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## **A Cross-Case Study of Three European Universities**

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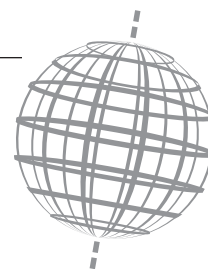
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### **Article abstract**

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# Hybrid Organizational Responses to Institutional Complexity: A Cross-Case Study of Three European Universities

## Complexité institutionnelle et réponses organisationnelles hybrides : une étude comparative de trois universités européennes\*

## Complejidad institucional y respuestas organizativas híbridas: un estudio comparativo de tres universidades europeas

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### ABSTRACT

European universities traditionally embedded in the institutional logics of academic professionalism as well as democratization and regulation face the emergence of a new managerial logic generating conflicting demands and triggering hybrid organizational responses. This article investigates hybridization processes by analyzing how multiple institutional logics play out among organizational attributes (strategic positioning, organizational design, governance systems and identity) over long periods. The longitudinal cross-case analysis reveals different hybrid responses made of various forms of segmentation and blending. Furthermore, it informs the debate on the stability of hybrid responses by tracking various hybrid response paths.

**Keywords:** Institutional logics, institutional complexity, hybridization, managerial logic, university

### RÉSUMÉ

Les universités européennes, traditionnellement inscrites dans des logiques institutionnelles de professionnalisme académique et de démocratisation bureaucratique, font face à une nouvelle logique managériale générant des demandes contradictoires et des réponses organisationnelles hybrides. Cet article explore les processus d'hybridation en analysant sur une longue période la manière dont les logiques s'expriment à travers les attributs organisationnels (positionnement stratégique, design organisationnel, systèmes de gouvernance et identité). L'étude comparative des cas met en lumière différentes réponses hybrides, segmentant ou unifiant l'organisation. Les résultats contribuent également à la connaissance des conditions de stabilité des réponses organisationnelles hybrides en soulignant différents chemins d'hybridation.

**Mots clés :** Logiques institutionnelles, complexité institutionnelle, hybridation, logique managériale, université.

### RESUMEN

Las universidades europeas, con tradición enraizada en las lógicas institucionales del profesionalismo académico y en la democratización burocrática, se enfrentan a una nueva lógica gerencial que produce demandas contradictorias y respuestas organizacionales híbridas. Para entender los procesos de hibridación, este artículo investiga cómo, durante largos periodos, se desarrollan múltiples lógicas institucionales a través de los atributos organizacionales (posicionamiento estratégico, diseño organizacional, sistemas de gobierno e identidad). El estudio de caso comparativo destaca diferentes respuestas híbridas, segmentando o unificando la organización. Además, los resultados contribuyen al conocimiento de las condiciones de estabilidad de respuestas organizacionales híbridas siguiendo diferentes derroteros de hibridación.

**Palabras clave:** lógica institucional, complejidad institucional, hibridación, lógica gerencial, universidad

Numerous reforms have spread managerial tools and values into public organizations, aiming at enhancing their efficiency and accountability (Mazouz, 2004; Mazouz, Rousseau, & Sponem, 2015). Public universities face great pressures to become “entrepreneurial” and act as competitive actors on markets, recognizing opportunities for differentiation and new funding streams (Clark, 1998; Kwiek, 2013; Meier & Schimank, 2010). The new prescriptions for governing and organizing universities

reflect an emerging *managerial logic* in the higher education field. This logic challenges traditional norms and values for continental European universities, historically embedded in an environment dominated by the institutional logics of *academic professionalism* as well as *democratization and regulation* (Engwall, 2007; Teelken, 2015). Such an institutional context imposes conflicting demands for organizations – labeled as institutional complexity – which trigger heterogeneous orga-

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nizational responses including hybridization (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Greenwood, Raynard, Kodeih, Micelotta, & Lounsbury, 2011; Kraatz & Block, 2017; Mazouz et al., 2015).

This article contributes in three ways to a better understanding of hybridization processes, especially in public organizations, where hybridization proliferates (Denis, Ferlie, & Van Gestel, 2015). First, most research focuses on hybrids combining two logics, whereas our case studies reflect the hybridization of three logics, opening up a larger set of possible relations (Battilana, Besharov, & Mitzinnec, 2017; Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Greenwood et al., 2011). Second, whereas it is widely shared that hybrid organizations embody multiple logics, organizations are often only decomposed by researchers into functional units or professional groups. However, we still know little about the way organizations selectively adopt different logics through their attributes such as governance or organizational design (Greenwood et al., 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013; Raynard, 2016). Third, we inform the ongoing debate on the sustainability and stability of hybrids (Besharov & Smith, 2014). While most research focuses on institutional contexts of enduring stable complexity, we respond to calls for research that accounts for pluralistic and changing fields (Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Martin, Currie, Weaver, Finn, & McDonald, 2016) by tracking hybridizations paths. Thereby, we account for various processes of hybridization (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Denis et al., 2015) and contribute to the literature on the ways institutional logics compete for dominance (Reay & Hinings, 2009), interact (McPherson & Sauder, 2013), coexist (Pache & Santos, 2013), or blend (Battilana & Dorado, 2010).

We do so by conducting a longitudinal cross-case analysis of three continental European universities, in France and Germany, attempting to respond to new demands of the emerging managerial logic. Compared to countries like the U.S., Canada, or the UK, France and Germany are late-movers in restructuring their higher education systems according to managerial principles (Boitier & Rivière, 2013a, b; Schimank & Lange, 2009). In both contexts with their own national legacies (Paradeise, Reale, Bleiklie, & Ferlie, 2009), *academic professionalism* as well as *regulation and democratization* were prevailing as the core institutional logics (Kallio, Kallio, Tienari, & Hyvönen, 2016) before the emergence of the managerial logic. Our comparative cases design thus aims to foster the understanding of specificities of hybridization processes.

We first elaborate a theoretical framework and then present our methods. We then describe the institutional context made of competing institutional logics of the higher education field, before analysing the hybridization processes of the three universities studied. Finally, we discuss the main results from our cross-case analysis and conclude by outlining the study's main contributions.

## Theoretical framework

### ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRIBUTES FILTERING INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEXITY

Institutional logics prevail at the field level as “socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, assumptions, values and beliefs by which individuals

produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their daily activity” (Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012, p. 51). Institutional logics induce ideal types (Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Thornton et al., 2012), that inform organizational identity, practices (Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012) and organizational structure (Townley, 1997). These ideal-types do not describe practices, as there are rarely organizational “pure forms”, but are theoretical and heuristic tools that facilitate comparison of empirical variations.

*Institutional complexity.* Recent research in institutional theory suggests that different institutional logics can prevail in a field and prescribe divergent expectations, values, and identities whereby organizations face institutional complexity resulting from contradicting institutional demands (Greenwood et al., 2011; Kraatz & Block, 2017; Pache & Santos, 2013; Raynard, 2016). Institutional complexity is not handled by all organizations in the same way, but opens opportunities for creative responses by combining different cultural symbols and material practices provided by the logics (Besharov & Smith, 2014). To capture heterogeneous organizational responses, Greenwood et al. (2011) suggest decomposing organizations into analytical attributes: *strategic positioning*, *organizational design*, *governance structure*, and *identity*. These attributes are both results and filters, medium of interactions between organizations and their institutional environment, influencing how organizations respond to institutional complexity.

*Strategic positioning.* Greenwood et al. (2011) consider the field position as an organizational attribute and define central organizations in a field, by their visibility, status, resources and size. Such central organizations experience a higher level of institutional complexity than peripheral ones who “may be less aware of institutional expectations” (Greenwood et al., 2011, p. 340). As field position appears as a relatively passive attribute, we adapted it to strategic positioning, reflecting more accurately the (even if limited) strategic attempts of differentiation and profile development of universities regarding material, immaterial and relational resources (Münch, 2014).

*Organizational design.* Levels of fragmentation and centralization determine the way institutional demands are interpreted and managed in decision processes. Fragmentation refers to organizational settings in which multiple actors and groups may pursue varying goals (Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001) and perceive complex environment in various ways (Kraatz & Block, 2017; Reay & Hinings, 2009). Centralization of decisions provides a simpler representation of the environment and narrows the strategic scenarios envisioned. Universities were traditionally decentralized and fragmented, with multiple intra-organizational groups (academics, administrative staff, students, etc.) committed to different institutional logics. Such an organizational design induces a high level of institutional complexity, but organizational coordination may quicken the consolidation of emerging new practices and the diffusion of their related logic (Smets et al., 2012).

*Governance structures* have external and internal dimensions. External governance refers to the influence of governmental actors such as evaluation and funding institutions drawing on different logics. Internally, governance structures relate to control relationships which coordinate different interest

groups potentially defending contradicting logics. Dominant coalitions might manage organizations hierarchically (Cyert & March, 1963), but presidential teams traditionally had limited formal authority. Internal control systems can thus result of a combination of collegial self-governance (clan control type), bureaucratic rules and output control (Ouchi, 1979), each type of control reflecting different logics. In this context, the governance structures simultaneously influence the distribution of financial resources, symbolic legitimacy, professional norms and values among groups (Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2007).

*Identity* is an organizational attribute defined at two levels. First, identity is a set of claims standardizing social roles, values and missions in a field (Glynn, 2008; Kraatz & Block, 2017). For universities, these claims can be dedication to the science within a self-organized community of scholars, to mass education, or to the knowledge economy favoring economic growth. Second, this institutional identity can be adopted, adapted or rejected at the organizational level, whereby an organizational identity distinct from the institutional dominant one is possible (Kraatz & Block, 2017). Moreover, divergent identities can coexist within an organization, between groups or members, the likelihood of such divergence increasing with organizational fragmentation.

#### HYBRIDS: SEGMENTATION AND BLENDING

Field institutional logics are filtered by organizational attributes. It explains the various ways institutional complexity is experienced and enacted by organizations through processes of hybridization (Greenwood et al., 2011). Organizational hybridity refers to the state of being composed of a mixture of elements originating from different institutional logics regarding organizational forms, practices or identities (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Denis et al., 2015). Multiple institutional logics can induce contestations and conflicts for domination (Reay & Hinings, 2009), coexist (e.g. McPherson & Sauder, 2013; Pache & Santos, 2013), or blend by the emergence of unprecedented identities and practices (e.g. Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Smets et al., 2012). Literature identifies *organizational segmentation* and *blended hybridization* as distinct forms of hybridization.

*Organizational segmentation* refers to the compartmentalization into differentiated subunits defending different logics, whereby potential conflicts between logics' prescriptions are suppressed (Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Kraatz & Block, 2017; Reay & Hinings, 2009). Kraatz and Block (2017) present the American research university as a prototype of a segmented organization reflecting various stakeholders' logics (students, faculty, alumni, economic actors or regulators). As different logics dominate in different compartments, segmented organizations prevent the genesis of a cohesive organizational identity and consist of multiple identities. Segmentation is a way of responding to conflicting institutional demands, but may carry seeds of organizational dysfunction (Greenwood et al., 2011). However, beyond the simple mechanism of separation, segmentation can also result from more differentiated mechanisms. Pache and Santos (2013) found that organizations hybridize by combining organizational attributes in a selective coupling drawing on different logics. They particularly stressed how governance structures, control operation and brand identity are selectively coupled with commercial or social welfare logics, to avoid internal conflicts and project legitimacy

to external stakeholders. This differs from decoupling strategies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), where organizations symbolically endorse practices prescribed by one logic, while actually implementing practices promoted by another logic.

*Blended hybridization* refers to the combination of values, rules, and practices borrowed from different logics without segmenting the organization into sealed compartments. Conflicts are then solved not by isolating different logics in differentiated segments but by mixing them, in a balanced equilibrium or with a relative domination of one logic. Battilana and Dorado (2010) show how organizational blending was achieved in two micro-finance organizations by hiring new members and developing socialization practices supporting the genesis of a new common identity. Smets et al. (2012) underline the emergence of blended practices in a global law firm, where initial improvisations to respond to complexity consolidate into hybrid practices, under the pressure of tight deadlines and with an organizational coordination that quickens the hybridization of practices. McPherson and Sauder (2013) show how, in a drug court, professionals make concessions to their own professional logic to reach collective decisions drawn on a shared toolkit of various professional logics. Finally, blended hybridization can also refer to decisions and practices mixing logics with a prioritization. In the health sector, Arman et al. (2014) found commitment to quantitative assessments as evidence for a domination of the managerial logic over the professional logic of psychiatric care, although the latter competes in a subordinate role. On the contrary, Kurunmäki (2004) stresses the hybridization of hospital doctors, through their adoption of accounting practices, as a way to preserve the domination of the care logic.

#### PATHS OF CHANGE AND CONDITIONS OF STABILITY

Research on hybrid organizations is predominantly occupied with theorizing hybrid responses as ways to render organizations viable and stable in environments marked by long term institutional complexity (e.g. Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Battilana & Lee, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013). Two issues have received attention to a far lesser extent: the paths from one type of hybridity to another and the conditions of the hybrids' stability.

*Paths of Change.* A stable constellation of field-level logics (Goodrick & Reay, 2011) as well as a stable field position of the organization is less likely to induce organizational change and hybridization. In contrast, changing logics' constellation is likely to trigger organizational disruptions associated with resistance, inertia, transformation, unresolved tension (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988, 1993). The typical case of such field-level changes is the growing dominance of a peripheral logic or the emergence of a new logic for the organization. This involves the perception of new institutional demands creating ambiguity and instability. Then, the continuing diffusion of the new logic among the organizational attributes might question the mission and identity of the organization, triggering potentially radical tensions (Greenwood & Hinings, 1993). Moreover, how organizations and their members relate three logics to one another and what tensions spring from such increased complexity remain open questions (Battilana et al., 2017, p. 150). Processes of hybridization are potentially more complex and instable than in dual logics hybrids.

*Conditions of stability.* Besharov and Smith (2014) posit that the stability of hybrid organizational responses depends on the *centrality* and *compatibility* of logics. *Centrality* refers to the degree to which a logic is treated as valid and relevant for core dimensions of organizational functioning. *Compatibility* is the extent to which the instantiation of logics, i.e. the way they manifest in core features of the organization, implies consistent and reinforcing organizational actions (Besharov & Smith, 2014, p. 367). When a single logic is central to an organization or when multiple logics are compatible, hybrid is expected as relatively stable. In contrast, organizations adopting multiple logics with a high degree of centrality and incompatibility might face extensive conflicts and instability. Notably, logic incompatibility about mission, reflecting core values and beliefs, is expected to produce more conflicts and instability than about means (Pache & Santos, 2013). Compatibility between dominant field logic and organizational logics can also affect organizational stability. A rather marginal logic on the field level can be central for only a few organizations, inducing potential instability. Interestingly, when dominant logics change on the field level, organizations which operated at the periphery adapt more quickly to the new dominating logic than embedded organizations (Pache & Santos, 2013). In summary, degrees of centrality and compatibility of logics may be predictors of the hybrid's stability, but this prediction does not reveal how organizations cope with institutional complexity over time. By studying logics expressed in organizational attributes over time, the following analysis details how organizations manage stability or instability.

## Methods

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The research journey began with three initial autonomous longitudinal case studies – a French and two German universities – aiming at assessing organizational changes induced by the emerging managerial logic. The organizations were selected because authors had close knowledge of the changes initiated to respond to new institutional demands.

Struck by several commonalities, we decided to conduct comparative case studies. Our initial case studies were all based on multi-level analyses, accounting for organizational changes of universities struggling to respond to the institutional pressures of the European higher education field (Boitier & Rivière, 2013b, 2016; Hattke et al., 2014; Reihlen & Wenzlaff, 2014). Manifold empirical material together with our literature review allowed us first to characterize the three institutional logics at the field level, and then to account for organizational change processes. We intensively exchanged about the empirical material, exploring ways for qualitative cross-coding in order to illuminate and extend the relationships among theoretical constructs and empirical observations (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Our qualitative case studies provided rich data to explore how organizations deal simultaneously with environmental and internal factors that affect their development over time (Eisenhardt, 1989; Pettigrew, 1990). Thus, our first iterative phase between literature review and data analysis led us to consider the framework of institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011) as the most relevant for cross-coding the cases and for contributing to understanding organizational hybridity. In summary, our approach is partly inductive, grounded in data, and partly deductive, inspired by theory, and the multiple-case

**TABLE 1**  
**Data Specifications**

	<b>UDEX (France)</b>	<b>UHH (Germany)</b>	<b>LUL (Germany)</b>
Students*	32,000	38,500	9,000
Full professors*	2,600	568	155
Scientific staff*	2,600	1,768	595
Administrative and technical staff*	2,000	1,835	450
Annual budget** (total)	358 m. Euro	418 m. EURO	111 m. EURO
- public basic funding	286 m. Euro	301 m. Euro	54 m. EURO
Data collected between	2009-2014	2011-2014	2011-2014
Span of investigation	2006-2014	2002-2014	2002-2014
<b>Data sources</b>			
Documents	Archival data, meeting minutes, press releases and evaluation reports	Archival data, meeting minutes, press releases	Archival data, meeting minutes, press releases, internal documents on strategy and merger
Interviews	29 semi-structured interviews (40 hours)	6 group interviews (6 hours)	55 semi-structured interviews (56 hours)
Participant observation	No participant observation	Committee meetings (8 hours)	participation in committees as key administrator

\*data from 2014    \*\* financial data from 2013

design provides more generalizable insights (Yin, 2003). This iterative approach of coding and theory building is suggested for interpreting qualitative data without reinventing already existing concepts (Denis et al., 2001).

#### DATA SOURCES AND CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

Our data originate from multiple sources - including field notes - and provide a comprehensive and triangulated perspective. Documents and interviews constitute the major data sources (table 1). Documents comprise archival data, minutes of meetings, press accounts and internal publications detailing the change processes. Partners for semi-structured interviews were selected according to their position and involvement in the transitions.

Our first analytical step was to characterize the three institutional logics and organizational ideal-types, defined by attributes adapted from the institutional complexity framework (Greenwood et al., 2011). This resulted in a coherent grid of analysis (table 2) gauging the distance of organizational responses to institutional demands (Thornton et al., 2012).

The second step involved the data coding according to the analytical grid for each case to identify the influence of logics on organizational attributes as well as the attribute's filtering effect. The three initial studies presented longitudinal data of how universities perceived, customized, managed, and paced their change processes (Pettigrew, 1990). We divided each case into periods, with no intention to generate predictable phases towards a stage model (Langley, 1999). We looked for critical junctures, such as the election of a new presidential team, that transform previous structures, governance, control modes and identity, as other studies on institutional complexity did (e.g., Dalpiaz, Rindova, & Ravasi, 2016). We used these periods as embedded units to analyze paths of change from one response type to another as suggested by Greenwood and Hinings (1988). Each period involves changing characteristics of the organizational attributes, reflecting changing logics instantiation, which led us to stress the different ways organizations hybridized by either blending or segmenting logics. We finally compared our three cases in terms of paths of change in hybridization processes.

### Findings

#### CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION FIELD

Traditionally, the field of higher education in continental Europe has been dominated by *academic professionalism* as well as *democratization and regulation*, which defined guiding principles, missions and relations with state and society for universities (Kallio et al., 2016). Their coexistence for decades requires considering universities as traditional hybrids (Greenwood et al., 2011; Kraatz & Block, 2017). The emergence of a new *managerial logic* created new contradictions and conflicts (e.g., Münch, 2014 for Germany; Boitier & Rivière, 2016; Musselin, 2017 for France), that rendered relations between organizations and field-level institutional demands more complex.

*Logic of academic professionalism.* Universities are traditionally associated with principles such as academic freedom and unity of teaching and research (Olsen, 2007). Their mission is

to produce “pure science” (Merton, 1942) aiming to enforce scientific reputation. Professors form a community of scholars, with an identity centered on their academic discipline, relying on free inquiry, truth finding, and expertise (Kallio et al., 2016). Governments fund universities through lump sums, without much interference in academic issues (Capano, 2011). Internal decision processes are decentralized at the department level, with a large autonomy. Presidents and deans are “*primus inter pares*” (Musselin, 2017) and organizations are loosely coupled (Weick, 1976). Based on professional autonomy and self-governance (Freidson, 2001), this logic implies selection, socialization, and clan control type (Ouchi, 1979).

*Logic of democratization and regulation* is largely marked by the 1960s democratization movement. Mass education, cost containment and coordination requirements altogether have resulted in an increased regulation (Capano, 2011; Reihlen & Wenzlaff, 2014). Universities in Germany and France were supposed to be treated equally by the State and not expected to differentiate themselves (Krücken & Meier, 2006; Meier & Schimank, 2010; Paradeise, 2007). Strategic positioning may be summed up to egalitarianism, and resources are allocated per bureaucratic rules. This logic induces a participative governance giving voice to all status groups, decisions being based on “*interest representation, elections, bargaining, and majority decisions*” (Olsen, 2007, p. 30). Such decision processes follow the ideal of social equality instead of elites domination by being organized itself in an egalitarian way (Clark, 1983; Peterson, 2007). In this logic, universities and academics lost part of their autonomy, for the profit of a bureaucratic regulation defined at the state level. Administrative processes are concentrated at the department and faculty levels, creating a partially centralized organization with frequent interactions between academics and the administration (Weick, 1976).

The historical dominance of *academic professionalism* has been displaced by hybridization with *democratization and regulation*, whereby until today both logics coexist as guiding principles. However, universities partly escaped regulation by decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977): responsibility of process control was relegated to administrative staff, in charge of the relationships with state, leaving academics in their “Ivory Tower”. Decisions were fragmented: those related to research content and curriculum were made by scholars in departments, and the university administration focused on the administrative side of research and teaching.

The *managerial logic* relies on three key components (Münch, 2014; Olsen, 2007; Reihlen & Wenzlaff, 2014). First, the pervasiveness of a market ideology encourages competition between universities, aiming at increased differentiation, “excellence” and contribution to the knowledge economy (Engwall, 2007; Münch, 2014). Strategic positioning draws on material and immaterial resources such as reputation or social capital (Münch, 2014). Second, government funding is increasingly based on performance assessed by quantitative indicators (Ter Bogt & Scapens, 2012) and the pressure of raising third party funding (public and private) challenges the autonomy of research (Barrier, 2011). Output control and incentives direct scholars to pursue goals rewarded even though they disagree with the underlying rationale (Kallio et al., 2016). Third, universities are

constructed as autonomous actors, led by strong management teams willing to implement strategic choices and to contract with governments and other stakeholders (Krücken & Meier, 2006; Meier & Schimank, 2010; Boitier & Rivière, 2016). Academic and administrative leaders are supposed to conduct centralized decision-making, supported by professionalized central units. Transdisciplinary matrix designs aim to delegate decisions to the more relevant department, and thus complements centralization to find a cohesive way of conduct.

In summary, each institutional logic emphasizes different missions, governance and funding principles for universities, and defines organizational ideal types in terms of strategic positioning, organizational design, governance and identity (table 2).

### CASE ANALYSIS

The three cases faced similar field-level pressures with the emerging managerial logic creating ambiguity and opportunities. However, they experienced change differently depending on their pre-existing logics, and on their position within the field. Building on the approach of Denis et al. (2001), tables 3, 4 and 5 provide synthetic analysis of cases and illustrate the dynamics of hybridization processes in their various dimensions. For each phase, the embeddedness of organizational attributes in different institutional logics are highlighted. The combination of logics explains the characterization of the hybrid responses observed.

### Case UDEX

UDEX was originally a “classic segmented hybrid”, dominated by academic professionalism, influenced by regulation logic. Its strategic positioning and identity, based on scientific reputation, as well as organizational design, were in line with the academic logic. In terms of governance, logics were segmented: clan control for scholars (academic logic) and process control for administrative groups (regulation logic).

In 2008, a newly elected presidential team conducted deep changes in accordance with the managerial logic: centralization of decisions, managerial governance based on consulting expertise and output control. Elected academics and administrative staff adopted the new logic, without rejecting their original ones. They worked together to diffuse a blended hybrid model, despite resistances among academics.

Between 2010 and 2012, the managerial logic expanded through the national funding competition *Excellence Initiative*, which reinforced the internal use of performance criteria and contractual relationships. UDEX new motion “*La science en grand*” intended to create a blended identity mixing academic and managerial logics. But the *competition for excellence* was perceived as being opposite to academic values. Resistance at the department level crystallized against contractual relationships threatening scholars’ autonomy and reflecting the power

**TABLE 2**  
**Institutional Logics and Organizational Ideal Types in Higher Education**

Institutional logic		Academic professionalism (A)	Democratization & regulation (D)	Managerial (M)
Guiding principle		Professionalism and academic freedom	Democratization and state control	Competition, differentiation, excellence
Mission	Research	Scientific progress	Diffusion of knowledge	Contribution to knowledge-economy
	Education	Elitism	Massification	Customization
State governance		Autonomous institution	Public agency	Contractor, service provider
Resource allocation		Input based: lump sum	Input based: bureaucratic	Results based and third-party funding
<b>Organizational Attributes</b>		<b>Ideal type: Academic university</b>	<b>Ideal type: Democratic university</b>	<b>Ideal type: Entrepreneurial university</b>
Strategic positioning		Reputation of scientific expertise	Egalitarianism	Profile development/ differentiation
Organizational design	Centralization	Decentralized decision making	Partially centralized decision making	Centralized decision making
	Fragmentation: professional groups	Fragmented	Fragmented	Low fragmentation: central units and shared services
	academic departments	Fragmented	Less fragmented	Transdisciplinary, matrix design
Governance	Governing mode	Collegial self-governance (domination of full professors)	Participative governance of status groups	Managerialism (internal and external members)
	Control mechanism	Clan control: selection and socialization	Process control: formal rules, regulations	Output control: rankings, evaluations, incentive systems
Identity		Academic discipline Institutional mission	Democratic values Institutional mission	Organizational Institutional mission

\*data from 2014    \*\* financial data from 2013

given to administration services. UDEX became an instable segmented hybrid.

In 2012, a new presidential team was elected by denouncing the *managerialization* of UDEX. Managerial discourse and tools were banned and central administration weakened. UDEX showed external compliance to managerial demands, but internally decoupled. UDEX came back to a segmented hybrid, dominated by academic professionalism with collegial self-governance at the department level. However, it was a new form of segmented hybrid, since the silenced managerial logic gained the potential to be retrieved because of persistent demands at the field level. It questions the stability of UDEX' response to institutional complexity.

### Case UHH

UHH was initially dedicated to mass education with values of egalitarianism prevailing over scientific differentiation. Decisions in 18 departments were marked by a culture of mistrust between status groups (administrative staff and academics), leading to largely ineffective bureaucratic procedures. In 2003, a federal state government report urged UHH to rationalize and centralize administrative structures in line with the managerial logic. The academic senate first rejected this plan, standing on the academic logic to preserve autonomy of the departments. Under strong external pressures, departments were finally merged into six faculties and administration centralized, but these reforms failed to establish UHH as a unitary actor.

**TABLE 3**  
**UDEX: Full steam ahead... or back to the future?**

<b>History and initial positioning:</b> Large French university, founded in 1969 by merging three faculties of medicine, pharmacy, and sciences. Fragmented organization dominated by academic professionalism, with bureaucratic compliance for the administrative group to respond to external pressures.				
	<b>2006-2008</b> <b>In the mood for change!</b>	<b>2008-2010</b> <b>Starting the transformation</b>	<b>2010-2012</b> <b>Accelerating changes</b>	<b>2012-2014</b> <b>Back to the future?</b>
STRATEGIC POSITIONING	Scientific reputation	Good scientific assessment	Success in <b>Excellence Initiative competition</b>	Scientific expertise, Ranking rejection
ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN				
Centralization	Decentralized	<i>Partial centralization</i>	<b>Centralization</b>	Decentralization to faculty level
Fragmentation between				
professional groups	Fragmented: decision taken by academics, supported by administrative members	<b>Less fragmented at the top level</b> Pluralistic leadership academics/ <i>administrative</i>	<b>Transversal administrative projects</b>	Fragmented
academic departments	Fragmented	<b>Mergers of departments and research groups</b>	Academic resistance to centralization and transversal projects	Fragmented
GOVERNANCE				
Governing mode	<i>Bureaucratic compliance</i> and collegial self-governance (professors)	<b>Managerial governance:</b> central leadership with support of consultancy firm	Bureaucratization of the managerial logic	Collegial self-governance (academic power)
Control mechanism	Clan and process control	Clan and <b>output control</b>	Clan, <i>process</i> , and <b>output control</b>	Clan control
IDENTITY	Academic professionalism	<b>Attempt to create an organizational identity</b> Academic professionalism dedicated to discipline		<i>Democratic values</i> and academic professionalism
ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE	CLASSIC SEGMENTED HYBRID: academic logic domination over democratization logic	EMERGING BLENDED/ SEGMENTED HYBRID: growing place of the managerial logic at the head of university	INSTABLE SEGMENTED HYBRID: academic resistance	STABLE SEGMENTED HYBRID: academic and democratization resistance
INTERVIEW EXTRACTS		"The president is dedicated to putting the house in order"	"Steering was renovated and new budgetary procedures expressing the strategic choices have been put in place"	"They rejected all the tools implemented to steering the university; they are suspicious with management control systems"

Academic professionalism logic/ Democratization and regulation logic/ **Managerial logic**

**TABLE 4**  
**UHH: A loosely coupled flotilla struggling for actorhood**

**History and initial positioning:** One of the largest multidisciplinary universities in Germany, founded in 1919 by local citizens. Fragmented organization focused on egalitarian mass education, shared governance between status groups, and decentralized administration.

	2002-2006 Government initiates transformation	2006-2009 Pressures for change and first resistances	2009-2010 Mutiny and organizational crisis	2010-2014 In search for a new path
STRATEGIC POSITIONING	<i>Egalitarianism</i> Weak assessments	<b>Seeking “excellence”</b> Weak assessments	<b>Weak assessments</b>	Diversification, <i>ranking rejection</i>
ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN				
Centralization	Decentralized decision to 18 departments	<b>Centralization process: six faculties with strong deans</b>	Organizational crisis: “mutiny”	<b>Administration centralization</b>
Fragmentation between				
professional groups	Fragmentation between scholars and administration	Fragmentation between departments and <b>head Conflicts for funding</b>	<i>Cohesion for resistance against the president. Mobilized political groups</i>	<b>Administrative change</b> vs academic inertia <i>Split-up: eight faculties</i>
academic departments	Autonomy of disciplines departments			
GOVERNANCE				
Governing mode	<i>Governance shared by status groups</i> Power of the academic senate	<b>Strong managerial governance</b>	<b>Weak managerial governance</b> Interim president	<i>Participative and managerial governance</i>
Control mechanism	Process and clan control	<i>Process and output control</i>	<i>Process and output control</i>	<i>Process and output control</i>
IDENTITY	<i>Multidisciplinary university dedicated to mass education</i>	In search for academic and <b>managerial legitimacy</b>	<i>Resistance of democratic values against managerial ones</i>	In search of a new “sustainable” identity
ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE	SEGMENTED HYBRID: Democratization and academic logic	SEGMENTED HYBRID: <i>Democratic moving to managerial governance</i>	HYBRIDIZATION CRISIS: struggle between democra-tization and managerial logic	SEGMENTED HYBRID: <i>Democratic domination</i> over acade-mic and <b>managerial</b> logic
INTERVIEW EXTRACTS		“Nobody seemed to care about the university and whether it succeeds or not in the Excellence Initiative.”	“Integrating administrative structures is excessively bureaucratic”	“We will boycott the CHE ranking. We already rank among the top 5 per cent of German universities, so we don’t need to prove anything.”

Academic professionalism logic/ Democratization and regulation logic/ **Managerial logic**

In 2006, the newly elected president fostered strategic changes by urging professors to raise more external funding and intending to increase tuition fees. Academics from humanities and social sciences resisted, drawing on both academic and democratic logics. The university became highly politicized and fragmented between disciplines considered as *winners* or *losers* of the reforms. Driven in an authoritarian way, the managerial reforms collided with the democratic logic and led to a political crisis in 2009. Representatives of all status groups, including student unions, turned against the president and the ministry finally offered her to resign. The managerial logic was rejected by the democratic university model, leading to a “hybridization crisis”.

In 2010, a new president initiated a participative debate including all university members, which synthesis proposed a new path partly in line with the managerial logic: UHH

continued then to centralize and standardize its administration. Meanwhile, the presidential team satisfied demands for keeping strategic multidisciplinary positioning and egalitarian distribution of resources between disciplines. However, UHH introduced a pay-for-performance system and goal contracts with professors congruent with the managerial logic. As a segmented hybrid, UHH partly complied with the managerial logic, but retained the dominant democratic logic for defending disciplinary pluralism and the voices of different stakeholders.

#### Case LUL

LUL results from a merger of a marginal mass educator with a local polytechnic in 2002 in consequence of a budget cutting program of the German state Lower Saxony. Professional identity of polytechnic professors, hired with a focus on teaching and technology transfers, corresponded to the managerial logic,

TABLE 5 LUL: From slump to storm until complete transformation				
<b>History and initial positioning:</b> Founded as a teacher training college in 1946, LUL became a badly financed university. Marginal mass educator in German higher education field with weak research assessments, forced to merge with a local polytechnic, in a State budget cutting program.				
	<b>2002-2004 Running into crisis and state-led merger</b>		<b>2004-2006 Struggle and organizational paralysis</b>	<b>2006-2014 Transformation</b>
STRATEGIC POSITIONING	University Weak research assessments, teaching orientation	Polytechnic Good teaching and <b>transfer reputation in the region</b>	Merged Recognition as downgrade to polytechnic	<b>Innovative Recognition as reformed university</b>
ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN				
Centralization	Low (autonomous faculties + weak administration)	<b>Middle (autonomous faculties + strong administration)</b>	Low (autonomous faculties + weak administration)	<b>Matrix design (strong administration &amp; autonomous faculties)</b>
Fragmentation between				
professional groups	High (distrust)	<b>Middle</b>	<i>High (distrust, anxiety)</i>	<b>Middle (integration)</b>
academic departments (faculties)	High (autonomy)	<i>high (autonomous study program organization)</i>	<i>Middle (integration attempts)</i>	<i>Middle (partial integration)</i>
GOVERNANCE				
Governing mode	<i>Committee and Collegial self-governance</i>	Collegial / <b>hierarchy</b>	Collegial resistance to <b>hierarchy</b>	<i>Committee and managerial governance</i>
Control mechanism	<i>Process and clan control</i>	<i>Process control</i>	<i>Mainly process control</i>	<b>Process and output control</b>
IDENTITY	<i>Democratized mass educator</i>	<b>Praxis</b>	<i>Identity conflict</i>	<b>Emerging organizational identity</b>
ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE	Classic Hybrid <i>democratization and academic logic</i>	<b>Hybrid democratic and managerial logic</b>	<b>Instable segmented Hybrid:</b> <i>academic logic, democratic integration and managerial logic</i>	<b>Blended hybrid:</b> academic professionalism <b>dominated by managerial logic</b>
INTERVIEW EXTRACTS			"It was a difficult process after the merger, almost a trench warfare between the two cultures. Everything I suggested was not wanted."	"It no longer matters if you came from the university or the polytechnic."  "LUL has reinvented itself."

Academic professionalism logic/ Democratization and regulation logic/ **Managerial logic**

whereas university professors' identity was largely guided by the democratization logic. The polytechnic operated within a more centralized organizational design and with less collegial self-governance than the university. Both organizations were highly fragmented between faculties which autonomously managed their study programs.

Between 2004 and 2006, differences burdened the integration. Organizational identity remained segmented between former university and polytechnic faculties. Despite setting-up mixed task-forces aiming for democratic bottom-up integration, the unwanted merger was frustrating for both sides. University professors feared to be considered as members of a downgraded university and efforts to find a compromise resulted in an organizational paralysis. LUL operated as an instable segmented hybrid due to the very distinct professional identities.

In 2006, a rather unconventional president, committed to managerial reforms, was elected. He first decided the deletion of all existing programs and the introduction of an innovative educational model. A new organizational matrix design increased centralization and reduced fragmentation. Collegial self-governance was considerably shifted towards a managerial top-down approach, and performance management systems were established to promote entrepreneurial activities. A common organizational identity was promoted to support the integration and transformation process. Finally, the diffusion of the managerial logic through multiple attributes became possible because of the vacuum in collective power and counter ideas left by the preceding paralysis. The threat of shut-down led to the adoption of the managerial logic as the chance of becoming a legitimate actor among German universities. In 2014, LUL reached a unique strategic position as a prototype

of an entrepreneurial university. The organization has moved from a segmented hybrid to a blended hybrid dominated by the managerial logic.

### Discussion

Our case analysis contributes to a better understanding of hybridization processes by revealing distinct forms of segmented and blended hybridization of logics. They also detailed the roles of organizational attributes as filters and outcomes of field-level institutional logics along organizational response paths.

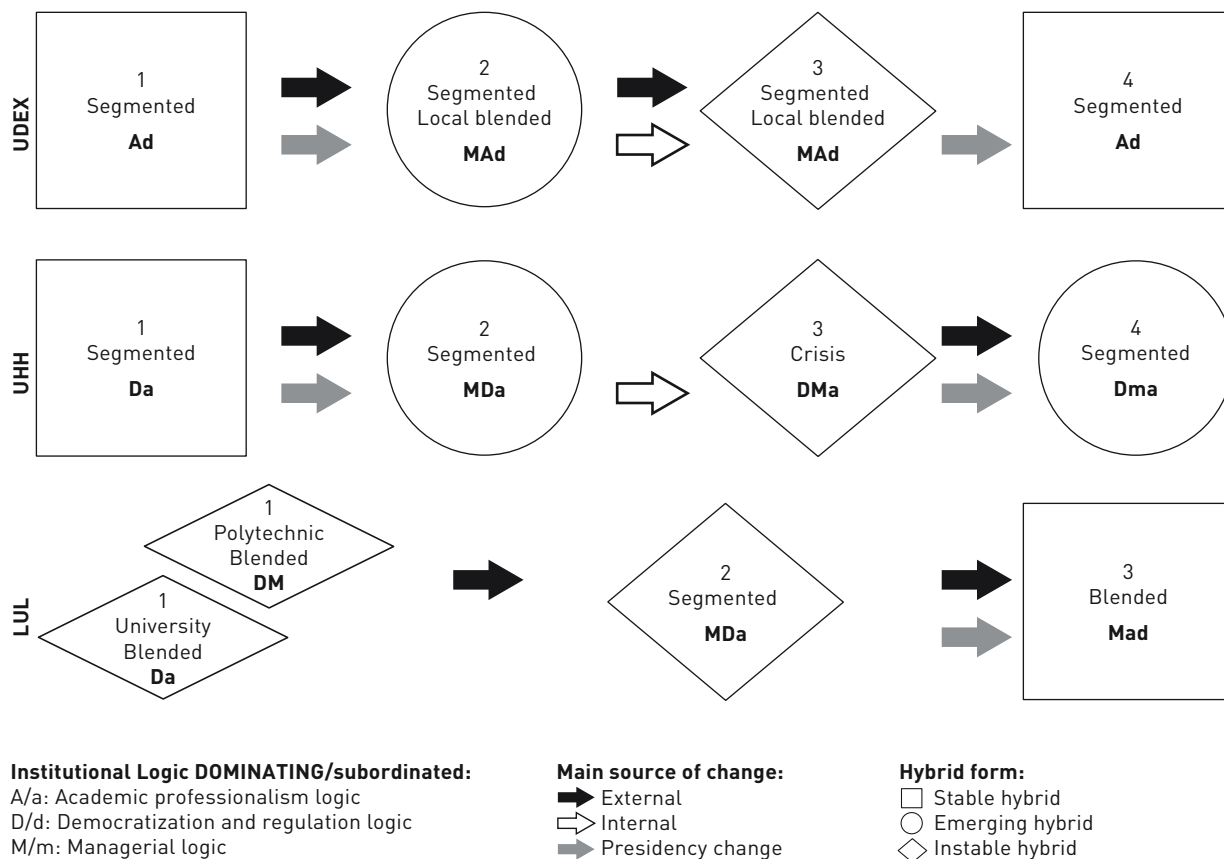
#### SEGMENTED HYBRIDIZATION

Our results suggest a refined understanding of segmented hybridization by analytically separating three forms. The first form of segmented hybridization connects to the idea of “loose coupling” (Weick, 1976) or “compartmentalization” (Kraatz & Block, 2017), where multiple identities drawing on different logics are structurally separated. All presidential teams committed themselves to improve the position of their universities by adopting and diffusing the managerial logic. However,

academics at the department level claimed for the preservation of their traditional dominant logic, academic professionalism in UDEX and democratic logic in UHH. LUL academics also started by refusing post-merger integration because of their distinct identities. Segmentation relied simultaneously on organizational design, and more deeply on norms and values, whose contradictions led to significant tensions. This segmentation was no stable condition for hybridity in none of the universities studied.

The second form of segmentation, apparent at UDEX and UHH, is close to Pache and Santos' (2013) selective coupling. Presidential teams focused first on changing *organizational design* and *governance* with more managerial decisions and centralized administrative structures, as well as mergers of academic departments, to improve their effectiveness. These changes preceded a wider diffusion of the managerial logic to *strategic positioning* and an attempt of creating a new *organizational identity*. This segmentation was thus neither deliberate ‘cherry picking’ nor a strategy to create a stable segmented hybrid (Pache & Santos, 2013). It was rather a contingent necessity

**FIGURE 1**  
Hybridization processes: The three cases



<sup>1</sup>Although French and German higher education systems are based on specific national legacies (for example, stratification between *Grandes Ecoles* and universities in France, and dual German system made of polytechnics and universities), they also converge in many key aspects (Paradeise, 2007). In both countries, higher education is still largely a public service, and professors, appointed for lifetime, enjoy professional autonomy. Governments play a major role through public funding and control, and promote the new entrepreneurial model of university in coherence with the Bologna process.

to prevent conflicts (UDEX) or to balance powerful coalitions (UHH) and to gradually disseminate the managerial logic.

The third form of segmentation reflects the coexistence of parallel practices referring to a sole organizational attribute. It comes close to the concept of structural differentiation, partitioning an organization into different mindsets and normative orders (Greenwood et al., 2011). Especially at UDEX and UHH, management control systems – made of clan, process, and output types of control – were inscribed in different logics depending on the aims and actors involved in control processes. This segmentation can sustainably balance out conflicts by adopting different logics for different purposes, in an approach close to the pragmatic collaboration underlined by Reay and Hinings (2009). For instance, in processes such as budgeting, members of different groups collaborate while maintaining their identity.

### BLENDING HYBRIDIZATION

Our results refine the understanding of blended hybridization by distinguishing *local* and *global blending*.

*Local blending* occurs when a single attribute exhibits mixed practices based on multiple logics, while others remain embedded in previous logics. Local blending can thus reflect the partial adoption of an emerging field logic, as in UDEX' first period of change. To make the university fit for the future funding challenges, the presidency prompted elected academics and administrative staff to collaborate in joined committees, to gain a common understanding of institutional demands. This helped the emergence of hybrid practices among these groups, as visible in the medium-term strategic plan ("University Project") mixing academic logic (missions), and managerial logic (objectives and performance indicators). Furthermore, elected committees and consultants jointly supported the implementation of a balanced scorecard as a managerial steering tool. This local blending of governance practices based on the democratization and managerial logics reflects collaboration between groups using a shared toolkit based on different logics (McPherson & Sauder, 2013). Besides, local blending can also be a transitional phase preceding global blending.

*Global blending* implies blending of most organizational attributes as illustrated by LUL. After a long transformation phase, all attributes exhibit elements of the managerial logic, without an unconditioned dominance. For example, regarding organizational design, the matrix structure allows both central (managerial) and decentral (academic) steering of academic work. Regarding governance, important decisions about study programs or appointments were centralized, but committees kept a voting power in many academic matters. It supports the idea of a constellation of logics (Goodrick & Reay, 2011), by which the dominant logic is part of an arrangement whereby subordinated logics are still enacted (Arman et al., 2014). LUL's transformation from a peripheral actor to a recognized prototype of a successfully reformed university also confirms that peripheral organizations can adapt more quickly to institutional change than central ones (Pache & Santos, 2013).

### ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRIBUTES

Our cross-case analysis reveals that most forms of segmented or blended hybrids are not likely to endure as stable forms. Instead, they had a transitory nature as part of a larger organizational response path to field-level complexity marked by the diffusion of the managerial logic. Figure 1 illustrates each hybridization path. In the last phase, the managerial logic is active at UHH, dominates at LUL, but largely disappears at UDEX. As a key result, organizational attributes seem to shape hybridization processes, whereby we discuss the attributes in the following.

*Strategic positioning.* All presidential teams intended to respond to external demands by building recognized profiles and enter the "race for excellence". However, the importance of *strategic positioning* varied across the cases. UHH was mainly occupied with reforming internal governance as well as dealing with conflicts and hostile forces against change, whereby *strategic positioning* was not prioritized. On the contrary, the new presidential team of LUL initiated the transformation in phase 3 and concentrated on improving the field-level position with entirely new branding and study programs. External recognition helped to create a new *organizational identity* and to gain internal support of the managerial logic. UDEX' presidential team failed to convince academics to support the "University Project" combining a new *strategic positioning* with a new *organizational identity*. In summary, the attribute *strategic positioning* catalyzed LUL's rather successful hybridization process, but appeared as a source of conflict and instability for UDEX and UHH.

*Identity.* Our results connect to research that points to the importance of identity for sustainable hybrids (Glynn, 2008). It has been stressed that building a new organizational identity – largely promoted by specific hiring and socializing practices (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Besharov & Smith, 2014) – can balance competing logics. However, this instrument is limited in public universities context, where staff is hired for lifetime. Exceptionally supported by a large share of new hires – socialized with the emerging managerial logic – the case of LUL demonstrated that creating an *organizational identity* was essential for global blending. However, the professional identity of academics is historically rather related to academic disciplines than to the organization (Hattke, Vogel, & Woiwode, 2016). In such context, change is problematic as shown in UHH and UDEX, where professional identities acted as filters hindering the new managerial logic. As already illustrated by Kraatz and Block (2017), the integration of multiple identities in the organization's mission is a challenge, and conflicts arose as groups adhered to different logics when referring to this mission. Consequently, it might be more appropriate to develop a mutually beneficial collaboration between carriers of logics in structurally differentiated units (Martin et al., 2016). Thus, segmented hybrids have the potential to reconcile logics through specific arrangements (Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Raynard, 2016), and to manage the relationships between institutional, organizational and professional identities which characterize universities.

*Organizational design and governance.* All cases are marked by new presidential teams willing to implement managerial reforms regarding *organizational design and governance*. Both at UDEX and UHH, reforms started with a centralization of

decision-making. Interpretations of external demands by members of presidential teams (mixing academics and administrative staff) were harmonized, and led to local blending of logics at UDEX and domination of the managerial logic at LUL. All presidencies relied upon external actors such as consultants or scientific experts to legitimate the reforms. Organizational changes are thus influenced by actors who give voice to institutional logics (Greenwood et al., 2011). However, whereas centralization is supposed to reduce complexity by limiting the various interpretations of external demands (Greenwood et al., 2011), our cases demonstrate how it developed a new type of fragmentation between presidential teams and faculties or departments. In addition, increasing managerialism reduced collegial self-governance modes, and thereby contributed to organizational fragmentation. Thus, centralization of decisions played a crucial role in the first adoption of the managerial logic, but later in its rejection. In paths of hybridization, segmented hybrids reflected either a peaceful coexistence of multiple logics (phase 1 in UDEX and UHH), or a fragmentation between presidential and department levels (phases 2 and 3) made of extensive conflicts about the managerial logic diffusion. The initial fragmentation between professional groups and between academic departments gave the opportunity for presidential teams to centralize decisions and initiate changes without resistance. However, attempts to diffuse more widely the managerial logic through *strategic positioning*, output control and *organizational identity* led to resistance in the less fragmented universities. Organizational reforms – mergers of departments or faculties – to improve coordination and efficiency, strengthened this ambivalent hybridization process, providing more power to faculties and departments and a voice to their dominant academic logic. In summary, *organizational design* and *governance* played a critical role in the different phases of hybridization, as they first focused attention for the diffusion of the managerial logic, then were at the heart of extended conflicts, and finally resolved in three different ways. For LUL, a matrix-design and performance measurement systems of entrepreneurial activities led to a stable blended hybrid of managerial and academic logics. UHH and UDEX turned to a segmented hybridization, dominated by their original dominant logic, with a partial adoption of the managerial logic by UHH and the global rejection by UDEX. In conclusion, *organizational design* and *governance* appears in tension, as targets of change reflecting field institutional demands – with the aim of rendering organizations more efficient, effective and accountable – and filters of these demands, contributing to organize resistance.

#### HYBRIDIZATION PROCESSES: PATHS OF CHANGE AND STABILITY.

Our longitudinal perspective provides insights on how organizations combine different institutional logics across successive phases of change. Changing constellation of logics at the field level induced different paths of hybridization that can be explained simultaneously by the positioning of universities in their field, the initial internal configurations of logics and the relative power of groups defending their “home logic”.

LUL appeared as a “success” by creating a new stable blended hybrid which adopted the managerial logic for all attributes

and thus conforming to the external demands of the field. The managerial logic diffusion was paradoxically eased by LUL initial precarious situation – both in financial terms and in research assessment – and the relative vacuum of collective power in an initially highly fragmented organization. LUL’s hybridization path was however a long way (2006-2014), made of a progressive elaboration of a new organization, including new buildings, a novel brand, and extensive hiring and training programs, blending the managerial logic with democratization and academic logics.

UHH and UDEX were both traditional segmented hybrids of academic and democratization logics, whose presidential teams adopted the managerial logic with the intention to diffuse it widely. The first step of change (phase 2) introduced only local blending in segmented hybrids. Projecting compliance to external demands and avoiding internal conflicts could have been a viable strategy as suggested by Pache and Santos (2013). However, in our cases, the commitment to organizational change beyond external compliance created organizational crisis. The centrality of the democratization logic at UHH and of the academic logic at UDEX resulted in multiple contradictions with the managerial logic on *governance*, *organizational designs* and *identities*, and generated organizational crisis, empirically confirming the model proposed by Besharov and Smith (2014). Crisis induced the assignment of a new president as well as a participative bargaining process for UHH, and the election of a new presidential team for UDEX. Initial dominant logics were the main source of resistance for academics who strongly hold out against pressures for managerialism. UDEX returns to a classic segmented hybrid form, decoupling from the managerial logic (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), but slightly different from the initial one. The managerial logic left an imprint on the organization – through management control systems and even in the culture – and the new presidential team (in phase 4) used the democratization logic together with the academic one to reject the managerial logic. UHH finally appeared as an emerging segmented hybrid where the managerial logic is substantive in the administrative structures, but mainly symbolically managed by the academics. Conflicts between logics seem to have found temporary forms of resolution. The stability of these hybrids depends on the potential external pressures, since the managerial logic is still gaining ground in the field.

Finally, our findings confirm that high centrality of contradicting logics produces instability, because instead of balancing each other, logics continue to vie for dominance in organizations (Besharov & Smith, 2014). The managerial logic is hardly compatible in terms of norms, mission and values with the two other logics, which offer a repertoire to resist (as shown by Townley, 1997). So, conflicts appear each time that an attribute regarded as essential by powerful actors is changed to conform to the managerial logic. Whereas main conflicts can be related to *strategic positioning* or *organizational identity*, reflecting core values and beliefs (Pache & Santos, 2013), the data stressed how *organizational design* and *governance* can be conflictual too. In the universities studied, conflicts and instability found sources about attributes considered as less conflictual in other contexts (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013). This may be explained by the fact that governance issues, such as collegial self-governance, autonomy of faculties and clan control, are part of the historical professional identity of academics.

Thus, the segmented hybrid form – that provides some space to the managerial logic while preserving the original dominant logic through arenas of interactions – appears as an appropriate way to manage organizational stability in such organizations.

### Conclusion

This article contributes to knowledge about organizational hybridization processes in three main ways. Firstly, responding to calls for exploring hybridization beyond a binary logics context (Battilana et al., 2017; Goodrick & Reay, 2011; Greenwood et al., 2011), it extends the scope of analysis to a constellation of three logics in the field of continental European higher education. Secondly, it provides advanced insights on hybridization by focusing on organizational attributes (Greenwood et al., 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013; Raynard, 2016), revealing their role in the enactment of logics and detailing paths of hybridization (Besharov & Smith, 2014). We thereby refine theoretical concepts regarding segmented and blended hybridization. Segmentation is not necessarily a long-term strategy, but may be a step towards upcoming change. Blending of logics may appear as a local stable blending or as an intermediate step before global blending. Organizations may also display segmented and local blending at the same time. In contrast to the literature on enduring and sustainable hybrid forms (e.g. Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Battilana & Lee, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013), these results stress the potential transitional character of various hybrid forms. This may lead some organizations to constantly (re)negotiate the forms of segmentation and blending by adapting their organizational attributes. We expect this “volatile complexity” (Raynard, 2016) to generate an even wider range of responses beyond those revealed by cases studied.

Thirdly, our results specifically refine the roles of organizational attributes in the diffusion of the managerial logic in public organizations. In such context, conflicts are most likely to spring upon *strategic positioning* and *organizational identity*, reflecting core values and beliefs, but also upon *organizational design* and *governance*. Consequently, managing interactions in segmented hybrids, composed of groups with strong professional identities, is essential for preserving the institutional hybrid identity of public organizations. This holds for the higher education field as for health care (Arman et al., 2014; Kurunmäki, 2004), social welfare (Pache & Santos, 2013) or law system (McPherson & Sauder, 2013). Our findings thus specifically enhance the knowledge about hybrid responses of public organizations to institutional complexity (Denis et al., 2015; Mazouz et al., 2015).

Finally, exploring hybridity through comparative cases study and longitudinal data have considerable advantages. It provides a better basis in theorizing hybridization as a complex process raising questions of stability and variety of hybridization. Further researches in this way should be encouraged.

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