

Wilfrid Laurier University

Scholars Commons @ Laurier

Sociology Major Research Papers

Sociology

2014

Understanding Difference in the Internationalization of Higher Education: A Comparative Study

Leanne MacDonald

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.wlu.ca/soci_mrp



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

MacDonald, Leanne, "Understanding Difference in the Internationalization of Higher Education: A Comparative Study" (2014). *Sociology Major Research Papers*. 5.
https://scholars.wlu.ca/soci_mrp/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology at Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sociology Major Research Papers by an authorized administrator of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact scholarscommons@wlu.ca.

**Understanding Difference in the Internationalization of
Higher Education: A Comparative Study**

By

Leanne MacDonald

Wilfrid Laurier University

2014

Abstract

International education is becoming increasingly important in higher education, but does this mean that internationalization looks the same at every university? A comparative case study examines how, why, and to what extent internationalization is implemented or decoupled at different universities. A total of fifteen qualitative interviews were carried out with those who make, manage, and implement policies and practices related to internationalization at two institutions of higher education: Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, Canada, and Georgia Southern University in Georgia, USA.

The interviews reveal that the degree of decoupling is higher at GSU than at Laurier. While macro forces, such as government policies and accreditation bodies can shape internationalization strategies, so too can the internal culture of the respective university. This research finds that there are a variety of factors that account for these differences in internationalization strategies and the degree to which they are implemented or decoupled, and demonstrates the importance of multi-level analysis in understanding organizational complexities.

Understanding Difference in the Internationalization of Higher Education: A Comparative Study

By

Leanne MacDonald

B.A., Wilfrid Laurier University, 2013

Supervisor: Dr. Lucy Luccisano

Reader: Dr. Linda Quirke

A Major Research Paper Submitted to the Department of Sociology in Partial

Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts

Wilfrid Laurier University

2014

Leanne MacDonald ©2014

All Rights Reserved

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Lucy Luccisano, for her encouragement and support throughout the graduate program, research, and MRP writing. I would also like to thank my reader, Dr. Linda Quirke, for providing detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement. Without the guidance of my committee, my MRP would not be what it is today.

I would also like to acknowledge the Department of Sociology at Wilfrid Laurier University for providing me with academic resources and financial support. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Peter Eglin for opening my mind to new ideas, Dr. Jim Overboe for always lending an ear, and Kimberley Ellis-Hale for her constant encouragement to better myself not only as a student, but as a person as well.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my fifteen participants for taking the time to share their experiences with me; this research would not have been possible without them. I would also like to thank the academics and administrators at Georgia Southern University, in particular Danielle Smith, Dr. Jeff Palis, and Emily Stallings who gave me a place to live and work while I carried out my research. I gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Canadian Federal Government grant, Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education (2010-2014), a grant held by Lucy Luccisano and Kevin Spooner. I am also thankful for the financial support provided by the Graduate Program in Sociology. This combined funding made it possible for me to carry out fieldwork at Georgia Southern University.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and friends for their reassurance and understanding over the past year. A special thank you to the friends in my program for

sharing in the good times and the bad. Getting through this program would have been impossible without your moral support and I wish you all the best in the future!

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
New Institutionalism.....	2
Research Question.....	6
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature.....	8
Institutional Context.....	8
Globalization	9
Labour Market.....	10
Geographic Location	11
Other Universities.....	14
Organizational Elements.....	14
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	18
Comparative Case Study	18
Interviews	20
Researcher’s Position.....	22
Limitations.....	23
Ethics	24
Analysis	25
Chart 1: Context	26
Chart 2: Findings	27
Chapter 4: Findings.....	28
Isomorphism.....	28
Normative Isomorphism.....	31

Mimetic Isomorphism	32
Coercive Isomorphism	33
Rational Myth	39
Georgia Southern University	39
Wilfrid Laurier University	43
Decoupling	45
Faculty and Curriculum	46
Administration	48
Decoupling	51
Chapter 5: Discussion	53
Georgia Southern University	53
Wilfrid Laurier University	56
Conclusion	59
List of Appendices	61
Appendix 1: Interview Questions	61
Appendix 2: Information Letter	63
Appendix 3: Informed Consent	66
References	70

Understanding Difference in the Internationalization of Higher Education: A Comparative Study

Chapter 1: Introduction

International education at the post-secondary level is not a new phenomenon. Early models tended to be based around student and faculty mobility, as travel was at times required in order to access the matter of one's study, such as archaeological dig sites or to gather data from a library in another country (Edwards 2007:375). During the last three decades, however, rapidly changing social, technological, economic, and political forces have placed increasing pressures on universities around the globe, prompting them to adapt and in turn change the scope and nature of their international activities (Bartell 2003:43). 'Internationalization' is the umbrella term used to refer to the policies and practices put into place by institutions of higher education in response to the forces of globalization (Altbach and Knight 2007:290). Though there continues to be much debate around the definition of the term, it has gained popularity in the education sector since the early 1980s (Knight 2004:9).

Today, internationalization encompasses much more than just mobility and often refers to methods of 'internationalizing the home' university through the development of multicultural workshops or certificates, language courses, internationalized curriculum, and so on (Nilsson 2003:31; Robson 2011:622). Internationalization may also be referred to as a 'holistic' process informing all university policies and practices (Bartell 2003:46). In most cases, the ways that internationalization is defined in the academic literature is

extremely vague, lacking distinct borders or directions. For example, how could it “inform all policies and practices”? Though internationalization in various forms is also incorporated into statements of university mission and values, it is often lacking a definition altogether. This is true of both Wilfrid Laurier University and Georgia Southern University, both under investigation in this study. Despite the amorphous nature of the concept, institutions of higher education worldwide are increasingly adopting internationalization.

New Institutionalism

How can we understand this shift in the internationalization of higher education? Why is it so popular amongst universities, despite the fact that what actually constitutes internationalization is lacking in clarity? Much academic literature (Altbach and Knight 2007; Bartell 2003; Brustein 2007; Edwards 2007) takes for granted the fact that internationalization is becoming a mainstream concept or practice in universities, given that we live in a globalized world, without thoroughly investigating why, how, or to what degree institutions of higher education incorporate it into their institutional rhetoric and practice. The new institutionalism provides a framework through which to examine and understand the proliferation of internationalization of higher education today.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983:147) argue that “highly structured organizational fields provide a context in which individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead, in the aggregate, to homogeneity in structure, culture, and output.” They state that isomorphism is the concept that best describes the process by which organizations in the same line of business become similar to one another (DiMaggio and

Powell 1983:149). Meyer and Rowan (1977:340, 346) argue that organizations become isomorphic to the institutional context or field they reside in in order to increase their legitimacy and survival, using the notion of rationalized myths to explain how this happens,

First, they are rationalized and impersonal prescriptions that identify various social purposes as technical ones and specify in a rule-like way the appropriate means to pursue these technical purposes rationally. Second, they are highly institutionalized and thus in some measure beyond the discretion of any individual participant or organization. They must, therefore, be taken for granted as legitimate, apart from evaluations of their impact on work outcomes. (Meyer and Rowan 1977:343-4).

Therefore, rationalized myths do not necessarily derive only from the external environment, but may also be fostered from within an organization. For example, though there is not necessarily a link between being a good professor and holding a PhD, institutions of higher education generally require their professors to have one. However, Hallett (2010:54) notes that myths are not necessarily erroneous, as they are “idealized cultural accounts” about the most effective way for organizations to function.

However, it can be difficult for an organization to become isomorphic with other organizations in its field as they may encounter multiple myths from various actors that differ in prominence and clarity (Meyer and Rowan 1977:354-5). Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin, and Suddaby (2008:6,11) caution that, for this reason, isomorphism should not be interpreted as synonymous with homogenization, as organizations may respond to various myths in multiple ways that are all equally legitimate. Pache and Santos (2013:93-4) note that this may be especially difficult for hybrid organizations, as they are required to satisfy demands from contradictory institutional logics. For example, universities may balance competing concerns about academic freedom and serving the public good while simultaneously being expected to operate based on market-driven logic and operate in ways that serve to make the university money.

Meyer and Rowan (1977:355) argue that, in addition to the troubles of negotiating competing myths, isomorphism may be problematic for organizations if the incorporation of particular myths counters efficient functioning of the organization. Nevertheless, organizations must appear as though they are conforming to these myths so as to gain legitimacy, survive, and possibly even obtain benefits or awards for doing so (Meyer and Rowan 1977:350-1). They state that these myths may be 'ceremonially' incorporated into the formal structure of the organization, while not actually being carried out in technical activities. For example, universities might brand themselves as 'internationalized' regardless of whether or not all professors have incorporated a global element into their curriculum. Meyer and Rowan (1977:357) argue that this separation of rhetoric and practice, or what they term 'decoupling' can help the organization maintain legitimacy while the degree to which actual tasks are carried out can be based on pragmatic concerns. Furthermore, organizations operate on a 'logic of confidence and good faith,' in which both internal and external stakeholders assume that 'everything is as it seems'. In other words, the assumption is that rhetoric and practice do, in fact, match. In these ways, organizations are able to reduce scrutiny or serious inspection of operations that could uncover the decoupled nature of the organization, resulting in a loss of legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan 1977:358-9).

To understand whether or not decoupling occurs in a university, mission statements or other policy documents should be read in order to see what claims are being made about the type of education or opportunities offered at the institution. Mission statements are a means of legitimation for universities – something normative that all institutions of higher education have. These are often used symbolically to prove to external and internal

constituents that they understand and adhere to the established norms of higher education (Delucchi 2000; Morphew and Hartley 2006). For example, a university mission statement might make reference to teaching excellence in order to signal their understanding that academics are fundamental in an institution of higher education.

In a study conducted on learning centers, Aurini (2006) found that the center's goals are defined in vague ways that are difficult to measure, inhibiting an investigation of the coupling of rhetoric and practice. Davies and Quirke (2007) add to this in their finding that private schools operating in markets that are not strongly regulated are more readily able to claim to be "qualitatively unique." For example, schools would claim to provide excellent customer care, which is more difficult to measure (Davies and Quirke 2007:84). School leaders are also noticing that students and their parents are "shopping around" for education like they would any other product to find a school that provides an education best fitting their specific needs or interests, making it important for institutions to set themselves apart from others (Aurini 2006:103). These findings could apply to the way that internationalization is used in university mission statements. For example, a university may state that it graduates students that are interculturally competent without defining what skills constitute intercultural competence or how exactly they train students to develop these skills. This then allows for decoupling to occur and deflects investigations into whether the university is actually achieving its stated goals.

One critique of the new institutionalism is that organizational sociologists working within this tradition have a tendency to take a macro, structural perspective, with only a "passing reference to micro sociology" (Hallett and Ventresca 2006:214). The problem with this approach is that it does not allow us to understand how meaning is negotiated and

experienced in local contexts. This is important, as organizations are not machines that respond automatically to the demands of their environment. Rather, people with different interests and obligations inhabit them, which may influence how myths are incorporated into the structure and functioning of the organization. These scholars (Binder 2007; Hallett and Ventresca 2006; Hallett 2010; Hirsch and Lounsbury 1997) advocate instead for a multi-level analysis that combines this macro, structural perspective with a micro perspective that attends to the agency that different organizational actors have to interpret myths and manipulate them for their own needs. Combining levels of analysis can allow for a more comprehensive explanation of organizational behaviour.

Research Question

This study aims to answer the question of how, why, and to what extent internationalization is implemented or decoupled at different institutions of higher education. In order to understand how and why institutional rhetoric and practice become decoupled, it is necessary to investigate the isomorphic pressures each institution faces, the existing culture or values of the institution that may affect how internationalization is taken up, and the degree of internal support there is for internationalization. It is important to note that decoupling is not necessarily a “fraudulent” exercise; in fact, separating rhetoric from practice may be the most appropriate strategy organizations have to manage competing pressures and maintain efficient operation (Meyer and Rowan 1977:359). In other words, it should not be said that universities are labeling themselves as internationalized while not actually undertaking any international activities. Rather, there

may be varying degrees to which universities are incorporating internationalization into their functioning based on the specific concerns of the organization and its actors.

This study seeks to employ a multi-level analysis, following critiques (Binder 2007; Hallett and Ventresca 2006; Hirsch and Lounsbury 1997) that past new institutionalist research on organizations tends to rely on overly structural, macro perspectives. Though a micro analysis is beyond the scope of this study, this research seeks to combine both macro and meso perspectives to provide a more rich explanation of internationalization at each university under investigation.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Institutional Context

In order to understand how institutions of higher education become isomorphic with one another, the institutional context must be identified. While this is a vague concept, the institutional context generally refers to “widespread social understandings (*rationalized myths*) that define what it means to be rational” (Greenwood et al. 2008:3). This context is more than just the ‘environment’ that is ‘out there’ to which organizations simply respond in automatic ways, however. Instead, university actors strategically respond to it in particular ways, and may even try to shape the institutional context itself (Greenwood et al. 2008:5-6). Globalization, the labour market, geographic location, and other universities all constitute part of the institutional context that institutions of higher education engage with and become isomorphic with, though the mechanisms through which this occurs may differ.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) add to Meyer and Rowan’s work by delineating three mechanisms through which institutional isomorphic change occurs: coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, and normative isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism refers to the “formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations” which may be subtle and implicit or forceful, originating from those upon which the organization is dependent for survival (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:150-1). Universities may experience coercive pressures from the state and other regulatory body mandates. Mimetic isomorphism occurs when organizations face uncertainty and therefore model themselves after an organization they

believe to have a high degree of legitimacy or success. This uncertainty may arise when institutional pressures or particular goals they are trying to achieve are unclear (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:151-2). Universities may model their internationalization strategies after those of other institutions of higher education, particularly ones ranked highly by university ranking systems, such as the Shanghai List or the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) list. Normative isomorphism occurs when members of organizations have been similarly trained or socialized. Because of their similar training, the policies and practices that these members develop are often alike and considered normatively sanctioned (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:152-3). DiMaggio and Powell (1983:152) note that these three mechanisms do not necessarily operate separately, but may overlap. Examining these three mechanisms of isomorphism highlight the difficulty that exists in trying to pin down exactly from where the push for internationalization of higher education comes. In fact, there may not even be a 'push' per se, but a combination of pressures and expectations from the institutional context with speculation on the part of the university.

Globalization

There is no doubt that globalization has an influence on the institutional context within which institutions of higher education reside. Globalization is a process of international integration, facilitated by advances in transportation and information and communications technology. As economies become more interdependent and flows of people, culture, and knowledge increase, it makes sense that this would affect universities. Bartell (2003:43) states that,

The proximity and intertwining of diverse cultural experiences, political systems, economic relationships, and technological options require the development and infusion of a worldview and perspective in curriculum formulation and implementation and in the definition of research areas and questions posed by researchers in various disciplines.

It is apparent in the scholarly literature that internationalization is assumed to be a university's natural reaction to globalization. Knight (2004:11), one of the most heavily cited researchers in the field defines internationalization as, "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post-secondary education." It seems as though globalization has become such a taken-for-granted aspect of contemporary Western society that restructuring institutions of higher education based on this phenomenon is almost a given. Universities may interpret internationalization as a way to engage with other institutions of higher education around the globe and/or as a way to give students the skills to participate in a globalized world.

Labour Market

Globalization has also influenced the nature of the labour market. This is one area of social life in particular where the development of certain skills is said to benefit students (Stier 2010:345). Because economies around the world are becoming increasingly intertwined, it will be important for many companies to employ workers who are able to conduct business in diverse settings. For example, they may need to work in international settings with those who speak different languages or come from different cultural backgrounds, who may perceive or approach issues in various ways (Brustein 2007:382). Brustein (2007:385) further notes that among business leaders of multinational corporations, government offices, and NGOs alike, the value of hiring employees with some

international knowledge or language skills is recognized. Perhaps students recognize the value in attaining an education that includes some international experience or provides other opportunities to gain these skills, as it will make themselves attractive to future employers (Stier 2006:9; Jiang 2010:349). Whether this is something students are demanding or if this is one angle universities use to market themselves is unclear.

Regardless, internationalizing the university is often cited as a way for students to develop these skills, especially for those who do not have the opportunity or resources needed to study abroad. These skills are defined in various ways using various terms, one of which is 'intercultural competence.' Stier (2006:9) defines intercultural competence as "the ability to reflect over, problematize, understand, learn from, cope emotionally with and operate efficiently in intercultural interaction-situations." To be intercultural competent, one must not only 'know about' other cultures, but also 'know how' to interact with others appropriately and how to problem-solve when cultural differences create interactional challenges (Stier 2003:84-85). In other words, students must have the capacity to communicate across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Geographic Location

One external factor that must be considered is the geographic location in which the university resides. Though internationalization has become a worldwide trend in higher education it must also be noted that many universities serve their local employment area. This is especially true of teaching-focused universities in which most students do not continue in academics beyond the undergraduate level (Zha 2009:474). Therefore, even though the university may internationalize, the degree to which that actually happens may

depend on how diverse the local area is and whether or not employers in the region are specifically looking to hire employees with intercultural competencies.

The state that a university resides in will also affect the policies and practices that organization develops. The monetary benefits of international projects are quickly becoming the primary rationale behind internationalization (Jiang 2010:327). This shift is occurring within a neoliberal context, characterized by the increasing privatization and corporatization of the university. Institutions of higher education, which at one time prioritized education and serving the public good, are now being modeled after corporations, both in terms of rigid administrative structure as well as in regards to competitive, profit-seeking values (Polster 2005:18). This is effectively summed up by Naidoo (2003:250), as:

The perception of higher education as an industry for enhancing national competitiveness and as a lucrative service that can be sold in the global marketplace has begun to eclipse the social and cultural objectives of higher education generally encompassed in the conception of higher education as a 'public good'.

Universities around the globe have consequently been affected by a decline in state funding, as institutions are increasingly expected to seek their own funding (Naidoo 2003:250). One valuable source of income institutions of higher education have come to rely on to fill this funding gap is from international students (Altbach and Knight 2007:292), as tuition rates are much higher than for national students. For example, for the 2013-2014 school year, undergraduate tuition for domestic students was estimated as \$5,670-\$5,836 compared to \$16,664-\$21,012 for international students at Wilfrid Laurier University (The Association of Universities and Colleges Canada 2014).

International students may be valued by the state for a number of reasons. For one, international students are required to pay higher tuition fees than national students and contribute to the national economy by spending money while they reside in the country. In fact, it was found that international students contributed approximately 6.9 billion dollars to the Canadian economy in 2010 (Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development Canada 2013.), while a separate study found that international students and their families contributed 20.23 billion to the US economy during the 2010-2011 school year (NAFSA: Association of International Educators 2011).

However, the Canadian and American governments have opposing views on two-step migration of international students. The Canadian government is now beginning to view international students as 'ideal immigrants'. International students not only graduate as skilled workers, but are also assumed to have learned the national language and gained familiarity with the culture and values. Therefore, it is assumed that this group will integrate more easily into Canadian society both economically and socially (Belkhodja 2011:7). It stands to reason that the government would need to spend fewer resources supporting these types of immigrants, as they would already have some experience and some social connections in the country, whereas other immigrants coming directly from their home country may not. On the other hand, international students looking to attend an American university must display non-immigrant intent (NAFSA: Association of International Educators 2009). In other words, they must prove their intent to move back to their home country upon graduation, rather than staying in the US.

Other Universities

University ranking systems such as the Shanghai List or the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) list may also encourage institutions of higher education to internationalize. These rankings legitimize particular models of higher education based on criteria that may vary depending on the interests of those commissioning the classificatory system. Achieving a high score in university rankings may come with particular rewards, whether this is prestige, external funding, or simply general public recognition. Rankings may play a part in policy making then, as universities may have to conform to the established standards (Kauppi and Erkkila 2011:314-321).

It is important to note, however, that universities do not simply copy one another. Vaira (2004) emphasizes the fact that isomorphism should not be equated with homogenization, because if all organizations were exactly the same, there would be no competition between them. Therefore, universities must simultaneously adhere to the 'norms' of higher education while also finding ways to innovate and differentiate themselves from other universities. In order for changes to stick, however, there must be some compatibility with the existing values of the organization (Stensaker and Norgård 2001: 473-475). University actors, then, must be aware of the practices of other institutions not only to ensure that they are adhering to these standards of higher education, but also so that they can figure out unique ways to market their school in order to attract students.

Organizational Elements

Examining the institutional context in which an organization resides is important to understand how they become isomorphic with each other, but the internal environment or

'organizational elements' must also be considered, as the organization and its practices do not exist apart from the employees that work there (Hallett and Ventresca 2006:227).

Meyer and Rowan (1977:343) argue that "structural elements are only loosely linked to each other and to activities, rules are often violated, decisions are often unimplemented, or if implemented have uncertain consequences." In other words, while the university may attempt to implement internationalization across the whole organization, internal actors may resist or reject it, resulting in decoupling.

Binder (2007:551) adds to Hallett and Ventresca's inhabited institutions approach in her assertion that we must also consider the possibility of one organization having multiple responses, rather than one single response to environmental pressures, especially when the organization has many subunits. Some subunits of an organization may be tightly coupled with a particular policy while others are loosely coupled (Binder 2007:554). Though a university may decide to internationalize all institution-wide policies and practices, the department that organizes student accommodations may interpret and/or incorporate this into its operations differently than the faculty does. University actors may also "symbolically comply" to certain mandates: at a surface level it appears as though they are adopting new practices while still performing in the way they always have (Teelken 2012:278). For example, professors who are mandated to use rubrics may post them on their assignment outlines but not actually mark the assignments using the rubric. Clearly, we cannot look to the internal or external environment of organizations alone to determine how rational myths are incorporated, but must attend to how both structure and agency influence this process.

The importance university leaders ascribe to internationalization may influence the institution's mission statement and budget allocation, as well as the degree to which other university actors value it (Burch 2007:90; Robson 2011:626). Additionally, the buy-in of deans and department chairs will be necessary in order for undergraduate programs to be designed in such a way as to incorporate international strategies at home (Brustein 2007:385). Crilly, Zolla, and Hansen (2012) note that while decoupling is sometimes a purposeful or strategic decision made by an organization's leaders, this is not always the case. Sometimes, decoupling is a product of variation within an organization (Crilly et al. 2012: 1431). Stohl (2007:367) argues that buy-in of faculty is the most important factor in the internationalization process as they "hold the keys to education." However, the faculty may resist this as internationalizing their curriculum could take away time spent on their preferred research or area of interest (Robson 2011:620). Therefore, it may be necessary to create some incentives to gain faculty buy-in by changing reward structures such as salary and tenure (Stohl 2007:386; Brustein 2007:620).

It is important to note that responses to a rational myth, such as the value of international education, may be dynamic and change over time. 'Recoupling' or the "process of creating tight couplings where loose couplings were once in place" is possible (Hallett 2010:54). This may occur, for example, when a student service unit in a university, such as a career centre, begins offer specialized services for international students. Hallett (2010) argues that it is impossible to understand how and why this happens if we look at the external environment alone, and urges researchers to examine the role that internal actors play.

For one, the meaning the rational myth has to the individual actor may effect whether or not they align their work with that agenda. University actors may take up internationalization if they themselves see it as important and are truly interested in it. They may also do so if they think it has the potential to help them advance professionally or if they fear being viewed as out-dated if they do not (Olsen 2012). Coburn (2004) adds that the nature of the message can also play a role in the degree to which university actors take up initiatives. The greater the intensity and pervasiveness of the message, the more likely actors are to respond to it. For example, if a professor attends a conference or training session that promotes international education and if their colleagues are beginning to incorporate global issues into the content of their courses, they may be more likely to do the same (Coburn 2004; Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin, and Suddaby 2008:342).

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

To answer my research questions, I conducted a qualitative, comparative case study of two universities, one Canadian and one American (see Chart 1). More institutions in North America see internationalization as an important benefit than in any other region of the world (Knight 2007:2). I conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews with university employees that create and/or implement policies and programs related to internationalization. This topic is best suited for qualitative, rather than quantitative study, as there is no objective, agreed-upon definition of internationalization. The meaning of internationalization and its importance will vary contextually, based on the values of the university, the effect that internal and external factors have in influencing decision-making, the resources available to put into these programs, and so on. Therefore, it is not productive to empirically measure or compare the 'success' of internationalization strategies from one university to another, as they will differ due to their specific circumstances.

Comparative Case Study

The two institutions of higher education I examined are both public, mid- to large-sized universities with a similarly sized student population. Wilfrid Laurier University, or Laurier, is located in the province of Ontario, Canada, while Georgia Southern University, or GSU, is located in the state of Georgia in the United States (Wilfrid Laurier University 2013a; Georgia Southern University 2013). These schools were chosen primarily on the

basis of access. At the time of data collection, Laurier and GSU were participants in the Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education. The two institutions were part of a consortium of six partner universities from Canada, the US, and Mexico, and therefore already had established ties (Wilfrid Laurier University 2013b). Additionally, both institutions have separate departments within the university to administer and support international activities, though the way they are structured and the types of activities and programs run through them are not exactly the same. The international office at GSU is called the Center for International Studies, or CIS, while the international office at Laurier is called Laurier International, or LI. For the purposes of this study, it is beneficial that the two institutions share some similar characteristics, though are different in many other ways. It was advantageous to examine whether the similarities the schools share influence internationalization strategies and implement them in the same ways or not.

As the scholarly literature has shown, internationalization is a complex concept that is understood in varying ways. This is why a case study was preferable to answer my research question, as it allowed me to investigate the reasons the institutions “internationalize” in the ways that they do, the effect various internal and external factors have on this, and how the internationalization strategy is developed based on these concerns. Many scholars examining internationalization only take one factor, such as faculty buy-in, to study in-depth, or theorize about the total process without examining contextual particularities. I think it is more effective to try to understand the total process of internationalization and what concerns go into the decision-making around policies and practices.

A comparative study provided even greater insight into the issue than looking at one institution of higher education alone, however. Because I expected to find that different institutions internationalize in different ways to varying degrees, it was necessary to look at more than one university to see if this is the case. While not evaluating which strategy is the best, per se, this nevertheless helped me to understand the disparities that exist between institutions of higher education and how different factors, such as support from administration or concerns about accreditation effects the implementation of different policies and practices related to internationalization.

Interviews

To answer the question of why internationalization looks different and is implemented to varying degrees at different institutions of higher education, I conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews with university employees who make, manage, and implement policies and practices related to internationalization. Policy statements of the two institutions were also examined in the course of my research; however, these documents only reveal so much information. While these documents provided an understanding of the institution's official stance on internationalization, they do not always correspond with actual campus practice. In other words, content analysis alone is not sufficient to determine whether decoupling occurs. Therefore, conducting interviews allowed me to gain a much deeper understanding of how internationalization is interpreted and put into practice than analyzing policy documents alone could provide.

My sampling was non-random and purposive, based on those who I thought occupied the positions most appropriate for the study. I interviewed Laurier and GSU

employees who make, manage, and implement policies and practices related to internationalization. Given that I was investigating the considerations that go into creating policies in a particular way and the practices implemented on that basis, I needed to gain insight from the employees who have intimate knowledge of and experience with this process. They are the ones who deal with the majority of the activities under investigation on a daily basis.

This is one reason that students were not interviewed for this research project, as their voices are more appropriate for answering evaluative-type questions, which are beyond the scope of this study. Students would be more likely to focus on their individual gains or experiences with international activities in their institution of higher education, rather than being aware of the implications of internationalization for their school as a whole. Considering that many universities are embracing the ‘internationalization at home’ or ‘comprehensive internationalization’ strategies that are intended to encompass all institutional policies and practices, the students may also not even be aware of all the international activities in which the school is engaged. On the other hand, there may be some aspects of their university experience that they are not aware of that fall under the scope of internationalization. For example, when I was completing my undergraduate degree, I thought that only studying abroad was ‘internationalization.’ I did not realize that certain aspects of the curriculum my professors taught me would be considered internationalization. Additionally, it is possible that not all students are familiar with the concept of internationalization, or care about gaining an education with an international component embedded within it.

Employees were identified by staff and faculty listings on each university's website. I sent an email inviting them to participate in an interview (see Appendix 2). My sample consisted of seven employees from GSU and eight employees from Laurier. Each interview was conducted individually, face-to-face, and lasted between thirty minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes. Individual interviews were preferred over focus groups, as there were variations in how internationalization is interpreted even among people working together in the same institution. Interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questioning, which allowed the participants to construct their understanding of internationalization and how related strategies are implemented at their institution (Creswell 2013:24). See Appendix 1 for a list of interview questions. Though I had specific questions that I wanted the interviewees to answer, open-ended questioning allowed for employees to bring up some aspects of internationalization in the course of the interviews that were unanticipated.

I conducted only one round of interviews at each university, as a longitudinal study was beyond the scope of my research. In order to get a sense of how the two institution's internationalization strategies have changed over time and why, I employed retrospective questioning, asking questions about their past strategies in order to understand this evolution.

Researcher's Position

As I am a university student myself, I have some experience with the internationalization of higher education. Specifically, I participated in an international student exchange when I was an undergraduate student, and therefore have some ideas

about the benefits and limitations of certain institutional international activities. While my knowledge may have informed some of my research questions, I recognize that my experiences are not representative of all; therefore I tried not to make assumptions based on my personal understandings.

Limitations

One potential limitation of my study is participant 'altercasting.' Altercasting is defined as "projecting an identity, to be assumed by other(s) with whom one is in interaction, which is congruent with one's own goals" (Weinstein and Deutschberger 1963:454). Because the participants work for the university, fulfilling a particular administrative role, they may answer interview questions in a way that frames the interview in an administrative context rather than a sociological one. In other words, they may have responded in ways that reflect the institution's 'official' stance on internationalization, or what they tell the public about their internationalization strategy. What the institution reveals to the public may hide some aspects of internationalization that would portray them in a negative light. For example, the university may profess to put students' best interests ahead of all else, when really they may actually prioritize economic concerns. The participants may be hesitant, then, to give their actual opinion of this process. Due to these concerns, it is important to recognize that the responses I obtained from my participants are only one constructed version of reality.

A related limitation of my study, then, is that I am not investigating students' experiences with the programs and practices related to internationalization in the universities being examined. While I stated that students are not the appropriate subject to

answer my initial research questions, their voices and experiences may help to elaborate on the answers that my participants give me. Subsequent research could examine whether the institutions are achieving what they set out to accomplish in their internationalization strategy. Are students actually gaining the knowledge and experience the university states it is giving them? While gaining students' perspectives on this process is beyond the scope of my research project, this is a beneficial direction for future study.

Ethics

This research project was approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board and met the standards outlined in the Laurier Research Ethics Policy. This study should be considered low-risk, as the questions I asked in my interviews included subject matter that the participants deal with in their place of employment. Therefore, it was low-risk in that it did not pose a significantly greater risk than that which they encounter in their everyday lives.

Voluntary, informed consent was provided by each participant. They were each given a consent letter to sign (see Appendix 3) and ensured that they were capable of withdrawing from the study at any time. By signing the consent form, participants approved the use of quotations from the interview to be used in the final research paper. To ensure confidentiality, participants were guaranteed that they would not be identified by name or job title in any write-ups or presentations of the research. This is to protect their jobs in the event that they express opinions that present their institution in a negative light. Names and job titles were not included in any audio or written data, and employees

are given pseudonyms. In addition, appropriate measures were taken in storing interview data: electronic files were encrypted and paper hardcopies were stored in a locked drawer.

Analysis

The interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis. The interview data was then coded using QSR NVivo in order to identify similar themes and patterns among the interviews. Thematic analysis is a method of “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun and Clarke 2006:79). Because a social constructivist framework guides my research, my analysis was initially inductive (Creswell 2013:36). In other words, rather than trying to find patterns that fit into a predetermined coding scheme, I first found themes that are strongly linked to the data (Braun and Clarke 2006:83). However, I must acknowledge that because I asked a specific research question and had background knowledge of the topic I am examining, it is possible that this informed the key themes that I identified in my analysis. After conducting an inductive analysis of my data, I found that the themes that emerged from my data coincided with those commonly described by researchers using the new institutionalism framework. The analysis that follows makes use of these themes: isomorphism, rational myth, and decoupling, which are examined in depth in the following sections.

Chart 1: Context

	Wilfrid Laurier University (Laurier)	Georgia Southern University (GSU)
Geographic Region	-Waterloo, Ontario, Canada -24.6% of population immigrants in Waterloo Region, 28.5%, province of Ontario	-Statesboro, Georgia, USA -3.8% population foreign--born in Statesboro, 9.5% in state of Georgia
Immigration Policies	-Canadian government making it easier for international students to become immigrants upon completion of studies at Canadian post-secondary education institution	-international students required by US government to prove 'nonimmigrant' status, or intent to return to home country upon completion of studies at American post-secondary education institution
University	-17,000 student population -public university	-20,500 student population -public university
International Office	Laurier International (LI) -no formal accreditation	Centre for International Studies (CIS) -accredited by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

Chart 2: Findings

Theory	What Theory Predicts	WLU	GSU
Isomorphism	-universities become isomorphic to the rational myth that international education is a valuable part of higher education today as a result of normative, mimetic, and coercive isomorphic pressures	-internationalization recognized in university's mission and values, as well as academic plan -program sharing with other international educators -look to 'best practices' of particular schools (ex. international residence communities), not necessarily those highly ranked -international activity does not face accreditation -government looks more favourably on internationalization	-internationalization recognized in university's mission and values -program sharing with other international educators -look to 'best practices' of particular schools (ex. international residence communities), not necessarily those highly ranked -international activity accredited by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) -government looks less favourably on internationalization
Rational Myths	-organizations may face multiple, competing myths about how best to organize and function -organizations may respond to these in differing but equally legitimate ways	-rational myth that international education is valuable aspect of higher education fits well with Laurier's culture of student experience	-pro-America values and "workforce university" culture at odds with rational myth that international education is valuable aspect of higher education
Decoupling/ Implementation	-if incorporation of rational myth counters efficient functioning of the university, a separation or 'decoupling' of rhetoric and practice may occur to help the organization maintain legitimacy	-no official definition of internationalization prevents scrutiny -exhibits efforts to 'recouple' -decoupling not strategic response by university leaders, but uncoordinated response by different university actors (ex. individual faculty members)	-no official definition of internationalization prevents scrutiny -decoupling appears to be strategic response by university leaders who have greater priorities -little interest in internationalization by those outside the CIS

Chapter 4: Findings

The present study finds that, though both GSU and Laurier are isomorphic with the rational myth that internationalizing higher education is the best way to prepare students to be successful members of a globalized world, internationalization at the two schools both look different and are decoupled to different degrees. These differences can be explained through the isomorphic pressures they face, how the different culture and values of the universities effect how internationalization is taken up, and the different supports that internationalization receives by the university leaders.

Isomorphism

In order to investigate whether decoupling occurs, it is necessary to first understand what the 'rhetoric' is that is being decoupled from actual practice. Both GSU and Laurier have become isomorphic with the rational myth that internationalizing higher education is the best way to prepare students to be successful members of a globalized world. Both institutions have campus units, or international offices, dedicated to carrying out related programs and activities. Laurier's international office is titled Laurier International, or LI, while the international office at GSU is known as the Centre for International Studies, or CIS. At GSU, internationalization, or "transcultural experiences", is officially recognized in the university's mission statement (Georgia Southern University 2014). When asked about the incorporation of internationalization into the university's mission statement, one GSU employee notes that,

Yeah, [internationalization is] a stated strategic goal within the university. And it's one of the major goals. So, so at least on paper, that is the case. But once again those kind of things are just in name. I don't know if all of that has really translated into shifting the culture of the university. That hasn't really happened yet. [Ray, GSU]

In other words, just because internationalization is listed in the mission statement does not necessarily mean the campus is internationalized. Laurier's mission statement also incorporates internationalization or "global engagement" as a value (Wilfrid Laurier University 2014b). In addition to incorporating internationalization into the mission statement, Laurier has also incorporated it in the form of "global citizenship" into its academic plan. Laurier's academic plan "is a high level guiding document that recognizes the strengths and unique characteristics Laurier boasts as an institution while identifying the areas which Laurier will continue to emphasize and initiate focus" (Wilfrid Laurier University 2014a). In other words, this document is intended to drive academic planning of the university. When asked what drives internationalization at Laurier, one employee emphasized,

Um, it was really a result of the academic plan. I think that came out in 2010. So our efforts at Laurier International were driven by that. So because [internationalization is] embedded into the mission, value, and purpose of the university, that's kind of where we started developing our initiatives. [Robert, Laurier]

Unlike the GSU employees, Laurier employees argue that the academic plan, supported by the values and mission of the university, actually drives internationalization at Laurier.

Regardless of the degree to which the universities implement internationalization, employees from both schools recognize that their internationalization strategies are fairly typical compared to those of other institutions of higher education. When asked how Laurier's internationalization strategy compares to that of other universities, one Laurier employee notes that,

I have other files of international strategies that everybody has come up...and it, it seems that there's certain elements, right? So there's international students and then the question is what is it that we want from the international students and how do we support and work with our international students. And then the other piece is about mobility, and then there's a curriculum piece. Right? So there's those kind of three main elements. [Robert, Laurier]

In other words, most universities have similar components to their internationalization strategies, such as student mobility.

Despite the fact that internationalization strategies at GSU and Laurier both have similar key components, employees from both institutions of higher education recognize that internationalization at their university has some unique aspect that sets it apart from other schools. One GSU employee expressed his thoughts on this,

I think Georgia Southern is a very unique case because we do so many different things in one office. We're the only university that I know in the entire world that does two degree programs, a minor program, a few certificate programs, international students...everything in one office. And I think that's great, I think it's distinctive. [Andrew, GSU]

Employees of Laurier made similar remarks about how Laurier is 'doing' internationalization differently from other universities,

I actually think our global engagement strategy is one of our...cause [other LI employees] were just at the [Ontario Association of International Educators] meeting, and they were saying that there weren't any other universities that have particular staff relegated simply to global engagement. So having this intentional staff focus on the international at home isn't evident [at other universities]. So I think that's something, I think that's a great strength we have. [Laura, Laurier]

Greenwood et al. (2008) note that a common critique of the new institutionalism is that it does not account for differences that exist between organizations residing in the same field. They argue, however, that this is a misunderstanding as isomorphism is not synonymous with homogenization, which is made apparent in this study. Though both Laurier and GSU

have similar components in their internationalization strategy, GSU is different from other schools in that the CIS is simultaneously an academic unit running two degree programs and a minor program, while LI is different as a result of its Global Engagement team, hired specifically to focus on the internationalization at home piece. Understanding how these strategies differ is important, as it relates to a difference in decoupling at the two schools, which will be discussed further in coming sections.

Normative Isomorphism

One surprising theme that emerged during interviews with employees from both Laurier and GSU is that international educators, specifically those that work in international offices, do not feel any sense of competition with other schools, and rather collaborate a great deal with employees of other universities filling similar roles. Some staff members are even board members for various international education organizations, such as the Canadian Bureau of International Education. Frequent collaboration with others is a form of normative isomorphism, and can account for the fact that both schools' internationalization strategies contain similar elements. One GSU employee emphasizes the need for this sharing,

I feel in some ways that our collaboration with Georgia College and smaller colleges within Georgia and the other state schools...none of us are big enough to stand on our own two feet, in terms of international. And while Georgia Southern is big enough to stand on our own feet with everything else, I still think that if we don't work with our friends on international, then we're going to suffer. So there's no competition within the state. We're all together. [Andrew, GSU]

Because the international office at GSU is small and resources are lacking, mutual sharing is relied upon to carry out responsibilities related to internationalization. For example,

Andrew went on to explain how he will contact international educators at neighbouring universities for advice on setting up new study abroad partnerships. David, a Laurier employee proposed a possible explanation for this phenomenon in his assertion that the competition between schools occurs on the recruiting side, whereas program sharing occurs once students are actually on the campus. Therefore, the fact that university employees interviewed did not feel as though they were competing with other universities does not mean that there is no competition at all, but that this competition may stem from elsewhere in the university, rather than in international offices.

Normative isomorphic pressures are one way that internationalization at a given school is shaped. Internationalization strategies may vary depending on the location of international educators they collaborate with. For example, there may be a difference if an international office is confined to collaborating with those in the same state or province, as opposed to program sharing across the nation or even internationally.

Mimetic Isomorphism

Another reason why GSU and Laurier's overall model of internationalization may be similar to that of other universities is a result of mimetic isomorphism. Both GSU and Laurier employees state that for program development or enhancement, they look to best practices of other universities. Kauppi and Erkkila (2011) note that organizations that model themselves after others particularly look to organizations they view as having a high degree of legitimacy or success. Following this line of reasoning, one would expect universities to mimic those that score high in universities rankings, such as Times Higher Education or the Shanghai List. This is not necessarily the case in regards to

internationalization, however. It was noted by employees of both schools that it is more important to look at schools who do well in one element, such as international residence communities, rather than looking to a university that ranks well overall. Again, this is not to suggest that university rankings are irrelevant or ignored by everyone in a university, but that they may have little effect on what people in international offices do. David, a Laurier employee, also highlights the agency of university actors, as he states that 'best practices' are not simply copied, but are adjusted according to the needs and resources of the institution.

Coercive Isomorphism

Though both GSU and Laurier face similar normative and mimetic isomorphic pressures, they deviate in the coercive isomorphic pressures they face. Coercive isomorphism refers to the "formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations" which may be subtle and implicit or forceful, originating from those upon which the organization is dependent for survival (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:150-1). This is important to investigate as it can help us to understand why internationalization is different and incorporated to differing degrees at the two schools.

Coercive isomorphic pressures may be found in regulation and accreditation bodies. These bodies may influence how different programs and policies are shaped, as employees may try to design them in a way that will grant approval by these bodies more easily. When asked whether or not LI and its programs and initiatives undergo accreditation or review processes, one Laurier employee notes that,

Um, we do in that we report to the Associate Vice President of Academic Services. So there is a regular review that way. But we don't go through like an accreditation review, um. We're going to start doing an annual report, um, so yeah. I mean, we don't go through an accreditation process, no. [Robert, Laurier]

In addition, internationalization and related concepts have no official definitions at Laurier.

The fact that these terms are not clearly articulated is not necessarily detrimental,

however. In fact, one employee states that,

I think you run into a problem if you suddenly make this definition, okay, internationalization is going to be this. Now you can say that internationalization involves these kind of components with these kind of outcomes...I think it's something that I've tried to look at, to try to define it. But I don't think I can ever find an answer that would really make a difference in driving what we're doing. [Robert, Laurier]

Though this employee argues that defining internationalization is not productive in terms of actually pushing the mandate forward, this could alternatively be seen as a means to avoid close scrutiny and detection of decoupling. When these goals are loosely defined, it is more difficult to hold the university accountable, as it is hard to measure whether it is achieving its goals or not. For example, Laurier does not outline what specific skills a “global citizen” has and how exactly students come to develop them. There is also no mention of how to measure whether or not students in the course of their degree have become global citizens. If LI underwent accreditation, they may be forced to define these concepts and be evaluated accordingly.

In contrast to Laurier, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is responsible for accrediting the CIS. SACS is “the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse institutions”

(Southern Association of Colleges and Schools 2014). One GSU employee notes that this has created problems for the CIS, as,

a lot of these [study abroad] programs are getting in trouble now with the provost because the provost is in charge of making sure that the academic rigor...we, we're up for reaccreditation. And so she's the one that's overseeing all that. So they're really struggling over there to figure out how they're gonna deal with some of these study abroad programs to make sure that they're meeting student learning outcomes. [Ray, GSU]

The issue here is that there is little consensus on how to define and subsequently measure student learning outcomes for those who study abroad. Whereas Laurier is not hindered by the fact that internationalization and related concepts are vaguely defined, the opposite appears to be true of GSU. One employee argues that,

I think this goes to the heart for the problem with internationalization efforts. If we're into accreditation, we're into analysis, we're into assessment, how do you assess that? [Joshua, GSU]

Another GSU employee provides a specific example of how a Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, implemented by SACS has limited the expansion of internationalization at the school,

And the final survey supported experiential learning. Which would have supported more globalization attempts: study abroad, those types of things. And though it, though the committee and the university said they would support the total vote, they didn't. They went with enhanced writing. But I, I think that the fact that it's difficult to assess, both experiential learning and internationalization efforts, I think that's why they don't support it as aggressively as they should. [Joshua, GSU]

Clearly, the lack of solid definitions for internationalization and related concepts is detrimental to GSU, given the accreditation processes they face. Rather than expanding internationalization initiatives that are vaguely defined and therefore have student outcomes that are difficult to measure, it may make more sense for GSU to prioritize

academic goals such as enhanced writing that have more established measurements to prove to SACS that they are meeting their goals.

In addition to SACS, GSU is also part of Complete College Georgia, or CCG. CCG is a branch of Complete College America, or CCA, which is “a national non-profit with a single mission: to work with states to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations” (Complete College America 2014). One GSU employee explains CCA or CCG further as,

This notion that universities should solely be generating students that are workforce ready. Which is a good way, is a good thought in one sense, but just goes against the notion of just generating educated citizens. Or prefer to generate educated citizens rather than just someone who can just, say, go and cut down a tree. Because that's really ultimately what workforce kind of, system is about. And it reduces the flexibility also once you have created that educated person, because they then can't change jobs. [Joshua, GSU]

The CCG mandate at GSU focuses on making education more affordable, as well as getting as many students through university and into a job as quickly as possible (Georgia Southern University 2012). This mandate is at odds with some internationalization efforts. For example, it may not be advantageous for the university to spend resources developing study abroad programs, which are seen as expensive extra-curriculars that might slow graduation times and with student learning outcomes that are difficult to measure.

GSU and Laurier may also experience coercive isomorphic pressures from their respective governments. Although the definition ‘coercive’ hints at some forceful pressure, this is not necessarily the case, as these pressures may be subtle and informal. The state of Georgia provides little support for internationalization efforts in higher education. One GSU employee notes,

I think the state of Georgia tends to have a very conservative uh government and leadership. And um, they're going to be conservative with the money they invest in education and public education. And within that they're going to be conservative with the money they spend on international and foreign languages and I don't think it's a high priority... I don't get encouragement from the state level. For the state institutions to do [internationalization]. [Andrew, GSU]

In addition to providing little funding for internationalization efforts in higher education, international students in the US must also display their intent to return home upon completion of their studies. This is not to say that the government is necessarily discouraging GSU from admitting international students or expanding internationalization efforts. However, if the university leaders are trying to appeal to the state or nation for funding, prestige, or other rewards, internationalizing is probably not the most effective way to accomplish their goal.

In contrast with GSU, the Laurier administration may believe that the university could gain prestige and rewards from the government for internationalizing. Cultural diversity is recognized and even encouraged in Canada, and the Canadian government is now promoting new channels for international students to become immigrants upon completion of their studies in Canada. This could help lend legitimacy to the idea that cultural diversity is important and that teaching students to be interculturally competent should be an inherent part of higher education. Some Laurier employees cited the importance of diversity to Canada as a country as benefitting the internationalization mandate at Laurier,

Canada prides itself as being a mosaic or a country of multiculturalism – I use that word um loosely, but um I think the international education strategy contributes to that. Because all these international students are coming from all over the world. They go to school for four or five years. They learn Canadian norms and values and they become the future Canadian citizens. So they contribute to that mosaic that Canada prides itself on, right? [Chris, Laurier]

Again, Laurier's leaders may not be told specifically by the provincial or federal government that they should accept more international students or that they should expand internationalization at home efforts, but given the positive outlook taken on cultural diversity and international students, doing so may be one way to earn prestige, funding, or other rewards.

Understanding the different coercive isomorphic pressures Laurier and GSU encounter can help to explain why the two internationalization strategies differ. Employees from GSU state that internationalization is unique at their school because the CIS is responsible not only for running typical student services, such as the organization of study abroad programs, but also for running the two academic international degree programs. This may be a way for the university to advertise their "transcultural opportunities" while still meeting standards of accreditation. An international studies class may have more easily measurable student learning outcomes than other internationalization efforts.

On the other hand, Laurier claims to have a unique internationalization strategy because of its' focus on "internationalization at home." This is a relatively new initiative that is unlikely to have easily measurable student outcomes. However, this will not likely hinder the LI's efforts, as this initiative will not face accreditation. In addition, the Canadian government looks favourably on international students, which may benefit internationalization at home, as the incorporation of international students into a university is said to diversify the campus. It is thought that it will provide both international students and domestic students with the opportunity to learn from each other and strengthen their intercultural competencies accordingly.

Rational Myth

The rational myth under investigation here is the idea that internationalizing higher education is the best way to prepare students to be successful members of a globalized world. This myth is evident at both Laurier and GSU. Meyer and Rowan (1977) state that organizations encounter multiple myths that may be overlapping or competing, and organizations respond accordingly in varying but equally legitimate ways. In the course of interviews, no other rational myths were identified. However, different themes arose in the course of interviews with employees of both Laurier and GSU about the culture of the university that effects how the rational myth under investigation is taken up at the respective schools. At GSU, “Southern tradition” and the notion that GSU is a “workforce university” were highlighted as aspects of the university’s culture that affects internationalization efforts. At Laurier, employees emphasize the school’s focus on the “student experience.” In addition, Laurier employees argue that international students are not admitted to Laurier as a means to fill a funding gap. These themes and their effect on internationalization will be discussed in turn, as they are necessary to understand how and why decoupling occurs at the two institutions of higher education.

Georgia Southern University

One main theme that arose in interviews with employees of GSU was the culture of “Southern tradition.” Southern tradition may refer to a number of things, such as regional cuisine, music, or Southerners’ hospitable nature. When brought up in interviews, however, Southern tradition was used to describe pro-America attitudes and a lack of interest in other cultures. This is exemplified by one GSU employee,

I think there's a fear that those who, who both students, faculty, and parents and administrators who look beyond, you know, there's such a gung-ho attitude that America is number one. That if you show anything that shows that it's not, it would completely deflate that whole balloon, rather than just a little piece of it. Cause I tell my students, "look, this is a great country and I love living here, but..." [Joshua, GSU]

Another GSU employee made a similar statement,

From my perspective, the only thing that really limits [internationalization] is Southern tradition. And limited vision, let's call it. Do not say close-minded. Even some of the young folks. You know, they don't really want to, they think they're just fine right here. There's no real need to look elsewhere. [Ray, GSU]

These examples help to demonstrate why internationalization may not gain as strong a foothold at GSU compared to other schools. There is a strong nationalistic culture in GSU, which is held not only by students and staff, but administrators as well. Another GSU employee argues that when administrators or university leaders hold these attitudes, it can be detrimental to the expansion of internationalization as they have the power to decide which efforts to pursue on campus,

One individual of significant importance here at the university was talking to the chairs of our college and was talking to us about internationalization. And I asked this person how foreign language figured into his conception of internationalization. And he said, well, foreign language is important, but you know, broadening our cultural outlook for some kids here in Georgia is just going from here to Atlanta. That's the kind of thing you know that the person that holds control to money and policy and things like that, when they hold those attitudes prevail [Ray, GSU]

From this quote, it is apparent that while the university leaders at GSU recognize the importance of internationalization, these leaders doubt the value of it for GSU students. Here, we can see why it is so important to examine the perceptions of people within the university and the existing culture of the university. Though the rational myth that internationalizing higher education is a rational response to globalization exists at GSU, the nationalistic culture and attitudes held by individuals across campus can affect the way it is taken up. If the people within the university hold nationalistic values, implementing

internationalization practices and programs may be more difficult than it would be in other locations. Decoupling may be more likely to occur in this situation if it is difficult to convince university actors, such as the faculty, that it is important and that they should be incorporating it into their practices.

A second theme that emerged from discussions with employees at GSU is that GSU is a “workforce university.” What this means is that the education the university provides is intended to facilitate the development of skills students need to do a particular job upon graduation, rather than developing deeper knowledge. Taking up the rational myth that international education is an important part of higher education may be difficult when encountering a school with a “workforce” culture if people do not see the value in it. This notion is highlighted by one GSU employee,

I mean, we have a president who just went up to Washington, DC to the Hill to talk to congress. And he said we are a workforce university. So getting away from these ideas of liberal arts, education, education to create you know, a more educated workforce. He's just saying workforce. Which means we're just, we are just teaching courses specific to say, you know, you're going to become a computer programmer. So you don't need to do anything that's going to develop your mind beyond a very limited area. So if you have that philosophy from your president, how do you think that affects internationalization efforts? [Joshua, GSU]

For example, a professor teaching chemistry may not see the practical value in incorporating a global component to curriculum if they foresee their students working in a laboratory in the future. Of course, concern over having the skills to gain employment after graduation is not unique to students at GSU. Complete Colleges Georgia, however, reinforces this perception that being educated is only important insofar as it prepares you to work.

It is not only a matter of whether the professors, staff, and administrators see international education as a valuable part of higher education, but also whether students

(and by extension, their parents) recognize the value. If international education is not of interest to students, then there is little sense in expanding internationalization at GSU, which may lead to greater decoupling. Another GSU employee highlights why this is of little interest to GSU students,

You have to look at the nature of the clients, which are your students. And 70% is from the Atlanta region, 30% is from really one-stoplight towns in rural Georgia who have no interest in globalization. They can go home and work in the same town. And in Atlanta they're just going to go back to Atlanta and work. [Sarah, GSU]

The fact that GSU is a “workforce university” alone does not help to explain why internationalization is not recognized as having great value. However, when one considers that the majority of the students will look for work in rural areas or Atlanta, where there is little cultural diversity, it helps to explain this phenomenon. On the other hand, a “workforce” university in a geographic location where there is greater diversity and therefore greater need for employees with the skills that international education can provide, such as intercultural competence, may be more inclined to internationalize.

The example of GSU can help to reinforce the idea that rational myths do not always outline the most efficient means for an organization to operate. In other words, though GSU has become isomorphic with the idea that international education is a valuable part of higher education today, actually incorporating it into the university may counter efficient functioning. The fact that the those within the university have a prevailing “pro-America” or nationalistic attitude, combined with the fact that the area surrounding the school is lacking in diversity and therefore students likely do not need “intercultural competencies” to get a job – the main focus of GSU’s education – would make it difficult to incorporate this particular rational myth. Rather than spending time and resources convincing university

actors that internationalization is important, it probably makes more sense for international 'rhetoric' to become decoupled from practice at GSU.

Wilfrid Laurier University

While the culture of GSU does not appear to be very compatible with the rational myth that internationalizing higher education is necessary to prepare students to live in a globalized world, Laurier's culture, values, and attitudes seem to be more accommodating. In discussions with Laurier employees about the university's culture and values, one theme highlighted is the idea that Laurier prioritizes the "student experience,"

I think it's all kind of the student experience that we're all interested in, and that's one thing that we're kind of all are focusing on. So for sending students abroad, how is this helping the student experience? If international students are here, how's that helping the student experience? So there's that commitment at Laurier around that. [Robert, Laurier]

Laurier employees interviewed argue that international education can not only help students to develop skills needed to work in the global market, but can also facilitate wider personal growth and development. Therefore, internationalization is compatible with Laurier's existing focus on student experience and may reduce decoupling.

One common perception about international education is that international students, who pay much higher tuition rates than domestic students, are being used to fill a funding gap in universities that have experienced a decline in government funding. Employees at Laurier are adamant that this is not the case at Laurier. David, a Laurier employee, explains that, though the university does get more money from international students, some of that money is put back into supporting international students. For one, it

has allowed for specialized supports, such as career advising geared towards international students, to be developed. Additionally, a scholarship has been created to fund international students to come to Laurier that would not have had the resources to attend otherwise. Another Laurier employee explains that the school is concerned with the level of support available for international students,

I think Laurier is um growing at a pace at which it can support. So we're not bringing in more international students than we have support systems here that can support them. Because if we do that, students will have a bad experience, and they'll tell their family members that they're not getting the support at Laurier, and that's only going to be detrimental for Laurier's image. [Chris, Laurier]

Therefore, regardless of how many international students are brought to Laurier, the university has made the commitment to make sure they receive adequate levels of support.

Promoting and expanding internationalization at Laurier appears to be one way that the university is satisfying its competing 'hybrid' logics (Pache and Santos 2013). Though it is often argued that increasing enrolments of international students is just a means to fill a funding gap in universities (Altbach and Knight 2007), every single Laurier employee interviewed is adamant that this is not the case at Laurier. They argue that Laurier has made a commitment that the number of international students will not increase beyond that which the school can support. Though these students pay four times the tuition and fee rate of domestic students, this extra revenue is put back into internationalization efforts, including specialized supports and services for international students themselves. Bringing in international students, then, allows for a fulfillment of the market logic, as the school receives more tuition money from them than domestic students. It simultaneously fulfills the social welfare logic, as international students diversify the campus, which is said to benefit all Laurier students. Additionally, the extra money from tuition goes back into

supporting the students who provide this extra revenue. This is a beneficial situation for Laurier, as the university can showcase a strong commitment to internationalization while being able to deflect claims that they are just bringing in international students to make money.

Though the rational myth that international education can help students develop skills needed to participate effectively in a globalized world is evident at both Laurier and GSU, the culture of the two schools are very different, which can effect the degree to which this rational myth is decoupled. Considering that attitudes at Laurier are more compatible with internationalization than those at GSU, it stands to reason that there is probably a higher degree of decoupling at GSU than at Laurier.

Decoupling

The previous section helps to understand why decoupling may occur to varying degrees in different organizations. If a rational myth is incompatible with the values or culture of an organization, it makes more sense to comply at a symbolic, or face value level, rather than actually incorporating it into university-wide practices. It is important, however, to recognize that universities have many different units, some of which may be tightly coupled, while others may exhibit loose coupling (Binder 2007). For example, international offices on campus will be tightly coupled to an internationalization mandate, whereas other units, such as a career centre, may not incorporate any aspects of internationalization into its operations. Due to space restrictions, this study focuses on the implementation of internationalization in the core of the university, teaching and curriculum, as well as how administrative support affects it.

Faculty and Curriculum

While both Laurier and GSU have co- and extra-curricular opportunities for students related to internationalization, such as study abroad, employees interviewed recognize that these are peripheral activities. Multiple employees at Laurier express that to truly be an 'internationalized' university, the core of the university must be internationalized, in addition to the peripheral activities. Curriculum and teaching are cited as that 'core.' When asked whether Laurier's faculty value internationalization or not, answers varied widely. On one hand, employees recognize that there are many faculty members doing great things related to internationalization without prompting from LI. In addition, one Laurier employee, Alex, argues that the reason internationalization is included in Laurier's academic plan is because so many faculty members are proponents of it. On the other hand, it was also noted Laurier has a long way to go in terms of internationalizing the curriculum across the whole university. This is emphasized by one Laurier employee,

So there's people that just don't, you know, I had someone in the Science faculty say, well, how do we do that here?! It makes perfect sense in Business or Arts, but does that mean I can only teach about Polish chemists? [David, Laurier]

The importance of this is that many faculty members already have an international or global component to their curriculum, especially those teaching subjects where international content is inherent to the subject matter, such as Global Studies or Anthropology. However, faculty members from other departments are unconvinced about the relevance of including a global component to their teaching or curriculum. Therefore, it is possible that certain departments within the university may exhibit decoupling to a greater degree than others, depending on their subject matter.

One might assume that because internationalization is included in Laurier's academic plan, a document intended to drive academic planning at the university, professors must incorporate it into their teaching. One Laurier employee explains why this is not necessarily the case,

So the dean's office can say, "we're going to have all these initiatives" and you can have certain departments say, "we don't really care about these initiatives," then um, they wouldn't be defensive about them. They would just ignore it. So on one level we think this is a good idea, as long as individual departments don't have their resources restricted, they won't complain. Right? Some departments will be more supportive than others because of the people who happen to hold positions of authority in those departments, because of the nature of those departments, like Global Studies against something else, but it often depends on individuals within those departments. [Alex, Laurier]

This passage aligns with Binder's (2007) finding that multiple units, as well as the individuals within those units, can have different reactions to the same rational myths. Individual faculty members have the agency – in this case, academic freedom as codified in collective agreements - to decide whether this international mandate is something that is important to them and whether they want to include it in their research, teaching, or curriculum. If it does not align with what they are already doing or what they wish to do in the future, they can simply ignore it with no real repercussions.

Unlike at Laurier, GSU employees note that faculty members dedicated to internationalization are few and far between. In general, it is noted that those interested in internationalization are interested only in study abroad initiatives, rather than the wider internationalization at home efforts. Clearly, decoupling of the 'core' of the university from its internationalization mandate is much greater at GSU compared to Laurier, though it certainly occurs at both.

Administration

The administration at a university plays a large role in determining the scope of international efforts, as they have the power to allocate funding and create policies that could support or inhibit its growth. To understand how and why decoupling of rhetoric and practice occurs, then, administrative support should be examined. Several employees from GSU argue that internationalizing the campus is difficult due to a lack of support from their administration. When asked how important internationalization is to the university, one employee from GSU states,

I don't think it is. And again, it's probably driven by assessment and the respect accorded it from the administration, which is very limited. [Ray, GSU]

One might assume that this lack of administrative support at GSU for international education is obvious, considering the lack of cultural diversity and limited government support in Georgia. However, internationalization is in fact the hallmark of a neighbouring university in Georgia, Kennesaw State University. When asked to elaborate on why the administration was less interested in internationalization at GSU than Kennesaw, the employee notes that,

Georgia Southern's administrative priority has been to grow the university in terms of size of student body, to make the university a research-focused doctoral university. By building its graduate program and building its graduate enrolment. And building its research and investments. Um, voting its endowments, um, they're using football as a driving force behind that, behind those endowments, thinking that if we have football, that's our...you know, the president says that's our window. Is people's window to the university. [Andrew, GSU]

Therefore, while the administration at Kennesaw prioritizes internationalization, the administration at GSU focuses on pursuing different initiatives they presumably believe are of greater value to the school, such as football. One GSU employee notes that, though there

is little administrative support for international education in the present, university leaders still recognize its importance,

I think [a CIS employee] put something forward to the administration. And my guess is that administration kind of said, "That's great! We have pressing matters that need to be taken care of right now, when we can get to it we'll get to it. And give it the time that it deserves." [Andrew, GSU]

The fact that the administration knows that internationalization is still important reinforces the idea that decoupling is not static and can change over time (Hallett 2010). If the administration at GSU places greater value in internationalization in the future, efforts might be made to recouple, or create more tight couplings across the university to internationalization.

Unlike at GSU, the internationalization mandate at Laurier is now coming directly from the administration, specifically the Academic Vice President (AVP) of Academic Services, who oversees LI. This mandate has been articulated in the academic plan. The benefits of this approach are explained by one Laurier employee,

So by embedding [internationalization] in the academic plan, that would mean the academic plan that would go forth to the Vice President of Academics would have to have that component to it. So everybody across the university who reports to the VP of Academics, so that's all the deans, has to address that [internationalization] [James, Laurier]

Therefore, having support for internationalization at the administrative level results in a stronger, more strategic internationalization mandate. On the other hand, the administration at GSU's lack of support for internationalization results in an opportunistic model of internationalization where individual actors are relied upon to promote it. When asked to explain this, one GSU notes that,

There is limited strategic vision for international on this campus. I think what [the administration] do and what they have done, and moderately successfully so, is rely on incredibly committed people to do international. It's great, but rather than the

university involving itself strategically for internationalization, they're able to rely on faculty to push it forward or staff to push it forward. [Jennifer, GSU]

Employees at GSU argue that an opportunistic model of internationalization where the CIS is relied upon to push the mandate forward is detrimental to internationalizing the campus.

A GSU employee argues that,

the ultimate effect is that internationalization efforts kind of get brushed under the carpet unless there are strategic component of your university. And it's not the case here. [Joshua, GSU]

Clearly, the level of administrative support can affect the degree to which the practices of university actors or units are decoupled from internationalization rhetoric.

Administrative support will also affect resource allocation for the development of programs and initiatives related to international activities, as well as for personnel to carry them out. This is important, as many employees at GSU lament that this is a problem for the CIS. One states that,

Um, sometimes we're envious or jealous, you know, that certain universities may have more commitment or more resources or more staff, and we don't. We get frustrated, and we get cynical, and that's not healthy but it's true... [Andrew, GSU]

In particular, a common complaint is that the CIS is understaffed, meaning that staff members must spread their time and energy across many tasks, rather than being able to focus on doing just one well. In contrast, one Laurier employee reveals that,

The university's downloaded a fair bit of money to [the AVP of Academic Services] and his office in order to work with Laurier International in order to make some changes. [Alex, Laurier]

These resulting changes include the allocation of resources to LI for the hiring of a new director as well as staff members to oversee the Global Engagement strategy at both Waterloo and Brantford campuses. Though the GSU administration also recently created a new position in the CIS, it is an academic advisement position for domestic students in the

International Studies and Trade degree programs. Therefore, unlike Laurier, this hiring really relates back to academic necessity rather than interest in expanding internationalization efforts.

Furthermore, administrative support for internationalization may influence how important or valuable others on campus perceive it to be. It is possible that schools such as Laurier with a higher degree of administrative support for internationalization may have a higher degree of buy-in of other campus units and actors than there would be otherwise.

Decoupling

Despite the fact that GSU and Laurier have both become isomorphic with the rational myth that internationalizing higher education is the best way to prepare students to be successful members of a globalized world, it is clear that what internationalization looks like and how tightly coupled it is to actual practice varies between the two schools. Decoupling of rhetoric and practice is evident at both universities, however, my findings concur with Crilly et al.'s (2012) assertion that decoupling may occur for various reasons and is not always due to coordinated decision-making on the part of the leaders of the organization. This is apparent in Laurier's case: the university administration supports internationalization but because they do not necessarily have a way to enforce it, university actors are able to ignore this mandate if they wish. Decoupling at Laurier then is not a strategic response on the part of the university's leaders.

Laurier also exemplifies the process of recoupling, or attempting to create tight couplings where they were once loose (Hallett 2010) through the Global Engagement initiative, or focus on internationalization at home. Employees argue that not all students

have the opportunity to study abroad. Therefore, the type of education and opportunities that Laurier provides must ensure that all students, even the ones who never leave the country, are still 'globally engaged' and graduate 'global citizens,' as listed in the mission statement and academic plan. Internationalization at home is thought to be one method of achieving this goal. In relation to this goal, the administration has allocated funds to LI to hire employees to head the Global Engagement initiative. These employees are tasked with conducting an environmental scan of the campus to assess what internationalization efforts are already being carried out and where improvements can be made. Various Laurier employees interviewed argue that this is intended to be a collaborative effort and that it is not appropriate or acceptable to 'tell' others what to do with regards to internationalization. Regardless, university actors at Laurier not may be more open to internationalizing their practices if they meet face to face with someone from the Global Engagement team that promotes international education.

Unlike at Laurier, decoupling of internationalization rhetoric and practice appears to be strategic at GSU. Employees interviewed argue that the administration does understand that appearing internationalized is important, and that they display acts of ceremonial incorporation to do this (Meyer and Rowan 1977). For example, one employee mentioned that at recruiting ceremonies and open houses, university leaders highlight the successes of students who have studied abroad. Beyond this, the administration has made no move to 'recouple' or expand internationalization efforts at the campus. It was noted that this was primarily due to the fact that they have more pressing priorities.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The findings reveal that Laurier and GSU have different internationalization strategies with a higher degree of decoupling at GSU. In order to understand how and why this difference occurs, macro and meso analyses were combined; following critiques (Binder 2007; Hallett and Ventresca 2006; Hirsch and Lounsbury 1997) that past new institutionalist research on organizations tends to rely on overly structural, macro perspectives. These findings take into account not only how macro, environmental forces, such as government policies and accreditation bodies influence internationalization, but also how internal groups and the culture of the university can affect its implementation.

Georgia Southern University

The lack of support for internationalization by GSU's administration is not surprising, given that the culture of the university is incompatible with the myth that international education is a valuable aspect of higher education. One of the main facets of this culture cited by GSU employees is Southern tradition. Employees argue that this attitude is detrimental to the expansion of internationalization at GSU because people in the area tend to be 'pro-America' and have little interest in international issues. One employee that is a proponent of internationalization argues that this actually puts him at a disadvantage professionally, as his nationalistic colleagues do not approve of his interest in international education.

The degree to which university leaders support internationalization may influence how important or valuable others on campus perceive it to be (Stensaker and Norgård 2001). It is possible that low buy-in amongst university actors at GSU, particularly faculty, may be due to the fact that the administration does not support internationalization beyond the surface level. Unless they are personally interested in it, employees stand to gain nothing by internationalizing their practices, as the administration is not likely to reward them for doing so. In addition, these employees probably also have nothing to lose in being open about their disinterest in international education, as the internationalization mandate in the university's mission statement is not being enforced.

This disinterest in internationalization within the university is likely strengthened by outside perspectives as well, particularly those backed by the government. The state of Georgia provides little support for internationalization efforts in higher education. In addition, international students in the US must also display their intent to return home upon completion of their studies. This is not to say that the government is necessarily discouraging GSU from admitting international students or expanding internationalization efforts. However, if the university leaders are trying to appeal to the state or nation for funding, prestige, or other rewards, internationalization is probably not the most effective way to do so.

The idea that GSU is a "workforce university," or that higher education is valued only insofar as it allows students to develop a set of skills to conduct one particular job after graduation is another aspect of GSU's culture that employees argue is detrimental to internationalization efforts. This is not a perspective that is limited to GSU; however, this myth is reinforced by the CCG mandate, which devalues the wider benefits of higher

education and instead prioritizes getting as many students through post-secondary education as quickly and cheaply as possible. This is at odds with the hallmark of internationalization; study abroad, which is often viewed as an extra-curricular that could possibly delay graduation times. In addition, employees note that because many students intend to return to their rural hometowns to work upon graduation, developing intercultural competencies is of little value to them.

Another reason why GSU's leaders are less likely to support internationalization is due to stronger regulation and accreditation the university faces. Because internationalization and related student outcomes, such as 'transcultural opportunities' are vaguely defined and difficult to quantify, it is understandable why the university prioritizes other initiatives, such as enhanced writing, that are easier to measure. Of course, like other universities, GSU is expected to standardize while simultaneously innovating in order to set itself apart (Aurini 2006). Internationalization is certainly not the way that GSU is distinguishing itself from other schools. Instead, university employees state that GSU promotes itself as "qualitatively unique" (Davies and Quirke 2007) through varsity football, their beautiful campus, and the quality of life for those that attend the institution. Because the academics at GSU are expected to meet rigid state standards, it appears as though the administration must rely on things that are distinctly non-academic in order to prevent accreditation disputes with SACS.

The case of GSU appears to concur with Meyer and Rowan's (1977) assertion that decoupling is not necessarily a fraudulent exercise, but is often a necessary step to take to ensure efficient functioning of the organization. Given that there is little support for internationalization both outside of and inside the university, expanding

internationalization would not be beneficial for GSU's functioning. If schools are interested in increasing their legitimacy in order to secure prestige, funding, and other awards that come along with it, it really does not make sense for GSU's administration to allocate resources toward ensuring that internationalization is implemented across the university.

Wilfrid Laurier University

In contrast to GSU, there is a "cultural match" (Stensaker and Norgård 2001) between existing values at Laurier and one of the ways in which the school is trying to innovate, which in this case is through the expansion of internationalization at home or Global Engagement efforts. Employees interviewed at Laurier are adamant that international education can not only provide students with intercultural competencies needed in the labour market today, but can also contribute to students' personal development and growth. This is congruent with Laurier's existing focus on the 'student experience.'

In addition, many more faculty members at Laurier than GSU were conducting international research, teaching their students about global issues, or organizing international field trips – in other words, 'doing' internationalization - prior to the incorporation of these goals in the mission statement or academic plan. In fact, one Laurier employee notes that part of the reason internationalization was incorporated into the academic plan is because so many faculty members see the importance of and are advocates for international education. Of course, not all faculty members are convinced that international education is a valuable part of higher education. Nevertheless, the

Laurier environment seems to be more compatible with internationalization than that of GSU.

In contrast with GSU, the Laurier administration may also believe that the university could gain prestige and rewards from the government or other external constituents for internationalizing. Cultural diversity is recognized and even encouraged in Canada, and the Canadian government is now promoting new channels for international students to become immigrants upon completion of their studies in Canada. Again, Laurier's leaders may not be told specifically that they should accept more international students or that they should expand internationalization at home efforts by the government, but doing so may possibly result in less scrutiny or greater rewards in Ontario than Georgia.

Furthermore, Laurier is not as strongly regulated as GSU, and its international office does not report to an external accreditation body. While the fact that internationalization and related concepts are vaguely defined seems to be detrimental to international education at GSU, it appears to have the opposite effect at Laurier. Because there is less concern about securing approval from external reviewers, they have more freedom to market their "qualitative uniqueness" (Davies and Quirke 2007). It appears as though Global Engagement is one means the university intends to distinguish itself from other institutions of higher education. Students and their parents may be more receptive to this at Laurier than they would at GSU when deciding which university to attend, considering Zha's (2009) argument that smaller, teaching-focused institutions of higher education tend to serve the local employment area. Considering that Laurier resides in a geographic region with greater cultural diversity than that of GSU, intercultural competencies may therefore be in higher demand by local employers.

Administrative support for internationalization may influence how important or valuable others on campus perceive it to be. Following this logic, it is possible that schools such as Laurier, with greater administrative support for internationalization, may have a higher degree of investment of other campus units and actors in internationalization. Employees interviewed at Laurier believe there is greater investment of faculty members and other campus actors in internationalization than those interviewed at GSU, which may be in part due to the fact that the 'nature of the message' – that international education is a valuable part of higher education - is stronger at Laurier. University actors who do not have a personal interest in internationalization may interpret that following this mandate is nevertheless beneficial for them. For example, a professor who chooses to do international research may receive more funding at Laurier than GSU because it has been made a bigger priority by the leaders of the university.

However, it is possible that stronger support for international education may also result in more "symbolic compliance" (Teelken 2012) of faculty members and employees of other campus units at Laurier than GSU. At GSU, there is no harm in university actors being open about their lack of adherence to the internationalization mandate in the mission statement. At Laurier, however, it is possible that employees recognize that they are supposed to be internationalizing and therefore adhere to this on an outward level without changing their practice in a meaningful way. For example, faculty members might say that they are internationalizing their curriculum without really doing so.

Laurier's administration has likely interpreted that allocating resources to expand internationalization can benefit the university. Therefore, using Global Engagement as a means to innovate and distinguish itself from other universities is more likely to be

successful at Laurier than it would be at GSU, given that there is both external and internal support for it, as well as compatibility with pre-existing values of the university.

Conclusion

This study highlights the fact that although different universities are becoming isomorphic to the rational myth that internationalizing higher education is the best way to prepare students to be successful members of a globalized world, what internationalization actually looks like or the degree to which it is implemented at different schools and why can vary widely. Case studies are invaluable in investigating this difference. This study is not intended to be evaluative of GSU or Laurier's internationalization strategies; rather, the purpose is to understand how and why they are different. This study employs a multi-level analysis, combining both macro and meso perspectives, following critiques (Binder 2007; Hallett and Ventresca 2006; Hirsch and Lounsbury 1997) that past new institutionalist research on organizations tends to rely on overly structural, macro perspectives. Therefore, this study recognizes that universities are not machines that respond automatically to the demands of their environment.

It must be noted that only a few employees were interviewed from each university. Though these employees made statements about internationalization and its implementation based on their own perceptions of internationalization at their institution of higher education, future research can benefit from the investigation of perceptions of employees from different campus units. For example, these employees commented on whether or not they thought the faculty was internationalizing their curriculum. In order to

understand whether decoupling or implementation really occurs, however, faculty members should be interviewed themselves.

A related direction for future study, then, is that macro and meso analyses should be combined with micro, as well. Though my study was able to uncover locations within the university that agency may be used, the scope of my research prevented me from actually investigating how university actors interpret internationalization and how or why they incorporate or reject it from their practices. For example, a micro analysis may be able to reveal how faculty members interpret administrative support for internationalization and whether that affects changes they make to their curriculum.

One unexpected finding that emerged from this research is a lesson in changing the culture of or rebranding an organization. In order to prevent or decrease decoupling, the new rhetoric must be something that would be approved of by external constituents, is compatible with the existing cultural norms and values of the organization, and is of some degree of interest to internal actors. Leaders wishing to rebrand their institution, then, would do well to investigate these avenues in order to determine what types of cultural alteration would result in a changing of actual practice, as opposed to those that would be accepted only at face-value by internal actors.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Background

1. How did internationalization originate at this university?
2. How long and in what capacity have you worked in the international office at your university?
 - a. Did you specifically study international education?
3. How important do you think internationalization is to the university?
4. Where does the knowledge about internationalization that informs this institution's policies and practices originate?
5. How has the institution's internationalization strategy changed over time?

Operational

6. What types of programs or initiatives does the university run that fall under the scope of internationalization?
7. Do you know if other universities in the state of Georgia/province of Ontario have adopted internationalization strategies? Can you describe their strategies? Do you get together with other universities in your area to talk about internationalization?
8. Does this institution rely on funds brought in by international students?
9. Are there any types of international programs or initiatives missing from this university?

10. What direction do you see the institution's international strategy taking in the future?
11. What are the limitations of current manifestations of internationalization?
12. What are the benefits of current manifestations of internationalization?

Accountability

13. To what extent do external factors shape internationalization at this institution?
14. To what extent do internal factors shape internationalization at this institution?
15. Does the institution rely on feedback from students and faculty to improve international activities?
16. What is the relationship between your office and curriculum?
17. Does your office face review processes?
18. Is there something you thought I might ask that I have not?
19. Is there anything else you want to add?

Appendix 2: Information Letter

Wilfrid Laurier University



Information Letter

Internationalization and Post-Secondary Institutions

Researcher: Leanne MacDonald, MA Student

macd4620@mylaurier.ca

Department of Sociology, Wilfrid Laurier University

Supervisor: Dr. Lucy Luccisano, Ph.D

luccisano@wlu.ca

Department of Sociology, Wilfrid Laurier University

Purpose of the Study:

You are invited to participate in a research study that will examine how, why, and to what

extent post-secondary institutions become internationalized.

Participation:

I am looking for employees of Wilfrid Laurier University and Georgia Southern University that work in the international office, with international students, and/or employees involved in the university's internationalization program and mandate. Participants are invited to participate in a one-on-one interview, the total duration of which will be approximately 30 to 60 minutes in length. The setting will take place on campus, in a location agreed upon by the interviewer and the participant. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Absolutely no deception will be used during the course of this study.

Benefits and Risks:

This study has the potential to add to the literature on internationalization of higher education and organizational behaviour. This research study compares the practice of internationalization at two universities. Information gathered and produced in the MRP can be a useful source of information on policies of internationalization for the specific universities in this study in particular and post-secondary institutions in general. The participant may experience discomfort and/or wish to end the interview for a variety of reasons. If so, the researcher or the participant may decide to end the interview.

Confidentiality:

Quotations may be used in write-ups or presentations. Participants will not be identified by

name or title. When quotations are used, I will write “a WLU or GSU employee states...”

Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to research data. Electronic files will be encrypted and any hard copies will be kept in a locked drawer. The researcher may keep the data for two years before destroying it.

Contact:

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Leanne MacDonald, at macd4620@mylaurier.ca. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or rbasso@wlu.ca.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact the researcher via email: macd4620@mylaurier.ca

Appendix 3: Informed Consent

Wilfrid Laurier University



Informed Consent Statement

Internationalization and Post-Secondary Institutions

Researcher: Leanne MacDonald, MA Student

macd4620@mylaurier.ca

Department of Sociology, Wilfrid Laurier University

Supervisor: Dr. Lucy Luccisano, Ph.D

luccisano@wlu.ca

Department of Sociology, Wilfrid Laurier University

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine how, why, and to what degree universities become internationalized.

INFORMATION

I am looking for employees of Wilfrid Laurier University and Georgia Southern University that work in the international office, with international students, and/or employees involved in the university's internationalization program and mandate. Participants are invited to participate in a one-on-one interview, the total duration of which will be approximately 1 to 1.5 hours in length. The setting will take place on campus, agreed upon by the interviewer and the participant. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Absolutely no deception will be used during the course of this study.

RISKS

The participant may experience discomfort and/or wish to end the interview for a variety of reasons. If so, the researcher or the participant may decide to end the interview.

BENEFITS

This study has the potential to add to the literature on internationalization of higher education and organizational behaviour. This research study compares the practice of internationalization at two universities. Information gathered and produced in the MRP can be a useful source of information on policies of internationalization for the specific universities in this study in particular and post-secondary institutions in general.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Quotations may be used in write-ups or presentations. Participants will not be identified by name or title. When quotations are used, I will write "A WLU or Georgia Southern

University employee states...” Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to research data. Electronic files will be encrypted and any hard copies will be kept in a locked drawer. The researcher may keep the data for two years before destroying it.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Leanne MacDonald, at macd4620@mylaurier.ca. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or rbasso@wlu.ca.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have it destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

The data will be used in the write up of a Major Research Paper (MRP), as the researcher’s

partial fulfillment for the 2013-2014 MA program in Sociology at Wilfrid Laurier University. This paper may be used as the basis for presentations in conferences, community forums, and information sessions. This paper will also be made available for viewing in the Sociology Department office at the Waterloo campus of Wilfrid Laurier University. The researcher can email an executive summary of the findings to participants upon request.

CONSENT

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

References

- Altbach, Philip, and Jane Knight. 2007. "The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 11(3-4): 290-305.
- Aurini, Janice. 2006. "Crafting Legitimation Projects: An Institutional Analysis of Private Education Businesses." *Sociological Forum* 21(1): 83-111.
- Bartell, Marvin. 2003. "Internationalization of Universities: A University Culture-Based Framework." *Higher Education* 45(1): 43-70.
- Belkhodja, Chedly. 2011. "Introduction." *Canadian Diversity* 8(5): 1-13.
- Binder, Amy. 2007. "For Love and Money: Organizations' Creative Responses to Multiple Environmental Logics." *Theory and Society* 36: 547-571.
- Boxenbaum, Eva and Stefan Jonsson. 2008. "Isomorphism, Diffusion, and Decoupling." Pp. 78-98 in *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, edited by R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, and R. Suddaby. London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology."

Qualitative Research in Psychology 3(2): 77-101.

Brustein, William. 2007. "The Global Campus: Challenges and Opportunities for Higher Education in North America." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 11(3-4): 382-91.

Burch, Patricia. 2007. "Educational Policy and Practice from the Perspective of Institutional Theory: Crafting a Wider Lens." *Educational Researcher* 36(2): 84-95.

Coburn, Cynthia E. 2004. "Beyond Decoupling: Rethinking the Relationship Between the Institutional Environment and the Classroom." *Sociology of Education* 77: 211-244.

Complete College America. 2014. "About CCA". Retrieved July 22, 2014.
(<http://completecollege.org/about-cca/>).

Creswell, John W. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Los Angeles CA: SAGE Publications.

Crilly, Donal, Maurizio Zolla, and Morten T. Hansen. 2012. "Faking it or Muddling Through? Understanding Decoupling in Response to Stakeholder Pressures." *Academy of Management Journal* 55(6): 1429-1448.

Davies, Scott and Linda Quirke. 2007. "The Impact of Sector on School Organizations:

- Institutional and Market Logics." *Sociology of Education*. 80: 66-90.
- Delucchi, Michael. 2000. "Staking a Claim: the Decoupling of Liberal Arts Mission Statements from Baccalaureate Degrees Awarded in Higher Education." *Sociological Inquiry* 70(2):157-171.
- DiMaggio Paul J. and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48(2): 147-160.
- Edelman, Lauren B., Christopher Uggen, and Howard S. Erlanger. 1999. "The Endogeneity of Legal Regulation: Grievance Procedures as Rational Myth." *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (2): 406-454.
- Edwards, Jane. 2007. "Challenges and Opportunities for the Internationalization of Higher Education in the Coming Decade: Planned and Opportunistic Initiatives in American Institutions." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 11(3-4): 373-81.
- Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada. 2013. "Economic Impact of International Education Canada – An Update." Retrieved August 1, 2014.
(<http://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/economic-impact-economique/index.aspx?lang=eng>).

Georgia Southern University. 2012. "Complete College Georgia: Georgia's Higher Education Completion Plan 2012." Retrieved June 2, 2014.

(<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BzP8rvDqILzbV3Franh3aWowYnM/edit>).

Georgia Southern University. 2013. "Fact Books and IPEDS Reports." Georgia Southern University. Retrieved October 23, 2013 (<http://em.georgiasouthern.edu/osra/facts-and-figures/factbook/>).

Georgia Southern University. 2014. "Mission and Vision." Retrieved July 28, 2014 (<http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/mission/>).

Greenwood, Royston, Christine Oliver, Kertin Sahlin, and Roy Suddaby. 2008.

"Introduction." Pp. 1-46 in *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, edited by R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, and R. Suddaby. London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Hallett, Tim. 2010. "The Myth Incarnate: Recoupling Processes, Turmoil, and Inhabited Institutions in an Urban Elementary School." *American Sociological Review* 75(1): 52-74.

Hallett, Tim and Marc J. Ventresca. 2006. "Inhabited Institutions: Social Interactions and Organizational Forms in Gouldner's Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy." *Theory and Society* 35: 213-236.

- Hirsch, Paul and Michael Lounsbury. 1997. "Ending the Family Quarrel: Toward a Reconciliation of "Old" and "New" Institutionalisms." *American Behavioural Scientist* 40(4): 406-418.
- Jiang, Xiaoping. 2008. "Towards the Internationalisation of Higher Education from a Critical Perspective." *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 32(4): 347-358.
- Kauppi, Niilo, and Tero Erkkilä. 2011. "The Struggle Over Global Higher Education: Actors, Institutions, and Practices." *International Political Sociology* (5): 314-326.
- Knight, Jane. 2004. "Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 8(1): 5-31.
- Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. 1977. "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *American Journal of Sociology* 83(2): 340-363.
- Morphew, Christopher C. and Matthew Hartley. 2006. "Mission Statements: A Thematic Analysis of Rhetoric Across Institutional Type." *The Journal of Higher Education* 77(3): 456-471.
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators. 2009. "10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Nonimmigrant Visa" Retrieved August 1, 2014.
(http://www.nafsa.org/Find_Resources/Supporting_International_Students_And_Sc

holars/Network_Resources/International_Student_and_Scholar_Services/10_Points_to_Remember_When_Applying_for_a_Nonimmigrant_Visa/).

NAFSA: Association of International Educators. 2011. "The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2010-2011 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis." Retrieved August 1, 2014. (http://www.nafsa.org/_/file/_/eis2011/usa.pdf).

Naidoo, Rajani. 2003. "Repositioning Higher Education as a Global Commodity: Opportunities and Challenges for Future Sociology of Education Work." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 24(2): 249-59.

Nilsson, Bengt. 2003. "Internationalisation at Home From a Swedish Perspective: The Case of Malmö." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 7(1): 27-40.

Olsen, Jennifer Rebecca. 2012. "From Student Mobility to Market Success: The Changing Logic of Internationalization in German Universities." Ph.D. dissertation, Higher Education, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Pache, Anne-Claire and Filipe Santos. 2013. "Inside the Hybrid Organization: Selective Coupling as a Response to Competing Institutional Logics." *Academy of Management Journal* 56(4): 972-1001.

Polster, Claire. 2005. "Privatizing Canada's Public Universities." *Canadian Dimension* 39(5): 18.

Robson, Sue. 2011. "Internationalization: A Transformative Agenda for Higher Education?" *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 17(6): 619-630.

Southern Association on Colleges and Schools. 2014. "Southern Association on Colleges and Schools: Commission on Colleges. Retrieved July 22, 2014. (<http://www.sacscoc.org/>).

Stensaker, Bjørn and Jorunn Dahl Norgård. 2001. "A Case-Study of University Identity Struggle 1969-1999." *Higher Education* 42: 473-492.

Stier, Jonas. 2003. "Internationalisation, Ethnic Diversity and the Acquisition of Intercultural Competencies." *Intercultural Education* 14(1): 77-91.

Stier, Jonas. 2006. "Internationalisation, Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Competence." *Journal of Intercultural Communication* 11: 1-12.

Stier, Jonas. 2010. "International Education: Trends, Ideologies and Alternative Pedagogical Approaches." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 8.3: 339-49.

Stohl, Michael. 2007. "We have Met the Enemy and He is Us: The Role of the Faculty in the

Internationalization of Higher Education in the Coming Decade." *Journal of Studies in International Education* 11(3-4): 359-72.

Teelken, Christine. 2012. "How do Academics Deal with Managerialism in Higher Education? A Comparative Study in Three Countries." *Studies in Higher Education* 37(3): 271-290.

The Association of Universities and Colleges Canada. 2014. "Tuition Fees by University." Retrieved August 1, 2014. (<http://www.aucc.ca/canadian-universities/facts-and-stats/tuition-fees-by-university/>).

Vaira, Massimiliano. 2004. "Globalization and Higher Education Organizational Change: A Framework for Analysis." *Higher Education* 48: 483-510.

Weinstein, Eugene A., and Paul Deutschberger. 1963. "Some Dimensions of Altercasting." *Sociometry* 26(4): 454-466.

Wilfrid Laurier University. 2013a. "About Laurier." Retrieved October 23, 2013 (http://www.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=28&p=186).

Wilfrid Laurier University. 2013b. "North American Mobility Program." Retrieved October 23, 2013. (http://www.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=165&p=8977).

Wilfrid Laurier University. 2014b. "Values, Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles." Retrieved July 28, 2014.
(https://www.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=2295&p=13531).

Wilfrid Laurier University. 2014a. "Academic Plan 2010-2015." Retrieved July 28, 2014.
(http://www.wlu.ca/documents/40655/Academic_Plan_2010-2015.pdf).

Zha, Qiang. 2009. "Diversification of Homogenization in Higher Education: A Global Allomorphism Perspective." *Higher Education in Europe* 34 (3-4): 459-479.