local influences

#### 3.1 The history of the ‘University B’

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ highlighted that changes have been made to the curriculum policy over the last few
decades. Some of them stated that in previous a ‘general education program’ was implemented at the university. According to some at the meso (university administration) level, such earlier developments influenced the new curriculum policy. One participant voiced this as follow:

The University B has a long history moving towards a program like this. If one looks, even 40 years ago, there were elements that indicated that the university was trying to do this. An example of this was the creation of the baccalaureate program, which generated a lot of interest. In fact, the MINEDUC promotes the creation of this type of programs. There are many antecedents of this in the university such as the creation of the General Education Program. (UB1)

Also, according to people working at this level, the program had deficiencies which triggered the establishment of the new college policy. On this, one participant commented:

The baccalaureate program had a long and successful existence. The problem was that it had high levels of desertion, not in compare with those in Chile that are around the 50%, but high for the context of the University B. So wt was natural that it happened, because if students did not stay in their course of preference, there was no further path for them. We had to figure out how to make a program with more capacity and no desertion in the second year. (UB1)

Such comments suggest that the university was interested in improving performance rates and that this was one of the main reasons why the new curriculum was chosen.

3.2 International experience of local academics

Another major local influence on the policy, as identified by some participants working at the meso (university administration) level, was the large number of faculty members and other authorities who have had an international education experience. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

I was a supporter of this model. I studied in the United States. In 2010 the rector at the time appointed me as director of the college which already had a year of existence. There was already a trend. The engine was that rectors’ experience studying abroad. (UB1)
This type of comment highlights, especially, that American college experiences have been influential in the moves to undertake curriculum change at this university.

3.3. Credits system

It is also held by participants located at the meso (university administration) level that the establishment of a credit system for universities, derived from the Bologna Agreement, was a local influence. In this regard, one authority commented: “We changed to the credit system, and we have been doing this for a while.” (UB2). Comments like this support a view that the efforts to implement a credit system in this university started before the Bologna process was established. On this, some participants at the meso (university administration) level expressed that this university has had a credit system for more than a decade, being one of the first ones in Chile to implement one. One participant explained the system as follows:

"This already happened in 2009 with the idea to reduce degrees from six years, which finally ended in five years. However, the project failed. The University B and the University X were doing it together and the University X disembarked from the project. It did not go in the direction of decreasing the length of degree courses. We were left alone. We reduced them from six years, from 580 credits, to 530. That reduction was local trend." (UB3)

The participant was highlighting that this University led the process towards a national credit system in Chile.

The context of policy text production at University B

This section of the chapter considers the perspectives of participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ about the context within which the curriculum policy and its associated texts were produced. It is undertaken in relation to the following features of the curriculum policy change: structure; ideology; accountability; policy elite; and policy processes.
1. Features of the curriculum policy change

1.1 Structure

Each policy has a particular characteristic that relates to the setting in which it is developed. On this, three structural features stood out for participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’. These are the ‘college system’; the ‘general education program’; and ‘other institutional developments’.

Regarding the change to a college system, which started at ‘University B’ in 2013, some located at the meso (university administration) level stated that a strong influence came from a liberal education model. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

*The second major project of curriculum innovation was the project of the college, which has a liberal education format, capturing about 30% of the university’s first year enrolment. Under this college, students are formed in three areas of knowledge at the undergraduate level and they specialise more at the professional level or later in the postgraduate discipline. It is a four years program in which the students acquire the degree of licentiate, like the American Bachelor, in which they can later study titling programs. It has academic master programs and doctoral programs. In Chile this is equivalent to a university degree.* (UB4)

Participants like this one suggested that the ‘college’ structure differs from the traditional curriculum structure at the university level in Chile.

Certain participants also had come to recognize that the introduction of the ‘college’ related to an existing program. On this, one participant stated:

*Some see the college as if we would have built ‘a second floor to the baccalaureate’. It is true that there is a link but there is more to this. It is true that college is very similar to the first two years of high school. There was a pilot program in between called ‘General Degree’. College was the name given to the program created afterwards and there was a lot of discussion about it.* (UB1)

Comments like this suggest that aspects of the general education program have persisted and that the introduction of the ‘college’ structure is a progression of this, being based on an international structure with its own peculiarities.
Also, participants working at the meso (university administration) level indicated that changes in curriculum policy at ‘University B’ have included a reduction in the years one has to study a degree course. On this, the case of courses in engineering came in for special consideration. One participant gave voice to this when stating:

_There were two episodes, one was a curriculum change that was implemented in 2009, which aim was to shorten the degree courses to five years. Those were professional courses that lead to a six years length professional degree and we wanted to cut them to five years. In that process they were cut to five and a half years, in 2009. I assumed as dean in 2010 and then we implemented a change that built on the 2009 curriculum change, which was implemented in 2013, and had to do with segmenting the courses in two cycles. On of those cycles, is two years that is identical to the Anglo-Saxon cycle of a bachelor of science. (UB3)_

Commenting in a like manner, another participant stated: “The Melbourne Report said that Chile a non-title degree course was going to fail. I, in 2010 negotiated mechanisms of articulation with degrees” (UB1). This comment highlights the pressures that came to bear on ‘University B’ as a result of knowledge about changes that took place at the University of Melbourne in relation to the length of its degree courses.

At the same time, participants working at the meso (university administration) level claimed that changes in degree courses also have an interdisciplinary dimension. On this, one participant stated:

_There are different costs, depending on the undergraduate, but is easier to produce this multi-school articulation than to produce any other degree. The truth is that it has to have an exit, that is essentially one more year, which is the idea. (UB1)_

Comments like this indicate a view that there has been an explicit intention to encourage different faculties inside the University engaged in interdisciplinary work.

Participants at the meso (university administration) level also held that another characteristic of the curriculum policy transformation has been the introduction of a process of a constant tracking of student progress. As one participant put it:

_We have followed students one by one. We tell them “hey, you have to take this course this semester, if you do not you are going to be delayed”. That job is terrible but it worked. There is a lot of people in the undergraduate level and we have a person_
responsible for each of the majors, communicating with each student of the semester as well. (UB3)

Comments like this indicate that the university has engaged in efforts aimed at changing students’ studying practices. In doing so, it also suggests the existence of a view of students as passive individuals to be manipulated, rather than as active people directing their own learning according to their own ideas.

A view was also expressed about the system of majors and minors in the new curriculum. One participant described this process in the following way:

*Why the University B gets into this if it receives the best students of the system? There is one reason: because it can do it. It is not easy to have the ability to offer more than 100 majors and minors. We have disciplinary coverage. And the costs of this are not terribly high. We use courses that already exist. To some extent the program is based on what already existed.* (UB2)

Comments like this indicate that there are critics of the articulations required by the curriculum policy change. Referring specifically to the minors and majors system in engineering courses, for example, one dean stated:

*It meant a lot of work. Between 2010 and 2013, the school worked on each of these majors by groups and to this day we have a major curriculum manager. To make this work we have a gigantic structure.* (UB3)

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level also held that structural features of the new curriculum policy relate to institutional developments. One such developments is the change of the ‘School of Undergraduate Studies’, and also the creation of an ‘Undergraduate Research Unit’ and a ‘Postgraduate School’. One participant referred to this as follows:

*The Undergraduate Direction will now be an Undergraduate School... The professional degree is a postgraduate problem, so we have a new Graduate School. We have covered the three main areas: undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional education. These are the three major areas that underlie the school. To create these transversal units, we also established a unit of research and another of innovation, which nourishes these three areas. Because research has always been seen as something of a graduate character and one of the important changes I made was to introduce research at the undergraduate level.* (UB3)
Such comments indicate that these developments are seen as being part of a change in perspective about what should take place at the undergraduate and the graduate level, and that they also influenced the nature of the new curriculum policy at this university.

Participants at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ also referred to other structural developments, including the introduction of a digital application in the School of Engineering. Referring to this, one participant stated:

*Something that was very important for student and that they have appreciated a lot, was the creation of a tool called the P, a tool made by students of this university, entrepreneurs... There, students type any combination of courses that they would like. Basically, it allows them to plan all these curriculum paths and the time it will take them to do certain articulations. That was very well received, a relatively simple tool, it took us a year to design because the problem is complex, it is like a banner, it is focused on engineering and it has turned out to be super successful. Today the P app is basically a reality for them.* (UB3)

Such comments suggest that curriculum flexibility has been sought based on international structures within an engineering school at ‘University B’.

Similarly, regarding the ‘general education program’, participants at this level claimed that the inclusion of such units as a language, especially English, theology and ethics, and Christian anthropology, indicate a desire to appeal to a wide audience. One participant commented on this as follows:

*We also incorporated a course on ethics but from the perspective of anthropology, as a way to understand what man is framed in a Christian anthropological vision. The third course was English, which was highly opposed.* (UB2)

Comments like this indicate that while the university has been implementing this aspect of the curriculum policy to promote internationalization, some criticism of it has come from academics within the University.

1.2 Ideology

Those working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ also recognized that a set of core beliefs lie behind the context of policy text production at
their institution. One value that came in for special consideration is interdisciplinarity or multidisciplinarity. Referring to this, one participant stated:

*The main organizational value behind this was interdisciplinary. That is a key value which is to achieve. Our work in the University happens in certain disciplinary silos and to look for these connections with other disciplines is an issue. It has been achieved by few universities in the world.* (UB3)

Such participant comments suggest that in order to arrive at a multidisciplinary approach at the university, a paradigm change is required. Referring to this, another participant stated:

*Our desire to be interdisciplinary was not simply to follow a fashion. It was because the most unexplored knowledge spaces are in those limits where disciplines meet. For example, nobody has ever wonder, where the social sciences meet with engineering? For example, I have been working the subject of natural disasters which is my subject. There more topics start to appear, to suggest the study of some disciplines that begin to affect others, and that is like the essence of interdisciplinarity... That is a value.* (UB3)

Such comments suggest that this institution attaches a large importance to adopting a multidisciplinary approach. For example, the School of Engineering has established connections with other schools within the university. On this, one administrator stated:

*One of the big focus is the interdisciplinary. The traditional majors of engineering, such as civil, structures, electrical, chemical, mechanical were replaced by majors that are completely different, that cross the School of Engineering. For example, subjects such as the concept of design, biological medical engineering or biomedical engineering, mathematical engineering and physical engineering appeared.* (UB1)

Some participants also had come to articulate reasons justifying the implementation of a multidisciplinary curriculum.

Reflecting on the latter matter, one participant expressed a view as follows:

*We did it to prepare a person who is able to dialogue in a multidisciplinary way. I do not like the word interdisciplinary because it implies being on the border and not knowing much of each discipline. It seems more sensible to use a multidisciplinary program, so that the student can be familiar with different discourses. If the person has been exposed to different disciplinary discourses, the multidisciplinary work becomes easier.* (UB1)
Such comments suggest that the university is interested in approaching unexplored niches within the academic world to improve their competitiveness in the higher education sector both nationally and internationally.

Participants at this level also deemed that multidisciplinary work provides a positive learning experience for students. On this, one participant claimed:

*I see it very positive. Due to the nature of Chilean education, many former students teach where they studied. At this moment we have a number of young professors who are a good precedent for what is coming, which is the cultivation of multidisciplinary. They have an experiential approach, looking from different perspectives and they have learnt the nomenclature of other disciplines, which favours teamwork.* (UB2)

Such participants suggest that the new generations of students and university teachers at ‘University B’ are breaking with traditional practices in Chile.

Regarding the latter, some participants also stated that, as they saw it, the results of students engaging in multidisciplinary studies will have a positive impact in Chile. As a participant put it:

*That will have an impact in the country, because obviously our students will be much more connected with the rest of the world, they will bring technology to the country, etc. This is an integral, systemic and much more interdisciplinary vision. I think it is a very central issue that this country urgently needs.* (UB4)

Also, for some working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’, working in a multidisciplinary fashion can help both students and the institution to be more connected in a globalised world. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

*Then there are multiple reasons to maintaining a format of disciplinary courses. However, if we do not integrate the undergraduate and the graduate, or we do not do interdisciplinary work, we have no future. From the internal point of view of the university, of globalisation, of professional markets and of the academic environment, this was the next step forward.* (UB4)

Here it is also important to note that while some used the term ‘multidisciplinary’, others used the term ‘interdisciplinary’, even though they seem to mean the same concept.
Some participants also had come to recognize that there was resistance during the policy text production phase to including a multidisciplinary approach in the new curriculum policy at the university. One gave voice to this by saying: “It does not jump to more than those three for now because this, by the awkwardness of the rest of the schools that do not yet see the value in this” (UB3). Such comments suggest that there is not a shared vision within the university on the matter. Another participant added as follows on this:

*For example, engineering and economics have a model like this, it is not liberal arts, but they are close to a model like this. That may eventually happen. There are bureaucratic issues. In many schools the college model is validated and it is something that they would like to adapt. In other schools it is not.* (UB1)

Such participants suggest that in order to achieve a full multidisciplinary approach a bureaucratic change is necessary along with consensus amongst different units.

Regarding values in the context of policy text production, it was also clear that participants operating at the meso (university administration) level saw curriculum flexibility being essential. This view was expressed by one participant as follows:

*The second important value of this curriculum change is curriculum flexibility, which translates in not forcing people to make decisions before they have a certain intellectual maturity... That was a very strong argument, to not force people to make abrupt decisions.* (UB3)

Such comments indicate that the previous curriculum was rigid and did not allow students to make good decisions about their chosen education pathways. Commenting on this, another authority stated:

*Firstly, what we wanted was to shorten degree length to four years in the first cycle, but in those four years there would be a lot of curriculum flexibility. Because the world of science and technology is evolving at an incredible speed. So, if someone is studying a six years degree, when they finish the world has changed. So, for courses, especially the ones in science and technology, you need to renew the curricula very quickly. For example, the knowledge in computer science doubles every 18 months. So, how are you going to have a six-year curriculum? So that was an important frame for our curriculum change.* (UB3)
Such comments also suggest a view about the rapid obsolescence of knowledge, with globalisation guiding the move towards a new curriculum in the university.

Commenting on the latter matter, another participant added:

*Based on these considerations and the long and rigid curricula, we promote the ‘General Education Program’, to enable and impose on students how to undergo other branches, to make disciplinary crossings, to complement their training with other disciplines.* (UB2)

Coupled with this was a view amongst participants working at the meso (university administration) level that increasing the amount of research-based activities for undergraduate students is another value that underpins the curriculum policy change at ‘University B’. In this regard, one authority said:

*From a scientific point of view, the changes being made by other schools will double our research capacity in an incredible way, which you probably will be perceived as a characteristic of this university... And we have a whole program called IPE, research at the undergraduate level, which seeks to captivate the interest of students from very young age in research.* (UB3)

Such comments also suggest that increasing the amount of time devoted to research is also aimed to enhance positioning of the university in international league tables.

Some also stated that the direction being taken at the university involves trying to win financial support from the national state. On this, a participant elaborated further:

*Fighting a position within the 150 best in the world. I think that's a change for the next 15-20 years. The project called Super Engineering, with CORFO, is going to produce that change. I believe, I have a lot of confidence and hope, I am confident that we are going to place the School of Engineering of the University B within the 50 best in the world. Maybe only in seven or five years.* (UB3)

The Production Development Corporation in Chile is a government organization established in 1939, aimed at improving the competitiveness and the productive diversification of the country.
Participants located at the meso (university administration) level also held that the individual development of students is a core value behind the new curriculum policy. On this, one participant stated:

*Within this university there has always been a university education that promotes personal formation, a proposal of values inspired by a Christian anthropological vision.* (UB2)

Participants like this suggest that the development of students is seen as being related to moral education. This view was expounded upon by another participant when stating:

*If we think of the word ‘educate’, that is to help a person to develop their own being. To do that, a proposal of values and knowledge that broaden the world view has to be present. I have always been inspired by the reflection of Gabriel Marce from the Christian existentialism who was right when he said that education can help a person to grow in her or his own being... Asking if we educate to be or to have. In Latin America in general, education is more related to have and is professionalising.* (UB4)

The comment suggests that religious values are of central importance in this university. For others, personal development relates to developing students to become autonomous.

Finally, according to participants at the meso (university administration) level, a liberal humanist ideology was also considered to underlie the policy text production. This was indicated when they highlighted that social issues and development of students as persons are major values included in the new curriculum policy.

### 1.3 Accountability

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ argued that accountability to different stakeholders in relation to the curriculum policy changes is also required. First, there is social accountability. This relates to the idea of universities being responsible for their social environment. Commenting on this, one participant stated:
What nourishes these three schools is social responsibility. We created an area of university social responsibility, well-intentioned, in the sense that it was focus to particular aims. One of them was inclusion... the University B receives 80% of the Chilean university system. Within the School of Engineering we receive 80% of students from private schools and 20% of subsidised public and private schools, and that equation is wrong. Conceptually it's wrong because talent is not distributed in that way. But, how is it possible? The PSU clearly segments and segregates them. We started and inaugurated the program called T in 2011, which aims to be that inclusive of talented people. It has been very successful. (UB3)

Participants like this one suggest that there has been an internal initiative undertaken in the university, which was articulated with the policy text production, to improve equity in higher education in Chile as part of its social accountability agenda.

Another form of accountability identified was international accreditation. This was recognized by participants located at the meso (university administration) level as a matter that has received great attention. The general view on this, was expressed by this participant as follows:

The 2009 curriculum had a focus on competency, understood as being able to achieve certain skills and abilities in students. It is hard and by far very difficult. It was easy to write it down on paper. It is very difficult to measure. We have an exam and everything, but the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology told us that this was not enough, they wanted other evidence of students achieving these competencies. We had to go out. After three years interviewing graduates and those who hired them, to tell us if the graduate has or not the competency. (UB3)

The comment suggests that the competency-based model was introduced as part of the new curriculum policy at this university, in its efforts to attain international accountability and accreditation.

2. The role of policy elite

2.1 Highest level of authority

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level identified, as they saw it, the main policy actors involved in the context of policy text production at ‘University B’. Specific participants were highlighted in this regard. Commenting on this, one academic stated:
The best course for our reality is that in which university authorities drive this reform. In this case, the chancellor and the academic vice-chancellor of the time. (UB1)

Suggestions like this indicate that participants working at the meso (university administration) level were aware of the existence of a policy elite at the university.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also stated that while the specific content of curriculum policy was decided at the bottom, and specifically at each school, there was also a process engaged in to gain the approval of senior authority figures within the university. One former vice-chancellor commented on this as follows:

The university created a commission to work on the creation and development of projects, in which the Academic Vice-Chancellor led and incorporated deans and academics of some faculties. That acted like a board of project development. Then they went to the ‘Titles and degrees commission’, which is a commission of the superior council, composed by deans, general secretary, one of the vice-rectors, and then that was presented to the superior council. It requires the support of the superior council to be implemented. (UB4)

Such comments indicate that there was also a top-down process in the policy text production.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also identified specific departments at the University involved in planning the production of curriculum policy change. On this, one participant said: “The Undergraduate Direction, well obviously with a lot of work from us, but who in the end is pushing that topic is the Undergraduate Direction.” (UB3). The suggestion here is that the early work was done at the ‘bottom-level’, but that the wording of the final curriculum policy texts was decided upon at the top.

Some also had come to recognize that the Chancellery and the Academic Vice-chancellery have been central actors in the process. On this, one participant stated his view as follows:
It was expressed in the speeches of the Chancellor at the time. He was in charge. There are many documents from that time, including annual reports and documents which emanated from the academic vice-rectory which also contain it. (UB2)

Such comments reassert a view amongst participants about the policy emanating from the top of the university administration.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also had views on the role of policy elite. They consider the elaboration of policy at this university as being a complex task requiring the involvement of a variety of policy actors. On this, some participants mentioned the existence of a school council. One academic referred to this as follow:

This is the only school in the university where the president of the student union, the Academic Counsellor and the representative of the graduate students participate in the School Council, which is the most important entity of the school's policy. (UB3)

Comments like this indicate a view amongst some that great importance was placed on students’ ideas about policy and future directions at one school within the university. On this, another participant stated:

We were very interested in the opinion of graduates and in how this generalist would be perceived by the labour field and finally in how to build a curriculum for a program like this. There were several months of correspondence and visits with them. (UB2)

Such participants highlighted the participation of students and graduates in the process of changing the curriculum policy at 'University B'.

3. Policy processes

3.1 Decentralized structure

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ also recognized that there is a decentralized structure in place to assist curriculum policy change. In this regard, one authority stated as follows:

This university has a decentralized structure, so the faculties have autonomy to make processes, which is why the curriculum changes lead to specific commissions, in which they analysed formal issues, leaving enough freedom of content for the units. I consider
this to be a very positive characteristic, very powerful, that there is a certain degree of disciplinary autonomy in the definition of programs. (UB4)

Comments like this indicate that each faculty and school defined its own curriculum content, through discussions and paperwork, while the work of people with the highest level of authority made the final decisions.

Some participants working at the meso (university administration) level came to question the autonomy possessed by faculties and schools within the university. On this, one participant stated:

It was a political change inside the university. It was the dispute between autonomous decisions of each faculty versus a more integrated and political project as a university. So, it was more corporative. (UB4)

Here, the suggestion was that the final decisions on policy text production were made in response to political and corporate imperatives rather than education ones.

Regarding policy processes, participants working at the meso (university administration) level also highlighted that students were involved in designing and broadcasting the curriculum policy changes. The student union in particular, it was held, played a central role in the policy production. On this, one participant expressed:

It was very positive for the students. The student union became heavily involved in the construction of this. You have to consider that in each major there are at least two student representatives who participated in its design and in its follow-up. They are rotating courses and today they are helping us strongly with broadcasting it amongst their colleagues. The first achievement was involving them in the process of curriculum design. (UB3)

Such comments suggest that students were major actors in the policy text production process. As another participant expressed it: “I tell you that the great support of these projects were students” (UB4).

Some participants working at the meso (university administration) level also considered that student participation has been especially relevant in advertising information about the new curriculum policy. On this, one participant stated:
The second great achievement is that they have been largely responsible for advertising this with the other 4300 students. It seems easy, but the student union does not easily reach the 4300 and we as academics we reach less. Then they have been key in the dissemination of this curriculum. We are very close to the student union. (UB3)

Some also suggested that the role of students in diffusing the new curriculum becomes even more relevant when they entered the labour market. On this, one participant stated:

We are seeing some results now. A group of students continues to postgraduate studies and professional qualifications. There are a few who leave to the labour market only with this degree. Of the group that has gone to the labour market, they are hired and are recognized by the program. (UB1)

Some participants at the meso (university administration) level, however, had a different view, pointing out that students are ignorant regarding the purpose and nature of the new curriculum policy. Commenting on this, one participant claimed:

Yes, our students and the student union participated a lot. The students, do not have any idea what a curriculum is all about. (UB4)

Participants like this also suggested that students have been passive in the policy text production process. Oppositely, one participant who had a positive perspective about student involvement in policy processes, stated:

Now, it is clear to us that students now arrive at the annual open day, even before of the PSU process, and they already know the curriculum upside down. Students today manage the curriculum, honestly, much better than the teachers. They are more empowered and know more. They know more about the logics that allow them to move inside the university. (UB3)

Most of the participants working at this level also held that the involvement of students on curriculum committees established during the policy text production phase was significant. On this, one participant stated:

The university created, following the Dutch model, the curriculum committees involving two students, two teachers and two academic managers. Once per semester they are reviewing the curriculum progress, receiving input from the different actors and sectors. Since that scheme is in place, these committees also have a say. (UB3)
Such comments suggest that students’ perspectives were considered valuable in the production of the new curriculum policy in the interest of promoting internationalization.

3.2 Medium resistance

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level also claimed that there has not been much resistance to the new curriculum policy. On this, one participant commented as follows:

Did it have any detractors? Just a few. It had at first. It was the typical thing os some people saying “but why this? And why that?” But mostly, I do not know, maybe I’m being conservative, but 90% of this school understood it very well and in understood in what direction it had to move. There are always people who worked on the previous curriculum change and they tell you “but why do you worry about doing it?” What we had to do was to take the 2009 curriculum and put it also in this 2013 curriculum, not as something that antagonises it but as part of it. (UB4)

Such comments suggest that resistance comes only from a small number of people involved in the previous curriculum model. Further commenting on this, another stated:

There are always going to be people who are against it, who raises their hand and tells you “I do not, I’m still not sure”. But I would say the vast majority is clear and in favour. (UB3)

Furthermore, there was some consensus about the resistors to the new curriculum policy. On this, some commented along the lines of one participant, who said:

As academics we always have the difficulty that when you are in your department, what matters to you is your little circle. That is a mistake, and is the most common and most serious error of academics in general, where the only thing that matters is how are your surroundings, your conditions, your salary, your things. In that sense there is a lack of vision of the institution, of the country, because you are so involved in your specific subject, research, your courses and your things, that you forget the rest and the importance of others. (UB3)

The suggestion here is that detractors are influenced by perceived threats to their individual interests. The resulting fear may make them go against the collective welfare.

Some also had come to recognize specific critics of the new policy. Indeed, on this, one participant suggested:
It had critics at several levels. They said it was an initiative drawn from the wicks, exotic, why to innovate if this university has excellence. Other criticism were things such as that this was going to mean a tremendous surcharge of courses, hiring low level teachers and lowering standards, and asking where the resources will come for this. (UB2)

Such comments suggest that certain people within the university see that the new policy may be having a negative impact on the quality of education provided. One participant commented on this as follows: “On the other hand, many did not understand or do not understand why a college program was created” (UB1). Overall, then, what is being suggested by resistors is that the availability of resources is not sufficient for the successful implementation of the new policy.

The context of policy practices at University B

This section details the perspectives of participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ regarding the context of policy practices and effects (enactment). They consider that the new policy is having an impact on staff, on students and on the institution. In considering this, attention is given to their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

1. Impact on staff

1.1 Positive evaluation

The adoption of the new curriculum policy has led, according to those working at the meso (university administration) level, to transformations in the role of employees at ‘University B’. In particular, in the view of some working at this level, the enactment of the new curriculum policy has brought about changes in the functions of academics and other staff. Furthermore, they consider that this has been positive. Commenting on this view, a dean stated:

Well, my experience has been very positive. Perhaps the speed of this change is what has tested the system. For me the change has been paused, but I am aware that for some people within the school the change has been fast because it is not only this change, there
have been other important changes within the school. We have grown in 50% the numbers of teachers in the last five years. (UB3)

Such comments suggest that participants working within the school in question consider that policy enactment at the university had been most effective. Another administrator gave voice to this view as follows:

*I am optimistic about the change that has occurred. Of course, there are things that have worked better than others but the truth is that this change has been essential. The most difficult thing about the change would obviously be to sustain it over time. I believe that nowadays there is maturity in the university so that this change, regardless if I am not the dean tomorrow, is able to sustain itself...* (UB1)

Like-minded participants also suggested that there are processes in place at the university that acted to sustain the policy practices over time.

**1.2 Changes in role**

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ considered that the policy practices have led to a change in their roles and functions. Commenting on this, one participant claimed:

*My role changed completely with this curriculum change. The project pushed those changes and it came out relatively fast. It started in 2011, we finished it in 2013, but a change of this magnitude was difficult. Because for me it has meant re-structuring the school completely.* (UB3)

In like manner, another participant added:

*All these changes in the university's status and in curriculum content affected to all hired professors, everyone became affected by the change.* (UB4)

Suggestions like this indicate that there has been a reinvention of practices at the faculty level. Some, however, had come to recognize that those transformations had not been devoid of challenging issues. This was highlighted by one participant who stated:

*This has generated many problems, such as how to socialise it with academics. The argument was to just do it straight but the idea was dilute... One challenge for academics is to reinvent themselves. The college has that aspiration.* (UB1)
Furthermore, such comments indicate that some academics were concerned that practices associated with the new curriculum clashed with academics’ traditional practices.

2. Impact on students

2.1 Changes in academic expectations

There was a very strong view amongst participants located at the meso (university administration) level that the curriculum policy changes taking place at ‘University B’ had had a major impact on students. Specifically, according to them, the transformation had extended the academic options available to students. On this, one academic stated:

*It generated a great opening to students with 22 majors during their first four years. They can choose any path and after finishing their four years of bachelor they can jump to any specialisation.* (UB3)

Participants like this also indicated that the new structure will allow students to perform better in team work and to work in a multidisciplinary fashion in the future. Such comments also indicate that students’ academic expectations have also changed.

Furthermore, within one particular school, some considered that the curriculum policy changes explicitly tried to motivate students through promoting science, technology, and entrepreneurial research. One participant expressed this view in the following terms:

*The mindset of the students changed in the direction of science and technology enterprise. Transforming a percentage of the 4300 students in entrepreneurs, a 10%, in scientific and technological entrepreneurs. This is a great effort and a change of culture, which implies changes that are multidimensional. We can tell students that the option of being employed is not the only one. You have other options, you can do investigation, which was a different focus… I think in the long term, we will see results in 10-15 years, we will see more technological enterprise, more involvement with what the country needs to develop.* (UB3)
Such comments suggest that participants located at the meso (university administration) level saw that changes in the university culture and students’ preferences were expected policy outcomes.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also held that expectations regarding students amongst academics have changed in the practices of the new curriculum. On this, it was specified that more autonomy and self-management is expected of them, as one participant stated:

*There is clearly a different expectation, because the university expects that graduates can better handle contemporary reality, to integrate interdisciplinary working groups and to have a more global glance of the problems and issues they face... Students are expected to have greater autonomy, greater self-management, greater management and comprehension of different languages and disciplines, and this produces a differentiation in compare with the characteristics of graduates from other universities, which will be very important.* (UB4)

Such participants also highlight the importance placed by ‘University B’ on preparing their students for the labour force.

Also, according to some working at the meso (university administration) level, an expectation is that students’ enquiry capacity will be promoted. One participant gave voice to this when stating:

*They distinguish our students by positive traits: studious, qualitative, a clear relationship with knowledge, more restless, more questioning and more able to mix different things... The expectation is to educate a restless person, with a strong theoretical training. The mixing of immaturity of some students, in groups of students who are interested in some subjects is a good thing. Many students arrive with that attitude and then they change it.* (UB1)

Such comments suggest that the new generations of students should have different characteristics to those of their predecessors at the university.

The notion of entrepreneurship came in for special consideration amongst some participants working at the meso (university administration) level. On this, one academic stated:
We want them to be entrepreneurs on a personal level and at the social level. We have a whole area of social entrepreneurship that we have pushed hardly, in which students are very enthusiastic. It has happened as something natural. (UB3)

The suggestion here is that there is an expectation that students will be empowered to make an impact on social justice, as a result of engaging in the new curriculum.

2.2 Change in social expectations

Those working at the meso (university administration) level also considered that there are new social expectations of students as a result of the new curriculum policy. On this, one participant stated:

For example, that program was born here, from the same students. Even though 70% of our students come from private schools, there was something in the internal DNA that makes our students very prone to social issues and they get really excited about creating non-government organizations; to create something whose value is social rather than private. That was taken advantage of and instances were created within the curriculum, which allows them all these opportunities. I would expect that these students who are going to graduate with the curriculum created in 2013, have a completely different view of how to face the country and how to face its development. (UB3)

Overall, such comments indicate a view that the new policy and its practices should reinforce a social conscience and commitment amongst students. This, they held, also means that graduates should want to ‘give back’ to society. One participant referred to this as follows:

We want to educate people who are very grateful of their country and tell them their duty. We are saying to them “here we gave you all the opportunities but now it’s your turn to reciprocate”. Retribution has been a characteristic we have cultivated much lately. We created things that sometimes seem silly instruments, but, for example, we have the gift of the generation that graduates. The generation that now graduates gives the school what they can for the Program X, so other students can study here. That sort of thing is generating a different internal culture, like a pay back. (UB1)

This comment suggests that the university is using graduates’ gifts of money to cover the fees of students from low socioeconomic classes.
3. Impact on the university

3.1 Recognition and status

The practices of the new policy, it was held, have changed the way in which ‘University B’ is perceived by others. According to participants working at the meso (university administration) level, the university has received greater recognition than previously from other higher education institutions and stakeholders. Commenting on this, one participant said:

*I believe that within the institution and the country the most powerful and strong policy is college. After all, it is a program that by design has this structure and this format and we have seen the distinction in its graduates, which happens to be very clear. The first generations graduated and they have had high levels of recognition weather they entered for the first time in the world of work, or those following academic degrees very successfully. The innovation of these profile has been well recognized when they are looking for work.* (UB4)

Suggestions like this indicate that acknowledgement of the value of the university and its new curriculum policy practices has come about as a result of the quality work being undertaken by graduates in the labour force.

4. Overall strengths

4.1 Positive transformation

There was recognition by some working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’ that one of the strengths of the new curriculum policy is that it prepares students and academics for future political changes in higher education in Chile. On this, one participant stated:

*At the institutional level, the university is ready for the future if the government decides to undertake a process like that of Bologna. That would happen if the gratuitousness happens.* (UB2)

Such comments suggest that participants at the meso (university administration) level had studied political debates on higher education in Chile at the time and have responded to them by engaging in the practices advocated by the new curriculum policy.
5. Overall weaknesses

5.1 Conservatism

Weaknesses in the curriculum policy enactment were identified. According to participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University B’, there were obstacles inside each faculty and school within the university, which, as they saw it, could be understood as ‘discipline jealousy’. Concern on this was expressed by one participant, who stated:

There is this kind of disciplinary zeal of the faculties, which prevents you from having too many professional articulations. What we are doing is an extreme change of mentality within each school, especially with all the sciences. The sciences are more open to this. For example, they understand that’s no problem if I have a student of mine who jumps to biology, or physics, or maths, or to chemistry. (UB3)

Such participants suggest that a loosening of boundaries between academic disciplines, which was unthinkable previously, is now possible at the university. Another participant gave voice to this position as follows:

For example, this does not mean that we are going to change the definition of who a lawyer is. It meant that you get into your law school a person who has a mentality and a rational thinking structure which can help you to understand things. Maybe we'll have to do at the graduate level too. It will have to happen that these students can become masters in law, or in economics, or in sociology. (UB4)

Some, however, argued that there are still rigid structures and that traditionalism reigns amongst academics in the university. One participant put it as follows:

I believe that university communities have an extremely conservative DNA which maintains the status quo, basically because big universities professors are overbought people and any additional thing is a burden. Therefore, it is hard to innovate. This is my hypothesis. (UB2)

The above comment suggests that conservatism exists as result of the influence of an ‘academic capitalism’ paradigm and a lack of team work inside the university. On this, another participant stated:

If you ask about the limitations of good universities, these are not technical skills. However, they have limitations in teamwork, in multidisciplinary work, in multidisciplinary dialogue. This type of program offers this. (UB1)
Participants like this one indicated that the university also has a deficiency in other capacities when it comes to fully implementing a more flexible curriculum.

Some participants also identified that a weakness in the policy enactment is a lack of resources. This view was expressed by one as follows:

*One difficulty we have had is the access to resources. For example, when a student wants to use the laboratory and because he or she is a college student, they have more restrictions. That kind of thing was there before college. The effect of creating this curriculum affected the culture of the university.* (UB4)

The suggestion here is that resistance to the new policy and its practices has resulted from restrictions in obtaining the appropriate funds to enact the policy properly.

**The Micro Level**

**The context of influence at University B**

The following section considers the perspectives of participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University B’. On this, one main international influence is identified, namely that of other higher education institutions. One local influence is also identified, namely, the development of an improvement program within the university.

1. International Influence

The curriculum changes at ‘University B’ has a correspondence with developments globally in relation to higher education institutions. Participants located at the micro (academics) level were aware of those international trends. On this, one academic stated: “I believe that more than an international trend is that the university has always been looking and comparing and looking for international models” (UB5). Such participants also suggest that the university frames its curriculum moves as part of an internationalization strategy. Commenting on this, another stated:

*Because we cannot be looking at our navel, we always have to be and we are always looking at what is done outside, especially in the universities that we consider to be better.* (UB6)
Participants working at the micro (academics) level also identified universities with a liberal arts curriculum as being particularly influential. On this, one academic pointed out:

*very important reference is always the influence of American universities. They always work with this system of liberal arts or training, also called general education. Depending on the university there are different ways to structure it. They have different liberal arts formats. But you always have to fulfil that requirement. I think we have tried to go there, but not with their formats but with our own format, which works better for us. (UB5)*

Suggestions like this indicate that ‘University B’ adapted liberal arts models from the main universities in the US for its own situation.

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also pointed out that the University has alliances with other universities around the world, and that these also have had an impact on the new curriculum policy. On this, one participant commented:

*belief in ourselves and when we create new degree courses, we always have external evaluators or external pairs. We see how courses are done elsewhere. Our referents are our partner universities. For us this is like a natural thing. (UB5)*

Such comments suggest that this University placed a major importance on the influence of international universities when elaborating the new curriculum policy.

2. Local Influence

Some participants located at the micro (academics) level also identified institutional aspects influencing the curriculum reforms at ‘University B’. Improving and developing the ‘general education program’ is one of the local influences identified. On this, one participant stated:

*did not use a particular model. It is an inspiration rather than a model. The general training came with the vice-Chancellor at the time and it had a special name during the 60’s. I think this is rather a revision and a modification of what we already had. (UB5)*

The suggestion here is that the new curriculum policy is an improvement on the previous one. One academic explained this situation further as follows:
The quality of the courses was not what we expected. The courses were too simple. After that we had the idea that maybe it would be better for students to take real courses from other areas, not courses specially prepared as general training courses. (UB6)

Such participants indicate that the quality of the previous curriculum has been criticized and that this was an influence leading to a change of policy.

Some also came to recognize that the previous curriculum providing a general education was not working as expected and authorities decided to change it. Commenting on this, one academic stated: “I think it was an internal thing to just see that there were courses especially for general training which were not working too well” (UB5). Suggestions like this indicate that for some participants at the micro (academics) level the curriculum policy changes have merely been an internal process of the university and this took place without any external influences being brought to bear.

**The context of policy text production at University B**

This section of the chapter details the perspectives of participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University B’ regarding curriculum policy texts production. These are considered in terms of the features of the curriculum policy change; the role of policy elite; and the role of policy processes. Each of these will now be considered.

1. Features of the curriculum policy change

1.1 General education structure

Those working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University B’ argued that a restructuring of previous curricular programs took place as part of the policy text production of the new curriculum, specifically, the ‘general education program’.

Commenting on this, one participant stated:

*The university does not have a unique curriculum development policy, except for the general program, like our undergraduate degree it has 400 credits, which means 40 courses in average or so.* (UB5)
This participant was suggesting that the curriculum changes have aspects in common with the previous program yet there are also some differences. On this, another academic stated:

*Within those 80 credits, there are 10 credits of a theological course, ethical anthropology, and for the other 60% student must enrol courses in areas that are not their own, i.e. the student in mathematics should not take a course in physics, but it should do it in the humanities or the arts, and vice versa as well.* (UB6)

Such comments suggest that some academics at the micro (academics) level considered that the policy forces multidisciplinarity has been widening the world views of students. Extending this argument, another participant stated:

*The 2002 curriculum was restructured from the bottom because a study was done. The results showed that the general training courses were not relevant within the curriculum and the general training was expected to be an important part of the curriculum, giving students breadth and a greater vision of other disciplines beyond the speciality that students are taking.* (UB5)

Furthermore, regarding the policy text production, some participants also refer to the creation of curriculum committees. On this, one academic expressed his view as follows:

*I think that the creation of the curriculum committees with a much more defined structure was another important change, not in the curriculum itself, but in the administration of the curriculum. There has always been something like curriculum committees and in those there is student participation.* (UB6)

The suggestion here is that different power groups were members of the curriculum committees, which constituted a structure to support the new curriculum policy. About this, one participant claimed: “Each school has its curriculum committee or department. Because curricula are different, they are not the same” (UB5).

Such participants suggest that even though the university was fostering a multidisciplinary model, the curriculum policy text production adopted was still decided by each discipline, area or school.
Regarding curriculum committees, participants located at the micro (academics) level held that these pay attention to curriculum quality. On this, one participant commented thus:

*The final task of the curriculum committee is to ensure the quality of curriculum programs, to ensure that the courses that are created and the changes are relevant. They study the curricula proficiently but at the end they can use any model that they want.* (UB5)

Suggestions like this indicate that a major importance has been placed on maintaining consistency within the new curriculum during policy text production at the university.

**1.2 An ideology of continuous improvement**

Those working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University B’ also argued that a desire for permanent enhancement is a core belief that lies behind the studied curriculum policy at the university. One academic stated a view on this as follows: “The curriculum changes are within a setting of continuous improvement” (UB5).

Another commented on this by stating: “When changes have to be made, when there is a need for renewal, it is part of these processes of continuous improvement as well” (UB6). The suggestion here is that a logic of engaging in continuous improvement is both an inspiration and an outcome of the new policy.

Participants at the micro (academics) level also held that the policy and its programs are a reflection of a ‘seal’ that ‘University B’ wants to leave on its graduates. One this, one academic stated:

*I think that the general education program responds to what now is called imprint. Before it did not have a name. What one expects from students is that they have these dimensions, beyond the narrow view of their specific courses, to open more, to provide a broader training.* (UB6)
Such comments express a view that the policy explicitly seeks to widen students’ vision beyond their studying of a single discipline, thus getting them to realise the value of multidisciplinary alliances. Commenting on this, another participant added:

*Many students take advantage of it. When they come back as graduates, when we see the graduate’s surveys that we do, many of them highly value this, to be able to specialise in areas that have nothing to do with their professional degree, which has given them great value.* (UB5)

Participants also suggest that the wider vision that the new multidisciplinary curriculum policy provides has translated into a wide range of opportunities being opened up for students and graduates in the work place.

Participants at the micro (academics) level also specified that graduates have a perspective on the ideology underpinning the new policy. One this, one academic stated:

*I actually think this is a good idea, I think it’s worth it. Maybe when you are a student you do not realise it, and you think it is a waste of time to take courses from other disciplines, because you believe that the only important thing is what you are studying. But it seems that as they get older, they realized that it was very practical to have learnt about other things, that perhaps those things were more important than what one believes.* (UB6)

The suggestion here is that amongst enrolled students at the time there was some resistance to the new multidisciplinary curriculum.

Participants also held that multidisciplinarity was already being experienced at the time within the classroom settings. On this, one academic commented as follows:

*Today you find units composed not only by engineering students, but also students from a lot of other courses, and has more college students than students from degrees or courses. I think that also this has changed the way we see students, whom are no longer students of a course but of the university, and they also see it a little like that.* (UB5)

At the same time, some working at this level also recognized that the curriculum policy change could help in the emergence of other values within the university. One set of such values, they held, relates to innovation. Regarding this, one participant stated:

*One thing that appeared in this Development Plan was the subject of innovation in teaching, which does not mean putting innovation as a content to students, but how we*
can teach different. Whenever these revisions are made, there are issues that have to do with what is happening in the world, which eventually will affect in some way the general formation. What we hope to achieve with this change is to include or improve some of the aspects. (UB6)

Comments like this also suggest that participants working at the micro (academics) level considered that the new curriculum policy could also help them to acquire skills and values related to an inclusive liberalist ideology. On this, they seem to be indicating that a hidden agenda lies behind the new curriculum policy.

2. The role of policy elite

2.1 Top-down policy process

Participants located at the micro (academics) level at ‘University B’ identified, as they saw it, policy actors within the university who have been involved in the policy text production. Indeed, specific individuals were highlighted. Commenting on this, one participant stated: “It began to work in 1999 and 2000, and this was part of the effort of the Vice-chancellor at the time.” (UB5).

Participants also suggested that the process of producing the policy took years. As they saw it, the political climate was ripe for the embracement of curriculum policy change.

Some working at the micro (academics) level also held that the policy elite at the university have played a central role in imposing the studied changes. On this, one participant stated:

There were several commissions that worked for that vice-chancellor, ex deans, ex-vice-chancellors and well-known professors. They developed several documents of this type. Yes, it was a something pushed from the Vice-chancellery and from the Superior Direction... (UB6)
This comment suggests that, above all others, the Vice-chancellor played a major role in setting the agenda for policy text production of the new curriculum at ‘University B’.

3. Policy processes

3.1 Top-down and bottom-up processes

Participants located at the micro (academics) level at ‘University B’ claimed that the process of policy production has been guided by both top-down and bottom-up policy processes. Regarding this, most participants recognized that even though those individuals having the highest level of authority have directed the changes, there was other actors participating in the process. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

*Within those definitions that are super wide, the thing is much more internal within each one of the academic units, although the revision and the approval of all these programs of curriculum development were made at the Academic Vice-chancellery with the approval of a series of instances, such as the Superior Council and the committees involved with the Superior Council of the university. That is more or less the way to define curriculum development.* (UB6)

The comment suggests that each new curriculum has been designed from the bottom-up, moving from each school or faculty through their curriculum committees. However, the final approval comes from the top-down.

At the same time, those working at the micro (academics) level also claimed that the role of each school in deciding its own curriculum was fundamental. One academic explained this as follows:

*What this Vice-chancellery did was to make a proposal, a model for each school to create new courses, curriculum modifications and the creation of new professional degrees. They realised in the Higher Direction department, that many times in the creation of a course was involve a teacher who came from a doctorate and wanted to do a course, for example in happiness, and place it into engineering, having nothing to do with the curriculum, with the program. It was then decided that the same schools and the same faculties had to make their own filters.* (UB5)
Such comments indicate a view that there is a lack of clarity about the relationship between the previous curriculum and that the new policy designed to address its perceived weaknesses.

3.2 High resistance

Regarding the context of policy text production, participants working at the micro (academics) level, unlike participants located at the meso (university administration) level, considered that there has been a lot of resistance to the new policy, especially from the faculties. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

The graduates of that program said that the courses that they did were easy, that they did not agree the schedules and that they got good grades. In other words, what followed was the same discourse that one had when changing to this new model. (UB5)

The suggestion here is that critics consider that the courses in the new curriculum are of poor quality.

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also argued that detractors consider that the new curriculum policy has not promoted improvement of the university. Moreover, some working at this level stated that the resistance reflects the differences between those who believed in a modular curriculum system and those who desire a more general curriculum. One academic expressed this view as follows:

In general, it is the typical discussion between people who believed that specialisation is the only important thing, versus people who see that amplitude has as much value as specialisation... But this is something that you still listen, that is, there are still people within the faculties, who still think that they are taking away the ability to further perfect their students in their own areas. (UB6)

Suggestions like this indicate that the curriculum policy change within the university is a challenge to traditional practices.
The context of policy practices in University B

Regarding the context of policy practices and effects (enactment), participants located at the micro (academics) level at ‘University B’ considered that the new policy is having an impact on staff, on students, and on the way the institution functions. Each of these is now considered in turn. This is followed by an overview of participants’ perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

1. Impact on staff

1.1 New staff employed

The introduction of the new curriculum policy at ‘University B’ was perceived to have led to a transformation in the role of the employer. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

I can tell the history of the Direction of Teaching where I got to work at that time. In the end, I had to organize it to manage this new mini-curriculum, because it had to follow up what students were doing. I had to do everything, from the people who were hired, to managing the entire subject of the academic certificates, and to figure how to transfers payments to the units for the courses they take. (UB6)

Such comments suggest that roles and functions have been adjusted to make them attractive to new staff, and that new roles were created to support the curriculum policy change.

2. Impact on students

2.1 Change in expectations

Participants working at the micro (academics) level identified a major impact of the policy in expectations with regard to students. Specifically, some of them considered that students are expected to be more active in their studies than previously and to hold more responsibilities than they used to have. On this, one academic claimed:

Because deep down before students were maybe more passive, because they had a list of courses, now they have to get involved a bit more in how to organize their own curricular path. (UB5)
Such comments suggest that students are now entering into a new scholarly path which differs from old university practices. On this, another participant stated:

*Of course, they have more responsibilities in seeing how they develop their own curriculum. Because they have a fairly wide choice. Now they are the ones who choose.* (UB6)

Comments like this also indicate that students have more academic options than previously due to the radical changes in curriculum, and that they are more committed to the university’s affairs.

3. Overall strengths

3.1 Positive change

A positive perspective of the changes that the new policy had brought was evident. On this, participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University B’ shared a positive evaluation of the new curriculum policy. As one participant pointed out:

*I can compare, being a graduate of this university and what I see today. We are giving so much to the current students. I think it is very positive, it is a unique opportunity that they have to take advantage of the whole range of courses that the university offers, because they can take what they want. Basically, if they wanted to take Italian, they can do it. It is an incredible opportunity, very rich.* (UB5)

Such comments suggest a belief that the new curriculum policy at this university has given students advantages over students at other universities in Chile. The following comment of one academic illustrates another general view on this:

*The great result is the training of integral students, that is the goal of the general education program and is where it is going, and continues to go in that direction. Maybe somethings are going to change. There is a global recognition about this “soft skills” concept. I do not know if it is the best word, but it relates to what the student must have, which is a training broader than the disciplinary training... The general training and all this have to do with that.* (UB5)

This academic concluded by saying that another strength of the policy is that “there are more networks, because they know more people from other degrees”. The comment refers to the idea of students being able to enrol in units from different courses and degrees, and sharing with students from other faculties to extend their social capital.
In general, participants located at the micro (academics) level considered that the new policy is highly beneficial for the university and its students. On this, one participant stated:

*I think it is a way to take advantage of the university in a much broader way and makes more sense with what a university is. Compared to everything I had years ago, it is much better because they actually have more courses, which certainly have other types of effects. There are things to improve, but conceptually I think it is going in the right direction.* (UB6)

The suggestion here is that there are no identified weaknesses at this level and those at the micro (academics) level had internalised the dominant view promoted by the university authorities.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the perspectives of participants working at both the meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels at ‘University B’ regarding the curriculum policy changes. In particular, the context of influences, the context of policy text production and the context of policy practices and effects (enactment) have been considered. Regarding the former, four international, four national and three local influences were identified at the meso (university administration) level, while at the micro (academics) level, one international, no national, and one local influence were singled out. Regarding the context of policy text production, features of the curriculum policy change, including structure, ideology, and accountability, along with policy elite and policy processes were considered in relation to both the meso and the micro (academics) levels. Concerning the context of policy practices and effects (enactment), the view of participants on the impact that the new policy has had on staff, on students, and an impact on the university for participants at the meso (university administration) level was presented. Strengths of the reform were also presented for both
levels, along with weaknesses perceived by those at the meso (university administration) level.
CHAPTER EIGHT
‘UNIVERSITY C’

Introduction

This chapter, Chapter Eight, presents an analysis of the results on the research undertaken at ‘University C’. The analysis deals with curriculum policy in the university at both the meso (university administration) and the micro (academics) levels. The meso level, it will be recalled, relates to the university administration, while the micro level relates to academics in faculties and schools. Moreover, as explained in previous chapters, the exposition in relation to each level is organized around each of the contexts of the policy trajectory framework, namely, the context of influences, the context of policy text production and the context of policy practices and effects (enactment).

The Meso Level

The context of influence at ‘University C’

The following section of the chapter considers the perspectives of participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’. Here, three main international influences on curriculum change were acknowledged, namely: international practices; the Bologna Agreement; and the transferable credit system. Regarding influences at the national level, four major influences were identified. These are the influences from other institutions; the professional tradition in Chile; accreditation processes; and government influences. In relation to local (institutional-based) influences, one influence was identified: internal initiative. These sets of international, national and local influences will now be considered.

1. International Influences

1.1 International practices
Participants located at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ highlighted that current policy changes in their institution have been influenced by international practices, especially from universities in the United States (US) and Europe. One participant voiced this thus: “The current undergraduate model responds to good practices abroad, and they tried to insert them in Chile” (UC1). Such comments suggest a phenomenon of policy borrowing from overseas countries.

The ‘college system’ and the ‘liberal arts system’ were also deemed to have been major influences. On this, one participant commented:

*We did an investigation of how students were being formed in colleges in the United States before looking at the process of Bologna. It was inspired in the model of the North American college. We started using the nomenclature: major, minor. The minor was a concept to de-professionalise the first cycle.* (UC2)

In this regard, another added: “Maintaining this structure, the University C brings the system of liberal arts, proposed by the Anglo-Saxon culture” (UC1). Comments like this indicate a belief that universities from the US were a primary source informing the curriculum change at ‘University C’.

1.2 The Bologna Agreement

There was agreement amongst participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ that the Bologna Agreement has had an impact on the new curriculum policy. One participant explained this as follows:

*The influence of the Bologna Agreement was significant... In Europe the cycles were reduced and differentiated, the degree courses were specialised and competencies were defined... This approach was important in this school, both the influence of Bologna and the Tuning initiative, although in Chile it has not taken off as in other parts of Latin America.* (UC10)

Comments like this also suggest that the impact of the Bologna Agreement has been different across countries and universities. On this, another participant added:
We looked at good practices, specifically two experiences. Firstly, the cycles after the Bologna convention, such as the three plus two or four plus one which the Agreement brought. The other great practice is the study of the liberal arts and the college. (UC1)

Such comments further suggest that ‘University C’ has been imitating a course structure derived from the Bologna Agreement.

Some also considered that European institutions are influential. One administrative person expressed this view as follows:

*The change of 2002 also had European influence, especially the idea of the two cycles. In the case of the second cycle we look at what they were doing in Europe. This process of creating programs has a strong influence from Europe. We look at the Spanish universities, the American universities, HC, and the French universities.* (UC4)

Commenting on this also, one participant added:

*An option was made for the Bologna model, a model which fits to the European reality, with the idea of marking our presence in the MERCOSUR, which is a parallel political construction, and the process of Europe is stumbling. We are like a third cast of this.* (UC3)

The suggestion here is that these international models were chosen as political options to improve the presence of ‘University C’ within South America.

**1.3 Transferable credit system**

It was held by participants located at the meso (university administration) level that the transferable credit system derived from the Bologna Agreement is an innovation that has promoted curriculum policy changes inside ‘University C’. On this, one participant expressed: “Clearly this has European influence, the Bologna process and the transferable credit system.” (UC3).

Nonetheless, some working at the meso (university administration) level considered that the enactment of the latter system has not been easy. As one participant put it:

*The most resistant influence is the transferable credit system. In Chile it has been difficult to implement it because universities have been reluctant to accept this system, to accept their own mobility.* (UC10)
Comments like this suggest that the credit system clashes with the mobility system in place amongst universities in Chile. In other words, people have long been moving in between universities without the existence of the transferable credit system, and so there is resistance to this innovation.

2. National Influences

2.1 Other institutions

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ considered that developments at other universities in Chile have been influential when deciding to change the curriculum policy. On this, on participant commented:

*University B was working on its baccalaureate, which is now college... They took branches from different disciplines. Those who designed the program may have thought like us, like we did.* (UC2)

Another added: “We are referring more to the models of the University B” (UC10). In other words, there was certain universities that were in high regard or admired, and their steps were followed by ‘University C’.

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level also held that the curriculum policy change represents a national trend, especially for the ‘G8’ or ‘Group of eight private universities in Chile’, which is the group of eight private universities in Chile attached to the single admission system. One participant expressed this as follows:

*It played an important role amongst the group of eight private universities in Chile (G8), which at a meeting were focused on the transferable credit system. At the time, there was an intention to install the system and for that we have to have a proper curriculum structure.* (UC3)

Comments like this suggest that private universities in Chile are interested in changing their curriculum structure and in implementing approaches such as the transferable credit system to differentiate themselves from traditional universities and the
universities of the Council of Rectors in Chile (CRUCH), and in this way, are increasing their prestige.

2.2 Professional tradition

A second national influence on curriculum development at ‘University C’ acknowledged by participants working at the meso (university administration) level is the professional tradition that has existed in Chile. Traditionally, when entering a university in the country, many students enrolled in a degree leading to a professional ‘career’ at the undergraduate level. For some working at this level at ‘University C’, this tradition has proven to be problematic. As one participant explained:

*Chile has a tradition of professions and not disciplines, which makes the curriculum not very flexible. There is also a large history of academic subjects, which produces little differentiation.* (UC10)

Comments like this suggest that the liberal arts system of general knowledge clashes with the traditional model. On this, another participant stated: “Initially, we considered that it was not what we wanted, and it was not our pretension. What we wanted was to de-professionalise the degree courses” (UC2). The suggestion is that there is an explicit effort being made to change the traditional curriculum into one with a more flexible and general structure. However, it has not been an easy process due to the resistance of people who consider that the previous model should continue to prevail.

2.3 Accreditation processes

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also deemed that the accreditation processes operating in higher education in Chile have triggered curriculum policy changes at ‘University C’. On this, one participant stated: “Accreditation systems have imposed a set of structures in which we have generated know-how” (UC10). Such comments suggest that the new curriculum had to be designed to respond to accreditation demands. The same participant added: “The legislation and
what has happened with the accreditation of universities and careers and programs has affected what we are doing” (UC10).

Some came to recognize that pressure for change has also come from the national state and the Ministry of Education in Chile (MINEDUC). On this, one participant commented:

*The university found out that the implementation of the transferable credit system was a ministerial requirement to receive MECESUP money. This implementation involves carrying out a curriculum renewal. I think that this process contributes to the quality of education but there is also a debate about how it should be implemented and what its true meaning is.* (UC3)

Such views suggest that for universities in Chile it has been necessary to move in the direction indicated in order to receive government funding. Commenting further on this, the same participant added:

*There is a theoretical model that is common amongst the people who work in the ministry. It is almost consensual. It is a look of the curriculum very oriented to the management of the curriculum, not to the educational character of the curriculum, depending on the accreditation.* (UC3)

Suggestions like this display a belief that the national government is promoting a specific curriculum model, which is more form than content, and this has influenced the elaboration of curriculum policy at ‘University C’.

### 2.4 Government influences

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level identified influences from the national government, and specifically from the MINEDUC and its Improvement of Quality and Equity in Tertiary Education Program (MECESUP). On this, one participant stated:

*We worked with a commission from the MINEDUC. We were thinking in two things when we proposed to the university the formation of degree courses that would incorporate the formation of the liberal arts. That obliged us to define a curriculum more oriented to the training of specialties at the undergraduate level. In order to meet the minimum requirements of the MINEDUC, it was necessary to transfer the training of specialties,*
which had to be at the undergraduate. On the other hand, the training had to end in specialty, in the master. (UC10)

Comments like this suggest that at ‘University C’ the degree structure was modified to encompass a liberal arts model.

At the same time, some working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ held that they received funds for work with the MINEDUC to install some aspects of the curriculum transformation. One participant gave voice to this as follows:

It came from the ministry and the MECESUP many years ago. They have been very supportive of the installation of the transferable credit system in all areas. I assign this responsibility to the Ministry and to MECESUP. (UC3)

The suggestion here is that ‘University C’ has had a significant link with the Ministry and that the latter has had a major leadership role in directing the new curriculum policy.

3. Local Influences

3.1 Internal initiative

Local influences on the new curriculum policy undertaken at ‘University C’ were identified by participants functioning at the meso (university administration) level. Some of them stated that the changes are an internal initiative of this university. Reflecting on this, one participant claimed: “The model does not follow national trends. The University C wants to set a trend” (UC1). On this, another added: “The review of the curriculum, no. That was an internal diagnosis. The workshops-courses are new here in Chile” (UC4). Participants like these were highlighting that the new curriculum policy is not a response to external pressures.

Some also came to recognize that some aspects of the curriculum policy change are a response to students’ interests within the university. On this, one participant commented:
In the case of the undergraduate degrees there is probably a movement towards this subject, because young people are increasingly showing an interest in social issues and we noticed these interests amongst students. It was a demand from students. (UC4)

Such comments indicate that there was some level of student influence in the decision-making of the new curriculum policy at ‘University C’.

The context of policy text production at ‘University C’

This section of the chapter details the perspectives of participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ about the context within which the curriculum policy and its associated texts were produced. It is undertaken in relation to the following features of curriculum changes: structure; ideology; accountability; policy elite; and policy processes.

1. Features of the curriculum policy change

1.1 Centralised structure

Regarding the characteristics of the new curriculum policy at ‘University C’, participants located at the meso (university administration) level identified a structure with two levels. First, there is a high-level change because of the introduction of a liberal arts system since 2001 for all students. Secondly, curriculum change has occurred at some schools, including the School of Engineering, the School of Psychology and the School of Journalism. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

What the University C has done above all is to bring good practices from the liberal arts education of the Anglo-Saxon culture, maintaining this professionalising Chilean structure. Then what we have had now is a coexistence of both models, in which have been established two cycles, a cycle of the first to the fourth year that is the degree, and a cycle of the fifth year of specialisation. During the cycle of the degree and during the specialisation, courses coexist with the liberal arts courses. In that way, at the undergraduate coexist around 30-40 courses of the chosen profession, and around 15-20 courses of the liberal arts. (UC1)
Suggestions like this indicate that the University established a hybrid curriculum located between the tradition in Chile of studying for a ‘career’ at the undergraduate level, and the general education model from the liberal arts tradition.

Some participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ also stated that they started elaborating this policy from the late 1990s, influenced by international education models. On this, one participant commented:

There have been many changes. There was a great change that began to be studied approximately in 1999, parallel to the process of Bologna. We began a study of a new curriculum change that will encompass all the degrees, at that time Law, Commercial Engineering and Industrial Engineering. (UC2)

In like manner, participants working at the meso (university administration) level highlighted that a characteristic feature of the new curriculum policy at ‘University C’ is that they go against the tradition of studying for a professional ‘career’. On this, one participant stated:

We wanted to propose a change that will encompass and de-professionalise the first stage of these three careers. The training was very professionalising before. A humanist formation was not contemplated outside, but here it was. The University C has always been characterized by having elective subjects. Before they were around 8 and 10. But they had no pattern, no logic. They were loose. As in other universities, they were optional subjects. (UC2)

Participants like this suggest that what has been undertaken is a radical change within the higher education sector in Chile.

At the same time, participants working at the meso (university administration) level indicated that the new curriculum policy is modelled on principles set by the Bologna Agreement. One authority voiced this thus:

We went looking at Bologna, its first cycle of four plus one, we adjusted ours to this one. Some took the option of the three plus two model. In the first cycle we placed 12 core subjects, 25% of the student's education. (UC2)
The suggestion here is that the previous university system in Chile did not provide a general education. Going further in this argument, another participant referred to the university’s liberal arts system and the general plan, saying:

*There were two changes. The first implied to establish two cycles, cycle one of formation, cycle two of master, which meant a great change in Chile. The second one de-professionalise as much as possible the first cycle, providing humanist and scientific formation. It continued during the year 2000, and in 2001 was implemented with a great campaign.* (UC2)

Suggestions like this indicate that the main features of the new curriculum policy at ‘University C’ have been the use of international curriculum patterns.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also indicated that the curriculum policy change includes the introduction of new teaching methods. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

*Between 2010 and 2014 we have incorporated an important curriculum change, which was the introduction of the workshop format courses and a curriculum that was much more adapted to innovation and entrepreneurship, which was quite new in Chile.* (UC4)

Comments like this indicate that the features of the new curriculum policy are aligned with values operating within the culture of innovation from the business world.

Regarding structure, participants working at the meso (university administration) level indicated that the new curriculum policy production has different aspects to it. An example of this was presented by one administrator expressing as follow:

*Already in the year 2012 we began to work on a curriculum revision, in which we basically took care of part of the problems detected in 2008 and also of the implementation of other degrees. Therefore, in this curriculum change we were working in two different processes.* (UC4)

The suggestion here is that there are different initiatives taking place as part of the new curriculum policy.

Some working at the meso (university administration) level, however, held that the new structure is just a reorganization of the previous curriculum. On this, one participant stated: “And changes were made. Some courses were adjusted, there was a
rearrangement of some courses. It was rearranged” (UC4). However, there were other suggestions which indicate that there is more to the curriculum policy change than just the introduction of the general education program. On this, one participant stated:

*The schools are trying to explain all their curriculum, their graduation profiles, skills, etc., and it includes the installation of the transferable credit system, which Journalism and Engineering have already implemented. Earlier, a curriculum development policy was enacted in the university to adapt to this requirement. This began to appear with the change.* (UC3)

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level also stated that schools within the University are working to give the curriculum their own seal. A view on this was expressed by one participant by saying:

*This was important because until then there were two trends in Chile in this discipline. On the one hand, the National University offering a general education that did not recognize the specialties. All passed through the same curriculum and that was the logic that the first private universities had, they ascribed to that model. The other model was the curriculum of the University B, which maintained a generalist approach but where specialties were taken in the fifth year. Other regional universities attached to this model. Either way it was a single curriculum.* (UC10)

Such comments suggest that there has been a deliberate effort to do things differently.

Moreover, those working at the meso (university administration) level argued that the new curriculum policy has forced them to reduce the duration of degree courses. On this, one participant commented:

*The aim was to reduce the length of careers (degrees) which ranged from six to eight years. We introduced a thesis at the undergraduate level. There was a need to shorten the times. In addition, we needed to include the training of specialties to have a more professional orientation and to include the research component in the postgraduate training. As this was developed, other universities were ascribing to this.* (UC3)

The suggestion here is that both the undergraduate curriculum and the postgraduate curriculum have been changed and that other universities followed this path set by the ‘University C’.
1.2 An ideology of inclusive liberalism

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ also recognized that a set of core beliefs lie behind the policy text production. In this regard, the value of critical thinking came in for special consideration. On this, one authority stated:

*The liberal arts courses seek fundamentally to develop and deliver critical thinking, based on the impossibility of having a knowledge of all subjects, in a setting of rapid obsolescence of each of the contents of the different areas. Therefore, fundamentally it seeks to develop critical thinking.* (UC1)

The suggestion here is that critical thinking is now a very important tool in a global knowledge society and the new curriculum policy aims to provide it. Going further in this argument, the same participant added:

*The values are the development of critical thinking, since the problems now are multidisciplinary, and information is more and has a rapid obsolescence, so it is necessary an interdisciplinary view.* (UC1)

Such comments suggest that the curriculum transformation is a response of ‘University C’ to external demands of society.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level stated that innovation is also promoted. Reflecting on this, one participant expressed this view as follows: “We are trying to be innovate in a way we educate, different from the rest of the Chilean system” (UC1). Some recognized that the value of innovation has a practical applicability. On this, one participant stated:

*On the other hand, we began to generate certain exits for students in areas such as innovation and entrepreneurship, which are new areas and discipline, and therefore are changing faster.* (UC4)

Also, such participants suggest that certain schools within the University have placed great emphasis on teaching the value of innovation.

Some considered that the functionality of this value could trigger the development of other important skills. On this, one participant claimed:
The curriculum revision is a rather practical subject, since we needed a curriculum that allow us to reach the objectives that we had set for ourselves. There was also interest amongst academics in that the program could develop a critical mass. This initiative allows students to do more research. (UC4)

The suggestion here is that the curriculum policy change is associated with strategies to improve ‘University C’ performance rates.

Also, for some working at the meso (university administration) level the production of the new policy was a response to national public and social concerns. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

Firstly, students showed a big interest in public issues and the outcome was to create the master, because they felt inferior to start such a process without it. At the university level it was seen that a bachelor and a master degree were necessary to train people who have a greater role in public discussion. (UC4)

The participant concluded by saying: “That's a college duty. With the baccalaureate degree, we expect to change in 20 years, and the authorities were also interested in this” (UC4). Such comments indicate a belief that ‘University C’ is expecting to create social change in Chile. Another yet again added:

It is good to clarify the commitments we have with society through students. We want to train a professional who has basic skills to contribute, within a framework of qualifications. (UC3)

The suggestion here also is that behind the new curriculum policies is an inclusive liberalist ideology.

Participants at this level also deemed that during policy text production they were assertive when selecting the best skills for preparing students for their future employability. According to them, this assertiveness has been an important principle guiding the change. As a participant put it:

Tertiary training requires preparation for employability, and this will happen if students have the capacity of agency, of being able to define objectives and define their professional development. University education requires professionals to be effective, to be competent, to solve problems and to provide effective solutions to problems, those are incorporated into complex organizations. (UC10)

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Suggestions like this indicate the importance placed by the University on explicitly defining the type of skilled professionals they are preparing.

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level also stated that the new curriculum policy includes the notion of continuous education. On this, there is fidelity to views stated in the document which contains the education model. One participant referred to this as follows:

*One of our main values has to do with the fact that university training is not the delivery of technical knowledge that may become obsolete but the formation of the intellect to learn during life and to continue to learn in a didactic way. That was the main axis.*  
(UC2)

The suggestion here is that the new curriculum provides students who enrol at the University with a wide and complex education that goes beyond technical training. On this, another yet again stated:

*The formation of the intellect implies learning to think critically, a great ability for reading, learning to write, learning to communicate and learning to have a multidisciplinary vision. For example, students of Law have two science courses and engineers are studying literature and philosophy. It is a preparation to continuous learning.*  
(UC3)

Such comments suggest that a humanistic approach underlines the new curriculum policy.

Commenting on the latter, another participant stated: “There is something more profound, it is not merely cultural… The great sense that we pursue is a person who could have a self-understanding of the human being” (UC2). Such participants suggested that a desire to promote empathy and a holistic education within the new curriculum policy exists. Indeed, participants considered that this allows students to:

*It is to understand what is to live. You get closer to that by studying the humanities, philosophy and history as processes. That was the point. Somehow it was not the final idea to make them more educated but more complete people; make them capable of understanding the great questions of life.*  
(UC4)

Another participant voiced this as follows:
My opinion is that the change was above all to understand what a person is, to understand why we have evolved. They receive different approaches about it. (UC2)

The suggestion here is that developing an understanding of human kind is a value which underlines the new policy.

1.3 Outward accountability

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ argued that the production of the new policy text had an accountability dimension to it, and specifically outward or external accountability. On this, one participant stated:

Firstly, we were responding to the impact of the knowledge society on the development of professions. This forces you to expand the fields. In a knowledge society you have to have specialists, you have to increase the levels of specialisation. (UC10)

Suggestions like this indicate that the curriculum policy is a response to the current social reality of the country, which is trying to participate in the internationalization of higher education. In this regard, another added:

Globalisation challenges must be addressed through internationalization, including mobility of students. Students must be effective in their various domains. (UC3)

The suggestion here is that participants working at the meso (university administration) level perceived that ‘University C’ acknowledges that social phenomena affect higher education and that it incorporated that awareness during policy text production.

2. The role of policy elite

2.1 Power in decision-making

Those working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ identified, as they saw it, the main policy actors involved in the context of policy text production within their institution. Commenting on this, one participant stated: “The academic vice-chancellor of the moment participated in this. Also, the rector and the board of directors pushed for it” (UC1).
Such comments suggest that the initiative originated amongst those individuals having the highest level of authority. On this, some held that the whole project was the idea of one particular chancellor. One academic gave voice to this as follow:

Another radical one was the rector who left with the new model in 2001. Being director of Humanities, he was the main supported of this and he wanted to take it to the extreme. He dropped the extreme position and was one of the main promoters of the ideology of the model. (UC2)

The suggestion here is that in order to initiate the curriculum policy change, there was a shift of paradigm about curriculum amongst the administrators of ‘University C’.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also stated that during the policy text production, the results of work commissions were integrated by different authorities. As this participant put it:

The responsibility for this rests over the Academic Council, the director’s department, the Director of Teaching, the Director of Research, the Academic Secretary, the Executive Director who sees the appropriateness of this in relation to the budget, and the deans. In some of the processes, academics have been incorporated to work in groups which develop curriculum changes. (UC10)

The suggestion here is that the administrators at ‘University C’ exerted more power in curriculum policy text production than other actors did within the institution.

Those working at the meso (university administration) level also held that in terms of the policy text production, there was debate around which aspects would be included in the new curriculum. One participant commented on this as follow:

Several technical documents were made showing different curriculum alternatives. They were accompanied by international comparisons. Those did not contain the philosophical part of that because that was already done. Their content was the most fundamental subjects and the reasons why they were important. (UC2)

Such comments suggest that participants working at the meso (university administration) level saw a tendency towards a top-down approach being adopted in policy text production at ‘University C’.
Some also came to identify specific individuals and authorities whom, they believe, have been involved in the policy text production. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

*I worked with a couple of assistants in those three documents. There was a committee integrated by the deans and the rector at the time who made the final decisions and to which I reported what I was doing.* (UC2)

The suggestion here is that senior administrators hold control over faculties and their work within ‘University C’.

2.2 Team work

Some participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ stated that during the policy text production phase there was collaboration between different constituencies within the University. Indeed, special teams and units were created at the time. On this, one example was especially considered. As one participant put it:

*The Department of Learning and Innovation was created. That is also part of the accreditation of the university. All this was done for accreditation. That unit communicates and coordinates different parts of the university.* (UC3)

Such participants suggest that promoting and strengthening team work and a new curriculum within the University was part of the strategy to obtain national accreditation.

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also had views about the context of policy text production being different depending on the faculty or school involved. Some of them place great importance on the work undertaken in one school within the University. On this, one participant stated:

*In the syllabus specific programs are compiled to see how they are in relation to training. Other documents are specific studies we have done, such as competency assessments and pedagogical innovations. There are other regulations such as the Code of Ethics and the Code of Honour which regulate the cycles. They are part of a set of normative documents of the university. We also have articles in scientific journals, we have participated in a series of studies comparing structures.* (UC10)
Suggestions like this indicate that the policy text production helped to integrate documentation generated by the University at different levels.

3. The policy process

3.1 Review of curriculum models

In terms of the methods used to produce the new curriculum policy, participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ held that there was a revision of various curriculum models. In this regard, one participant stated as follows:

A review of curriculum models was made and a first draft was drawn up, which was socialised with the teachers and then presented to the Board of Directors. It was approved and now we are working on the specific programs of the courses. (UC4)

The suggestion here is that the framework was decided upon by those participants working at the highest levels of authority, and that the specific content was defined at the bottom level amongst academics. Commenting further on this, the participant voiced as follows:

In the curriculum review process, I picked up teachers' concerns, in terms of how they felt by what was being implemented, and how far the objectives of the different areas were being achieved. There was also teacher surveys and a review with teachers of the second cycle. Because the university is reorganizing in cycles, a cycle of four years and a cycle of one year, and therefore the feedback provided by teachers of the second cycle served to think about the first cycle. (UC4)

Comments like this indicate that the policy text production involved the use of different sources of internal information and led to extra work having to be undertaken within academic units at ‘University C’.

3.2 Limited student participation

Participants located at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ also claimed that the initial policy text production process did not involve full student participation. On this, however, one dean commented as follows:
They have been consulted about two things. Firstly, in studies on the levels of learning by competency in the sub-cycles of training. It is necessary by the cross-skills approach and the progression profiles. They also participate in the evaluation of courses in terms of teaching, and this opinion has been considered to think about the progression of the courses. And there is also a study on graduates, which informs us about the adequacy of these profiles in the labour market. (UC10)

The suggestion here is that students were consulted at the enactment stage but not as part of a political strategy.

Some working at the meso (university administration) level also stated that the participation of students was limited to that of consumers of a service. On this, one participant stated: “At most, they have been taken as key informants, for example to know how many hours they devote to the study, which is information that is required for this…” (UC3). Such participants suggest that students were not part of the policy production, and that they still have no power in this regard.

**The context of policy practices at ‘University C’**

This section details the perspectives of participants located at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ in relation to the context of policy practices and effects (enactment). They considered that the policy is having an impact on staff and on students.

1. Impact on staff

1.1 Changes in responsibilities

The establishment of the new curriculum policy within ‘University C’ had led, according to participants working at the meso (university administration) level, to changes in responsibilities associated with their roles as employees. Some working at the meso (university administration) level held that there have been changes in their positions. Commenting in this view, one academic stated:
I had to take charge of the implementation of the economics program but it was not a big change either. I change from being the vice-dean of commercial engineering to be a teacher today. (UC4)

The suggestion here is that during the enactment of the new policy the distribution of power shifted. On this, another participant stated:

Between 2010 and 2014 I had the position of vice-chancellor at the School of Business. In that context I had to participate in a curriculum change of the School of Commercial Engineering, especially in some changes at the second cycle, in the fifth year of Commercial Engineering. (UC4)

Such comments indicate that the policy enactment has moved through different stages.

Some working at the meso (university administration) level also believed that the subsequent practices associated with the new policy have increased the complexity of their everyday jobs. Commenting on this, one participant said:

As the School becomes more and more complex, so do I... There has been a development of my work load. I must train trainers. Supervising. I distanced myself from the pedagogical experience. I have to look more and do monitoring, it is a more external responsibility, so I must be in permanent reflection. (UC10)

Such comments indicate that participants are now taking on more functions than they previously had administrating the curriculum.

Those located at the meso (university administration) level also held that they have assumed larger responsibilities than previously due to the new curriculum policy. One participant gave voice to this as follows:

In 1999 I was director of the MBA in the school. I voluntarily resigned and stayed as a teacher and they put me on the committee of this project. I was in 2000 working as Project Manager. (UC2)

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ also deemed that they have had a huge involvement in the policy enactment. On this, one academic stated:

I was more present in the implementation of the change than in its design. But one thing is what the curriculum structure says and another thing is the actual implementation, especially in a degree course like this where you have certain restrictions imposed by the
size of the course. The fact that we have an input of 550-600 students each year, plus 200 in the other campus, implies that each course has to be dictated in at least 15 or 20 sessions per year, in two different cities. And so, it involves a large degree, it is a major collaborative effort. (UC4)

The suggestion here is that the new policy enactment demands that participants engaged in more team work than previously and that they take on a heavier academic load.

1.2 Continuous training

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level at ‘University C’ considered that the enactment of the policy has led to an increase in the professional development of university teachers. Commenting on this, one participant claimed:

My job has to do with the improvement of teachers in the classroom. What we did at the time and what we are doing now, before the improvement of the syllabus, was to change those things that did not work well on their practices and this change offered a timely opportunity to do a curriculum reform. (UC3)

Comments like this suggest a view about the enactment of the new curriculum being challenging and demanding new skills and competencies from academics.

Some working at the meso (university administration) level also suggested that the new curriculum policy includes a plan for their continuous professional development. This, it is argued, is especially important for academics who had been employed for a long time. On this, one participant stated:

In theory work, but in practice the challenge is to change in the classroom, to make innovations in learning, to make processes of reflection of the practice. It aims to change how we understand the education process. It depends on the teachers and on their abilities. More senior teachers find it more difficult. It is a change in experience. The teacher is also responsible for learning. (UC10)

Such participants also suggest that university teachers are held to a greater level of accountability in the realm of curriculum policy enactment than they previously did.
2. Impact on students

2.1 Students’ needs at the centre of the reform

There was also a perspective amongst some working at the meso (university administration) level about the new curriculum policy having a major impact on students. Specifically, according to them, students are at the base of the model and are the fundamental inspiration for it. On this, one administrator stated: “Students are the background of the model. They are expected to be good professionals. Students are the reason behind the change” (UC1). Suggestions like this indicate that the new policy was established as part of a strategy of the university to simply attract more students.

Furthermore, some recognized that the curriculum policy change is still aiming to prepare professionals. One participant expressed this view in the following terms:

*We want them to be better professionals, who not only know how to solve technical problems. They have to work with people, to lead, to make decisions. Sometimes technical knowledge is useful but sometimes people with more credits are needed. We thought that under this model the graduates might fear technical disadvantages but the second cycle (master) is very professionalising.* (UC2)

The suggestion here is that there is a shared belief about the policy enactment improving the education that students received at ‘University C’ and eventually leading to the generation of more efficient professionals for the workplace than previously.

2.2 Policy practice gap

Some participants working at the meso (university administration) level suggested that the practices of the new curriculum have not had a large impact on students. On this, one administrator commented:

*It is a global change of the university. The changes are consistent with this, and therefore the role of them changes. [I: has it changed in practice?] Yes, but less than in speech.* (UC4)
Such views suggest that there is a disjunction between the rhetoric of policy documents and the policy enactment within ‘University C’. This view, however, is moderated by some participants, one of whom stated:

_The previous model assumed that students were incompetent. The knowledge society makes students more up-to-date than teachers. Today it seems that learning is more dialogical than in previous expectations. It implies a change in the expectation about the student who prepares the class more, who is more active. You have to have methodologies that will facilitate this._ (UC10)

Comments like this indicate that there have been efforts to put into practice the necessary requirements for students to be able to engage meaningfully with the new curriculum.

An example of a disjunction between theory and practice given by participants located at the meso (university administration) level is that the new policy practices demand increasingly that students be autonomous. One participant gave voice to this view as follow:

_Yes, students are expected to be more autonomous, self-guided, more driven to make a career. In the previous conceptualisation of curriculum students were more rigid. Now they are more flexible and they can be in charge of getting their credits. But until now nothing has been done to make an induction to the system. They are still in the design stage._ (UC3)

The suggestion here is that the University has not delivered the necessary resources to fully enact some features of the new curriculum policy.

3. Overall strengths
3.1 University success and recognition

With regard to strengths of the policy enactment, participants working at the meso (university administration) level shared a positive perspective about the work done by ‘University C’. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

_It has been a successful process and we are doing things well. Today this is more necessary than ever because problems are multidisciplinary and information is becoming obsolete. It is a relevant change._ (UA1)
Suggestions like this also indicate a view that the curriculum changes are a response to external demands that universities around the globe are facing.

Further, with regard to the notion that implementation is a success, another added:

*We see it in the recognition we get from the market: higher placement rates, higher incomes, better employability and greater social recognition. We were the last degree courses in being created and we are well positioned. The recognition of the market, the right of competition or trajectory, are evidence of continuous improvement. I want to be the best school in Latin America. Chile is not a reference for me.* (UC10)

Comments like this suggest that the University is attaching more importance to international rankings than it is to national benchmarks.

Some located at the meso (university administration) level also argued that the policy practices have enhanced the level of professionalism of their graduates. On this, one participant stated:

*Students are good, they are good graduates. I do not think that will change. What is going to change is that we are going to train professionals who are going to be competitive.* (UC4)

Such comments suggest that there is pride in the realisation that the new curriculum is preparing professionals whose qualities are related to the demands of the labour market.

4. Overall weaknesses

4.1 Critics of the policy

Participants working at the meso (university administration) level also identified weak points in the policy enactment. Regarding this, some of them held that overall there are criticisms that are being made of the liberal arts system. On this, one participant commented as follows:

*I only have one consideration. The liberal arts model has two ways of implementing it. On the one hand, as a set of separate courses, and the other hand it is a formation in liberal arts seeking more communicating vessels with majors. Here we opted for the first model and I think the second one would have been better for degree courses of students linked to business.* (UC4)
The suggestion here is that the adaptation of the liberal arts model should be improved by responding according to the needs of each degree course being offered by the University.

Another weakness in the policy enactment of the new curriculum identified by those working at the meso (university administration) level relates to the transferable credit system. Concern on this was expressed by one participant, who stated:

*The transferable credits system seems to me an excess, it is not feasible. They could do the same without this system. The transferable credit system has the advantage that it seriously considers students' timetable but this could have been done without this system.*

(UC3)

Such comments indicate that the main criticism of the transferable credit system has arisen from the experience and knowledge of some participants about ‘University C’ credits.

Coupled with this, participants located at the meso (university administration) level recognized that a certain resistance to innovation from academics exists. Commenting on this, one participant said:

*It was not easy to propose this curriculum to the usual teachers. The mass of teachers was very traditional with a very strong position. This process, as it affects students, needs qualified teachers. We are still in this process. We have a 50% achievement of what was expected. Maybe if we had exported teachers, we could have it all. Because students adapt easily, they are mouldable.*

(UC2)

Such comments suggest that some university teachers have maintained traditional practices notwithstanding the enactment of the new curriculum policy.

Some also recognized that another example of disjunction between policy enactment and the rhetoric of policy documents is that the new practices have not been inspired on students’ needs. One participant expressed his view on this as follows:

*I think we forgot that the approach was meant to be focused on improving students’ learnings. As a developing country we need to improve human capital, that should be the focus, to improve for students, so that there is less arbitrariness in the curriculum. It could it been done in a different way.*

(UC3)
The suggestion here is that some participants do not agree with the way in which the University has implemented the curriculum policy.

Further, regarding disjunctions between theory and practice, participants working at the meso (university administration) level held that some aspects of the new curriculum have been introduced but have not been fully implemented. On this, one participant stated:

> In some schools we have managed to identify certain things that were not working well, in terms of certain objectives that were not being fully fulfilled, in relation to the initial project versus the practical implementation. (UC4)

Comments like this indicate that there are certain directions in the new curriculum that have not been followed by all the academic units within ‘University C’.

Some working at the meso (university administration) level also argued that it is not appropriate to evaluate the enactment of the new policy at this stage. On this, one participant declared:

> We have not measured impacts. It is not easy. In 40 years students will say that we have a seal. We had focus groups with head hunters, interviews and applied surveys to our graduates. There is no impact measurement that indicates that our graduates are different. The graduates themselves do not recognize it, they do not identify something extra that this model has given them. That requires an aligned academic body. (UC2)

The suggestion here is that detractors are having an impact on the enactment. On this, another academic added:

> Today we are at an early to judge. It is good that this is taking place that the education plans are being normalised. It is difficult to say something, as we are at the beginning of the process. I think it will be implemented. The rest is venturing. It would be desirable that with this other teaching processes will improve too, to have coordination between careers and that students have goals and can make their own decisions. (UC3)

Suggestions like this indicate that there are still many challenges and aspects to improve with regard to the enactment of the new curriculum policy, especially related to power distribution and the role of students.
The Micro Level

The context of influence at ‘University C’

The following section details the perspectives of participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ in relation to the influences behind the new policy. Here, three international influences were identified. These are as follows: an unsynchronised change; influences from the United States (US) and Europe; and internationalization of higher education. National influences were also revealed. These are: lack of clarity of purpose for higher education; traditionalism; government influences; accreditation processes; other universities in Chile; and associations in higher education. Finally, in relation to local (institutional-based) influences, one trend was recognized, namely, endogenous initiatives.

1. International Influences

1.1 Unsynchronised change

Participants working at the micro (academics) level considered that the curriculum policy change in their university was not synchronised with changes taking place in higher education in the rest of the world. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

*There is a very fast pace outside and a very slow one inside the system. The world is going in a different direction, there is evidence which points to other direction, from in universities of developed countries which Chile admire, which are countries looking at the country project to develop their universities. They install the professional units that can make this network, linking the university with the environment. For example, technology in the classroom, which here are still frontal rooms. We have not incorporated yet the issue as necessary for that linkage. (UC7)*

Such comments highlight how universities in Chile want to be like those in first world countries but are still operating in a traditional way.
Participants located at the micro (academics) level also judged that the latest changes in the globalising labour market had influenced the tasks of universities. As one participant put it:

*It comes from the outside but it is very patent. It keeps changing a lot. Our referents are the American universities... The labour market changes faster. Universities are slower than employability. These gurus come and radically change schools. It is risky.* (UC9)

The suggestion here is authorities make hurried decisions at ‘University C’, without considering the national reality.

1.2 United States and European influence

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also identified international models from universities in the US and Europe as having an impact on their new curriculum. On this, one participant pointed out:

*It would seem difficult for academic leaders to initiate change processes without documentation of international experiences. I find it difficult to conceive. The National University is an example, which looked at a German model and the Chilean. ‘College’ is a copy of the United States; it uses a minor, a major and then a degree. All universities use other models.* (UC7)

The suggestion here is that the use of international reference points in curriculum policy has always be present amongst universities in Chile. On this, another academic added:

*The theme of innovation, especially from the United States and Europe. The 2002 change also had European influence, especially the idea of the two cycles. In the case of the second cycle we looked at what they are doing in Europe. The process of creating programs has a strong influence from Europe. We looked at Spanish universities, American universities and French universities.* (UC5)

Such participants indicate that European institutions have a greater influence over the curriculum policy change at ‘University C’. Those academic members of particular schools and faculties within ‘University C’ highlighted specific international universities. As one participant stated:

*We looked at the United States, to the North-Western University and their major in communications and we look in general at the London Economics School, for branches*
of the press that were more sociological. Also, to the University of Navarra in Spain for corporate communication. (UC8)

Similarly, another academic stated:

The vice president of Columbia has also advised us a lot on the subject and he has been quite influential with all the ideas he has given us of how we have put together this curriculum. Harvard as well. Well, John Bole who is the dean of the School of Engineering, he talks a lot with us. He has also given us a lot of ideas and has lend us their programming branch so we can imitate it. The aid is quite concrete. (UC6)

Comments like these indicate that the curriculum has been directly influenced by universities well positioned in international league tables.

Participants located at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ also indicated that assistance from international universities was received during the process of policy elaboration. On this, one academic stated:

More than influence we have received help from many international institutions. We have received help from the University of the Andes of Colombia in all that has to do with quality. There is a person there who has helped us a lot in quality issues, of how we order it within and once established the reform how we have to organize all things so that we can effectively get an accreditation without problem. (UC5)

Suggestions like this point out that universities from other developing countries, like Colombia, have also had an impact on curriculum development at ‘University C’.

Commenting about this international support, another participant voiced thus:

Amongst education institutions I could also name the Impreme College, which has given us more limited help. I mean, we have had interviews like I said with many universities. Last year and the year before our dean travelled and he was in countless universities. He joined with all the deans he could and he talked a lot about this topic, to get ideas that we could use here. Today we are in this, we are very connected with infinite universities. It is a wide network. (UC6)

Such comments suggest that ‘University C’ has had a considerable amount of external influences on its new policy and that authorities from other universities have had a say in its reform.

Moreover, participants working at the micro (academics) level indicated that there have been technological influences from international universities. One participant gave voice to this as follows:
We brought a methodology from Harvard, which works quite well. In fact, in January I was in New York, at Harvard to close a deal with them so that they let us use their methodology and we are using it. Yale uses it, it is used in California, it is used everywhere. The University of Miami is also copying it. So basically, we would be the first university in Latin America to use this methodology, which is a paradigm shift of classes. (UC6)

Such comments suggest that what is undertaken at overseas universities has also had an impact on teaching practices within ‘University C’.

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also highlighted the fact that they have been influenced by specific universities. This view was expressed by one participant when stating: “Conceive-Design-Implement-Operate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, much of our reform is based on this. Many universities have applied it. Tuning from Bologna also has that model.” (UC9). The suggestion here is that there has been policy borrowing taking place across countries, and the University was engaged in this.

1.3 Internationalization

Participants located at the micro (academics) level held that the curriculum changes at ‘University C’ relate to an international standardisation of curriculum. One participant gave voice to this as follows:

_The first thing that was done to the curriculum was to modularize it, to be able to absorb these concepts of innovation and entrepreneurship, and the second thing that was done was to standardise it to international frameworks. So, we have a bachelor of four years and an additional year for the professional degree, because the four years bachelor existed in Chile... Now, what we did was to do a reorganization of the subjects, so that the degree will be useful, a full degree, where the student will have to take a test to get a license, and that degree, therefore, can be recognized outside. (UC6)_

Such comments indicate that the University has had to adapt its curriculum structures to fit into a globalised world.
Regarding international influences, those working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ deemed that another trend that is having an impact on their new policy is curriculum flexibility. On this, one academic stated:

*I realized immediately that my curriculum was so rigid and no longer served. Because if a student wants to compete outside, I do not necessarily need to respond to the things that are being done in Chile. They import the things that are being done in Chile, or that are being done in the United States, or that are being done wherever the student wants to compete. But since they are endless things, I cannot put them all inside the curriculum. So, what does that mean? That I have to relax. More concepts are also appearing. So, we are talking about linkage, more flexibility.* (UC8)

Such participants indicate that in order to reach international employability it is a requirement that universities implement flexible curriculum, so that students can compete.

Moreover, regarding internationalization, some working at the micro (academics) level at the University judged that the new curriculum enables students to have an international experience. Commenting in this regard, one academic stated:

*What possibilities this gives us? That effectively at their fourth year our students can go and can have an international experience, to become a master, to enter a PhD, to enter to any course, only with a degree. That is, in the fourth year we could place a student in a doctorate program abroad. We have several examples. In other words, we are already doing it...* (UC6)

The suggestion here is that the new curriculum policy is influenced by the internationalization of higher education and by a strategy to engage in it.

Further, with regard to internationalization, participants operating at the micro (academics) level argued that international accreditation has also been a driving force behind the curriculum changes. As one participant expressed it:

*All the universities will recognize the degree. What is the way to do that? Here comes another point of the reform. It is accreditation. Today I am looking to accreditation for this course with the Accreditation Board for Engineering. That is the only agency recognized in the United States to accredit engineering programs. Because there are several agencies that accredit but if you want to be a professional engineer in the United States, you have to come from universities accredited by this institution.* (UC9)
Such comments suggest that quality assurance is an important motivation to reform the curriculum and to connect local settings to global trends. On this, the academic noted above concluded by adding: “Then accrediting our program with this institution would be tremendous, and tremendous in the sense that we could open all these agreements that I was talking about. It is much easier, because it is a course that is accredited by an international institution”.

2. National Influences

2.1 Lack of clarity of purpose for higher education

Participants working at the micro (academics) level identified national influences. In this regard, they argued that the lack of curriculum policy frameworks in higher education in Chile has been a driving force to undertake curriculum change. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

This is happening in a country context where we do not decide where we want to go. There are large meetings in higher education but we do not know what we want as a country. (UC7)

Such participants suggest that there is a lack of vision for the nation and a lack of a national project, and that there is no acknowledgment of this situation within the University.

Participants located at the micro (academics) level also stated that there is a gap between scientific evidence about higher education and policy decision-making within ‘University C’. Reflecting on this, one academic expressed:

I have worked in 16 higher education institutions in this country in the last 10 years, and I have noticed that the topic of competency is in vogue in curriculum accreditation. Technicians and public policy are using it, but in reality, there is a gap between research and development challenges. Despite the efforts there is an increasing distance. (UC7)

The suggestion here is that the competency-based curriculum model and the college model are imported formulas which have not been reviewed or assessed to see if they are valid for Chile.
There is also a lack of congruence, as they saw it, within the new curriculum policy. On this, one academic expressed as follows:

*In recent years I have noticed a concern deeper than the curriculum update. That has to do with finances. Projects are raised in this line but other actions are financed. The concern is shared but the mechanism and methods are distanced.* (UC9)

Suggestions like this indicate that the decisions are considered to be superficial, and devoid of consistency and depth due to a lack of clarity about the future. Going further on this, another participant stated:

*Public policy, resources, pedagogical models, everything should be synergistic. We do not make changes through speeches. There has been an absence of appropriate human capital to make curriculum decisions. The translation of policies into practice is not done well... Also, there is a natural resistance to change, because we have teachers to passionate with the changes.* (UC8)

Such comments suggest that there is a lack of personnel well trained to be able to decide and enact the new curriculum policy successfully within the University.

### 2.2 Traditionalism

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ also considered that in comparison with the rest of the world, the changes in curriculum had been slow amongst universities in Chile. The general view on this was expressed by one participant as follows:

*The offer is very traditional and there are few institutions that make a link. The pressure of the context of accreditation, a lack of knowledge of young people and a lack of capacity to teach far away, all of this causes us to distance ourselves from those changes rather than to get closer. It is slow by politics, slow in tactics and in competition.* (UC7)

Comments like this suggest that participants working at the micro (academics) level at this university had a perspective about the higher education system and universities as being traditional and conservative. In this regard, some pointed out that the curriculum reforms were outdated changes. On this, one academic said: “The point is that here, when we reach a stage, it has already happened in other countries.” (UC7).
indicates that some participant universities in Chile reflect the social and economic structures of a developing country undergoing a slow change.

2.3 Other universities

Another national influence highlighted by participants located at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ were the curriculum transformations that they observe in other universities in the nation. One academic expressed a view on this as follows: “We look at other universities as another data source” (UC8). Interestingly, one of the other universities reported upon in a previous chapter came in for special consideration as being a major influence. On this, one academic stated the following:

There have done very well. I mean, these people have managed, not completely, I think we somehow were in the way the University B is going but we managed to go one step further. Is going to be very difficult for that university to give one more step due to their statutes. (UC6)

However, according to participants working at the micro (academics) level, the curriculum changes at ‘University C’ were being implemented faster and more extensively. Referring to this, the same academic added:

The University B did this separation of the degree from the professional career. The problem is that although they put together a fairly solid degree, which is very similar to what we are putting together, once a student finishes that degree, in order to get the degree, they have to comply with all the branches that took them out of the degree. I mean, you’re going to be studying for more than seven years. Finishing in five and a half years, which is the promise of the University B today, is very difficult. It is possible, but it is very difficult. What we do is to make a conversation between all degrees. I believe that in the end this is the benefit of being private, that the statutes are not as strong as they are in the traditional ones. (UC6)

The suggestion here is that ‘University C’, being part of the private system, has more autonomy to make radical curriculum policy change than do traditional universities such as ‘University B’.
2.4 Accreditation processes

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ in the study being reported here also considered that the attention given to accreditation processes within the higher education system in Chile has promoted curriculum revisions. One participant expressed a view on this as follows: “The National Accreditation Commission model is good but the Chilean model is more focused on control than on quality and continuous improvement” (UC6). Such comments suggest that the notion of accreditation in Chile is limited. One of its dimensions relates to external accountability, as one academic put it:

Universities in Chile are forced to show their quality and that has helped to have these updating processes. It is obvious for private universities, so for us this innovation is like doing the right thing. (UC9)

Such participants indicate that the National Accreditation Commission is uneven in the requirements it lays down and differences exist in what it is expected of private and traditional universities to gaining accreditation.

2.5 Government influences

Some participants located at the micro (academics) level also held that the recent national governments have had an impact on the development of curriculum changes. On this, one academic stated:

The university sector is under the magnifying glass. These processes show that what matters is quality. It is part of the modernisation process of universities in Chile. (UC8)

The suggestion here is that there has been an explicit intention to change the structure of universities in Chile. According to some working at the micro (academics) level, a major key stakeholder of this is the MINEDUC, through MECESUP. On this, one participant commented:

The ministry, because it is helping us financially and administratively, they also ask us for reports of the money we are spending, so they also have an opinion to give, and we consider their opinion to be quite valid. Also, and sending flowers to the ministry, they
have helped us a lot through MECESUP, especially to connect with other universities. So today, the program that we have, we have not only "validated" as the University C, but we have presented it. I have presented at conferences at the University B and at the National University. I went south to present. The University of Temuco has received me many times. That is, there is a national framework or a craving for new curricula to be validated. (UC6)

Comments like this indicate that there is some gratitude shown towards the national government for the economic support being given to them as private university.

2.6 Higher education associations

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ also argued that another important national influence is the key roles that national associations in higher education play in the work of universities. Commenting on this, one participant stated:

The other thing that has helped us a lot is that our dean has assumed two roles that are quite decisive because we can access enough information. Last year he was president of the Council of Deans of Chile... That immediately opened doors for everything. There deans of Concepcion and Antofagasta participate, in which universities they are doing super-cool things that we can copy. Because in the end we come from totally different worlds as universities but the themes are always transversal. So that helped us a lot too. (UC6)

Such participants indicate that their new curriculum changes have benefited from the involvement of academics from ‘University C’ in such organizations. Key information and guidelines for change have been shared and exchanged in these instances.

3. Local Influences

3.1 Endogenous initiatives

Regarding local influences, participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ deemed that curriculum change has taken place as a result of internal processes. As one participant put it: “we were not driven here by outside reference points” (UC8). One such local influence was the introduction of innovative teaching
methods. On this, an example that came in for special consideration were the ‘workshop courses’, which were described as follows: “About the curriculum revision, I’d say that it was an internal diagnosis. What is new here in Chile, is the theme of the workshop courses” (UC5).

Comments like this indicate that some participants saw the university as innovating. On this, they also added that the technology used came from top universities in the US. According to participants working at the micro (academics) level, another original aspect is the possibility offered to students of obtaining two degrees through studying one course.

Participants located at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ also identified that another internal influence on the new policy is the interest of their students in social problems. One academic commented on this as follow:

In the case of the new degree, there was probably a movement towards this subject, because young people are increasingly showing an interest in social issues and we noticed that interests in students. It was a demand from students themselves. (UC5)

The suggestion here is that a degree was established as a response to a demand from students. However, this seems to have taken place as a reaction to their market and neoliberal ideologies being promoted by the university itself. A participant commented on this as follows:

On the other hand, the university had the intention of incorporating the degree as an option for the graduates of Commercial Engineering of the University C, which until that moment did not exist. (UC8)

Suggestions like this indicate that the new degree structure is consistent with the view and ideologies amongst the university administrators of what it should be.

The context of policy text production at ‘University C’

This section of the chapter details the perspectives of participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ regarding aspects of the context within which
the curriculum policy and its associated texts were produced. Regarding the characteristics of the new curriculum policy in place at ‘University C’, participants working at the micro (academics) level identify aspects related to ideology and accountability, along with the role of the policy elite in text production and the policy processes.

1. Features of curriculum change

1.1 Decentralized structure

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ recognized that a major curriculum change occurred in 2002. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

*The university underwent a major change in the year 2002, with the introduction of the liberal arts model. But in the particular case of this school, I would say that we had managed to identify certain things that were not working well such as certain objectives that were not being fully met, in relation to the initial project versus the practical implementation.* (UC5)

Such comments indicate that the process of policy text production has been characterized by team work.

However, some working at the micro (academics) level argued that the change has not been a consistent process within the university. Referring to specific curriculum changes in some schools inside their university, one academic stated:

*I could tell you more about the curriculum changes I participated in because I do not know what they are doing now. In the change that began to be implemented in Commercial Engineering in 2015, the truth is that I did not participate and therefore little I can tell you.* (UC9)

Such participants indicated that in some cases there has been a lack of involvement on the part of academics within the process.
In the case of one particular degree, participants working at the micro (academics) level held that the curriculum change consists of the introduction of new teaching methods. On this, one academic stated:

*I am in charge of the implementation of the change more than the design. Because one thing is obviously what the curriculum says and another thing is the actual implementation, especially in degrees where you have certain restrictions imposed by the size of enrolments.* (UC5)

The suggestion here is that at ‘University C’ academics have a more important role in the policy enactment than in the context of policy text production.

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also stated that the curriculum changes are a result of a process of reorganization. As one academic put it:

*In this curriculum change we worked in two different processes and changes were made. Some courses were adjusted, there was a rearrangement of some branches. It was rearranged. This revised curriculum is the one that students who entered in 2013 have.* (UC6)

Such comments, in which participants speak in the first person, implies that a collaborative and decentralized process has been engaged in the university.

It is also argued that this revision is part of an organizational strategy that has taken years. Commenting on this, one academic said: “The last curriculum change was conducted with about four years of planning, and the implementation was this year” (UC8).

According to participants working at the micro (academics) level, the result of this process was a coherent curriculum. One participant gave voice to this view as follows:

*All degree courses make adjustments, schools avoid making changes suddenly. It is a heavier gear to let each part of the structure to talk more, which is a more holistic approach. There are cross-cutting objectives.* (UC9)

Specifically, regarding the degree in Journalism and Communication, a participant stated:
The last curriculum was five or six years old and we decided to start a process of curriculum reform. The teaching director created a new curriculum according to a methodology of the university... The process started in 2016. The big change is a reorganization of four years and two exits, a master in media and a master of corporate communication. This did not exist before. (UC8)

In the case of engineering courses, participants working at the micro (academics) level stated that there has been an emphasis on education technologies since 2013. Commenting on this, one academic stated:

When one makes applies this structure to the meso-curricular, we have transformed, a great part of the subjects, mainly the subjects of the common plan of engineering, and that has been very important. We have transformed them into methodological issues. (UC6)

The use of the word ‘descent’ by this participant implies that decisions came from the top, contradicting the general view that a decentralized policy text production process has operated.

Some also voiced that there are defined times to do changes within the University. As this participant put it:

Normally, macro-curricular changes are of a large scale, so obviously you do not want to do everything in one go, you do it every five years, and there are even institutions that do it even more spaced. In fact, to make a macro-curricular change, which is to change the entire structure of your curriculum, you need at least five years of planning. (UC7)

Such comments indicate that participants working at the micro (academics) level had a technical knowledge about the procedures involve in the production of curriculum policy.

Participants at this level also highlighted the use of specific methods of curriculum design to inform the process of policy text production. One this, one academic commented:

During the four first years there was a lot of interviews in various fields, with many academics, both national and international. Then we did interviews with people from the faculty, i.e. people who were running degree courses, directors, key teachers, or other professors from other disciplines as well. We started to see all over that sector. Finally, we saw the professional world. We met with a lot of people from the industry, and in fact, in 2013 a career directory was established ... and that helped us a lot in how we wanted to approach this topic. (UC6)
The suggestion here is that the voices and opinions from the corporate world were influential in defining the important features of the new curriculum policy.

1.2 A neoliberal ideology

Regarding the values underlying the new policies, participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ deemed that demands from the labour market were of major importance. On this, one participant commented:

*Today companies are demanding different engineers, different profiles. There are super weird things happening. Because we have civil engineers who are taking positions of commercial engineers in companies. We have civil engineers who leave the School of Engineering, which is quite a difficult degree, and they go to human resources. That is quite strange but companies are looking for these different things. Today, perhaps, there is no much demand for someone who knows about numbers, but for someone who knows much more about cultures or is able to converse with other cultures, etc., someone with a more transversal vision. Due to the fast pace of everything, the industry is demanding different profiles, softer profiles perhaps, which know of transversality. However, harder profiles are also in demand. (UC9)*

The suggestion here is that study for a specific ‘career’, as was the tradition in Chile, is no longer required by the business sector. Participants themselves also believed that ‘soft skills’ are more valuable now for students in their efforts to get into the labour market, as this becomes more and more flexible.

The curriculum had to be changed to adapt to the requirements of the business sector. Thus, a neoliberal ideology has driven the policy text production of the curriculum. On this, one participant highlighted the importance of having a connection between universities and the business sector as follow:

*Here at University C we have used the concepts of entrepreneurship and innovation, which are part of the philosophy at University C. We also wanted to add something more, because during all those meetings a lot was said about innovation and entrepreneurship. Another subject that emerged was that of linkage, it has do with linking with the industry because students when they go to work they have no idea what to do, not only students from the University C but from all universities. (UC6)*

Suggestions like this indicate that neoliberal values such as innovation, entrepreneurship and preparation of students as workers are central in the new policy.
Some also argued that the new curriculum is aimed at improving performance in relation to microeconomic indicators in Chile. Commenting on this, one participant expressed:

*Today, Chile has a great problem with productivity. The reason why all productivity rates have decrease is because we do not have strong professionals. Why? Because the industry more than hard profiles is demanding softer profiles. Universities are embracing this and they are preparing softer profiles. But what happens when I need someone who is really creating products, or creating innovation, who is creating entrepreneurship? Then, it becomes a necessity to have a different graduate. (UC7)*

The suggestion here is that the new preparation that students are receiving will increase the productivity of the country.

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ also deemed that the notion of quality is at the centre of the policy change. Commenting on this, one participant said:

*What you normally do when you make curriculum changes first is to know what point you want to change, because you cannot always change it, because that is against quality, which is the first objective of any curriculum reform. So, the first thing you have to work on, and that is not easy, even if it sounds easy, is on a continuous improvement process. (UC6)*

The suggestion here is that to protect quality, a policy of periodic curriculum revision has been put in place at the University.

In terms of ideology, another highlighted a view of participants working at the micro (academics) level related to the economy sector. Specifically, they held, the university wants to have a say in this sphere in order to increase its influence in the higher education arena. Referring to this, one academic expressed:

*It was identified at the university that an undergraduate and a master degree would train people who have a greater role in public discussion. That is one of the duties of a university. With the degree we expect to change in 20 years and our authorities were also interested in this. (UC5)*

The participant also stressed what he sees as the importance of gaining more students, more enrolments, and more profits.
Some academics located at the micro (academics) level also believed that the new curriculum should be flexible, have less focus on content, and be open to innovation. On this, one participant stated:

*Instead of relaxing the whole curriculum, we made the curriculum more flexible in sections by modularizing it. We said, perfect, all these branches have correspondence with the branches of the degree and we set it up as a package. All of these branches are a transverse vision of the situation, perfect, here we have another package. So, we set up five different packages so students instead of being able to choose all the branches, have the possibility to choose the packages with which they are going to put together their curriculum.* (UC9)

The suggestion here is that the new curriculum policy has been designed to provide a better ‘package’ to attract the best students, who are seen as ‘consumers’ under the neoliberal logic established in Chile during the 1980s.

On the other hand, participants also considered that the new curriculum gives more opportunities to students. Commenting on this, one academic commented thus:

*It is a semantic change to say the "global engineer" and the "evolution of professionals" which is basically saying that we want more flexible students, that today they can end up working in sales, in medicine, in anything.* (UC6)

The view here is that a flexible curriculum goes ‘hand-in-hand’ with the requirements of the labour market in a global knowledge society.

For others who are working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’, the value of research was appreciated in the new policy. As this academic stated: “There was also interest in teachers, in to develop a critical mass in the program. This initiative allows more students to do research” (UC5). Such comments indicate a view of research as another ‘good’ that can be traded in the market.

1.3 Market and outward accountability

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ considered that external demands have shaped the new curriculum policy. One participant expressed his view on this as follows:
They started to use the concept of competence, everyone wanted a curriculum by skills, by competency and this was stressed. But they realized that the skills are also too specific for degrees such as engineering, talking about competency clashed a bit. (UC6)

Comments like this indicate that there is an expectation external to the university that it will implement a competency-based curriculum model.

Participants located at the micro (academics) level also stated that there has been an adaptation of this model so that the university can be accountable to the higher education market. On this, one academic commented:

Then, we entered into a discussion about what are competencies, skills, learning objectives, what are we doing? How do I structure that? So basically what we did was to establish certain objectives, which we call learning objectives, depending on what you call them, if they are competencies, skills, but for us they are learning objectives because they do not constitute competencies because they are not so specific. (UC9)

The suggestion here is that a debate took place about the right terminology, and that the notion of ‘objectives’ has been used as being more favourable to the term ‘competency’.

Furthermore, some working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ held that outward or external accountability also included a form of responsibility to students. As one put it:

These objectives are separated into 11 learning objectives, which we divided it into 33, like a crumbling, 33 performance indicators, which is how we measure those objectives. In that way we can see if students are achieving or not our goals... and there you have all things, ethics, that is, we have an objective that is ethical. We have another that is about communication. That is, in 11 you have all those themes that are more or less transversal, but you also have technical issues. (UC6)

The suggestion here is that the new curriculum model makes clear to academics and students what they should know, what they should teach, and what they should learn.
2. The role of policy elite

2.1 Power in decision-making

Participants working at the micro (academics) level identified those they saw as being the main policy actors in the policy text production at ‘University C’. On this, one academic stated:

*The Directions of Teaching and the Academic Vice-chancellorship promoted the policy of curriculum renewal and they decided when to do it. Who decides? The academic vice-chancellorship leads the processes, they see the necessity or the opportunity to do it, because it is not a systematic relation, but a fortuitous relation with the surroundings. But in the teaching action the policy dissolves.* (UC7)

The suggestion here is that the Academic Vice-Chancellor and a special unit have been in charge of the University’s curriculum policy change and have been making the really important decisions. Thus, even though participants expressed a view that the policy text production has been partially decentralized, they were also aware of the existence and power brought to bear at the highest level.

3. The policy process

3.1 Consultation

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ deemed that during the policy text production different agents had a say. One academic commented on this as follows:

*There were different things. We had days with teachers working in groups. Teachers participated in the genesis. There was socialisation with the student union, they also gave us their points of view. The heart of this came from a day with teachers.* (UC9)

Such comments indicate that debate amongst academics played a part in the production of the new curriculum policy. Some participants suggest that the policy text production involved receiving feedback from academics through surveys and conversations, but there was a lack of political and ideological debate.
Moreover, some operating at the micro (academics) level stated that there was consultation with employers. Commenting on this, one academic stated: “We have teamed up with employers to see how the state of the art is. We have agendas from those meetings” (UC8). Suggestions like this indicate that there has been external pressure from the corporate world to define policy.

3.2 Tensions between top-down and bottom-up

Some participants working at the micro (academics) level pointed out that in some cases a committee was created to decide on the project of the new curriculum policy. Each group was composed of university staff and external members. On this, one academic stated: “A committee was set up, and it was a joint project. It was composed of a current Minister of government, myself, and two members of the University’s Management School.” (UC5). Such comments suggested that even some politicians have had a saying in the internal policies of ‘University C’.

However, they stated that those individuals having the highest level of authority within the University had the final decision. On this, one participant claimed: “A review of curriculum models was made and a first draft was elaborated, which was communicated to the teachers, and then was presented to the Board of Directors, who approved the project” (UC9). Comments like this indicate that there had been a mix of top-down and bottom-up decisions process at ‘University C’.

3.3 Resistance as positive

Regarding the policy process, those working at the micro (academics) level also valued the existence of detractors of the new curriculum policy within the university. One academic explained this as follows:

There are people against this and it is good that we have them. In academia we must all fit. What it is important is to open the spaces for professional reflection. I have read, I
have been informed, I have an opinion, I am able to explain my arguments, and I am able to listen and to negotiate with the other. (UC7)

The comment suggests a view amongst participants about the coexistence of multiple visions and opinions being a fundamental part of the university environment.

Some, however, recognized that sometimes resistance, mixed with ignorance about the new policy, exists. On this, one academic stated as follows:

*Sometimes people speak without knowing, which is a great shame, because when you try to lead any innovation, they speak without knowing, a sport very practiced in this country and many are assiduous to their position.* (UC8)

Such comments suggest that academics are expected to be informed about new curriculum policies before expressing their views. This was moderated by the view of some, as explained by another academic, who added: “Many times detractors are then the best allies of innovation, if they do not make it a personal struggle” (UC7).

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also stated that the main opposition to the new policy has come from university teachers. Some suggest that resistance to innovation is evident due to different visions about the curriculum within the university prevailing. Commenting on this, one participant held:

*The revision of the curriculum did have detractors amongst the teachers. Some teachers in the review wanted to return to the previous model, which was not part of the set of possibilities... and there was also discontent with the courses that were chosen. This happens mainly because there are different schools working, because they have different visions. And there are also ego struggles.* (UC5)

However, consensus was eventually reached. As one participant put it: “there were critical comments at the beginning, but the mood was constructive, it was the minute to do so” (UC9).

**The context of policy practices at ‘University C’**

Regarding the context of policy practices and effects (enactment), participants located at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ also considered that the new policy is having an impact on staff and on students. Each of these is now considered. This
is followed by an overview of participants’ perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

1. Impact on staff

1.1 Academic leadership

Participants held that the new curriculum policy has given them an opportunity to assume positions of more power in the university. Commenting on this one academic stated: “I used to teach classes before and now I have the position of teaching coordinator” (UC8). Such comments suggest that some academics now have new functions. On this, another added: “The processes were more informal. Now there is an academic council. It is an adaptation process that has many new functions” (UC9). The comment indicates that there is now a new complexity in the structure of curriculum work at ‘University C’.

1.2 New staff employed

Some working at the micro (academics) level also declared that there was a process of hiring new people during the enactment of the policy. On this, one academic stated:

*The number of teachers was doubled because we also had challenges in research. New professors joined the team to do research and to work in the graduate school. An organizational chart was made and the charges were formalised, increasing the mass of the school.* (UC9)

Suggestions like this indicate that the new curriculum policy requires that more staff be employed in order for it to be implemented.

Some working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ also stated that they were hired to assume more managerial roles. As one participant put it: “I came to do the reform. I used to do classes before. In 2013 the restructuring began, and then I entered. I took over the reform. Now my role will change after implemented” (UC6). The
suggestion here is that academics now hold more bureaucratic responsibilities than they did under the previous curriculum model.

2. Impact on students

2.1 Students invisibility

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ considered that students are not as relevant as is stated in policy documents. Commenting on this, one participant declared:

*I think that the effect of the curriculum transformation would be achieved, because the slogan is the student at the centre of the task, if we see them clearly. But it seems to me that they are invisible, except as information givers. If we continue to consider them in that way, we cannot say that students have been considered in the curriculum renewal.* (UC7)

On this, another added: “The students did not participate” (UC5).

Furthermore, some located at the micro (academics) level also voiced that students did not participate in the development of new policies. On this, an academic said:

*Unless we consider participation as answering opinion polls or teaching surveys, I have not observed direct student participation in curriculum definitions. I have not noticed that that mechanism is installed, a policy for young people to express themselves, so they can say what they need.* (UC9)

The suggestion here is that in the policy enactment students are seen as being mere consumers.

Some, however, do suggest that students were consulted. One participant expressed this view as follows:

*Students had an indirect participation, first in the diagnostic process. Before we started, we had conversations with students from different courses... Then we worked with the student union. They are very proactive. There are things in the curriculum that they made us see. For example, that the academic burden was heavier at the end of the degree. But it was not something formal, it was a conversation.* (UC8)
There was also a belief amongst some participants working at the micro (academics) level that students should be more involved. On this, an academic commented:

*That is a great challenge. They can tell us where we could go, they live the same world as us. I have a hypothesis because they do not participate, because the history of curriculum management went from being an operative function of a group of people, to being an instance that generates projects, and if these instances still cannot reach the teachers well, it is even harder to reach students.* (UC7)

Comments like this indicate that the new curriculum policy is not being decided democratically.

3. Impact on the university

3.1 Improvement in performance indicators

Regarding the impact of the policy on the whole university, participants located at the micro (academics) level stated that the new curriculum enhances students’ employability. On this, one academic said: “Other universities are also training students in this way but our model makes them better, more competitive” (UC5).

Such comments suggest that, due to the new policy, graduates will have increased competitiveness in the labour market. On this, one academic commented as follows:

*What I think is that it is going to be very fast. We are going to make our students to get jobs of better quality and that they are going to be key figures. That is going to be noticed fast, because the formation here is not the same as elsewhere.* (UC9)

The suggestion here is that the quality of education is also being improved through the new curriculum policy.

3.2 Larger impact in higher education

Participants working at the micro (academics) level also believed that they will be viewed very positively in Chile’s higher education sector. One participant stated this as follows:
We should have more influence on the country through the undergraduate and graduate programs. The press will become key. Communications will become professionalised and we will become more important. (UC9)

Comments like this suggest a view of the new policy as a ‘marketisation’ strategy or an advertising mechanism, to attract more students and increase profits.

Some participants also highlighted challenges for private universities due to the financial reform in higher education that has led to financial assistance for certain students coming from low socioeconomic classes in Chile. On this, one academic stated:

The MINEDUC began to push institutions and although we receive money from them, there is lack of policy. What is going to cause the Gratuity Law? Gratuity is fine but it is crazy. Institutions with money are going to float and the others are going to fall apart. It is sacrificing quality for free of cost. Aspects such as retention of students, how do you do this without resources? (UC6)

The suggestion here is that the national government equity policies may be corroding quality in higher education.

4. Overall strengths

4.1 Advocacy

Participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ supported the new curriculum policy. As one academic stated: “I am a strong supporter of the model. I think the two-cycle division, which comes from the liberal arts, is a good idea. I think the changes that have been made are good” (UC5).

Some also considered that the current curriculum model is better than the previous one. A participant voiced this as follows:

Before it was different, the school was different, we were a small school and criteria were not established. There was no performance evaluation in the middle of the process, and the new one has fixed that. (UC9)

The suggestion here is that a series of administrative procedures have been installed in order to implement the new curriculum policy. Participants also considered that this has improved the work they do at ‘University C’.
5. Overall weaknesses

5.1 Deficiencies in the model

Regarding weaknesses, participants working at the micro (academics) level at ‘University C’ held that the policy originated without much research or consultation taking place. One participant expressed this as follows:

Permanent modification means an academic attitude of permanent reflection. We do a lot, but we reflect little. Curricula are distant from what is writing in documents. There should be official instances of reflection and I have not seen that in the university. I see the machine and not the reflection... We cannot talk about Chile having a curriculum policy because we do not know what the country wants to be. Countries that have achieved good, had thought before where they want to go. We lack a country project. (UC7)

Such comments indicate a politicised perspective about a lack of coherence and alignment between curriculum policy within the university and national government policies in higher education.

Some also highlighted a lack of leadership, associated with a lack of vision about national curriculum policy in higher education. As one academic put it:

There are ambiguities between technical education and university education, and even between undergraduate and postgraduate. This explains why curriculum units are installed in academic vice-chancelleries without leadership, they are only makers of curriculum formats. (UC8)

Such participants also suggest that there is a lack of expertise related to the curriculum policy-making process.

Moreover, participants working at the micro (academics) level considered that the recent history of Chile has had a negative impact on the new policy. On this, one academic stated:

Perhaps it has to do with the history of the last 50 years, because of the sociological problems associated with this history. The fragmentary look we have has to do with that history, coupled with its values and ways of seeing the world. For example, the distrust in the way we relate with each other. History divides us. (UC5)
The suggestion here is that weaknesses are due to a lack of political debate, vision, and acknowledgment of recent history, which has been inherited from the dictatorship era. On this, another participant added:

*I tend to think that as long as we do not rethink, in a reflection that incorporates students, permanently linking the university with the environment, there will be no major changes. This is not a concern about accreditation in higher education. If we were able to build that lattice, we could harvest fruits in 20 years. Without a common country development policy, we can bear fruit but it is a weak fruit. It seems to me that Chile should make an effort to make reforms about sense and identity, which will allow us to make this framework. These reforms will not solve anything and they are technically weak. We are wasting time. When will we build this? (UC7)*

Such participants indicate that a lack of reflection and political debate threatens not only the curriculum policy changes, but also quality provision and equity.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the perspectives of participants working at the meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels at ‘University C’, regarding its current curriculum policy transformations. In particular, the context of influences, the context of policy text production and the context of policy practices and effects (enactment) were considered. Regarding the former, three international, four national and one local influence were identified as operating at the meso (university administration) level, while at the micro (academics) level, three international, six national, and one local influence were presented. As regards the context of policy text production, features of the curriculum policy change, including structure, ideology, and accountability, along with policy elite and policy processes were considered in relation to both the meso (university administration) and the micro (academics) levels. Concerning the context of policy practices and effects (enactment), the perspectives of participants on the impact that the new policy has had on staff, on students, and on the same institution, and strengths and weaknesses of the process, were also considered in relation to both levels.
CHAPTER NINE

META-ANALYSIS ALONG THE POLICY TRAJECTORY AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The primary focus of the study being reported in this thesis was the transformation in curriculum policy at the three universities investigated at the macro (national), meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels in Chile. The previous four chapters presented results from the analysis relating to each university. This chapter now presents a meta-analysis of the results along the whole policy trajectory from global/international contexts to local (institutional) levels.

Critical theory was used in the meta-analysis to examine patterns in relation to power, resistance, conformativity, struggle and social justice (Crotty, 1998; Giroux, 2003; Simmons, Olssen & Peters, 2009). Particular attention was given to interrelationships between agency, people and movements (Apple, 2011). The outcome was a set of propositions for each research question. These constitute ‘tools for thinking with’ in relation to the situation in Chile and also in relation to jurisdictions beyond the specific settings of the research undertaken. As with the previous four chapters, the chapter is organized around the four contexts of the policy trajectory: policy influences; policy text production; policy practices and effects (enactment); and longer-term policy outcomes.

It will be recalled that a policy trajectory approach (Ball, 1994; Vidovich, 2007, 2013), as outlined in Chapter 4, framed the research questions for the investigation. Global trends, as described in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, provided the broad setting of the study. Empirical data were collected at the national level and within the three universities studied. An analysis of policy processes at the macro (national: Chile) level revealed the policy influences. Data collection and analysis in relation to the three universities studied at the meso (university
administration) and micro (academics) levels related to all four contexts of the policy trajectory. Dominant themes and subthemes generated as an outcome of considering all of the results are now presented.

**Research Question 1: The context of influences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 1: What are the key influences from global, national and local levels on curriculum policy transformations at the three universities studied?</th>
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</thead>
</table>

In Table 9.1 below, themes generated are presented. The table facilitates an analysis of similarities and differences in results along the policy trajectory at the macro (national), meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels. It also indicates in relation to the policy trajectory from the macro to the micro level that four major themes were generated about ‘influences’. These are as follows: First World hegemony; changes in the concept of a ‘university’; the changing structure of higher education in Chile; and endogenous university influences. Each theme is now discussed below in turn.
Table 9.1 Influences on curriculum policy transformations in Chile and in the three universities studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences</th>
<th>Themes (numbered) and subthemes (asterisks *)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contexts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macro (national data)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meso (university administration data)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Micro (academic data)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Curricular policy transformations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. First world hegemony</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* The Bologna Agreement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Top universities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* International organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Changes in the concept of ‘university’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Changes within disciplines</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Changing structure of HE in Chile</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Accreditation processes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Other institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. First world hegemony</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Competency-based curriculum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Changes in the concept of ‘university’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Rapid obsolescence of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Changing structure of HE in Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Massification &amp; demands of society in Chile</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Endogenous university influences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* University history</td>
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<td>* International experience of local academics</td>
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<td>* Students’ interests</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Changes in the concept of ‘university’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Reform lag</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. First world hegemony</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* US &amp; European influences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Changing structure of HE in Chile</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Government influence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Endogenous university influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Improvement of existing curriculum program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final list of themes and subthemes was obtained from a triangulation process of both, data from interviews and from document analysis.

**First World hegemony**

The theme of *First World hegemony* has a number of subthemes. These include the impact that the Bologna process in Europe has had; the influence of ‘top’ universities in Europe, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US); pressures from international organizations; internationalization of education; and the competency-based curriculum and liberal arts models.

The Bologna Agreement and its derivates were pointed by participants as major international influences in the three universities studied. The Bologna process has generated
dynamism in the higher education field not only in Chile but also around Latin America (Tiana-Ferrer, 2014). Regarding the influences from ‘top’ universities, these were considered by participants and authors of policy documents to have been a major force promoting curriculum policy changes in Chile and particularly at the three universities studied thereby downplaying the relevance of national (Chile) and local (university) contexts. Some academics (e.g. Marginson & Ordorika, 2011) have identified this sort of situation as representing a global hegemony (Gramsci, 2005) exercised by the strongest economies in the world and also including cultural hegemony, especially from the US. In other words, powerful first world countries are exercising dominant or hegemonic power over higher education policy processes in emerging market economies. In relation to this, Kaba’s (2012) study has demonstrated how the Anglo-American model of ‘university’ is exerting hegemonic power in international league tables, with universities in the US and the UK dominating the field. He also identified influences contributing to a country having universities located towards the top of those rankings. Here, gross domestic product (GDP) and GDP per capita, level of international trade (exports/imports), and colonial heritage and language, have been significant. Chile, by contrast, is a developing country in Latin America, with high rates of income inequalities (0.45 Gini coefficient), a projected economic growth rate (GDP) of 2.8%, and high levels of poverty (OECD, 2015). In relation to the three universities studied the main influences came from first world countries and their top universities. Thus, it is not surprising that universities in Chile are not located at the upper end of international league tables of universities deemed to be of quality.

The predominance of first world influences may have undesired repercussions. For example, they seem to ignore the fact that in Chile inequalities in higher education (Jarpa-Arriagada & Rodriguez-Garces, 2017) relate to social disparities (O’Sullivan & Tsang, 2015). On this, Bourdieu’s (2001) understanding of the education system playing a major role in
reproducing social inequalities is insightful. According to his view, the ‘pedagogic work’ undertaken with the privileged is capable of “perpetuating the arbitrary; it inculcates inequalities more lastingly than political coercion” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2001, p. 33).

It is arguable that universities in Chile are following the pattern outlined above. In a similar vein, the research undertaken by Dirk and Gelderblom (2017) on curriculum reform in South African universities suggests that ignoring the power of contextual influences from particular settings can create conflict, especially in terms of ‘hysteresis’, which is the gap between changing ‘field conditions’ and ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 2000). Their suggestion is that universities should be aware of contextual factors and promote attempts aimed at achieving equality in society through their policies. Liu and Metcalfe (2016) have argued along similar lines after identifying influences from outside universities (and country) exerting hegemonic pressure on universities in China that have been experiencing internationalization.

Regarding international influences, the advice of international organizations, primarily the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), was also identified as being a major force driving university curriculum changes. Indeed, the OECD was seen to have been a major influence in the development of education policy, especially in higher education, and not only in Chile but worldwide. Also, it was seen to have guided education policy in the country before Chile became a member state in 2010. One report on higher education from 2013 acknowledged advancement in the sector, but it also highlighted the need to improve economic and social inequalities drawing suggestions for policy-making (OECD, 2013).

Recommendations by international organizations that universities around the world should establish international policy networks were also deemed to be powerful influence at work in the three universities studied, as networks were becoming a dominant strategy for the
delivery of public policy (Shiroma, 2014). On this matter more broadly, some commentators have argued that the creation of international networks has been successful in developing countries (e.g. Biancani & McFarland, 2013; Valencia & Cázares, 2016) in terms of balancing the relationship between national governments and citizens. Also, Mundy and Murphy (2001) have argued that “new global structures of governance and political power have transformed world politics into a global politics of agenda setting, coalition building and multilateral regulation” (p. 88). In relation to this, it appears that the main organizations influencing higher education in Chile and particularly the three universities studied, were not regional institutions located in countries that are part of the Common Market of the South (Bevir & Rhodes, 2011) in Latin America. Instead, most influences were seen as having come from developed countries.

Specifically in terms of curriculum policy, both the ‘competency-based’ curriculum and the ‘liberal-arts’ approach to undergraduate education were identified at the three universities studied as becoming influential, thus representing Anglo-American hegemony (Ivanova & Sokolov, 2015). The former has been popularized not only in Chile but in other countries in Latin America (Pereira, Giménez & Tusing, 2017). Interestingly, developments mirror a particularly radical curriculum policy direction being undertaken at the undergraduate level which resonates with both the European Bologna model and the emphasis in the US on a ‘general’ and ‘liberal’ undergraduate education. These shifts can be understood in terms of new paradigms of policy influences and processes (Vidovich, 2012).

**Change in the concept of the university**

The second theme generated relating to policy influences identified along the policy trajectory investigated is the change in the concept of the ‘university’. The major subthemes are changes within disciplines, the rapid obsolesce of knowledge with globalisation, and a reform lag in Chile compared to developed countries were major forces driving the studied
curricular innovations. There is an international flavour to these, with some researchers located elsewhere contending that the origin and mission of the university as an institution have collided with such contemporary forces as marketisation, competition, and values related to a neoliberal ideology (Chow & Leung, 2016) which has accompanied globalisation. More specifically, the changes in curriculum policy at two of the three universities studied in Chile, can be seen, in Marginson and Considine (2000) terms, as responding to a market logic and a consumerist vision of education, within which universities function under an entrepreneurial logic.

A major watershed moment in the past in relation to the concept of ‘university’ occurred back in 1810 when the Prussian minister of education, Wilhelm von Humboldt, founded the University of Berlin. His vision was of an institution in which research and education would be intimately connected, thus giving students direct access to the leading researchers and thinkers of the time. The University of Berlin, which changed its name to the Humboldt University in 1949, quickly became an internationally renowned institution and a model for other universities around the world to emulate. Nowadays, however, changes in policies and practices have undermined Humboldt’s notion (Ylijoki, 2003), especially due to the introduction of new public management technologies from business administration (Singh, 2011). As some (e.g. Jessop, 2017) have put it, universities have been invaded by the logic of academic capitalism, where profit-oriented entrepreneurial practices dominate. An example of this from Chile is the rejection by the Constitutional Court in March 2018, of legislation prohibiting universities from making profit.

Massification of higher education around the world, including Chile, has also posed challenges for universities that have necessitated the introduction of new curriculum policies (Brunner, 2012). By massification is meant the rapid increase in student enrolment which has
taken place since the end of the twentieth century (Hornsby & Osman, 2014) and which has meant a movement away from just educating a small number of ‘elites’. This movement has been driven by the emphasis internationally on democratization, quality, social justice and equity, especially in relation to higher education systems in many developing economies (Gür, 2016; Mok & Jiang, 2016). Chile is no exception in this regard, although detailed research on the nature of what is happening there on the matter is urgently needed (Espinoza, 2015).

The rapid obsolescence of knowledge has also posed challenges for universities in Chile, including in relation to the three universities studied and for their academic staff. Internationally, the phenomenon has been described as being due to the changing condition of knowledge and to information becoming outdated because of the rapid emergence of new knowledge and the continual need for improved currency and relevance (Adams-Becker, Cummins, Davis, Freeman, Hall Giesinger & Ananthanarayanan, 2017). This trend, combined with academic capitalism, has increased levels of competition, and has put increased pressure on academics (Paroloa, Pana, Ghoshb, Hubermanc, Kaskia & Fortunatoa, 2015). All of this, in turn, has influenced the notion of what is a ‘university’, and not only in first world countries, but also in countries like Chile with developing economies.

The role of universities in Chile, again reflecting the situation internationally, is changing (e.g. Smelser, 2013). For centuries, universities have been considered to be the main societal centre for knowledge and learning. During this time also, their basic structures in relation to how to produce and disseminate knowledge, as well as how to evaluate students, have largely survived intact despite the societal changes created by technology following the Industrial Revolution (Anderson, Boyles & Rainie, 2012). Phenomena such as globalisation and the global knowledge society, however, have created turbulence and uncertainty within this structure. As a result, universities currently are adapting to the new demands through the
enhancement of new technologies and methods in the curriculum (Harrison, 2017). Such transformations have led to curriculum policy changes in many universities, including in Chile. Also, many universities now have the role of securing much of their own finances (Engler, 2017).

In addition, universities have for some time been charged with the responsibility of providing human capital (Becker, 1993) according to the requirements of the world of work in global knowledge economies. Thus, higher education is playing a major role in economic and workforce development (OECD, 2008). Regarding the tightening of the link between labour and higher education, however, universities cannot be lone players. As Gregorutti et al. (2016, p. 152) have pointed out, it is “necessary to match employment and learning”.

Gregorutti et al. (2016, p. 152) went on to state that “education in itself will not solve social inequities and problems of wealth distribution. This is a task that may start in the school, but that goes well beyond its walls”. On this, Brown, Lauder, and Ashton (2011, p. 124) have also stated that “we need to focus on how occupational opportunities are being transformed in the global division of labour rather than simply focus on the supply of marketable skills”. In a similar vein, Gregorutti et al. (2016) have also pointed out that currently there is a certain level of disconnection between society, universities and labour markets. This was reflected in the situation at the three universities studied in Chile reported in previous chapters. Even though education plays a major role, scholars (e.g. Brown et al., 2011) have stated that changes in higher education must be complemented with a set of other social and economic reforms. Accordingly, the assumption that more educated people in a self-regulated higher education system will lead to better quality education and economic growth needs to be revised in many countries, including Chile.
The concept of ‘university’ comes from the Latin word ‘universitas’, which means ‘the whole’. This implies that there should be space not only for neoliberalism but also for other ideas and ideologies. A new conception of the university, defined in commercial terms, is being promoted by neoliberalism and being reinforced in a setting of economic and cultural globalisation. Thus, it is undermining the essence of the original meaning of the word ‘university’ (Sterckx, 2011; Rai, 2015).

**The changing structure of HE in Chile**

The third theme identified as an influence on curriculum reform in the three universities studied is that of the changing structure of higher education in Chile. It has such subthemes as accreditation processes, a lack of clarity of the purpose of higher education, a lack of Chilean government policy on higher education, massification of higher education, government influences, and reforms in other universities in Chile.

The study reported in previous chapters revealed that at the macro (national) level in Chile there is a lack of clear government policy on higher education. It also revealed that universities still have a high level of autonomy. Furthermore, Ministry of Education programs, such as the ‘Improvement of Quality and Equity in Tertiary Education Program’ have certainly had some influence. However, it is mainly non-government organizations and universities that have defined the main directions for change.

By contrast, as a study by Ilieva and Peak (2016) has shown, higher education in countries with developed economies are guided by clear government-driven frameworks. Germany stands out in this regard, having a very balanced portfolio of national policies providing support in the field. Ilieva and Peak (2016) have also pointed to the importance of the development of legal frameworks for the internationalization of higher education in order to position universities in an international context. On this, they have argued that there has been
a rise in the number of countries with a commitment to this position. Indeed, highlighting of associated legislative developments, by Ilieva and Peak (2016), identify strong signals of readiness to engage internationally and to support national higher education systems to enhance their global positioning (Ilieva & Peak, 2016). The generation of such frameworks is a pending task in Chile. Indeed, organizations such as UNESCO (1995) and the OECD (2008) have made recommendations to Chile to follow this path. So far, however, only some of the advice offered has been ‘taken up’.

At this point, is important to emphasize that if no consensus emerges amongst citizens in Chile about the type of higher education they require, the goals and values which underpin developments will not be clear. As a result, there will be no clear vision of what is expected of universities to assist in the generation of decision-making processes. Here it is helpful to recall Leihy and Salazar’s (2017) point out that it is necessary to define a vision and to include a moral and ethical dimension in higher education. To ignore this position could mean that the violence and discrimination against migrants and against feminist protests witnessed in Chile over the last number of years, will continue to occur.

**Endogenous university influences**

The fourth theme is that of *endogenous university influences*. This relates to local institutional influences on universities. These include the history of the universities, the international experience of local academics, the improvements made to existing curricula, and the interests of current students. The importance of taking cognisance of such influences is highlighted in research by Rizvi and Lingard (2010). Also, the concepts of Braun et al. (2011) are helpful in considering the situation relating to the three universities studied in Chile. In their terms, the situation seems to be one of being ‘context-productive’, instead of one of balancing and integrating local and global dynamics by being more ‘context-generative’ and resisting
globalisation from above. In consequence, *global agency* (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002) was been imbalanced at these institutions, with global forces predominating over the local actions.

Research in other settings has also shown that localised influences over the last decades have not been sufficiently recognized in relation to higher education policy processes (Ragnhild, 2015; Jha & Kumar, 2017). Returning to this in relation to Chile, and especially in relation to the three universities studied, Braun et al.’s work is again useful. In particular, their four contextual dimensions (Braun et al., 2011) provided analytic tools to characterize the policy processes in the three universities studied. With regard to the first dimension, the *situated context*, two subthemes, namely the ‘the improvement of an existing curriculum program’ and ‘the history of the university’, relate to those aspects of context that are historically and locationally linked to the three universities studied. In relation to the *professional context*, the subtheme ‘international experience of local academics’ has to do with the fact that many university teachers in Chile have studied in universities in developed countries and have returned to their local settings with this ‘global’ knowledge. In particular, it seems that universities from the US have had a significant influence historically on those in Chile (Ugarte, 2014).

To conclude regarding influences on curriculum policies at multiple levels of the policy trajectory, and with reference to the literature, three key propositions were developed. These are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Propositions: Context of influences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The primary international influences on curriculum policy reforms in higher education in Chile lies with the ‘first world’, particularly the US, the UK and Europe, and in their top-ranking universities, which exercise hegemonic power over universities in other contexts, especially given their dominance of international league tables.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Globalisation and the global knowledge era are reshaping the concept of what is a ‘university’ in Chile, and privileging neoliberal policies and practices which are influencing the restructuring and reculturing the nation’s higher education institutions.

3. The structure of the higher education system in Chile is characterized by a lack of national policies and legal frameworks, while simultaneously there is as extensive autonomy for individual universities to manage their own curriculum policy reforms. The associated lack of central control enhances diversity across the higher education sector in Chile, compared to many other countries where national control is stronger.

**Research Question 2: The context of policy text production**

Research Question 2: What are the key characteristics of the context of policy text production at the three universities studied and how are they produced?

A summary of themes and subthemes relating to the context of policy text production at the meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels within the three universities studied is outlined below in Table 9.2. Policy text production at the macro (national) level is not included because, as was outlined above, there is a lack of national higher education policy in general, and no national policy on university curriculum in particular, in Chile.
Table 9.2 Policy text production of curriculum transformations at the three universities studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contexts</th>
<th>Themes (numbered) and subthemes (asterisks *)</th>
<th>Curriculum policy transformations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Meso (university administration data) | 1. Ideological hybridization  
* Major curricular structure change  
* Inclusive liberalism  
* Mixture of international curricular structures | 1. Ideological hybridization  
* Neoliberalism & related ideologies |
| | 2. Increasing external accountability  
* Market accountability  
* International & social accountability | 2. Power distribution  
* Tensions between top-down & bottom-up  
* Perspectives of bottom-up |
| | 3. Power distribution  
* Perspectives of top-down policy process | 3. Resistance  
* Resistance as positive  
* High resistance |
| | 4. Resistance  
* Medium resistance | |

As is clear above, there are four dominant themes related to the context of policy text production, namely ideological hybridization, external accountability, power distribution and resistance. Each is now discussed below separately. However, it is important to keep in mind that there is significant overlap and intersection not only between themes, but also between subthemes.

**Ideological hybridization**

The first theme identified in relation to the context of policy text production in the three universities investigated is ideological hybridization. This includes the subthemes of neoliberalism and related ideologies such as inclusive liberalism; major change in curricular structures; and a blend of international curricular structures.
At the universities studied, ideologies such as neoliberalism and inclusive liberalism were perceived to underpin the new curriculum policies. On this at a broader level, Rosow and George (2015) have argued that neoliberalism is the main ideology accompanying globalisation, and has been normalized in higher education discourses in Chile (Simbürger & Donoso, 2018). However, the dominance of a neoliberal ideology is not universal at the three universities studied. Accordingly, a blend of curriculum models which can be described as a ‘hybrid of curriculum policies’ prevails, as it does elsewhere in the higher education sector in Chile, including in relation to curriculum structures (Espinoza, 2014).

The concept of hybridity in curriculum policy can be seen in terms of partial policy transfer (Hartmann, 2008) between different jurisdictions. Within the context of the three universities studied, it relates to importing and combining curriculum models from particularly powerful US and UK universities, namely, those at the top of international league tables. This prompts one to recall Hartmann’s (2008, p. 217) reference to a hybrid of a US and European education position influencing curriculum structures across much of the world. Again, the situation at the three universities studied in Chile demonstrated the influence of this hybridization of international models.

Arguably, the concept of ‘policy learning’ is preferable to that of ‘policy borrowing’ across jurisdictions, as it emphasizes the active agency of policy actors in negotiating site-specific policies and practices (Vidovich, 2009). However, the indications were that a process of relatively uncritical ‘policy borrowing’ took place at the three universities studied in Chile. Overall, the neoliberal capitalist economic system constitutes the framework in which universities were performing. This is characterized by a move on their part to increasingly adopt such values as individual competitiveness and maximizing profit, and to this being evident in curriculum policy texts.
The resulting hybrid curriculum policies and ideological hybridization, were reflected in the way academics work within the three universities studied in Chile. Here, a ‘theory world’, defined as the predominance of ideas more than practices (Burk-Morss, 2003), prevailed over an ideology of autonomy for ‘organic intellectuals’ (Bourdieu, 1984; Gramsci, 2005). On this notion of ‘organic intellectuals’, Gramsci (2005) argued that the role of universities and academics is that of thinking and reimagining a new society. However, according to Giroux (2004) and others, an ideology of market fundamentalism exported from the US, has allowed neoliberalism to undermine the role of universities in promoting social justice in many countries.

Neoliberalism, Giroux (2004) maintained, has not only dissolved the bonds of sociality and reciprocity, but has also undermined the nature of social obligations by defining civil society through an appeal to market-driven values exclusively. On this, some scholars (e.g. Hill & Kumar, 2012; Smele, Siew-Sarju, Chou, Breton & Bernhardt, 2017) have argued that alternative (political) discourses to neoliberalism are needed, and that universities should be contributing to this. Again, one is inclined to subscribe to this view in relation to the situation in Chile, and particularly in relation to the three universities studied.

As expressed above, behind the policy text production of the new curriculum policies at the three universities studied lay specific ideologies. The study reported here conceived of ideology as a certain vision of the world. Therefore, the belief that curriculum was objective or neutral must be questioned (Torres, 1994); the curriculum reflects myriad ways in which power remains invisible, yet serves the interests of elites (Giroux, 2004). On this, Gramsci (2005) proposed that education, as a key institution of society, should be a site where hegemony is disputed. As a result, he promoted the notion of critical pedagogy.
The study that has been reported in previous chapters also identified two related models of curriculum that were dominating in the three universities studied, namely a ‘liberal-arts’ style model operating within a ‘college’ system and the ‘competency-based’ curriculum. Together, they have spawned a deconstruction of the traditional university subject through modularization and the cross curricular key generic skills movement and competency-based developments. Such a pattern has been noticed internationally by De la Harpe and Thomas (2009). The pattern also supports Vidovich’s (2012) point that different curriculum policy initiatives have been observed in the last two decades in higher education around the globe. Also, it finds justification in studies providing evidence about the competency-based model being successful in other Latin American jurisdictions (Pereira, Giménez & Tusing, 2017).

More specifically in relation to the three universities studied, two distinct reform patterns were visible, namely, a separation of generalist undergraduate programs from specialist and professional education at the postgraduate level, or generalist compulsory core programs which run in parallel with specialist and professional education at the undergraduate level. Regarding such observations, Cunningham, Key and Capron (2016) have argued for the need to produce more research to assess the effects of new curriculum models across the world. In Chile, some efforts have been made in this direction (Jerez, Valenzuela, Pizarro, Hasbun, Valenzuela & Orsini, 2015), but more work is needed.

**External accountability**

The second theme generated in relation the context of policy text production at the universities investigated is **increasing external accountability**. Related subthemes included market accountability, and international and social accountability which were evident in the data.
Regarding accountability in education broadly, Vidovich and Slee (2001) have identified a typology of different types of accountability mechanisms according to the direction of the accountability relationship. These are ‘upward’, ‘outward’, ‘inward’, and ‘downward’ accountabilities. At the same time, they acknowledge that there is often a hybridization of these, rendering accountability relationships increasingly complex in a global knowledge society.

‘Upward’ or vertical accountability, which is also referred to as managerial accountability (Vidovich, 2008), sees academics as being accountable to their line managers within universities, and universities, in turn being accountable to governments. ‘Outward’ accountability involves being answerable to groups in the community. This includes, academics and universities being accountable to employers and other ‘customers’. Together ‘upward’ accountability and ‘outward’ accountability, are focused on matters external to an organization such as a university. By contrast, ‘inward’ accountability and ‘downward’ accountability are centred more on accountability within the organization, with the former including accountability to self and to the profession, and the latter including accountability of senior staff members to more junior staff members in providing necessary conditions to optimise performance.

Vidovich (2018) has argued that ‘upward’ accountability and ‘outward’ accountability in higher education are the forms which have developed most over the last decades, and that they are associated with a neoliberal ideology and a quantitative logic focused more on ‘proving’ than actually ‘improving’ quality. In the three universities studied in Chile reported upon earlier, ‘upward’ and ‘outward’ accountability to enhance university national and international competitiveness were very much emphasized.

Some commentary in the literature on education in Latin America broadly (e.g. Rezende, 2010) has pointed to positive effects of increasing managerial and market
accountability in higher education. However, the introduction of management approaches from the business world, with an underpinning neoliberal ideology, still needs to be carefully examined in relation to universities and their functions in society. In relation to this, it was noted at the three universities studied in Chile, that increased demands for accountability have created significant pressure for academics, with an increase in workload and with resources, including time, often being diverted from research and teaching.

**Power distribution**

The third theme generated in relation to the context of policy text production is **power distribution**. This contains the subthemes of top-down policy processes; bottom-up policy processes; and tensions between both.

Regarding the decision-making processes relating to university curriculum policy text production, three different flows appeared. First, a group, mostly from the meso or university administration level, held that the processes were being directed from top-down. Other groups, mostly from the micro or academic level, as well as statements in policy documents, proposed that policies had been designed and decided upon from the bottom-up. A third group, again primarily academics also working at the micro (academics) level, saw curriculum policy text production as manifesting a tension between bottom-up and top-down processes. By contrast, official policy documents identified a bottom-up direction, with high levels of consultation and participation.

Studies about policy production in higher education, like those of Disterheft, Caeiro, Ramos and Azeiteiro (2012) and Zohar and Cohen (2016), have indicated that a blend of top-down and bottom-up policy processes seems to produce policy outcomes deemed satisfactory by most stakeholders. By contrast, participants at the three universities studied in Chile tended, in general, to describe curriculum policy production as being top-down and as reflecting
aspects of authoritarianism which, arguably, has been inherited from the last military dictatorship in the country (Dávila, 2013) and the tendency it created towards adopting a vertical distribution of power within universities. Research conducted in other jurisdictions by Liu (2012) and Tai (2015), also indicate that certain cultures that value hierarchy and authoritarianism have bolstered privatization and elitism as part of the ascendancy of neoliberal policies, and as a result, have promoted a deepening of inequalities.

Finally, while the study indicated that there was some consultation with academics during the policy text production phase, there was only very limited consultation with students. This calls to mind Elwood’s study (2013) in England, where he found that there can be a lack of meaningful consultation regarding what students see as ‘higher level’ policy agendas, and that this can have negative implications for universities. In particular, he argued, it can undermine the attainment of optimal education outcomes.

**Resistance**

The fourth theme generated regarding the context of policy text production is *resistance*. This includes the subthemes of medium resistance, resistance as positive and high resistance.

Some identified particular individuals as being resistance policy actors, or ‘detractors’, during policy text production. This calls to mind the work of researchers like Levinson, Sutton and Winstead (2009), and Rizvi and Lingard (2010), who have stated that policy itself functions as an ideology, while also being informed by the ideology of policy actors, and that this can generate conflict. Research has also been undertaken that indicates that less dominant actors, including academics, can still wield power through adopting roles of resistance and/or undermining policy (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992; Louvel, 2013). A possible outcome, then, is that ‘hybrid policies’ and ‘ideological hybridization’ can occur as accommodations are made.
with different perspectives and positions during policy text production. This was the situation at each university studied.

In order to better understand resistance of the type noted above, an examination of the relationship between the state and education is helpful. Focusing on this, the concept of education hegemony (Gramsci, 2005) facilitated an analysis of how the state can spread a certain vision of the world (Mayo, 2015). Gramsci’s (2005) position is that the state can create the conditions for hegemonic social classes to persist and expand their power not only through coercion, but also through the persuasion and adherence of the subaltern and less powerful classes of society. This allows one to see the resistance of certain academics at the three universities studied in Chile as a challenging of a ‘neo-hegemony’, especially in relation to the new curriculum policies.

The term ‘neo-hegemony’ is appropriate because the traditional definition of hegemony refers to the process by which dominant culture maintains its dominant position (Felluga, 2015), thus implying total dominance and a situation where hybridization cannot take place. Neo-hegemony, by contrast, is consolidated by a dominant class when consensus is achieved between political and civil societies (Mayo, 2015). In other words, the state, as an instrument of hegemony, controls people’s consciences. Thus, there is a direct relationship between the role of the state and education. Education institutions, such as universities, then, can be seen as being spaces in which “the collective is created, and a social conformity is achieved, where intellectual and non-intellectual castes, governors and governed, elite and followers, and leaders are directly linked” (Gramsci, 2005, p.61).

A concept related to education hegemony is that of ‘sulbalternity’. According to Gramsci (2005), subordinate people do not simply adapt to hegemony or negotiate. Rather, they can also break that domination. ‘Sulbalternity’, thus, means disputing and proposing new
political relationships and new cultural forms. This process was operating at the three universities studied in Chile. It was particularly evident in academics’ resistance discourses. This, of course, does not mean that the resistance generated new power relationships permanently. Rather, the detection of inconsistencies in the policies gave detractors opportunities to contest power in higher education from perspectives other than the hegemonic one.

Various studies about conflict and resistance (e.g. Reale & Seeber, 2010; Sapir & Oliver, 2017) have also identified a repertoire of coupling processes and framing strategies used by academics having to contend with organizational conflict within universities during policy text production. Further, such works have identified discourses related to loose-coupling in academic settings. Moreover, research undertaken by Bache and Taylor (2003) in Kosovo, on resistance to policy transfer from the UK, concluded that taking account of detractors when constructing policy was of crucial importance.

To conclude this section on the context of curriculum policy text production, then, the three key propositions outlined below were developed.

**Propositions: Context of policy text production**

4. Neoliberalism is the main ideology reflected in university curriculum policy text production in Chile. However, a mix of other models and values which result in ideological hybridization and hybrid curriculum policies, are also evident.

5. A main feature of neoliberal curriculum policies in universities in Chile is a demand for high levels of external accountability, and especially market accountability.

6. The individuals having the highest levels of authority within universities in Chile are those designing and making decisions on curriculum policies. Also, while a degree of
authoritarianism is evident during policy text production, some consultation and bottom-up processes, as well as resistance voices and practices from academics within universities, are also evident.

**Research Question 3: The context of policy practices and effects (enactment) within universities**

Research Question 3: What are the policy practices and effects (enactment) of curriculum policies at the selected universities studied in Chile?

It is important at this point to take into account that curriculum policies were enacted in different ways at each different university studied, due to the relevance of context. At the same time, the following general themes and subthemes related to the context of policy practices and effects (enactment) at meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels were generated in relation to each university studied, as shown in Table 9.3.
Table 9.3 Curriculum policy practices and effects (enactment) at the three universities studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes (numbered) and subthemes (asterisks *)</th>
<th>Curriculum policy transformations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contexts</td>
<td>Meso (university administration data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy practices</td>
<td>1. Changes *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Change in role *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Change in expectations *</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Change in infrastructure *</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Cultural change *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Positive perspectives on change *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Improvement in performance indicators *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Advocacy *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Disjunctions between policy &amp; practices *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Policy-practice gap *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Persistence of old practices &amp; structures *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Micro-curricular issues *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Lack of resources *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Conservatism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principal themes, as can be seen above, are as follows: **changes; positive perspectives of change**; and **disjunctions between policy and practices**. Each of these is now discussed below. At the same time, it is again important to emphasize that there is significant overlap and intersection between them.

**Changes**

The first theme is that of **changes**. The following subthemes were also generated: change in role; change in expectations; change in infrastructure; cultural change; change in academic leadership; new staff employed; and expectations of autonomy. To envision policy practices as rational and following a straight course is simplistic (Braun et al., 2011). In order
to better comprehend those changes during the policy enactment, it is important to consider the settings in which they have been taking place.

Following accelerated developments in higher education in developed countries over the past twenty years, attention is now also being focused on higher education policy and practices in developing countries (Jashari, 2014). The focus of most of these reforms has been on improving ‘quality’ in higher education systems. This is particularly so since the signing of the European Bologna Agreement of 1999 (Kehm, 2010), including in Latin American countries (Pinto de Almeida, Fávero & Tonieto, 2016). However, there have been diverse responses from institutions, particularly because governments often want to steer higher education policy, yet also desire to provide progressively less and less funding for the sector (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009). In Chile, for example, public spending by the state in higher education in 2012, was less than the average level of OECD countries (Bernasconi, 2012). As a result, there is still uncertainty about improving conditions and achieving both quality and equity for all citizens in the country through the curriculum changes investigated.

**Positive perspectives on change**

The second theme generated in relation to policy enactment is that of positive perspectives on change. Associated subthemes are as follows: improvement in performance indicators; advocacy; formalization of processes; and work placement of students.

Even though participants at the three universities studied deemed that it might be a bit early for them to be assessing the enactment of the curriculum reforms, they largely tended to support and trust the new policies. Recognition of each university internationally was promoted as being evidence of positive enactment, as was improvement on such indicators as student retention rates and graduation rates. On this matter, Roberts (2018), speaking regarding international trends, held that professional staff within universities can contribute positively to
the experience of students by providing a ‘quality service’ and understanding students as ‘customers’. This pointed to the existence of organizational commitment to reform reported by various participants. Others, saw such an approach as anathema to what universities should be about.

According to some (e.g. Jing & Zhang, 2014; Roberts, 2018), organizational commitment is fundamental for positive engagement in institutional performance assessment in higher education. Some researchers (e.g. Oliver & Hyun, 2011) have also asserted that a collectively shared guiding vision of the curriculum provides a strong foundation for a comprehensive curriculum review process, and for embracing curriculum development as a shared responsibility amongst academic faculty members and administration staff. Such assumptions come from organizational theories. However, from a more critical perspective, they can be understood as discourses of monopolization and neo-hegemony (Mayo, 2015). Specifically, in relation to the three universities studied in Chile, a ‘logic of productivity’ (Dirk & Gelderblom, 2017) prevailed.

Regarding the context of policy enactment, there was also a view at the three universities studied that a logic of continuous ‘training’ of academic staff had been installed. This can be seen to be related to ‘academic capitalism’ (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) and to neoliberalism. One of the possible associated effects on staff is that it can push staff towards what some have called ‘self-programmable labour’ (Castells, 2000), thus promoting the value of ‘competitiveness’ amongst them. This notion of ‘self-programmable labour’ has been described as being work that is reconverted with new technologies, and in which the worker must also be self-programming in the sense of being capable of adapting to the new demands. Some (e.g. Paroloa et al., 2015; Croucher & Woelert, 2016; Jessop, 2017) have, in turn,
contended that such self-programming can create high levels of uncertainty and insecurity amongst university teachers.

Regarding other new practices resulting from changes in policies, data collected at the three universities studied indicate that a heightened expectation of autonomy for students existed more than previously. And yet, students were mainly absent from deliberations during the processes of policy text production and the enactment. Consequently, as Roberts, Gentry and Townsend (2011) have noted regarding elsewhere, it is difficult not to conclude that student power was undermined. This, in turn, is likely to have been unwise given that involvement in policy formation processes is fundamental for successful policy enactment in higher education (Kelly, Fair & Evans, 2017).

At the broader geographical level, critical theorists in Latin America have highlighted the importance of engagement in political struggles in order to transform universities to achieve equity and democracy (Novaes, 2015) as well as achieve ‘quality’. In Chile, however, apart from the student movement, little in this regard has happened, leaving higher education decision-making in the hands of a few senior administrators (Mayol & Azócar, 2011). The indications also in relation to the three universities studied are that the curriculum changes have reinforced the situation. This corresponds to what some scholars (e.g. Novaes, 2015), see as a ‘counter reformation’ in education in Latin America, which is taking place through a theoretical ‘cleaning out’ of curricula and ignoring issues of social class within them. For some (e.g. Stromquista & Sanyal, 2013; Novaes, 2015; Espinoza, 2017) this has meant that inside universities, academics are producing ‘alienated work’, in the sense that its value is not for them. Rather, it is appropriated by the university, which is acting as a business. On this, the curriculum policies and practices at the three universities studied reflected a lack of social conscience and class consciousness. At the same time, the curriculum changes were not
depoliticized as there was a distinct neoliberal orientation to the political framework of the new curriculum policies and their enactment.

**Disjunctions between policy & practices**

A third theme generated is that of **disjunctions between policy and practices** in the area of curriculum reform. Associated subthemes are as follows: absence of students during policy enactment; a policy-practice gap; a persistence of old practices and structures; micro-curricular issues; a lack of resources; conservatism; students expecting a traditional curriculum model; isolated initiatives; and deficiencies in the policy.

The absence of students in the policy enactment of the new curriculum reforms has been one of the main disjunctions perceived by many participants working at the micro (academics) level in the three universities studied in Chile. Officially, in the new curriculum policy texts students and their needs were meant to be at the centre of what has been taking place. The perception, however, as to why this has not been reflected in policy enactment, is because of the persistence of old practices and structures, and students’ expectations that a traditional curriculum model should operate. According to Bernasconi (2012), this must be addressed as a matter of urgency because of the manner in which the student movement in Chile has been influencing changes in higher education over the last two decades. Nowadays, this situation is more crucial than ever, given the resurgence of the movement in March 2018, following the resolution of the Constitutional Court on the for-profit universities. Indeed, during May and June 2018 students in several universities were also protesting through strikes and ‘tomas’ (seizures of university premises). In their demands, they have been calling for the inclusion of anti-gender discrimination regulations within the universities (Lagos, 2018) and also for the inclusion of gender issues on the university curriculum. On this, the press and some scholars have been reporting on what they were calling a ‘feminist tomas’ or ‘feminist seizure’ movement, while students have labelled their actions as ‘feminist protests’. All of this indicates
that values relating to gender and equity now need to be defined and addressed more clearly than previously in Chile.

Specifically in relation to examining weaknesses and gaps identified in the context of policy enactment, resistance theories are valuable. In this regard, deficiencies in the enactment of new curriculum policies, which were highlighted by participants at the three universities studied, exemplified the views of agents exercising resistance to the dominance of neoliberalism and associated ideologies. On this matter more broadly, Shahjahan (2014) has highlighted a view that resistance theories are a powerful tool for academics to use to battle neoliberalism in higher education. In relation to Australia, for example, Peacock, Sellar and Lingard (2013) applied the associated notion of a ‘contested field’ (Bourdieu, 1993) to demonstrate the influence of resistance in the generation of State level and institutionally-specific policies for university student-equity practices in Australia. Similarly, Sapir and Oliver (2017) demonstrated a trend of the same nature in relation to resistance in higher education policy enactment in other jurisdictions, including Israel.

To conclude this section, three further propositions were generated from the study reported here. They are as follows:

**Propositions: Context of policy practices and effects (enactment)**

7. The curriculum policy transformations in the universities studied in Chile have brought about changes in the roles, expectations and practices of academics and students.

8. In general, the new curriculum policy practices being promoted in Chile are perceived in positive terms because they are seen to have improved the performance indicators of universities and to better position students in a globalised knowledge society. These positive perspectives are, in turn, consistent with dominant neoliberal discourses and ideologies.
9. Notwithstanding the positive responses, disjunctions between policy intent and policy practices in the enactment of curriculum reforms are seen to exist. These include gaps and weaknesses in processes related to consultation with academics and students during policy enactment. Critical theories and resistance theories provide tools to understand the incoherences more deeply and their adoption could be of benefit to enhancing policy design in higher education in Chile and in other Latin American settings.

**Research Question 4: The context of longer-term policy outcomes**

Research Question 4: What are the longer-term policy outcomes of the new curriculum policies and practices in the universities studied and for changing higher education policy-scapes, nationally in Chile and globally?

A summary of themes and related subthemes generated with regard to the context of longer-term policy outcomes at the meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels within each university studies is presented below in Table 9.4.
Table 9.4 Longer-term curriculum policy outcomes in the universities studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes (numbered) and subthemes (asterisks *)</th>
<th>Curriculum policy transformations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contexts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Meso (university administration data)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Quality enhancement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2. Improvement of the HE structure in Chile</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Innovative model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Europeanization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3. Criticisms of the new policies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Social impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Weak initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Unexpected outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Universities &amp; system neo-hegemonized in Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Equity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above identifies three themes, namely **quality enhancement; improvement of the higher education structure in Chile; and criticisms of the new policies**. As with previous themes, each is discussed separately. Again, however, it is necessary to keep in mind that they were all highly interrelated.

**Quality enhancement**

The first theme generated is **quality enhancement**. The subthemes of consistency and also improvement of the quality of education in universities studied, were identified. Participants and documents asserted explicitly that the main outcome of these curriculum policy changes that have been undertaken will led to an improve in the ‘quality’ of higher education, even though there was no consensus at the three universities studied as to what ‘quality’ is.

There has been a major emphasis on policies promoting ‘quality’ in higher education around the globe following the signing of the Bologna Agreement in Europe in 1999 and the
publication of a series of recent OECD reports (e.g. OECD, 2008; 2013). The main approaches to ‘quality’ adopted, however, had come from new management theories (Ruso, Filipović & Pejović, 2017). The results of the study being reported here suggest that while the curriculum reforms have been intended to enhance ‘quality’ and ‘equity’ in Chile, this may not be manifested in practice. Instructive on this is research (e.g. Espinoza, 2015; Leihy & Salazar, 2017) which has asserted that management technologies from the business world are only of limited value when it comes to improving higher education in Chile. This is because of the ‘crisis in education’ and of major economic and social inequalities evident in the country (OECD, 2013). It is also why Espinoza and González (2012) have argued that the accreditation system in Chile has many limitations and challenges that need to be faced.

According to Chile’s National Accreditation Commission (National Accreditation Commission, 2010), progress has been made in terms of accreditation and improving ‘quality’ in higher education in the nation. However, challenges in the form of a distrust embedded in the culture of higher education institutions has also been noted as having a negative impact on the improvement of efficiency and the effectiveness of accreditation procedures. Also, in other Latin American countries, including Mexico, researchers such as Sagarra, Mar-Molinero and Rodríguez-Regordosa (2015), have found that ‘quality’ (albeit how they define it), has been considerably improved. Unlike Chile, however, the government of Mexico has played a major role in supporting universities financially.

The approaches that have been adopted in relation to quality enhancement at the three universities studied were hybrid policies based on a number of approaches, but with neoliberalism being the predominant one. On this, some commentary in the literature (e.g. Singh, 2011) has pointed to the challenges of using ‘hybrid’ policy models, which graft together approaches to quality and accountability with different lineages. Especially
challenging are those from the ‘global’ template informed by new management understandings of accountability and cost effectiveness, namely, neoliberalism. Also, there can be problems with combining this with priorities generated at local settings, where the interest is more in equity and social transformation (Singh, 2011). Thus, a challenge for countries like Chile lies in developing a practical fit between prevailing neoliberalism and local goals related to both quality and equity.

In like manner, participants at the three universities studied expressed the importance of ‘consistency’ for achieving ‘quality’. They defined ‘consistency’ as one complying with what is declared in policy documents. They also stated that this requires that the new curriculum needs to focus on both ‘quality’ policy enactment and ‘quality’ in policy intent.

Research on consistency in the European higher education process aimed at improving quality (e.g. Elken & Stensaker, 2011; Schmidt, 2017) has indicated that much variety can be found in how, and to what extent, various policy areas are linked to ‘quality’. Also, considerable political ambiguity can exist regarding how different policy areas should, and can, be combined. In their recommendations, the authors of one study (Elken & Stensaker, 2011) suggested that increasing ‘horizontalization’ of policy making in the European Union (EU) could reinforce consistency. Here, horizontalization is used to refer to the inclusion of different agents including students, academics, and administrative staff when deciding on policy within universities. Also, consistency, in terms of policy compliance in higher education is deemed to be significant because it can have an impact on student outcomes (Smart, 2010).

**Improvement of the structure of higher education in Chile**

A second theme generated in relation to the context of longer-term outcomes is that of improvement of the higher education structure in general in Chile. Participants were asked to project forward about changes and potential longer-term outcomes of new curriculum
policies, not only in their universities but also in the higher education system in Chile in
general. Related subthemes are: innovative model; Europeanization; and competitivenes.
These are closely linked to the previous theme considered, namely that of quality enhancement.

The new curriculum models were considered at the three universities studied to be in
the ‘vanguard’ of developments. What was referred to in this regard is a belief by participants
that their institutions were at the forefront, being an innovative model for other universities in
Chile and around the world to emulate. In terms of the improvement of the structure of higher
education, the curriculum reforms were also seen to be increasing competitiveness nationally
and internationally. In this sense, a possible longer-term outcome is that curriculum
transformations in the universities studied might become a source for curriculum policy
learning for other universities in the nation that are aiming to enhance their global positioning.

A number of researchers (e.g. Tiana-Ferrer, 2014; Labas, Darabos & Orsolya, 2016)
have postulated the existence of a link between an improvement in competitiveness to the
Europeanization process of higher education systems that has been taking place. Thus, it is
held, by following the European Union and the Bologna Agreement recommendations,
universities in Chile may become more competitive in the international arena. More
specifically on this, a study in which East Asian countries and their higher education systems
were compared with those in Latin America (Lopez-Leyva & Rhoades, 2016) reported that the
most important indicator differentiating these clusters from one another was the management
of quality within universities, with East Asian countries preforming better on the international
league tables which were taken as a de facto measure of quality. At the same time, Chile’s
higher education system performs better within the Latin American region than others, and is
the most competitive there, as measured by such indicators as enrolment and the perception of
the quality of its institutions (Ugarte, 2014), as defined by rankings as the Quacquarelli
Symonds World University Ranking. At the same time, such internal challenges as uneven quality (National Accreditation Commission, 2010; Espinoza, 2012) continue to exist across the nation.

**Criticism of the new policies**

The third theme generated in relation to the three universities studied is that of criticisms of the new policies. It includes such subthemes as social impact, weak initiatives, unexpected outcomes, universities and systems under a neo-hegemony, and equity.

Overall, the central theme here relates to participants, and especially those at the micro (academics) level, being critical of the dominance of neoliberal policies and questioning the possible longer-term outcomes of the new curriculum policies. Related to this, notions of ‘equity’ being invisible in the policy discourses, were highlighted. Some are aware that in education, ‘equity’ encompasses a wide variety of education models, programs, and strategies that may be considered fair, but not necessarily equal (Anagnostopoulos, Lingard & Sellar, 2016). One definition of ‘equity’ focuses on inputs, and this translates into providing equality of access to education. This approach seems to be the predominant one in many developed countries (OECD, 2008). By contrast, a second approach to ‘equity’ is one of providing unequal inputs, allocating resources according to needs, which will more likely translate into equity of outcomes, and has been described as ‘treating unequals, unequally’ (Vidovich, 2013).

What was particularly noticeable when studying the situation in Chile is that ‘equity’ policies and discourses of social inclusion and social cohesion in higher education were promoted during the last government of Michelle Bachelet (2014-2018). This is especially so in relation to the law passed providing a gratuity for university students coming from the lowest socioeconomic classes in 2015. This initiative, however, does not seem to be related to the curriculum policy reforms that have taken place at the three universities studied.
Universities in Latin America generally, and in Chile specifically, have sometimes been deemed to be following a ‘macro-university model’, namely, being public and traditional universities with large numbers of enrolments (e.g. Fischman & Ott, 2018). This type of institution still has to meet great challenges in relation to access, equity and quality. At the same time, a variety of curriculum models, including the US college model and the European Bologna model are starting to become very influential in Chile (Bernasconi, 2008; Figueroa, 2008), including at the three universities studied. Furthermore, matters of ‘equity’ were not explicitly detailed in these. Rather, the assumption seemed to be that the improvement in ‘quality’ will bring about ‘equity’. On this, it is helpful to be reminded that internationally in a climate of marketisation and competition, a de-emphasis on ‘equity’ is becoming an unintended consequence (Espinoza, 2014). Invisibility of ‘equity’, accordingly, can take various forms, including not giving consideration to what knowledge is privileged in the curriculum, who it privileges, and whether or not all students have opportunities to succeed with the resources available to them. All of that represents challenges for the introduction of new curriculum policies in all universities throughout Chile. Here it is also valuable to recall Raaper’s (2016) work at one UK university, which led him to criticize defining ‘quality’ in neoliberal terms, and to reveal that while academics resisted neoliberal policies, they were not able to act against them due to ‘pervasive’ power relationships established by the dominant ideology.

At this point one is also prompted to recall the position of those who hold that it is necessary to include ethical considerations in policy processes (Leihy & Salazar, 2017). On this, Rubaii (2016) has asserted that the state should play a prominent role. Even though there has been progress on ‘equity’ in terms of access in Chile (Muhr, 2016), there are still challenges in terms of ‘equity’ of outcomes in both higher education and society in general in Chile (Espinoza, 2015).
To conclude this section, the following proposition regarding the context of longer-term outcomes of the new curriculum policies at each university studied has been proposed. It must be highlighted that this policy context is of a different order than the first three policy contexts as it projects into the future rather than being on observations at the time of data collection between 2015 and 2016.

**Proposition: Context of longer-term policy outcomes**

10. Notions of quality in current curriculum policies in higher education in Chile lack social justice and equity dimensions; instead a competitive neoliberal ideology dominates. It is considered, however, that the production and enactment of more critical approaches could help to promote both quality and equity in the sector. Consequently, the concept of equity should be explicitly adopted as a longer-term goal and outcome of university curriculum policies.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a meta-analysis along the whole policy trajectory of the production and enactment of new curriculum policies in Chilean universities, from the perspectives of participants within the higher education system, coupled with the results of the analysis of documents. Themes and subthemes generated were discussed in relation to the literature within each policy context, namely the context of influences, the context policy text production, the context of practices and effects (enactment), and the context of longer-term outcomes. In total, ten propositions were developed from the analysis. While applying specifically to the three universities studied, they can also provide ‘food for thought’ about university curriculum policy development in other jurisdictions. There is no intention to generalize the results of this research.
Dominant international influences along the policy trajectory investigated were underpinning an intense push for changing university curricula in the global knowledge economy. National (Chilean) and local institutional influences were also significant. The policy text production processes were characterized by the highest authorities within universities making top-down decisions, with aspects of authoritarianism evident. These processes have resulted in neoliberal curriculum policies with particular characteristics such as increasing external accountability, especially market forms. Most participants had a relatively positive perspective on enactment of new curriculum practices, however, there were also critics within the three universities studied, whom identified gaps and weaknesses. It was considered by some participants that in order to have more positive longer-term outcomes in relation to curriculum reform, changes in ideology and the inclusion of more critical approaches in pedagogy are urgently needed.
CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction

The study presented in this thesis consisted of an analysis of curriculum policy transformation in universities in Chile. The main aim was to generate understandings about the perspectives of participants working at the macro (national), meso (university administration) and micro (academics) levels with regards to those transformation. To this end, three universities were studied, each of which has been engaged in radical curriculum changes over the last decade. The origins of the changes, however, can be traced back to the 1980s, when the country was under military dictatorship. Developments set in train at that point resulted in a shift within the nation to a neoliberal economic agenda and to the adoption of associated international models by some universities.

Cognizance of the latter situation provided the stimulus for engaging in the study that has been reported here, which was framed within a ‘policy trajectory’ framework. The interpretivist paradigm underpinned the empirical component of the research, while critical theory guided the meta-analysis which focused on changing power relationships. In line with this approach, a qualitative design was deemed appropriate. Semi-structured interviews and documents were analyzed.

This is concluding chapter. It is organized in four sections. First, an overview of the results of the study is presented. Secondly, implications for policy improvement in higher education in Chile are outlined. Thirdly, implications for curriculum policy improvement within universities in the country are presented, as are proposals for engaging in future research lines.
Overview of the Results of the Study

A summary of the main results of the study reported in this thesis is now outlined. The major research questions which guided it and which were framed within a policy trajectory framework, related to four major policy contexts, namely, the context of policy influences, the context of policy text production, the context of policy practices and effects (enactment), and the context of longer-term outcomes. The results in relation to each of these are now considered.

What are the key influences from global, national and local levels on curriculum policy transformations at the universities studied in Chile?

The most significant perceived international influence on curriculum policy reforms in higher education in Chile comes from the ‘first world’, particularly the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and other European countries, and most notably from their top-ranking universities. Such institutions are seen to exercise hegemonic power over universities in other settings because of their dominance in international league tables and the popularity of their curriculum models. The European Bologna Agreement and its associated processes are also highlighted in this regard.

Globalisation and the global knowledge era are also considered to be reshaping the concept of what is a ‘university’ around the globe, including in Chile. It is argued that these forces have been accompanied by policies and practices of a neoliberal character which are influencing the restructuring and reculturing of Chile’s higher education institutions.

The actual structure of the higher education system in Chile is characterized by a lack of national policies and legal frameworks for curriculum policy design, while simultaneously extensive autonomy exists for individual universities to manage their
own curriculum policy reforms. The associated lack of central control enhances diversity across the higher education sector in Chile. This contrasts with the situation in many other countries, where national control is stronger.

**What are the key characteristics of the context of policy texts production at the universities studied and how are they produced?**

The curriculum transformations at the universities studied correspond to different initiatives that are taking place both between universities and within them. As stated above, neoliberalism is the main ideology reflected in university curriculum policy text production in Chile currently. However, a mix of other models and values which have brought about ideological hybridization and hybrid curriculum policies, is also evident. Furthermore, what is termed as the ‘crisis in the education system’ at all levels in the country has highlighted the negative effects of neoliberalism and its values on higher education. In particular, a main feature of neoliberal curriculum policies in universities in Chile is an increasing demand for outward or external accountability. On this, a special type of market accountability which views the role of universities as human capital ‘trainers’, is influencing the curriculum policy changes studied.

The individuals who have the highest levels of authority within universities in Chile are those designing and making decisions on curriculum policies. Also, while a degree of authoritarianism inherited from the last dictatorship in the country is evident in policy text production, some consultation and bottom-up processes, as well as resistance voices and practices from academics within universities, are also evident.
What are the policy practices and effects (enactment) of curriculum policies at the universities studied?

The curriculum policy transformations in the universities studied have brought about changes in the roles, expectations and practices of academics and students in Chile. On this, variations in university infrastructure, cultural change, change in academic leadership, the employment of new staff, and new expectations of students is also deemed to be evident.

In general, the new curriculum policy practices being promoted are perceived in positive terms because they are seen to have improved the performance indicators of universities and to better position students in a globalised knowledge society. In particular, recognition of each university as being well-placed internationally is promoted as being evidence of positive enactment, as is improvement on such indicators as student retention rates and graduation rates. Such positive perspectives are consistent with dominant neoliberal discourses and ideologies and also are related to a form of academic capitalism.

Notwithstanding the positive evaluations noted above, disjunctions between policy intent and policy practices in the enactment of curriculum reforms are also seen to exist. These include gaps and weaknesses in processes related to consultation with academics and students during policy enactment. On this, critical theories and resistance theories provide tools to understand the associated incoherencies more deeply. The embracement of such theories by policy makers could be of benefit to policy design in higher education in Chile and in other Latin American settings.
What are the longer-term policy outcomes of the new curriculum policies and practices in the universities studied and for changing higher education policy-scapes, nationally in Chile and globally?

In the conduct of the study reported in this thesis it was noticed that quality enhancement is highlighted amongst key participants as being the most relevant possible longer-term outcome. However, notions of quality in current curriculum policies in higher education in Chile lack social justice and equity dimensions; a competitive, economically oriented neoliberal ideology dominates. Accordingly, in the production and enactment of curriculum policies the adoption by key players of more critical approaches could help to promote both quality and equity in the sector. Also, the concept of equity could be explicitly adopted as a possible longer-term outcome of university curriculum policies.

Implications for Improvements in Curriculum Policy and Practices in Chile

With regard to the policy influences identified in the study reported in this thesis, the Bologna process has been very influential, although without challenges to it being made. It has promoted the adoption of a three-cycle Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system not only in Europe but beyond. Concurrently, the associated European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System has been used by many countries, along with common standards for quality assurance.

At the same time, the implementation of agreed Bologna goals and key commitments vary substantially between countries (European Union, 2018). During May 2018, the 48 Education Ministers members, who were signatories to the agreement, met in Paris and adopted a declaration entitled *Communiqué*, and defined their priorities beyond 2020. They agreed to promote inclusive and innovative approaches to learning and teaching, integrated transnational cooperation in higher education, research and
innovation, and securing a sustainable future for our planet through higher education. The new declaration also calls for stronger and better support for under-represented and vulnerable groups in society so that they can have access to higher education (European Commission, 2018).

In the meanwhile, universities in the US are moving against the impact of Trump’s administration and the rising need for sustainable funding to survive (Rodrik, 2018), while at the time of writing there is uncertainty for universities in the UK because of the Brexit negotiations (Universities UK, 2018). Currently, some international organizations have been making their presence felt in Chile. Such is the case with the World Bank which, during March 2017, started working with the MINEDUC on a 10-year strengthening program for state universities in the nation. The project is based on a loan to provide access to state universities for students from low socioeconomic classes (MINEDUC, 2017).

In 2015 a national gratuity reform policy was also introduced in Chile to help to provide access to a series of universities for students from low socioeconomic classes. However, there was a change of government in Chile at the beginning of 2018. Even though the Law of Higher Education, which includes the ‘gratuity reform’ was published during May 2018, some modifications were made to it. Specifically, there was a rejection by the Constitutional Court of Chile in March 2018, of the section of the law prohibiting universities from making profit.

Some experts in higher education, such as the sociologist José Joaquín Brunner, have also criticized the university reforms in Chile (Nahas, 2018), especially because it will have an impact on the high levels of autonomy that universities hold up to this point. Nevertheless, in June 2018 a new state funding system for higher education was
announced by President Piñera. This project is aimed at providing a gratuity to students who belong to the 60% of the poorest families in Chile, with the higher education institutions that partake in it covering additional costs. Once they graduate and gain employment, students will then pay up to 10% of their salary until the amount expended on them has been paid off. Thus, what they get really corresponds to a student loan.

The feminist and student movements that were evident during 2018 have also had an impact on higher education and curriculum policy in Chile. They have, for example, generated a gender agenda in all three universities studied. Through activities such as debates, strikes and forums, universities have been pushed by them to generate policies to try to ensure that gender rights are upheld and to include related issues on the curriculum.

Regarding the local level at each of the three universities studied, little has changed. The website of ‘University A’ is advertising Teacher Development workshops which are organized by the Directorate of Educational Quality which is overseen by the Academic Vice-chancellor. At ‘University B’, obtaining maximum accreditation given by the National Accreditation Commission is the main feature of its website. ‘University C’ keeps advertising its liberal arts model curriculum on its website. Also, during 2018 one of the three universities reported that it had made an advancement in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) international ranking, and is getting close to being one of the top 100 best universities in the world (La Tercera, 2018).
Recommendations for policy and practice at the national (Chile) level

Recommendation 1: A local emancipatory agenda which emphasizes social justice and social transformation is needed in the nation and should be promoted as a framework to help develop higher education policy. This implies defining and including ‘equity’ notions in policy, with the aim of overcoming the ‘crisis’ in education in Chile. Definitions about equity in curriculum policies to reach the desire outcomes could be included. Since politics without ideas can stimulate corruption, a more politicized debate within the university setting is necessary.

Recommendation 2: A national process of debate should be promoted for higher education in Chile. The view of the present researcher on this is that it is time for the national state, the government, all political sectors and all of the citizens to address an uncertain future in education and to promote equity and democracy in education as being central in seeking to promote social justice. The researcher’s view is that the recent history of Chile must be acknowledged so that forgiveness and peace are achieved, and that this should be reflected in higher education policy. The nation must heal wounds from its history first as a colony, and also of past violence, dictatorship and massacres.

In Chile, there is a social class which considers itself to be superior to the rest and which sometimes abuses its power. It is represented amongst those making policies within universities. For centuries, Chile has accumulated impunity and all bear responsibility. The last dictatorship left more than 40,000 dead and many missing people. Accordingly, the importance of the history of Chile must be considered when producing education policy. In particular, the definition of curriculum policy should include what happened in the nation’s recent history.
There is a need to openly discuss the effects of the last military coup and learn from it. Also, the national state and governments need to work to help all citizens desiring to have a higher education. The resources exist. There is talent, there is human capital, and there is research that has been undertaken. However, more economic support from the national state and governments in Chile to harness these resources in higher education and universities in the interest of helping the less well-off is needed.

Recommendation 3: The prevailing ‘crisis in the education system’ at all levels in Chile and the negative effects of neoliberalism and its values on higher education must be assessed and addressed urgently, and particularly when deciding on policy.

Recommendations for policy and practice at the local (university) level

Recommendation 4: Universities in Chile should pay attention to the local context when trying to successfully incorporate foreign policies and ideas so that Chile can play a major part in the global knowledge society.

Recommendation 5: Universities, when producing curriculum policy, should favour ‘policy learning’ over ‘policy borrowing’. In order to bring this about, effective and assertive communication needs to be established, between the universities and the national state, and also between the universities themselves. Having good communication is crucial for promoting social justice and equity, and can also be crucial in seeking to address education inequalities.

Recommendation 6: Universities should highlight matters of ethics and equity in their curriculum policy definitions and make explicit the ideologies that underpin them. Overall, the results of the study presented in this thesis pointed to a need for political definitions to be made clear and for the inclusion of quality and equity considerations to be made explicit in policy documents and their enactment. On this, the present researcher
considers that it is important to take the word ‘ideology’ to a broader audience and to articulate it such that the general population can identify ideologies and ask questions about their own power.

Recommendation 7: University authorities should give students a strong voice during university policy-making. On this, the present researcher believes that university authorities should listen to the perspectives of those who disagree with neoliberalism and seek to promote other values and ideologies. This is consistent also with promoting critical theories, which aim to empower the disempowered and gives them a voice in policy formulation and action.

**Implications for Future Research**

The study reported here also uncovered issues that warrant further attention. In particular, while the research focused primarily on Chile, the themes generated may have relevance across international settings and encourage active policy learning rather than uncritical policy borrowing.

Future research is needed on universities in other developing countries, and especially on the perspectives of various agents in higher education on what is taking place. Specifically, more research on students’ involvement in higher education policy is needed, including in Chile where the student movement is active and demanding. Also, similar research to that reported here but on other universities in Chile would facilitate the construction of a bigger picture, of global trends and of context-specific differences. In particular, there is a need for studies on local contexts in relation to the development and effects of new curriculum models. More research on how external accountability approaches are received would also be insightful.
Finally, research on issues related to the massification of higher education, and their relationship to democratization, quality, social justice and equity is required in Chile. This could include research about resistance practices of actors within universities and the impact they have on policy development. To this end, researchers can draw upon resistance theories and also draw upon other critical approaches to higher education policy and curriculum policy. Equally more research is urgently needed on the impact of legal frameworks that have been designed to support and to define curriculum policy.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, the researcher would like to emphasize that if there is no consensus amongst citizens in Chile about what type of higher education system is wanted, the goals and values which underpin curriculum policy changes will not be clear, and the appropriate education policies will not be selected. In other words, the vision of what is expected of universities should assist decision-making processes. On this matter, Leihy and Salazar (2017) emphasize that it is necessary to define a vision and to include a moral and ethical dimension in higher education policy in Chile. Otherwise, violence and discrimination, such as that called out against migrants and against feminist protests witnessed in Chile around the time of the data collection and analysis for this study were undertaken, will continue to occur.

The ultimate goal to which this study wants to contribute should be to changes aimed at improving the higher education system in Chile and contributing to the creation of an egalitarian education system and society. To promote this goal, other values and ideologies need to be embraced. The prevailing ‘crisis in the education system’ at all levels in Chile and the negative effects of neoliberalism and its values in higher education must be addressed when producing policy. If this is not done, then substantial improvements will remain distant aspirations.
Finally, the study reported here observed unequal power distribution and can serve as symbolic capital, to use Bourdieu’s terminology, which is as a source of information to help to unveil power relationships inside universities in Chile from the perspective of agents (internal role-players), living and experiencing the transformations of curriculum policy. It is a desire that the results will prompt others to promote change in practices within the nation’s universities and hopefully inspire more government initiatives to move beyond just embracing neoliberal ideology. It is time now to control the ‘hand of the market’, whose orchestrators are invisible to many, yet can be exposed by the conscientious who are informed.
REFERENCES


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Note: Regularly ask them for reasons for what they say. Usually through asking: Why?

Why do you say that?

**The First Research Question**

*What are the key influences from global, national and local levels on curriculum policy transformations at the three universities studied?*

Guiding questions:

1. What have been the changing patterns of influences over time? (temporal/historical influences)
2. What have been the relative influences from Latin America, Europe and the US on contemporary Chilean curriculum transformations in spatial terms?

- What does the curriculum change consist of in your institution?
- Which national influences do you recognize in this transformation?
- Which international trends do you recognize?
- Which values are behind the curriculum reforms?
- What do you think about the new curriculum aims?
- Which beliefs are behind the new curricular system?

**The Second Research Question**

*What are the key characteristics of the context of policy text production at the three universities studied and how are they produced?*
Guiding questions:

1. What are the principal features of the policy text?
2. Who produced the policy texts and what processes were used?
3. What are the similarities and differences between policy texts at the case-study universities?
   - Which documents content or explicit the curricular transformation?
   - Who elaborated these documents?

**The Third Research Question**

*What are the policy practices and effects (enactment) of curriculum policies at the selected universities studied in Chile?*

Guiding questions:

1. When, where, how and why did each university start its curriculum policy enactment?
2. What were the similarities and differences regarding the structural and curriculum reform enactment at the universities?
3. What were the international, national and local influences, both past and present, on policy enactment?
   - When did this policy implementation started?
   - Did the institution use other models for the policy implementation? Which ones?
   - What changes does this transformation involved in your work or role?
   - What is your opinion about this process?
   - What happens with students? What is expected from students in this new curriculum/model?
The Fourth Research Question

What are the longer-term policy outcomes of the new curriculum policies and practices in the universities studied and for changing higher education policy-scapes, nationally in Chile and globally?

Guiding questions:

1. How long have the curriculum change processes been underway?
2. What outcomes have been achieved to date?
3. What will be the likely outcomes at the local, national and international levels?
4. What similarities and differences can be identified regarding the structural and curriculum reform at the universities?

- Which will be the outcomes of this process for you?
- How have you experienced the change?
RESEARCH PROJECT TITLE: University curriculum transformations in context: global-local dynamics of policy processes at the university level in Chile.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER

Dear (name of participant)

You are invited to take part in a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Education degree research study named above. The research is led by Professor Tom O’Donoghue of the Graduate School of Education, University of Western Australia, assisted by the study research student, Victoria Valdebenito.

What the study is about:

The proposed study seeks to generate theory on curriculum policy in higher education. It has four main aims:

1. Identify key influences from global and national level contexts which have an impact on Chilean university curriculum policy transformations.

2. Analyze local level curriculum policy texts and practices in three case-study universities.

3. Explore how the curriculum policies and practices in the case-study universities compare with each other and with wider trends over time and place (especially in Latin-America, Europe and the US).

4. Consider the possible outcomes of new curriculum policies for the Chilean case-study universities, and for changing higher education landscapes nationally and globally.

The proposed study will make the following contributions to knowledge in the field of curriculum in higher education in Chile in the following ways:
1. It will build a much needed evidence base for Chilean university curriculum policy development for a global knowledge society.

2. It will locate contemporary Chilean university curriculum policy transformations within wider contexts of international trends.

3. It will locate contemporary Chilean curriculum policy transformations within historical patterns, both in the case-study universities and internationally.

4. It will offer a more holistic approach to understanding the phenomenon of ‘internationalizing the curriculum’.

5. It will employ an analytic framework which foregrounds both potentially homogenizing global pressures, as well as local agency, in the development of university curriculum policy.

6. It will involve conducting a detailed ‘situated case study’ analysis of curriculum policy transformations which will provide the basis for theory building.

**Taking part is voluntary:** Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. You are also free to withdraw at any time up until the stage at which data collection has been completed.

**What we will ask you to do:** The research will involve your participation in a semi-structured interview with the researcher. The interviews will be conducted at a location of your choice.

**Risks and benefits:** As all interview sessions will be conducted at a location of your choice, you will not be subjected to any foreseeable risk. The outcomes of the study, however, will provide insights which can be used to guide and refine higher education curriculum policy in Chile.

**Your answers will be confidential:** The records of this study will be kept strictly private. In any report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the report. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and only the researchers will have access to the records. (If you wish to have the recordings of your interview destroyed, we will do so after they have been transcribed). Once this research has been completed, a copy of the findings will be sent to you. It is also possible that the results will be published for academic purposes. The data will be kept securely for a period of seven years before being destroyed.

**Your participation in this study does not prejudice any right to compensation, which you may have under statute or common law.**

*Approval to conduct this research has been provided by the University of Western Australia, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures. Any person considering*
participation in this research project, or agreeing to participate, may raise any questions or
issues with the researchers at any time.

In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of researchers may raise ethics issues
or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the
Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Western Australia on (08) 6488 3703 or
by emailing to hreo-research@uwa.edu.au

All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form
and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project.

If you have questions: If you have any concerns, you can contact Professor Tom
O’Donoghue, Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia, Nedlands,
WA 6009 (Tel: +61 8 6488 3822 Email: Tom.ODonoghue@uwa.edu.au). All participants will
be provided with a copy of this letter/information sheet and consent form for their personal
records.

Yours sincerely

Professor Tom O’Donoghue
RESEARCH PROJECT TITLE: University curriculum transformations in context: global-local dynamics of policy processes at the university level in Chile.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I (name of participant) have read the information provided and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw at any time without reason and without prejudice. I consent to having the audio interviews recorded.

I understand that all information provided is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the investigator. The only exception to this principle of confidentiality is if a court subpoenas documentation. I have been advised as to what data are being collected, what the purpose is, and what will be done with the data upon completion of the research.

I agree that the research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not used.

Approval to conduct this research has been provided by the University of Western Australia, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures. Any person considering participation in this research project, or agreeing to participate, may raise any questions or issues with the researchers at any time.

In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Western Australia on (08) 6488 3703 or by emailing to hreo-research@uwa.edu.au

All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project.

Your Signature: (signature of participant) Date