

2 Unpacking Mundaneness

A Novel Conceptual Framework for Universities and Regional Engagement

Rómulo Pinheiro, Laila Nordstrand Berg, Tatiana Iakovleva, Elisa Thomas, and Paul Benneworth

Abstract

In this chapter, we debate the current view on university-regional engagements and suggest a renewed theoretical framework based on four main elements – macro, meso, micro dimensions, as well as a meta-dimension of temporality that cuts across all levels. The macro environment is typically defined as pertaining to public policies, culture, laws, and economy, while the meso environment includes links between the macro (societal) forces and the micro (agents) level through intermediate institutions and structures and is characterized by the processes and mechanisms of interaction of different actors. The micro level is about agency – organizations or individuals/groups within organizations – and agents’ intentions and behaviours. Finally, the interactions between actors and their macro and meso environments occur throughout a timeline and are subject to temporality and “loop” effects.

Introduction

The conceptual/analytical framework advanced in this chapter, and operationalized throughout the volume albeit differently across chapters, builds on seminal contributions from organizational and management studies, in addition to key insights from the extant literature on the topic of universities’ regional engagement. This edited volume focuses on the “everyday” engagements of universities and other types of higher education institutions (HEIs) across different geographies, investigating the manifold ways in which university knowledge agents build connections with regional partners. Their motivations and actions do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, actors’ behaviours are greatly influenced by the context in which they operate. By “context” we refer to the circumstances, conditions, situations, or environments that are external to a phenomenon and either enable or constrain it (Welter & Smallbone, 2011). Too often, context is taken for granted, and its influence is under-reported, although it offers deeper insights into how individuals interact with situations and how situations influence the behaviours of individuals (Johns, 2001). We

use the term “mundaneness” to characterize the dynamic interplay between contextual factors and actors’ strategic intentions and behaviours, in the context of the (daily) routinized tasks and social relationships within and beyond the university campus.

It is possible to conceive of the engagement of HEIs with regional actors as composed of *four* key elements, to a large extent corresponding to the macro, meso, and micro levels, in addition to a meta-dimension that cuts across all levels: temporality. The macro environment is typically defined as pertaining to public policies, culture, laws, and economy (Pitelis, 2005). It is exogenous, since agents often have limited power to change it. Social, cultural, and institutional arrangements define how the “gatekeepers” of resources, as well as the power-holders, have an impact on agents and their behaviours (Brush et al., 2009). At the same time, the meso environment includes links between the macro (societal) forces and the micro (agents) level through intermediate institutions and structures and is characterized by the processes and mechanisms of interaction of different actors. The micro level is about agency – organizations or individuals/groups within organizations – and agents’ intentions and behaviours. Finally, the interactions between actors and their macro and meso environments occur throughout a timeline and are subject to temporality and “loop” effects.

In the next section, we provide a succinct description of each of the four dimensions composing the framework and elaborate on their relationships in the context of university–region interactions and engagement.

The socio-cultural context

HEIs of all types and sizes are embedded into the geographical as well as the socio-cultural contexts surrounding their operations. Institutional scholars acknowledge that such sociocultural contexts, comprising political systems and regulations, and a collective understanding of society and norms of behaviour, can be considered as primary factors in forcing organizations to conform (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). When it comes to how embeddedness affects the activities of HEIs, these are, for the most part, regulated and funded nationally by governmental agencies. The latter are, on behalf of the government, tasked with providing oversight in relation to the governance and operations of the entire higher education (HE) system. Not only are the activities of HEIs embedded in national and increasingly supra-national (European Union) science and research sub-systems (cf. Maassen & Olsen, 2007), but the scope and legitimacy of their tasks and roles are also embedded in other (macro-level) societal structures such as the academic profession and the disciplinary fields into which academics are socialized and from which they derive their normative allegiances and professional identities (Becher & Trowler, 2001).

Marginson and Rhoades (2002) show how the dynamic interplay between local, national, and global dimensions supporting HE policy and practice, including increasing global competition for talent and funding, underpins the

local activities of individual academics and their respective organizations. In a similar vein, Hüther and Krücken (2016) refer to the notion of “nested organisational fields” – a specific manifestation of embeddedness at the sector level – to explain patterns of convergence (isomorphism) and differentiation among HEIs. Following this line of thought, Pekkola et al. (2021) contend that the increasing hybridity of policies and practices across European HE systems is a function of the degree of nestedness among key sub-systems – sociopolitical, institutional, organizational, and psychological – in which HEIs and key actors are deeply embedded.

While discussing the tensions and dilemmas faced by the HE systems and HEIs, Pinheiro et al. (2014) shed light on the complex interplay between a set of “nested tensions” and different types of internal (e.g., goal conflict, renewal versus continuity, governance) and external pressures such as the rise of competitive funding regimes. Regional science scholars have shown how HEIs are deeply embedded in local and regional economic/innovation systems, in addition to national and supra-national ones (Benneworth & Sanderson, 2009; Benneworth et al., 2017). What is more, studies show that key actors within HEIs play a critical role in connecting or bridging these different spheres (cf. Benneworth & Hospers, 2007). As a result, HEIs face pressure to actively engage with, and contribute towards, the broader development of their surrounding geographies, even if that may not necessarily be reflected in their primary functions of teaching and knowledge production (Benneworth, 2012) or be tightly aligned with their strategic interests and (world-class) aspirations (Ramirez et al., 2016).

It is important to note, however, that, as alluded to earlier, degrees of societal embeddedness among HEIs differ, depending on historical conditions and contextual circumstances (Krücken, 2003; Geiger, 2009). Although these days it is almost impossible for HEIs of any size or type to disengage from active participation in societal issues, as was recently demonstrated across the Nordic countries regarding the notion of the “responsible university” (Sørensen et al., 2019), this does not necessarily imply that a tight coupling exists between such activities and core/traditional tasks within teaching and research. Indeed, there is evidence from several contexts showing that actors within HEIs often engage in processes of “loose coupling” to protect core tasks from being co-opted by external interests and agendas (Pinheiro, 2012; Benneworth, 2018; Pinheiro et al., 2018) and/or prevent mission drift or overload (Enders & Boer, 2009). Furthermore, a handful of studies reveal that proper incentive and rewards structures (collectively and individually) for promoting academic engagement across the board are, in most cases, still rather inadequate (Nyden, 2003; Balbachevsky, 2008).

Thus, the opportunities that HEIs perceive and the actions of key agents within them (individuals or groups of individuals) are strongly influenced by their embeddedness within their context. It is possible to use context as a “lens”, drawing attention to questions of when, where, and why (Griffin, 2007; Johns, 2001; Oftedal et al., 2018). Such contextual understanding employs

several dimensions: given the remit and ambition of this volume, we limit the scope of analysis to such dimensions as culture and society, as well as political and economic systems. The empirical cases presented in the volume emanate from different countries. Grasping the specificities associated with the cultural, political, and economic systems of each of the cases is helpful in explaining certain trends as regards universities' interactions with regional actors.

Unpacking mundaneness: an institutional lens

It is important to note that, to describe the phenomenon of university-regional engagement and understand its influence on social participants, a broader (systemic) picture of the macro and meso environments is required for defining and unpacking what is termed as “the mundane”. The latter is defined here as pertaining to the routine behaviour of everyday life within both HEIs (as organizations and institutions) and regions (as socio-economic, cultural, and political entities), as social agents or participants go about their daily tasks and activities. As alluded to earlier (see Chapter 1), in this volume the primary focus of analysis is *not* on the extraordinary, that is, striving for excellence, becoming a new Silicon Valley, and so on, as is the case with earlier studies, but rather on the mundane aspect underpinning the interplay between university and societal actors in the context of academic engagement and the broader processes of regional development and regional renewal.

One of the many possible ways of unpacking mundaneness is through the theoretical lens of institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2011), a sub-stream within the broader neo-institutional tradition within organizational studies (Greenwood et al., 2017). Aligned with the earlier criticism that too much attention had been paid to the role of structural arrangements in conditioning actors' behaviours at the expense of aspects such as power (Lawrence, 2008) and social standing (Battilana, 2006), proponents of institutional work lend credence to the critical role that key agents within organizations play in creating, upholding, developing, and/or disrupting institutional arrangements (Lawrence et al., 2011). Institutional work manifests itself not only in the form of purposive and intentional actions, but also in regard to the widespread adoption of daily routines and institutionalized behaviours without much fuss or consideration by the actors involved. Such mundane behaviours are often invisible or “natural” (Scott, 2003), with actors being largely unaware of them. Still, they often contribute to incremental adjustments which are necessary for maintaining the organization and the sets of formal and informal rules underpinning social life (cf. March et al., 2000). On the more visible side, some actions are more intentional, as is the case with entrepreneurial-related efforts either to change existing structural arrangements or to establish new ones (Beckert, 1999) with differing degrees of internal resistance and external support (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010).

All types of organizations, independently of their legal status, size, and age, are not simply production machines or economic actors designed to achieve

certain ends but are also infused with an array of cultural symbols, ceremonies, and traditions, reflecting institutionalized norms, practices, and belief systems that define what is worth dealing with, how, when and by whom (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; March & Olsen, 2006). Yet, as open systems, organizations do not exist in a vacuum and are an integral part of the regulative and technical environments in which they operate (Scott, 2003), as sketched out earlier in the discussion on embeddedness. External environments help shape individuals' preferences and exert influence on collective and individual behaviour alike (Meyer & Scott, 1992; Geschwind et al., 2022).

Mundane work around institutional maintenance relies on social activities that are performed in a rather automatic or routine-like fashion, without much reflection. Nonetheless, to arrive at that stage, some form of institutionalization is needed before daily organizational (shared) practices and behaviours are performed, repeated, and taken for granted (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Still, the actions of organizational members are guided or mediated by a set of values, norms, beliefs, and identities that are associated with broader (macro-level) institutional orders and logics (Thornton et al., 2012) in addition to the meso- and micro-level dimensions underpinning organizational life (Brint & Karabel, 1991).

To unpack the roles of macro-, meso-, and micro-level dimensions, as well as the interplay among them, in institutionalization processes that result in the establishment of practices and daily routines that are taken for granted, we refer to Scott's (2003, 2008) seminal work on the importance of three institutional pillars underpinning organizational (social) life: the *regulative*, *normative*, and *cultural-cognitive*.

The *regulative* pillar refers to regulatory arrangements and legal frameworks at the macro (societal or sector) level. Once enacted by governmental agencies, these regulations must first be interpreted and second be implemented by the members of the organization to become part of so-called mundane work. Non-compliance with official rules and regulations often results in punishment, which can take legal, financial, or other forms (e.g., non-certification). As a result, most organizations, particularly publicly funded ones such as HEIs, will tend to comply. Organizational members, most saliently leaders, as well as others tasked with enforcing external regulations, tend to act in an instrumentalist fashion to avoid legal or financial punishment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003), as well as to avoid losing legitimacy or external support for organizational tasks and goals (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008).

The *normative* pillar reflects the dominant norms and values which influence the social behaviour of actors going about their daily tasks and activities. Such values often originate in the professional and/or organizational fields in which organizational participants have been socialized and to which they belong (cf. Welch, 2005), and consist of (informal) instructions on how to behave in each situation, through the matching of predefined and widely shared (and cherished) rules to emerging circumstances (March & Olsen, 2006). Over time, such norms and values have a tendency to become deeply institutionalized or

taken for granted and are often infused with a value beyond the task at hand (Selznick, 1996).

The last pillar, the *cultural-cognitive* pillar, is based on how organizational members cognitively perceive their local or immediate surroundings and how this perception is interpreted and integrated culturally within the entire organization, or parts of it, in ways that provide meaning to local participants (Scott, 2003, 2008). Thus, the local culture becomes an integral part of the identity of the organizational members (Clark, 1972), being influenced by traditions and common perceptions on how to act and how to perceive the social reality. From this perspective, mundane activities are regulated following a “logic of orthodoxy”: “this is who we are and how we always have been doing things”.

To further unpack mundaneness at the meso and micro levels, aspects such as materiality, spatiality, practices, and leadership or power structures should be given some attention as well. Mundane activities are often made visible through *materiality*. This is typically explored in sectors or organizational fields such as health care, where the interrelations of material and actions (care, in this setting) are explored (Buse et al., 2018). Mundane work is also influenced by material practices related to “things” pertaining to the technical environment, such as computers and software programmes. Such technical “things” can be conceived of as actors that influence or mediate the actions of organizational participants through daily interactions (Czarniawska & Hernes, 2005). Materiality also encompasses the realm of the immaterial, expressed through “things” and artefacts that are artificially made (e.g., academic groups or research units), reflecting cultural scripts and atmosphere (Buse et al., 2018). As for material artefacts, such as buildings, libraries or science parks, these are shared between the actors and play an active part in mundane activities and in what it is possible (or not possible) to perform.

Turning to *spatiality*, this pertains to the ways in which organizations design and physically organise work, with direct influence on how mundane activities are undertaken, when, and by whom. The locations can vary from the physical buildings (campuses in the case of HEIs) to informal spaces in and between organizations and social participants (e.g., annual academic conferences). Organizational sub-units (e.g., academic departments) placed close to one other influence the development of social networks, determining the types of working and informal relationships among social participants both within (*intra*) and across (*inter*) organizations. Likewise, organizations that are clustered together (such as science parks) and/or are located in more central areas, such as large urban settings, are easier to access by others than those in more remote locations.

Practice encompasses a relationship between actors’ competencies, ongoing dynamics, and processes in addition to the material aspects of social/organizational life that are embodied in tacit knowledge and routinized activities (Buse et al., 2018). As part and parcel of the repository of organizational skills and capabilities, individuals’ “know-how” and “craft knowledge” enable or hinder the types of mundane (daily) activities that social participants can pursue.

Finally, hierarchies and power relations have been found to regulate practice and influence the mundane (Buse et al., 2018). The managerial side of organizations not only allocates roles, responsibilities, and resources but also signals to participants which preferences (goals, solutions, partners, and so on) are to be given priority (Thompson, 2008). That said, mundane activities have, for the most part, been rather neglected in management and leadership studies. Nevertheless, performing administrative tasks, chatting with employees, gossiping, and creating a good working atmosphere are considered important mundane tasks by formal leaders or managers (Buse et al., 2018). The significance of such informal activities in respect of mundaneness may be more salient when compared to, formal, strategic and change processes.

Agency and agents in regional engagement

Although macro and meso environments are important in shaping interactions with regions, it is always individuals or groups of individuals as organizations (agents) who perform certain activities in pursuit of opportunities they find attractive. Neffke et al. (2018) specifically discusses the role of entrepreneurs and existing firms in structural change in regional economies, a role that can also be attributed to the university as a change agent. According to Neffke et al. (2018), local agents have ties with social and economic networks in their home regions which allow them to understand and draw from the region's capabilities to develop engagement activities contributing to regional development. Agents in this book can be either universities as organizations or agents within universities, including the university's leadership and employees: academics, researchers, administrative staff, and students. We also relate agents to individuals or organizations in the regional environment such as firms, entrepreneurs, political institutions, policymakers, non-government organizations, and so on. As university agents have access to different regional capabilities, this affects their capacity (or willingness) to induce change in a region and create economic activities (Neffke et al., 2018).

By drawing on the concept of *entrepreneurial agency*, Garud and Karnøe (2003) have shown that agency is distributed across actors because each actor dominates incomplete areas of knowledge. The same can be said about the agency for regional development, where the university and external partners contribute specific, different, and complementary forms of knowledge. Steen (2016) adds that the path creation in a region is the result of collective rather than individual agency and that the development of some sense of collective expectation is important. The actors shape paths and become embedded in these paths; "in turn, these paths begin shaping actors over time" (Garud & Karnøe, 2003, p. 278).

Universities' engagement is context-specific and contingent on agency. It is the agents who "mindfully deviate" from existing paths to establish new practices that will, with time, turn into new routines (Garud & Karnøe, 2003; Steen, 2016). "To understand why particular paths emerge instead of others therefore

requires more attention to agency and how actors respond to changes in (but also influence) the contexts in which they operate” (Steen, 2016, p. 1608). The 11 empirical chapters of this volume provide numerous illustrations of the role that agents at multiple levels, both internal and external to HEIs, play in processes of regional engagement.

Temporality as a key dimension of regional engagement

The processes underlying regional change and path creation/evolution due to universities’ engagement include a temporal dimension of agency: this is simultaneously past- and future-oriented (Steen, 2016). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) emphasized the agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, in which the *past* contributes with habits, the *future* predicts and imagines alternative possibilities, and the *present* contextualizes how past habits may become future projects according to the contingencies of the moment. The temporally oriented definition of agency reinforces the notion that actors adjust their actions in relation to changing circumstances or specific contexts, and “they selectively engage with routines and habits from the past, evaluate present possibilities and project hypothetical new paths into the future” (Araujo & Harrison, 2002, p. 8). When agents are aware of their ability to change the course of events and that the efficacy of their choices is temporally dependent, that is, when path dependence gets disentangled from determinism (Araujo & Harrison, 2002), there arises a useful discussion regarding universities’ engagement in regional development. University agents may, according to their engagement activities, create new paths or reinforce existing paths in their region.

As an integral part of institutional work, the intentionality of actors (i.e., the actions taken in given circumstances and linked to a predefined outcome) can be studied in relation to temporality (Lawrence et al., 2011). Tacit rhythms and rituals constitute and support social participants’ sense of security (Buse et al., 2018), but such rituals and habits do have a starting point. Firstly, habits that are taken for granted are based both on past experiences (Bucheli & Wadhvani, 2013) and what actions are considered appropriate or legitimate in each situation (March & Olsen, 2006). Tacit knowledge and habitual or routinized behaviour can be understood as intentional, since actors can often choose from a range of suitable alternatives (cf. March & Olsen, 1979). Secondly, the present context and social experience are thought to influence intentionality (Buse et al., 2018). Actors engage in self-reflexive actions to handle emerging situations in either a pragmatic fashion or a normative fashion. Thirdly, future expectations influence intentionality. This can best be seen in relation to goal-oriented actions and an orientation towards what is to be achieved, strategically, over time (cf. Chandler, 1990). In short, past, present, and future expectations are part and parcel of the ways in which actors within and across organizations choose from a course of possible actions as they undertake their mundane or daily activities.

The embeddedness of actors in their context often results in a “loop effect”, leading to path dependencies (Welter & Smallbone, 2010) whereby future trajectories and dynamics are to a large extent determined *ex ante* as a function of earlier events and situations (e.g., past decisions affect future decisions, and so on, in a pattern of incremental change). Multiple studies have pointed to the historical nature of universities’ functions, structures, and outlooks (cf. Krücken, 2003). Similarly, regional science scholars have demonstrated the role of path dependencies as important constraining and enabling factors in processes of regional change and adaptation or the lack thereof (Isaksen et al., 2019). Hence, the temporality dimension is an important element in understanding how macro and meso environments reflect contextual embeddedness and mundane activities.

Towards an integrative mundaneness framework

This book’s starting point is to consider the various processes by which university knowledge is made available and transferred into regions through everyday actions. Keeping focus on practices and processes, we want to shed light on how university interactions with societal partners shape and modify the development of HEIs as well as the regions in which they are embedded. In this chapter, we have reviewed four dimensions – embeddedness in sociocultural arrangements, mundaneness, agency, and temporality – to integrate them into a new framework for understanding the coupling of universities with places and the ways in which universities as institutions can allow their everyday activities to contribute strongly and positively to regional prosperity.

So far, we have paid attention to structures and processes that might affect agents’ behaviours. We mentioned earlier that regulative, normative, and cognitive dimensions within organizations should be considered, as well as external processes and structures, such as materiality, spatiality, practices, and leadership. However, over time, structure and agency become mutually constituted. Structuration theory holds that an actor or agent is a knowledgeable individual who has a capacity for actions (Giddens, 1984). The actors are seen as independent, creative, free, and sensible and are able to perform agency; that is, they have the “capacity to do otherwise: to follow one system of practices and to refuse another” (Whittington, 2010, p. 147). Through structuration theory, Giddens attempts to build a bridge between actors and structures with the latter providing opportunities (enabling and/or constraining) for actions (Giddens, 1984).

The structuration process is characterized by three distinct dimensions ranging, in order of strength, from iterative to projective to practical-evaluative (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). The most prevalent at the start of the structuration process is the *iterative agent*. This refers to the selective reactivation, by actors, of past patterns of thought and action. These are routinely incorporated into practical activity, giving stability and order to social universes, and helping sustaining identities, interactions, and institutions over time. The next

stage of the process is *projectivity*, which is the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action that are creatively reconfigured, considering actors’ hopes, fears, and desires for the future. The final stage of the process is *practical evaluation*, which is based on the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgements regarding alternative trajectories of action in response to emerging demands and dilemmas alongside the ambiguities of evolving situations.

While the iterative agent may develop intentions and attitudes for future behaviour, as the phases of structuration proceed, the projective agent is likely to test the context by choosing a behavioural posture fitting one’s intentions. Practical–evaluative agents may, in turn, influence existing structural arrangements by communicating their judgement of them. In other words, agents are affected by, but may also influence (help shape), structural conditions through their actions and experiences, a process recognized in the literature as pertaining to phenomenon of “embedded agency” (cf. Battilana & D’unno, 2009). This in turn poses the perennial dilemma of how, and under what circumstances, agents who are deeply embedded in a given structure or sets of structures, and socialized to accept them as “natural”, exercise agency to change these same structures.

Following the conceptual and analytical elements sketched out earlier, our framework suggests that mundaneness processes take place in each of the aforementioned pillars. Universities as organizations or university agents – students, academics, administrators, and so on – are therefore exposed to formal or informal rules derived from the regulative, normative, and cognitive pillars and/or to new knowledge which then forms the basis for the agents’ awareness of contextual circumstances. Those pillars impact agents through such mechanisms as materiality, spatiality, practices, and leadership structures. Agents, in turn, might behave in iterative, projective, or practical–evaluative ways. Over time, their behaviours also modify the context in which they operate. This dynamic and non-linear process is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

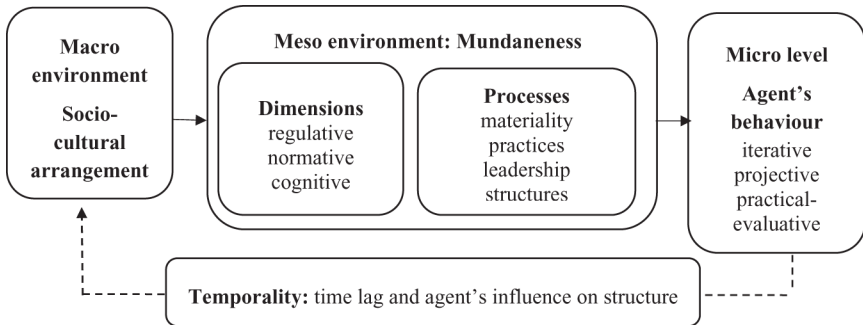


Figure 2.1 Mundaneness as process

We accept, in this theoretical framework, a time lag between reaction, stimuli, and action. A time lag also exists between the agent's stimulation by the structure and the agent's influencing that same structure. In certain cases, for example, students or temporary staff spend limited periods of time at universities, in contrast to permanent academic and administrative staff. In such situations, it is therefore necessary to consider the influence of structure upon the agent to be greater than that of the agent upon the structure. On the other hand, when it comes to permanent staff, and in particular senior academics, the reverse holds true. Senior academics have a considerable degree of professional autonomy and discretion in going about their teaching, research, and engagement activities (Kehm & Teichler, 2013). This creates a high degree of "loose-coupling" between structural arrangements at the central and sub-unit levels (Pinheiro & Young, 2017).

We assert, on the basis of Giddens's (1984) interpretivist view of structure, that perception of the regional and organizational context guides agentic behaviour, related to structural maintenance, change, or both. This view is aligned with the notion of the university as an institution, composed of a set of institutionalized (formal and informal) structures determining the behaviour of social actors; more specifically as encompassing

a relatively enduring collection of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances.

(March & Olsen, 2006, p. 3)

This view contrasts with a more instrumentalist account, held by rational-choice scholars and most managers and policymakers, which treats the university as a tool or instrument for reaching certain policy-defined or managerially induced strategic agendas (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2007; Pinheiro & Stensaker, 2014).

This book focuses on the formal and informal roles and everyday activities played by different agents in universities' engagement with the regions where universities are located. The university and its role in regional development have been discussed from different approaches, that is, the triple helix, regional innovation systems, and the entrepreneurial university (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997; Asheim et al., 2011; Audretsch, 2014). However, for the most part, these studies fail to address how "university agents" perform their ordinary activities when engaging with "regional agents".

Hence, the analytical framework described here and visualized in Figure 2.1 aims at unpacking the everyday interactions of university agents with their environment, whether within their core organization or at the regional and national levels. Thus, the main focus is not on exceptional performance by HEIs, measured in terms of patents, licences, or publications. Rather, our framework

focuses on the micro scale of individual knowledge actor agency and the way that the interactions of HEIs with societal (regional) partners shape local contexts for actionable knowledge.

References

- Araujo, L., & Harrison, D. (2002). Path dependence, agency and technological evolution. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 14(1), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537320220125856>
- Asheim, B. T., Smith, H. L., & Oughton, C. (2011). Regional innovation systems: Theory, empirics and policy. *Regional Studies*, 45(7), 875–891.
- Audretsch, D. (2014). From the entrepreneurial university to the university for the entrepreneurial society. *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 39(3), 313–321.
- Balachevsky, E. (2008). Incentives and obstacles to academic entrepreneurship. In S. Schwartzman (Ed.), *University and development in Latin America: Successful experiences of research centre* (pp. 23–42). Rotterdam: Sense.
- Batilana, J. (2006). Agency and institutions: The enabling role of individuals' social position. *Organization*, 13(5), 653–676.
- Batilana, J., & D'ahunno, T. (2009). Institutional work and the paradox of embedded agency. In T. Lawrence, R. Suddaby, & B. Leca (Eds.), *Institutional work: Actors and agency in institutional studies of organizations* (Vol. 31, pp. 31–58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Becher, T., & Trowler, P. (2001). *Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual enquiry and the culture of disciplines*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Beckert, J. (1999). Agency, entrepreneurs, and institutional change. The role of strategic choice and institutionalized practices in organizations. *Organization Studies*, 20(5), 777–799.
- Benneworth, P. (2012). The relationship of regional engagement to universities' core purposes: Reflections from engagement efforts with socially excluded communities. In R. Pinheiro, P. Benneworth, & G. A. Jones (Eds.), *Universities and regional development: A critical assessment of tensions and contradictions* (pp. 199–218). Milton Park and New York: Routledge.
- Benneworth, P. (2018). *Universities and regional economic development: Engaging with the periphery*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Benneworth, P., & Hospers, G. J. (2007). The new economic geography of old industrial regions: Universities as global–local pipelines. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 25(6), 779–802.
- Benneworth, P., Pinheiro, R., & Karlsen, J. (2017). Strategic agency and institutional change: Investigating the role of universities in regional innovation systems (RISs). *Regional Studies*, 51(2), 235–248.
- Benneworth, P., & Sanderson, A. (2009). The regional engagement of universities: Building capacity in a sparse innovation environment. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 21(1), 1–18.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality*. London: Penguin Books.
- Brint, S. B., & Karabel, J. (1991). Institutional origins and transformations: The case of American community colleges. In W. Powell & P. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (pp. 337–360). Chicago: University Chicago Press.

- Brush, C., de Bruin, A., & Welter, F. (2009). A gender-aware framework for female entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 1(1), 8–24.
- Bucheli, M., & Wadhvani, R. D. (2013). *Organizations in time: History, theory, methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buse, C., Martin, D., & Nettleton, S. (2018). Conceptualising “materialities of care”: Making visible mundane material culture in health and social care contexts. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 40(2), 243–255.
- Chandler, J. A. D. (1990). *Strategy and structure: Chapters in the history of the American industrial enterprise*. Boston, MA: MIT Press.
- Clark, B. (1972). The organizational saga in higher education. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(1), 178–184.
- Czarniawska, B., & Hernes, T. (2005). *Actor-network theory and organizing*. Copenhagen: Liber & Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Deephouse, D., & Suchman, M. (2008). Legitimacy in organizational institutionalism. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, & R. Suddaby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism* (pp. 49–77). London and Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- DiMaggio, P., & Powell, W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147–160.
- Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(4), 962–1023.
- Enders, J., & Boer, H. (2009). The mission impossible of the European university: Institutional confusion and institutional diversity. In A. Amaral, G. Neave, C. Musselin, & P. Maassen (Eds.), *European integration and the governance of higher education and research* (Vol. 26, pp. 159–178). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Etzkowitz, H., & Leydesdorff, L. (1997). Introduction to special issue on science policy dimensions of the Triple Helix of university–industry–government relations. *Science and Public Policy*, 24(1), 2–5.
- Garud, R., & Karnøe, P. (2003). Bricolage versus breakthrough: Distributed and embedded agency in technology entrepreneurship. *Research Policy*, 32(2), 277–300.
- Geiger, R. L. (2009). *Research & relevant knowledge: American research universities since World War II*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Geschwind, L., Pinheiro, R., & Stensaker, B. (2022). Organizational persistence in highly institutionalized environments: Unpacking the relation between identity and resilience. In R. Pinheiro, L. Frigotto, & M. Young (Eds.), *Towards resilient organizations and societies: A cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary perspective* (pp. 195–221). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society. Outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Gornitzka, Å., & Maassen, P. (2007). An instrument for national political agendas: The hierarchical vision. In P. Maassen & J. P. Olsen (Eds.), *University dynamics and European integration* (pp. 81–98). Dordrecht: Springer
- Greenwood, R., Oliver, C., Lawrence, T. B., & Meyer, R. E. (2017). *The SAGE handbook of organizational institutionalism*. London and New York: SAGE Publications.
- Griffin, M. (2007). Specifying organizational contexts: Systematic links between contexts and processes in organizational behaviour. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 28(7), 859–863.
- Hüther, O., & Krücken, G. (2016). Nested organizational fields: Isomorphism and differentiation among European universities. In E. Berman & C. Paradeise (Eds.), *The university under pressure* (pp. 53–83). Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

- Isaksen, A., Jakobsen, S. E., Njøs, R., & Normann, R. (2019). Regional industrial restructuring resulting from individual and system agency. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 32(1), 48–65.
- Johns, G. (2001). In praise of context. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 22(1), 31–42.
- Kehm, B. M., & Teichler, U. (2013). *The academic profession in Europe: New tasks and new challenges*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Krücken, G. (2003). Learning the “New, New Thing”: On the role of path dependency in university structures. *Higher Education*, 46(3), 315–339.
- Lawrence, T. (2008). Power, institutions and organizations. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, & R. Suddaby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism* (pp. 170–197). London: Sage Publishers.
- Lawrence, T., Suddaby, R., & Leca, B. (2011). Institutional work: Refocusing institutional studies of organization. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 20(1), 52–58.
- Maassen, P., & Olsen, J. P. (2007). *University dynamics and European integration*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (2010). *Explaining institutional change: Ambiguity, agency, and power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1979). *Ambiguity and choice in organizations*. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget.
- March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (2006). Elaborating the “New Institutionalism”. In R. A. Rhodes, S. A. Binder, & R. B. A. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political institutions* (pp. 3–22). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- March, J. G., Schulz, M., & Zhou, X. (2000). *The dynamics of rules: Change in written organizational codes*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Marginson, S., & Rhoades, G. (2002). Beyond national states, markets, and systems of higher education: A glonacal agency heuristic. *Higher Education*, 43(3), 281–309.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 340–363.
- Meyer, J. W., & Scott, W. R. (1992). *Organizational environments: Ritual and rationality*. Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage Publications.
- Neffke, F., Hartog, M., Boschma, R., & Henning, M. (2018). Agents of structural change: The role of firms and entrepreneurs in regional diversification. *Economic Geography*, 94(1), 23–48.
- Nyden, P. (2003). Academic incentives for faculty participation in community-based participatory research. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 18(7), 576–585.
- Oftedal, E. M., Iakovleva, T. A., & Foss, L. (2018). University context matter. *Education+ Training*, 873–890
- Pekkola, E., Pinheiro, R., Geschwind, L., Siekkinen, T., Carvalho, T., & Pulkkinen, K. (2021). Nested hybridity and value definition in public higher education. In J. Vakkuri & J.-E. Johanson (Eds.), *Hybrid governance, organisations and society: Value creation perspectives* (pp. 59–80). London: Routledge.
- Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. (2003). *The external control of organisations: A resource-dependence perspective*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Books.
- Pinheiro, R. (2012). *In the region, for the region? A comparative study of the institutionalisation of the regional mission of universities* (PhD dissertation). Oslo: University of Oslo.
- Pinheiro, R., Geschwind, L., & Aarrevaara, T. (2014). Nested tensions and interwoven dilemmas in higher education: The view from the Nordic countries. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 7(2), 233–250.

- Pinheiro, R., & Stensaker, B. (2014). Strategic actor-hood and internal transformation: The rise of the quadruple-helix university? In J. Brankovik, M. Klemencik, P. Lazetic, & P. Zgaga (Eds.), *Global challenges, local responses in higher education. The contemporary issues in national and comparative perspective*. (pp. 171–189). Rotterdam: Sense.
- Pinheiro, R., & Young, M. (2017). The university as an adaptive resilient organization: A complex systems perspective. In J. Huisman & M. Tight (Eds.), *Theory and method in higher education research* (pp. 119–136). Bingley: Emerald.
- Pinheiro, R., Young, M., & Sima, K. (2018). *Higher education and regional development: Tales from Northern and Central Europe*. Cham: Palgrave.
- Pitelis, C. N. (2005). On globalisation and governance; some issues. *Contributions to Political Economy*, 24(1), 1–12.
- Ramirez, F., Byrkjeflot, H., & Pinheiro, R. (2016). Higher education and health organizational fields in the age of “world class” and “best practices”. In R. Pinheiro, L. Geschwind, F. Ramirez, & K. Vrangbæk (Eds.), *Towards a comparative institutionalism: Forms, dynamics and logics across health care and higher education fields* (pp. 35–57). Bingley: Emerald.
- Scott, W. R. (2003). *Organizations: Rational, natural, and open systems*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Scott, W. R. (2008). *Institutions and organizations: Ideas and interests*. London: Sage Publications.
- Selznick, P. (1996). Institutionalism “old” and “new”. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41(2), 270–277.
- Sorensen, M. P., Geschwind, L., Kekäle, J., & Pinheiro, R. (2019). *The responsible university: Exploring the Nordic context and beyond*. Cham: Springer Nature.
- Steen, M. (2016). Reconsidering path creation in economic geography: Aspects of agency, temporality and methods. *European Planning Studies*, 24(9), 1605–1622.
- Thompson, J. D. (2008). *Organizations in action: Social science bases of administrative theory* (5th ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The institutional logics perspective: A new approach to culture, structure, and process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Welch, A. R. (2005). *The professoriate: Profile of a profession*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Welter, F., & Smallbone, D. (2010). The embeddedness of women’s entrepreneurship in a transition context. In C. Brush, A. Bruin, E. Gatewood, & C. Henry (Eds.), *Women entrepreneurs and the global environment for growth: A research perspective* (pp. 96–117). Cheltenham Edward Elgar: Publisher.
- Welter, F., & Smallbone, D. (2011). Institutional perspectives on entrepreneurial behaviour in challenging environments. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 49(1), 107–125.
- Whittington, R. (2010). Giddens, structuration theory and strategy as practice. In D. Golsorkhi, L. Rouleau, D. Seidl, & E. Vaara (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of strategy as practice* (pp. 145–164). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.