



**Management and
Business
Administration
Doctoral School**

SUMMARY OF THESES

Gergely Kováts

**The Position and Role of the Dean in a Transforming Higher Education
System**

PhD Dissertation

Thesis Supervisor:

Katalin Szabó, DSc
University Professor

Budapest, 2012

**Institute of Management
Department of Management and Organization**

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1. The basic questions of the research and their justification

1.1. The relevance of deans as the subject of research

According to mainstream higher education research, the tertiary education of developed countries has been characterised by massification, the transformation of the institutional system of research, decreasing public funding, the transformation of the role of the state and increasing competition in recent decades (*Barakonyi* [2004b]; *OECD* [2008]; *Halász* [2009]). Due to these changes, not only have new services and technologies appeared in the institutions (such as IT systems, career centres, student counselling) but the techniques used in business management have also been gradually introduced in the operation of universities, such as controlling, HR, strategic planning, quality management and benchmarking systems (*Sporn* [2006]). Thus, the governance and management systems of the institutions of higher education have undergone significant transformation. As operators of the new services and management techniques, the importance of institutional management and administration – with regard to the resources used and the number of employees – has increased (*Gornitzka, Kyvik et al.* [1998]; *Gornitzka – Larsen* [2004]), and their roles have changed significantly (*Teichler* [2001]; *Barakonyi* [2004a]).

However, during the introduction and analysis of these processes, as well as the examination of the changes in roles, institutional management is considered to be homogeneous and coherent (*Mignot-Gérard* [2003]); moreover, overtly or covertly, it is identified with the senior management of the institution, thus, a more differentiated approach towards the institutional management is missing. As a consequence, significantly less attention is paid to middle managers such as the deans and heads of departments, although they are the key actors of the transformation process (*Santiago, Carvalho et al.* [2006]). Hence, this is the level at which the new managing techniques can be implemented in everyday practice, in the context of resolving actual problems, so the transformation of higher education management systems is realised at this level. Namely, it depends mostly on mid-level managers whether the strategic approach, controlling, quality management and the other techniques *indeed* operate in the institution or they are simply stuck at the level of fulfilling external expectations without having any impact on the everyday life of the institution (see e.g. *Lozeau, Langley et al.* [2002]). Thus, mid-level managers – in *Fulton's* highly critical wording –

“are soldiers fighting in the front line of the reorganisation process” (*Fulton* [2003] 162.o.). The importance of their role and also its contradictory nature is highlighted by the fact that the transformation of tertiary education – and the management system in particular – is far from being without arguments and conflicts, as many professors regard it as the betrayal of the mission of universities while others feel it to be losing social status, deprofessionalisation; moreover: proletarianisation.

In my research, I undertake the analysis of the deans’ position. The reason for my choice of them (over the heads of departments) is that I see their responsibility as more significant, while their position more difficult and more abundant in role conflicts than those of other mid-level managers at universities, as the deans have to face considerable organisational and contextual complexities, the pressure to decide, conflicting expectations and a restricted space for manoeuvre at the same time. All this originates from the fact that the contradictions emerging from the transformation of the higher education system are particularly apparent in their case as it is their responsibility to harmonise, on a daily basis, the academic, economic and administrative spheres of the institution, as well as external expectations. Thus, the inconsistencies between these factors become palpable at the deans’ level – primarily in the increasingly strong controversies of the expectations towards them.

1.2. Antecedents of the research

The reflections upon the deans’ particular position, if initially with low intensity, have been present in American higher education research since the 1960s. As a consequence, numerous role models were born (such as those by *Wolverton and Gmech* [2002], *Maghroori and Powers* [2004], *Krahenbuhl* [2004], *Martin* [1993]). However, in Europe – at least according to the sources available for me – the question has been addressed highly sparsely, occasionally even since the 1990s. The reason for this may be that in the United States, the marketisation and massification resulting in the transformation of the governance of universities and that of the dean’s role had finished by the 1960s, while in Europe, it only started in the 1980s and the 1990s. This is what makes the analysis of the research questions particularly interesting in Europe and in Hungary. That is, the question what it means to be a dean in an environment transforming significantly in a short period of time and by what sort of conflicts and tensions it is accompanied cannot be answered relying on the mostly American

accessible literature, as the latter devotes little attention to the question what relationship there is between the organisational characteristics of the university as well as the transformation of the higher education system and the specific characteristics of the dean's position and the changes of his/her role. Therefore, it is unable to reflect upon the transition that is taking place in Europe and in the higher education systems of Central- and Eastern-Europe in particular. Nor does the American literature reflect on the deans' "sandwich-position", that is, on deans being middle-managers.

1.3. Research questions

As for the analysis of the dean's position, two questions arise from the above:

- 1. What role or roles do deans have in Hungarian higher education institutions?**
- 2. How do deans perceive their own role as deans in Hungarian higher education institutions?**

The first question refers to what collective expectations the person in the dean's position has to face, what kind of role or roles are attributed to them or, in other words, what being the dean of an institution means for the organisation. With the second question, I am examining what being a dean means to the deans as individuals, namely, how they process the collective expectations, how they relate to them, what kind of interpretations and expectations they have of their role and what they do to establish collective expectations as well as make their own interpretations accepted.

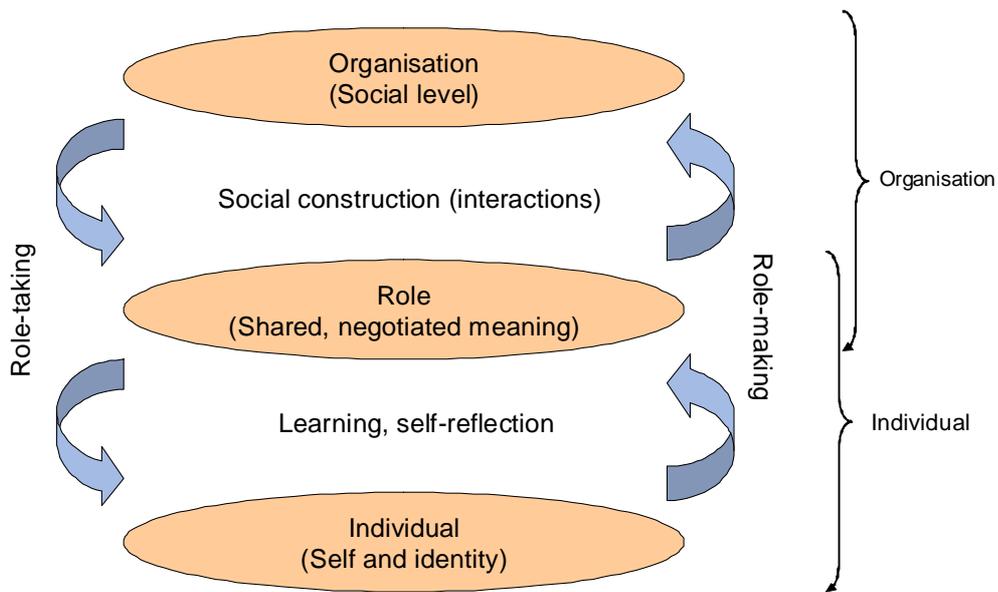
2. Methods used during the course of the research

2.1. The theoretical framework of the analysis

The research questions focus on the (self-)expectations towards the dean, the analysis of the dean's roles. The role is nothing other than a repertory of accepted behaviour patterns, behaviours and attitudes considered to belong together and appearing as a generally accepted expectation towards an individual in a certain position or situation (*Bailey – Yost [2000]; Turner [2001] p. 233*). Many roles may only be interpretable with their partner roles and altering roles, as only this way may the content of the role under discussion become meaningful. For instance, the superior's role becomes clear only together with the role of his inferior; the seller's with the buyer's, the teacher's with the student's. Consequently, the analysis of roles essentially means the examination of the relationship between individuals and social systems – such as organisations or society –, namely, how a particular social system influences the individual's behaviour (as well as self-interpretation and the identity) through the roles and vice versa.

The theoretical framework of the analysis of the dean's role is provided by the symbolic interactionist approach. According to this approach, the role of the dean is a social construction. In the interactions, the dean and his/her partners behave in accordance with this system of beliefs; therefore, in these interactions, the image of the dean's role is under continuous reconstruction and reproduction, which stabilises the dean's behaviour as well. The dean's role implicitly entails the expectations related to the tasks and activities of the role partners. The description of the interrelations of roles, in fact, means the description of the operation of the organisation. Therefore, role interpretation embedded into the belief what the university is like and how it is supposed to (should) be operating, which I call the narratives. From all this follows that it is necessary to reveal the narratives of the organisation as well in order to understand the role of the dean.

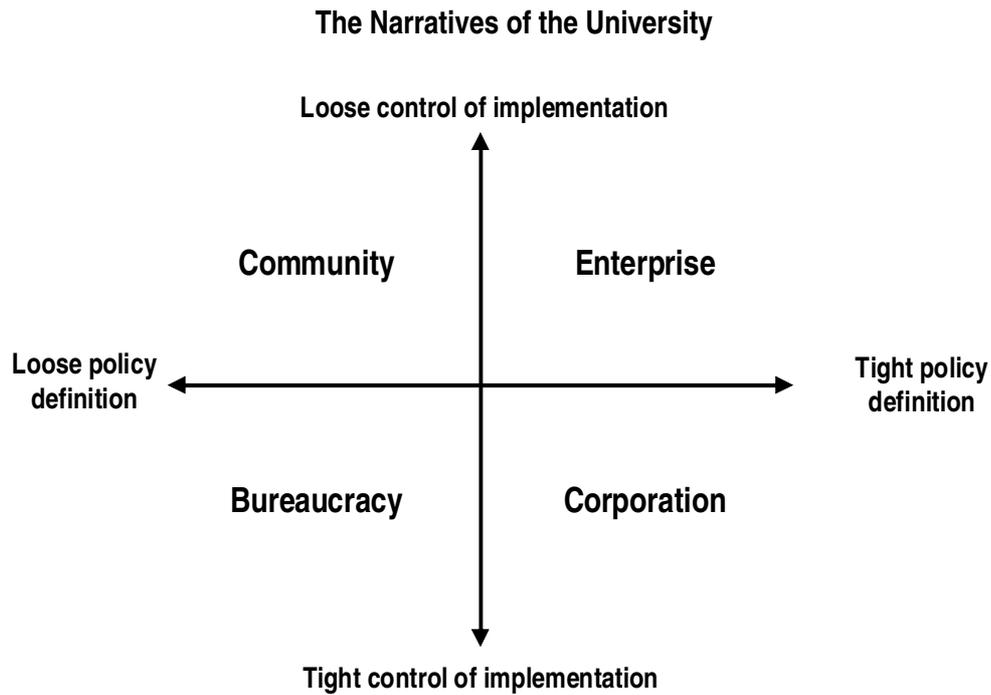
The Review of the Symbolic-Interactionist Approach Applied in the Research



2.2. The narratives of the university and the initial interpretations of the dean's roles

The analysis of the theoretical framework led to the conclusion that the role expectations towards the dean are incorporated into the narratives of the university. Based on *McNay* [1995]'s model of university culture as the starting point, I distinguish between four university narratives: the collegium, bureaucracy, the entrepreneurial university and corporation. The basic differences between the narratives may be apprehensible along two dimensions. One of them is the way of policy-making while the other is identical with the strictness of implementing policies. Thus, the two dimensions organise the narratives according to how they relate to the two essential characteristics of the university: its professional nature and fragmentation.

In the light of the narratives defined along these two dimensions, I have reinterpreted the potential roles of the dean, giving them metaphoric names: the idealised dean of the community is the hero, the bureaucracy's is the provider, at the entrepreneurial university, the dean works as a catalyst while in the corporation, the dean is essentially a strategic player.



Source: based on *McNay* [1995]

Due to the lack of empirical sources related to the roles and experience of deans, the research is explorative research, the aim of which is to understand “deanship” and to deepen the concept of the dean’s role. This agrees with the logic of “grounded theory”, in which theory (the dean’s roles, the organisational incorporation and changes of roles) develops alongside empirical data collection (Glaser-Strauss [1967], cited in *Maxwell* [1996] p.33).

Summary of the Narratives of the University						
Aspect		Source	Community	Bureaucracy	Enterprise	Corporation
Values, mission	Source of legitimacy		Education towards enlightenment and disinterested “truth”-seeking	Social justice	Satisfaction of consumer needs, utility	Economic return, competence, survival
	Dominant value	<i>McNay</i> [1995]; <i>McNay</i> [2003]; <i>Clark</i> [1983]	Expertise and excellence	Equity and efficiency	Competence and compliance	Loyalty and effectiveness
Characteristics of higher education system	The coordinating group of the higher education system	<i>McNay</i> [1995]; <i>McNay</i> [2003]	Academic oligarchy	State (as bureaucracy)	Market policy	State (as policy maker)
	Barriers of entry		High	High	Low	Low
	Performance control		Low	High	Low	High
Characteristics of the operation of higher education institutions	Idealised organisational form*	<i>Mintzberg</i> [1981]; <i>Mintzberg</i> [1991]; <i>Weick</i> [1976]	Missionary organisation, loosely coupled system	Professional bureaucracy	Operative adhocracy	Divisional organisation
	Hand’s cultural equivalent	<i>McNay</i> [1995]; (quoted by <i>Bakacsi</i> [1999])	Person culture	Role culture	Task culture	Power culture
	Quinn’s cultural equivalent	quoted by <i>Bakacsi</i> [1999]	Supporter-oriented	Rule-oriented	Innovation-oriented	Goal-oriented
	Operational focus		Internal (organisation)	Internal (organisation)	External (environment)	External (environment)
	Dominant unit	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Department/individual	Faculty/committees	Sub-unit/project team	Institution / senior management team
	Decision arena	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Informal groups, networks	Committees and administrative briefings	Project teams	Working parties and senior management team
	Management style	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Consensual	Formal, ‘rational’	Devolved leadership	Political, tactical
	Role of central authorities	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Permissive	Regulative	Supportive	Directive
	Timeframe	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Long	Middle	Instant	Short/middle
	Environmental ‘fit’	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Evolution	Stability	Turbulence	Crisis
	Nature of change	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Organic innovation	Reactive adaptation	Tactical flexibility	Proactive transformation
	Initiators of change		Professors	Administration	Customers	Senior management team

Summary of the Narratives of the University						
Aspect		Source	Community	Bureaucracy	Enterprise	Corporation
	External referents	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Invisible college	Ministry, regulative bodies	Customers, sponsors	Policy makers as opinion leaders
	Internal referents	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	The discipline	The roles	Market strength, students	The plans
	Basis for evaluation	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Peer review	Audit of procedures	Repeat business	Performance indicators
Roles in higher education institutions	Leaders		Primus inter pares	Rational planners	Visionary leaders	Controlling managers
	Source of leadership authority		Scientific excellence	Formal position	Persuasive vision, expertise	Control of resources
	Students	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Apprentice academic	Clients*	Customers	Unit of resource
	Lecturers		Member of scientific community	Experts, professionals	„state-subsidized entrepreneurs”	Knowledge workers
	Administration	<i>McNay</i> [1995]	Serves the community	Serves the committee	Serves the client, external and internal	Serves the chief executive
	Role of boards and committees		Community rituals, preserving community culture, sharing information	Decision-making, coordination	Scene of brainstorming and problem solving (project)	Legitimation and preparation of decisions
Related concepts		Organised anarchy (<i>Cohen – March</i> [1974]), public good regime (<i>Slaughter – Rhoades</i> [2004])	Soft managerialism (<i>Trow</i> [1994]), public good regime (<i>Slaughter – Rhoades</i> [2004])	Soft entrepreneurial university (<i>Barnett</i> [2005]), academic capitalism (<i>Slaughter – Rhoades</i> [2004])	Hard managerialism (<i>Trow</i> [1994]), hard entrepreneurial university (<i>Barnett</i> [2005]) Public management regime (<i>Bleiklie</i> [2005])	
Criticism based on other narratives		Inefficient, non-accountable, disregards the expectations of the environment, needs (ivory tower), elitist, strives monopoly	Limits creativity, slow, unable to keep up with the changes of environmental needs.	Lack of mission	Commodifies knowledge, oppressive	

* The original proposition of the author cited has been changed

2.3. Data collection processes

The explorative nature of research and the symbolic-interactionist approach selected as the theoretical framework justify the application of qualitative research techniques and data collection procedures. Accordingly, my primary data collection method is the semi-structured interview. However, the validity and reliability of the conclusions drawn from these interviews should be refined by additional information collected (triangulation), which in the current research is provided by document analysis, observation as well as statistical data gathering.

Document analysis: To understand the dean's formal position as well as the situation of faculties, I examined the higher education laws and significant regulations having been in effect since the change of regime; furthermore, in 2011–2012 I reviewed the Rules of Procedure of all state institutions and some of the employment statutes, and I analysed the institutional websites as well. The aim of the review was to carry out the comprehensive analysis of the deans' environment as well as the identification of the tendencies and factors affecting the situation of faculties.

Statistical data gathering: I collected the most significant statistical data related to faculties, reviewed the faculty websites and analysed the deans' CVs. Data gathering had been carried out in August 2010 and as a result, the most significant data of the 150 faculties operating in Hungary and deans were summarised in a table. This was further refined in 2011 and 2012. The results enable the identification of not only the deans' general characteristics but the general expectations towards them as well.

Semi-structured interviews: the primary sources of data regarding the deans' life situation are the deans themselves; therefore, I used the interviews to be made with them as a basis for formulating the question about sample selection. At the beginning of the interview-research (in June 2010), 150 deans were in charge in Hungarian higher education. During the sample selection process, I primarily applied the maximum variance method (*Miles – Huberman* [1994] p. 28) since I believed that the analysis of deans being in significantly different life situations enabled the documentation of a variety of roles and experience while, at the same time, it also allowed for the identification of common patterns.

Apart from the active deans of the selected institutions, I also contacted *former deans who had completed their tenure the year before the research*, and who could provide their opinion from a different, more reflective position. The dean's role partners also contribute to the construction of the role of the dean, out of these partners I involved the *senior managers of*

higher education institutions in the research. The purpose of conducting interviews with them was to better understand the institutional context and the expectations towards deans.

Eventually, I conducted interviews with 30 (incumbent, outgoing or future) deans and 8 senior managers of seven higher education institutions. The approximately 44 hours of audio material had been transcribed literally, the volume of the transcription was 700 pages¹. The processing of the interviews was carried out in several rounds, using the Nvivo software. In the first round I had coded 4–5 interviews applying the open coding method (*Strauss – Corbin* [1990]); based on this and the original interview questions, I created a fixed, hierarchical code system. All the interviews were coded in this system. Afterwards, in light of the experience gained, I revised the code system and recoded the interviews where necessary. The analyses were implemented on the basis of the recoded interviews.

During the analysis, I examined every interviewee against the role concepts defined earlier on the basis of the literature, then I attempted to refine and specify the initial model accordingly. In addition, I also examined factors such as the deans' motivation, their typical and atypical career paths or the general practices of electing a dean.

2.4. Validity, Reliability and Generalisability

I aimed to increase the *validity* of the research by applying the researcher's self-reflection and a research journal (*Gelei* [2002]), seeking out contradictory data and cases with constant awareness as well as applying triangulation (gathering different types of data, using various analytical techniques). Another method of consolidating validity is the collection and analysis of abundant data (which was provided by the accurate transcriptions of the interviews).

I supported the *reliability* of the research with the transparency of data collection and processing as well as by the diverse methods of data gathering (*Miles – Huberman* [1994] p. 278; *Bokor* [2000]; *Gelei* [2002]). It is important to indicate that the reliability of the research is weakened by the partial lack of transparency caused by the anonymity ensured for the interviewees.

Generalisability is looking for an answer to the question to what extent the experience gained in the research is relevant beyond the immediate context of the analysis. Generalisability may refer to the study population (internal generalisability) or to a more general population (external generalisability). Qualitative research is to be generalised primarily within the group

¹ I would like to thank Virág Ladencsics for typing the text of the interviews.

(*Maxwell* [1996]), which I was trying to achieve by applying the maximum variance sample selection method on the one hand, and by a detailed introduction of the characteristics of the sample on the other hand (providing the opportunity for comparison with other samples). A further means of enhancing generalisability was supporting the interpretations of the dean's role with “dense descriptions”, on the basis of which the reader may identify the conditions identical with his/her situation.

3. The results of the dissertation

3.1. Findings on the changes of the context of higher education

The findings on the changes of the context of higher education originate from the interviews, statistical data gathering, the analyses of the legislation and the literature related to Hungarian higher education.

1) The relationship between the state and higher education has been hectic. The reason for this is congestion, namely, that following the change of regime, all the processes that had taken place gradually, for 30-40 years in developed Western countries commenced simultaneously in post-socialist countries. These processes occurred within the considerably unstable legal and normative frameworks of the change of the socio-economic regime, as a result of which there was no real possibility of the consistent implementation of mature higher education concepts. Thus, numerous higher education narratives developed parallel to each other:

- the modernising-idealising-traditionalist Humboldtian narrative, which is equivalent with the community narrative;
- an anti-state, pragmatic Humboldtian (post-socialist) narrative, which is equivalent with the community logic rooted in anti-bureaucratism;
- a pro-state narrative rooted in the anti-market approach, which means a logic refusing the market and believing in the protective, regulatory and controlling role of the state (bureaucratic narrative), and finally,
- a pro-market logic, which urges the “emancipation” of institutions and their taking responsibility as well as the extension of their space for manoeuvre and business actions (entrepreneurial-corporate logic).

All this resulted in a hectic and unreliable regulatory context as well as the appreciation of legal background knowledge.

2) The expansion of higher education, the transformation of the education programme structure and the changes in the expectations and composition of the group of students significantly increased the operational complexity of the institutions, which posed challenges for the management both at institutional and faculty levels.

3) Regarding the transformation of the institutional structure, a growth in the number of faculties is a well-perceivable tendency, represented clearly by the fact that the number of faculties and institutes functioning as faculties increased significantly (from 66 to 135) between 1987 and 2009. Obviously, one reason for the rise is the institutional integration

process, within the framework of which previously independent institutions were incorporated into others as faculties. However, the spontaneous growth of the number of faculties is also significant.

4) The other essential tendency affecting faculties is the change of their sizes. In terms of the average number of students, the size of faculties increased significantly (from 866 to 2245 students); however, the indicator based on the number of lecturers suggests a decrease. All these have prompted an increase in the complexity of the dean's tasks as well.

5) The regulations related to the internal structure of higher education institutions became gradually more lenient between 1985 and 2011; therefore, the process of establishing new faculties was significantly simplified, the transformation of the faculty structure was practically brought under institutional competence.

6) The institutional integration process in 1999 contributed greatly to the rise of the number of faculties (thus, that of deans). However, the process also triggered growing internal tensions, which was also apparent in the interpretations of the dean's role during the interviews. In hope of seizing negotiating positions, the integration process itself also catalysed the establishment of new faculties.

7) As for the administrative structure of the institutions, central administration tasks underwent significant differentiation, a large number of new central units came into existence. With regard to the relationship between the centre and the faculties, two general models evolve: a decentralised model, in which the centre has only a few functions, the majority of the operation and implementation of tasks is provided by the faculties, and a more centralised model, in which faculties may be responsible for only a few tasks independently. This determines the dean's powers as well as the complexity of their duties.

8) The two traditional models of the intra-faculty structure are the chair-system and the department-system. A shift from the chair system is taking place in Hungary; however, several of its elements (the virtually lifelong tenure for the heads of departments, the differences in the statuses of department heads) remain.

9) As for their internal structures, faculties may be one-level ones (only the department or the institute) and two-level ones (departments within the institute). Approximately half of the faculties have a one-level, while one-third of them have a two-level structure. There are significant differences between the individual faculties in terms of the average size of the organisational units within the faculty. As a consequence, great dissimilarities can be observed in the homogeneity/heterogeneity of faculties, which influences to what extent a dean may be a professional as well as an administrative leader.

10) Regarding the financing system, an important finding is that 70–80% of the institutional revenues are received from state resources; thus, the institutions depend highly on the state. On the whole, the income from commissioned research is considered low. The market exposure of the institutions is insufficient, it is realised mostly through the application system of students.

11) Regarding the allocation of resources within the institution, there are also two models having evolved on the basis of the interviews: in the decentralised model, the incomes are received by the faculties and they “finance back” the central units, while in the centralised model, the subsidies are received by the institution, where – in accordance with a certain principle – the expenses are financed and the amounts for the faculties are determined. The allocation of resources between the faculty and the institutes/departments is implemented along a similar logic.

12) Direct state subsidies are allocated in a formally normative system; in practice, however, from an institutional point of view the normative allocation of subsidies is less effective due to the frequent changes of the amount of the normative aid on the one hand, and partly because the potentially decreasing amount of normative aid has characteristically been compensated for through other channels of financing. From a faculty point of view, however, normative allocation within the systems applying a decentralised internal allocation of resources indeed results in competitive allocation, since the allocation of resources is implemented predominantly in accordance with the legislative provisions and the faculties are not compensated for the changes occurring here. (While constantly increasing the number of students is not necessarily rational at the institutional level, for the faculties, it is.)

13) The interviews confirmed that the allocation methods for state-financed basic-degree places introduced in 2005 are disadvantageous for institutions and colleges outside the capital and discriminate against them in favour of the institutions and universities of the capital.

3.2. Findings on the dean’s characteristics

14) The dean’s is an elected position, the election process itself is carried out in a complex field of force, which is aptly represented by the variegation evolving through the interviews about the election process and its significant actors. There were four (or five) different narratives related to the significant actors: the competitive “I apply and win” attitude, when the dean's own intentions are in focus (a specific version of this is when although the election was competitive, the dean in question did not consider it necessary to talk about the election

process); accepting deanship to satisfy the request of factions, reports emphasising the role and legacy of the previous dean and accepting deanship upon request by the rector's management (the latter may be the result of a conscious policy or exigency). It is worth mentioning that among the 22 cases in which the circumstances of the election were sufficiently described by the deans, there were only 11 cases with at least two candidates, and there was only one case in which a candidate replaced the incumbent (and re-running) dean. As a consequence, the dean's position is not an overwhelmingly attractive one (several comments from senior managers suggested this), the elections may have been pre-arranged or due to strong self-censure, no competition for the position evolves.

15) The position of the dean is a temporary one: higher education laws – apart from some exceptional periods – mostly allowed deans to remain in their positions for two cycles at most, that is, for 6–10 years. After this period, they must skip a cycle. This obviously reduces the possibility of the evolution of a professional group of deans and affects the deans' future visions, their motivation related to deanship. 90% of the incumbent deans in 2010 had been in charge for 8 years at most.

16) Legal requirements for professional experience became gradually more lenient between 1985 and 2011; however, the strict former regulations which had only enabled the associate professors and university/college professors of a given faculty to be elected still existed in the regulations of the institutions. Out of the incumbent deans in 2010, 43% were professors, 23% college professors, 29% associate professors and 2% college associate professors; although, in some scientific fields the proportion of professors was significantly high (in the fields of agriculture, healthcare and natural sciences, in particular). All this reflects the high expectations regarding the professional career path.

17) The high expectations related to the position limit the number of potential candidates, since in the Hungarian academic career, the position of an associate professor can generally be acquired around the age of 40, while the position of a professor around the age of 50. As a result, deans may become leaders in the last third of their career paths. The average age of the incumbent deans in 2010 at the time of their appointment was 52,5 years. This is of great significance regarding the deans' motivations, visions, family situations and attitudes.

18) Advancing on the career ladder, the percentage of women is decreasing; thus, the proportion of women potentially elected as deans is also shrinking. This is one possible explanation for the fact that only 16,6% of the deans are women (according to the data from 2010). Nor is the situation of vice-deans much more favourable, where this rate is 27%. The worse than average proportions are to be found primarily in "hard" disciplines such as

healthcare, agriculture, the technical field and natural sciences as well as among the deans in the fields of law.

19) The (management) career path prior to deanship could be examined on the basis of the interviews with the deans. Three career paths may be considered typical:

- the gradual career path (head of department → head of institute → vice-dean → dean) (10 cases)
- the “head of department turned dean” career path (head of department and/or head of institute → dean) (8 cases)
- the “vice-dean turned dean” career path (vice-dean → dean) (6 cases)

Atypical career paths include the following:

- dean after a by-pass to central administration (3 cases)
- dean invited from outside (from other higher education or research institution) (2 cases)
- dean after a career-by-pass outside the institution (2 cases)

In comparison with the small number of available American career analyses, it is conspicuous that the traditional (or close to traditional) career paths in higher education are much more frequent in Hungary. There was no case in which a professor directly became a dean, which is, however, very common among American deans. It is also unusual if the dean makes a career at a faculty other than the one he/she has been attached to before.

20) The position of the vice-dean is generally regarded as a preparatory position, in which the faculty may test the leadership competence of the vice-dean, while the vice-dean may try his/her resilience and inclination for the dean's position.

21) Only a fourth of the incumbent deans in 2010 were not in charge as heads of departments or institutes at the time of their deanship. This suggests that preserving the position of the head of department and/or that of the president of the institute is particularly important even during the period of deanship. The arguments for preserving the position include the following: being the head of department provides further professional prestige and legitimacy, it helps eliminate the problems arising from the controversies of (status) hierarchy (when the dean as a lecturer is the inferior of the head of department), supports future career considerations (cf.: the temporary nature of deanship), provides the hinterland for the dean's tasks and prevents the dean from being detached from the core processes. Counterarguments regarding the preservation of the positions are also formulated: the problems of credibility, the difficulty of the separation of roles, time management issues.

3.3. Findings on the dean's motivations

One of the permanent questions of the interview-series was why somebody becomes a dean, that is, why they would devote their time to attending an enormous amount of administrative tasks and why they would give up on professional work when the primary motivation of entering higher education had been exactly the possibility of making a professional career.

Three groups of motivations evolved during the interviews:

22) Deanship as a service, as an exigency and as a task: deanship is perceived by many as a service, “the service of the community”, others regard it as a task to be completed or identify the reason for their becoming deans as a necessity, an expectation resulting from the situation. Thus, from this point of view, being a dean means partly giving up on individual goals and self-fulfilment. Therefore, deanship requires sacrifice, which predominantly means giving up on science, research and/or a family. For them, the difficulty is to try and balance these fields, for the purpose of which they occasionally subordinate the tasks of deanship to teaching (or less frequently research). As for the disadvantages, they sometimes mention the excessive responsibility of the position, the conflicts and too much knowledge. Naturally, the narrative of deanship as a service may be a simple tactic for the dean trying to gain legitimacy and steer attention from other motivations.

23) Deanship as a reward and the source of personal advantages: the essence of this approach is to foreground the advantages gained through the dean's position and applicable for the purpose of individual advancement and (professional) career. These are mentioned very rarely, sometimes only indirectly (while referring to others) during the interviews. As if talking about individual advantages (next to the “sacrifice” and “service” narrative, in particular) were inappropriate. Although tasks related to deanship indeed rob you of the time for active research and teaching activities, the disadvantage in professional advancement may be compensated for by stronger positions available in the field of scientific management. In some scientific fields and at a period of life, deanship does not stand for an administrative position detached from the professional career (as in the previous narrative) but a stage of the professional career through which the dean may excel professionally among his/her other colleagues working in a similar position.

24) Deanship as (self-)fulfilment: this approach is different from the previous ones in that here the faculty is in the focus of the dean's activity: it is either the object of transformation, which the dean intends to modify according to his/her own vision or (less frequently) the

object of education, the improvement of which the dean strives to foster, thereby making it more mature and steering it towards being able to fulfil its own potentials. The central actor of this narrative is the dean himself, who has a clear vision of what to do, and who is responsible for the success. This often means that deans see deanship not as giving something up but a chance for development and self-fulfilment. Thus, the position is no burden but something favourable, which is worth even being tested in a competition. It is unsurprising that a large number of such deans entered the election process as self-appointed candidates and won the position against another candidate. Although many of them acknowledge that deanship does not forward their professional career, they no longer desire that either. They are searching for other challenges since they feel that their professional career has ended, there is no room or real intention for more advancement; therefore, giving up on it does not seem to be a genuine sacrifice. The creative tasks related to deanship provide an opportunity for renewal, another type of self-fulfilment, which may as well mean experiencing professional work in a different fashion. However, this motivation does not mean the complete abandonment of teaching and research activities, although this does not originate from an internal urge but is subordinated to the managerial role and becomes a means of being a more successful leader. For instance, it establishes their credibility or makes the everyday experience of the operation of the faculty accessible.

However, deanship does not mean abandoning the professional career in every field. In some scientific fields (e.g. business administration) or in case of specific higher education interests, deanship may be interpreted as putting theoretical knowledge into practice – therefore, deanship means neither a necessary compromise between professional interests and leadership activities, nor the abandonment of the professional career. As a result, deans sometimes regard the position as a learning process which contributes to their individual professional development.

25) Analysing the motivations, some general problems and their managing strategies also emerged. One of them is the “double burden”, the phenomenon when the dean is trying to fulfil the requirements of both his/her deanship and lecturing and research tasks (depending on the motivation, continuing with the professional activities is naturally justified by different arguments). Typical managing strategies for this are: less spare time, prolonging the working hours, giving up on family, taking up individual training programmes, specific distribution of tasks within research (supervisory role), team work, making superficial performance in lecturing and research, taking on partial tasks.

26) Further difficulties of deanship mentioned include: the randomness of schedule, the constant state of readiness, family problems, lack of appreciation, a high level of stress and the difficulty of separating roles. The latter means that it is not easy to judge when the colleagues address the dean as a dean, and when as a friend or workmate.

3.4. Findings on the interpretations of the dean's roles

During the course of the research I put the initial interpretations of the dean's role in context, I extended and refined them. In addition, I attempted to define new (so-called secondary) roles within the given frameworks.

27) The central concept of the role of the *hero* is to become role models for other lecturers of the faculty by performing lecturing and research at a high level; thus, to help the consolidation of the existing system of norms – the primary focus of which is science. As a result, the dean's task in this role is to represent and embody scientific values. Its means are not using force or establishing motivational structures by, for instance, requiring scientific achievements, but creating a supporting culture that fosters individual improvement and the internalisation of the love of science. The dean contributes to this process primarily by setting an example and mentoring. Thus, there is no intervention on the dean's part, the pressure to perform is triggered by the culture itself (more exactly, the general motivational mechanisms of the scientific institutional system) and not by the faculty management systems established and run by the dean. Based on the interviews, however, it is obvious that no intervention is only an ideal, which may prevail most clearly in places where consensus about the significance of scientific performance has been reached. However, where this is missing, the dean must take on a community-forming role as well, which may shift the dean's role towards the role of an *organisation developer* (see later the dean as a *catalyst*, as well as the part on the culture-dependence of innovation).

For the role defined above, the dean is authorised by his/her own scientific performance. Thus, one source of the dean's authority is his/her scientific excellence, which does not only result in a meritocratic organisation but valorises the role of seniority as well. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that emphasising scientific authority and seniority fully corresponds with the regulatory system related to the selection of deans in Hungarian higher education, which – apparently – fundamentally supports the deanship of lecturers of a more advanced age, in the second half of their career. In light of this, it is somewhat surprising that during the interviews, I only scarcely met those who had a similar notion of the dean's role. This role occurred more frequently as a contrastive example with which the interviewees tried to demonstrate the changed circumstances and the transformation of the dean's tasks.

28) In the model based on the literature, the role of the dean as a *provider* is defined within the organisational narrative of the bureaucratic university, in which faculty goals are formulated among several actors, in loosely structured processes. The reason for this is that due to the variety of the actors' intentions and their specific habits, the goal structure of a given faculty is highly complex (one of the interviewees demonstrated this with the examples of the theatre and the jigsaw puzzle). Thus, apart from executive duties, the dean's role in this narrative is to “provide the possibility of success”, which may be implemented through ensuring sufficient support and creating an environment necessary for effective work. Its elements include the reduction of uncertainty, the provision of regulation, predictability, stability and order, the easing of unnecessary bureaucratic burdens (the puffer role) as well as the creation of an optimal working atmosphere, the reduction of the number of conflicts between lecturers. Accordingly, three additional roles evolved on the basis of the interviews. The *coordinator* ensures the harmonious operation of the faculty by striving to help everyone find their place within the faculty. In this role, the dean fosters the development of activities and goals that are acceptable for everyone. This reduces the chance of fundamental conflicts arising. In the process of determining the goals, the dean acts as a partner or proposes ideas, while the decision itself is made by the faculty and university representatives as well as the significant actors of the faculty. The *problem solver* tackles and resolves administrative difficulties, possibly relieving the lecturers of these problems. His role is predominantly reactive. The *owners* contribute to the goal-setting process not only as mediators (as the *coordinator*) but their administrative expertise and insight into feasibility and maintainability make them active participants. They provide a certain resource-based approach (which is also characteristic of the *strategic player*), but they also guard the consistent observation of formulated rules and norms (the policeman's role).

29) On the basis of the literature review, the major characteristic of *strategic players* is the reduction of dependence and risks by strengthening the control over resources. This means a centralised determination of goals and their controlled implementation; therefore, the community is often represented as the object of management or the executor of tasks, the central actor in this narrative is the dean (typical metaphors are the ship captain and the general) The narrative is characterised by strong goal-orientation and the fact that the faculty goal is often identical with the dean's own goals. On the one hand, this allows for the resource-based approach; on the other hand, it results in an instrumentalist logic, in which the value of everything is determined by the extent of its contribution to the achievement of goals. For a group of deans, the utility approach and transactional logic are interpreted not only in terms of the relationship between the faculty and its context, but the relationship of the dean and his/her environment as well (I call this secondary role the *tactician*). Given that the goals of the faculty and the dean's goals easily overlap, this is not surprising. As a result, these deans consider deanship as a game in which the environment can be divided into supporters (loyal members) and oppositionals (disloyal members), and disagreement is seen as resistance to be overcome. The word "compromise" or "consensus" hardly occurred in the interviews with the deans representing this role narrative.

Regarding the *tacticians*, two big systems of means of handling resistance and promoting goals evolved on the basis of the interviews: strength and tactics. The source of strength may be the authorisations formally related to deanship and the control over resources. A further significant means of strength for the dean is the employer's licence and a certain level of control over appointments. The other means of asserting managerial interests is applying tactics and suitably controlling and presenting information.

Based on the interviews, an important finding in contrast to the initial hypotheses is that the dean's external orientation does not seem to be stronger in this role narrative than in others. Therefore, apart from the occasional exception, not the contextual challenges or the pressure to adapt to them are the factors that justify the interpretation of the dean's role; thus, this model can hardly be regarded as a crisis-model. Instead of emphasising external pressures, the deans' goal-oriented behaviour, their eagerness to succeed and readiness to act are much stronger.

However, the literature says that the dean as a strategic player characteristically builds up management systems, which ensure the control over key resources and the motivation of other actors. However, only a few deans mentioned such management systems. Regarding the narrative, this demonstrates that deans do not interpret their role and position through these

means, which also means that management and governing systems have not been institutionalised, but are (remain?) strongly related to the individual, which explains why, on the basis of empirical experience, the political–dependence interpretative schema is so powerful in this narrative. This justifies the legitimacy of the secondary role of the *tactician* as well.

30) According to the literature review, the *catalyst* is the dean’s role narrative within the entrepreneurial university. The initial interpretation suggests that the dean as a catalyst focuses on external needs, the aim is to explore and satisfy them. Another focus point is the human focus, that is, these deans emphasise flexibility, innovativeness and the community culture and attitude ensuring these. This is reflected perfectly by a motto I came across on the wall of the main hall of the new building at the site of one of the interviews, while the dean was proudly showing the building to me. “*Everyone knows that certain things cannot be established. Then someone comes not knowing about it and establishes it.*” Thus, the central concept of this role narrative is novelty, innovation, which stands not only for inventing new ideas but – and in the interviews, much more often – the novel application and combination of things as well.

Depending on the target of innovation, I came across two characteristic approaches within this role: one of them emphasised the organisational culture, the other focused on the renewal of the product portfolio and the network of relationships. Therefore, the former one may be called the internal entrepreneur (*intrapreneur*), *organisation developer* or *team-builder*, while the latter one is considered more of a classic *entrepreneur*, whom I call the *broker*.

The *catalyst* approach is closely related to the role narrative of the *hero*, in which the dean also focuses on the community culture and system of norms. What differentiates between them is that the dean as a catalyst (and the *organisation developer* in particular) does not only intend to preserve the existing culture but to actively shape it, namely, the dean has a solid vision about the desirable *modus operandi*. Unlike in the case of the *strategic player*, however, the attempts at transformations are not guided by specific goals but distant visions, “dreams”. The fact that instead of goals and tasks, visions and “dreams” define the operation under the dean as a *catalyst* is significant since this makes it possible; moreover, inevitable for others to participate in the elaboration of the process leading there. The dean’s role is to involve the most possible people in the process and catalyse both the dialogue and the implementation. Contribution does not only require creativity from others as well, but at the same time, it also makes them partners. From this also follows that in this narrative, there are no supporters and allies or people pursuing their own agendas but recognising realities, ready

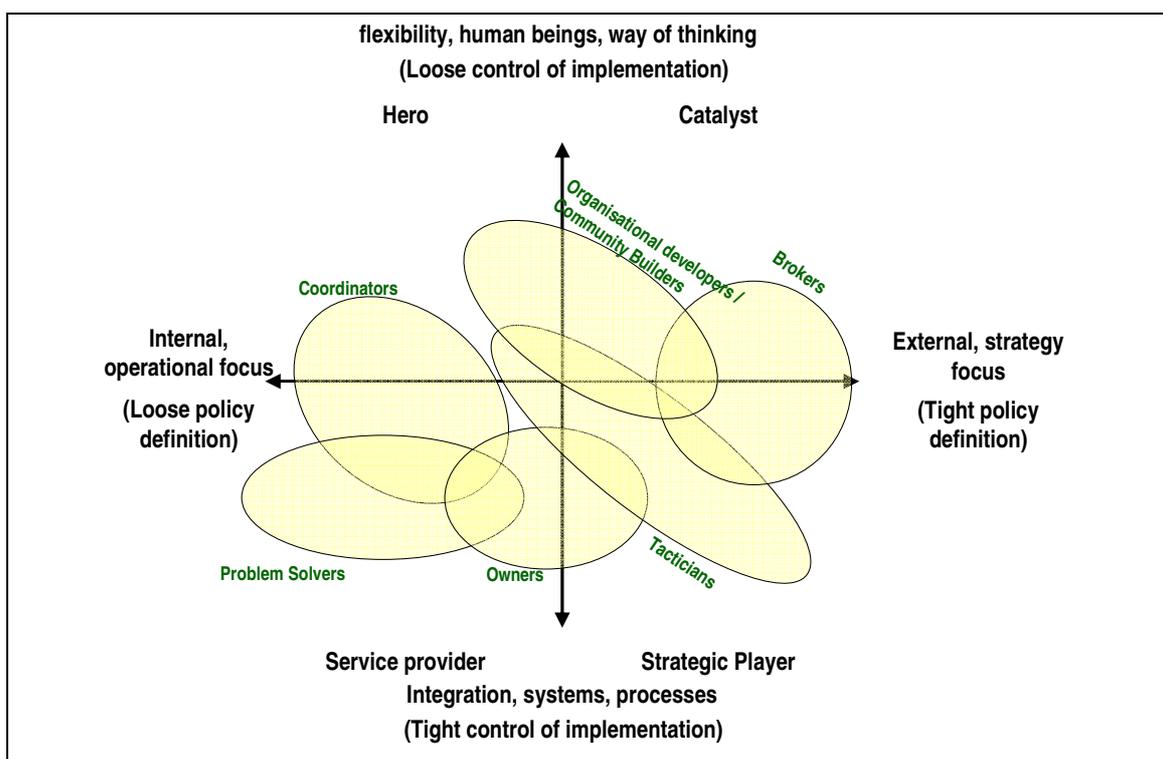
to compromise, but partners, thinking together. This enables the organic development of the faculty.

Compared with the initial hypotheses, the interviews allow for the conclusion that innovation was mentioned exclusively in terms of organisational-operational and educational considerations. The topic did not emerge with regard to research, which is not surprising if we take into consideration the data suggesting that the majority of Hungarian higher education institutions have a minimal amount of corporal commissions. In general, the dominant logic of operation is characterised by the urge to satisfy the needs of potential clients (such as future students, potential employers) and real procurers are hardly ever mentioned.

The literature says that in this approach, the source of legitimacy is provided by the satisfaction of consumer's needs and utility. Almost all of the deans among whom this approach prevailed relatively clearly reported on a certain exigency (a decreasing number of students, weakening social legitimacy, the limits of the dean's powers). Thus, in a sense, all the deans had become involved in this narrative as entrepreneurs out of necessity and not only for the purpose of realising their own visions.

31) The secondary roles defined on the basis of the interviews and their relations to the initial roles can be summarised by the following figure:

The secondary roles defined on the basis of the interviews and their relations to the initial (primary) roles:



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