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Jussi Välimaa

Higher Education
Cultural Approach

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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Cultural Approach

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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*to Ressu
-for all our years together*

ABSTRACT

Jussi Välimaa

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Diss.

This research aims to discuss the cultural approach in higher education. Culture is understood as an organizing concept to examine how cultural dimensions (national, disciplinary and organizational settings) influence the academic communities. The higher education cultural approach provides a standpoint to examine what the contextual dimensions are in higher education, and how these dimensions have been defined and examined in higher education research.

Theoretically, the dissertation has two aims. The first aim is to analyze the intellectual roots and neighbors of the higher education cultural approach. Second, to reflect on the influence of two intellectual traditions that have contributed to cultural understanding of higher education institutions and academic communities, i.e. humanist and rational traditions. With the help of these intellectual tools the disciplines, anthropology and sociology that have contributed to the development of the higher education cultural approach can be analyzed from the perspective of their interest of knowledge.

It is maintained that the higher education cultural approach is rooted mainly two in different intellectual starting points to analyze the higher education field as cultural entities: studies on disciplinary cultures and institutional cultures. Notions of disciplines as cultural entities have been developing in Europe rooted in the civilizational anxiety concerning the split in the academic world into two hostile cultures. The institutional studies tradition is, in turn, rooted in the American intellectual traditions, where cultural concerns emerge from the institutional level phenomena whether they concern students, faculty (university teachers) or higher education institutions.

In conclusion, it is suggested that the issue of cultural differences is the question of what constitutes different academic identities. The development and change of identity, in turn, is based on continuous dialogue with significant others. In the academic world, these significant others can be found in disciplinary and institutional colleagues, professional groups and national cultural environments. It is also argued that identity opens a seminal starting point for future studies in higher education cultural approach.

Keywords: culture, discipline, higher education, identity, institution

FOREWORD

A role reserved for, or adopted by, a researcher working alone with the dissertation easily seems like that of a mythic hero.¹ I must admit that I have been captured by this self-image as well. While working alone in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California during autumn term 1994 I felt lonely. Actually, I saw myself as a lonely hero solving crucial research problems; and I liked the feeling! Maybe it is so that the role of a hero is an elementary part of our culture and the task to write a dissertation is such a heroic deed that these feelings are even justified. However, if we take the role of a hero-researcher seriously and without a touch of irony, it easily leads to objective and impersonal studies where the author is covered by the passive voice and objectifying methods. Actually, it may seem that these studies are not made by the hero-researcher but by the objective eye and the rational hand of a neutral academic? I don't feel justified to follow this pattern any longer, because I believe that science is personal.²

However, I would like to profit from this hero-researcher tradition

¹ As far as I know, Leena Eräsaari (1995) is the first to speak about hero-researchers referring to anthropological discussion (Malinowski 1961, Pratt 1986) concerning roles of the researchers.

² As the reader can see I support the ideas suggested by the feminist tradition. See e.g. Krieger (1983, 1993), Keränen (1993) and Glazer, Bensimon & Townsend (1993). In this sense the articles consisting of my dissertation describe the change in my attitude from a passive voice into an active writer. In fact, I wrote the first article (Välímää 1992) in the active voice, but in the name of objective study it was "corrected" into passive voice. At that time I accepted it, because I thought that it is one of the rules of the game. Nowadays I see no basis for using passive voice automatically to guarantee the quality of research. For me it is just a style like any other academic writing styles. I may even find it as a useful structure when it is not used to hide the writer.

to memorize my path from a student of history to a researcher in the field of higher education studies. Traditionally in the Scandinavia, preface is the place for the hero to praise his supporting troops and to ignore the opposing academic tribes or persons. Thus, I start with my first intellectual territory: history. It was really so that the companionship of my fellow students at Villa Lante in Rome at the beginning of the 1980s was one of the starting points for me to see academic life as a life full of joy, friendship, passion and uncompromising work. I'll raise a toast to you: Christer, Juha, Simo, Antero, Kata, Mika, Liisa, Eeva, Timo! My "Roman professor", Margareta Steinby, with her inimitable intellectual style, contextualized the study of classical archaeology and history by comparing it to the first love, with the important addition, that it would be better to marry somebody else. Trying to be a good student, I have tried to follow her advice in this sense also.

Margareta was "my first real professor". While learning to do research in the higher education field I was lucky to meet professor Raimo Konttinen. I met Raimo for the first time in September 1988. We had lunch together to discuss the coming follow-up study on the free allocation of teaching resources. I now think that he wanted to check me before asking me to start as a researcher in that project. After two hours of intensive discussion I looked at my watch surprised by two things: how quickly time had passed and, even more, meeting a professor who can change his views during a discussion. For me, as a historian, this was a new experience. During the research project "Free Allocation of Teaching Resources as an element of the self-regulation strategy" Raimo's encouragement to find and to develop my own approach in higher education studies has been both an intellectually safe and challenging environment.

I met professor Risto Eräsaari on a play ground in 1990. His introduction to intellectual life while playing badminton gave me the courage to discuss the possibility to write a dissertation for Social Policy. Simultaneously, the journey in the territory of social tribes has feeded my curiosity: how are they seeing the world, what is my way of seeing the world? Risto's truly critical comments have forced me to develop my thinking in relation to social sciences. Especially the long discussions with Risto while writing this paper have structured my mind to see the coordinates of my thinking.

The six weeks I worked with professor William G. Tierney both at the Pennsylvania State University and at the University of Southern California have challenged me to define the cultural approach. Bill's scholarly criticism, advice and support have been intellectually very challenging. In addition to this, Bill offered me a culturally fascinating possibility to get familiar with the best traditions of the American intellectuals.

I feel privileged to be able to call all these guys as "my professors".

My orientation to higher education as a field of research was strengthened by the first European Higher Education Advanced Training Course during 1992-1993. The inspiring teachers, Maurice Kogan, Ian McNay, Ulrich Teichler, Frans van Vught and many others contributed to the understanding of higher education as a field of research. However, my fellow students Sakari Ahola and Oili-Helena Ylijoki were most supporting and challenging company while travelling through European higher education environments. Simultaneously, the continuous debates with historians Erkki Laitinen and Anssi Halmesvirta have helped me to define the historical building blocks of my identity.

For the development of my "cultural theme" the presentation I gave in 1992 at CHEPS (the University of Twente) "The Cultural Approach in Higher Education Research" supported my idea to examine what cultural approach in higher education research is all about. During that visit we wrote a paper on "Change in Higher Education" together with Don F. Westerheijden. I have had the special pleasure of repeating that experience many times ever since.

In Finland, thanks are due to my encouraging colleagues Hannu Jalkanen, Juha-Pekka Liljander, Pentti Määttä, Mauri Panhelainen, Ellen Piesanen and Päivi Vuorinen in the Higher Education Studies-research group, I have enjoyed writing my dissertation and working at the Institute for Educational Research despite the recent economically unpredictable years. I also wish to express my gratitude for the valuable support given by the Ministry of Education as my funding body. It has been academically important that the writing of the dissertation has been understood as an integral part of the more practically oriented follow-up study on the free allocation of teaching resources. I feel that the interplay between theoretical considerations and practical research problems has contributed both of them.

Everybody who uses a foreign language knows how valuable it is to have a person who can critically read the peculiarities suggested by the author. My luck has been to have Liisa Havola to do the critical reading.

Finally, I have always wondered why people thank their families in papers like this. Is it just an empty cultural pattern, or is praising the family a polite formality, or an attempt to calm down one's conscience after years of neglecting the family? As to me, after the hectic months of writing this paper, remembering the most valuable social support means more than all the above. Without the love Raili, Sampo, Juuso and Eetu have given to me I would not have had the motivation to finish this thesis that has occupied my mind for four years.

Now that the hero has spoken, I'll try to give the floor to the researcher in me.

HIGHER EDUCATION CULTURAL APPROACH

Articles included in the dissertation

1. Välimaa, J. (1992). Faculty Cultures and Innovations - A Case Study. In Hakkarainen, P., Määttä, P. & Jalkanen, H. (Eds.) *Current Visions and Analyses on Finnish Higher Education System*. University of Jyväskylä: Institute for Educational Research. Publication Series B: Theory into Practice 75, 71-99.
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<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ499567>
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<https://doi.org/10.2307/1561638>
4. Välimaa, J. (1995). Historian ja sosiaaliheimon soturit [Warriors of Historic and Social Tribe]. *Janus* 3 (2) *Sosiaalipolitiikan ja sosiaalityön tutkimuksen aikakauslehti [Janus, Journal of the Finnish Society for Social Policy]*, 180-191.
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<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429442063>
6. Välimaa, J. & Westerheijden, D. F. (1995). Two Discourses - Researchers and Policy-Making in Higher Education. *Higher Education Journal (Kluwer Publisher)*. In print.
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1 INTRODUCTION

What is the cultural approach in higher education? Is it a contingent approach with defined methods of inquiry and established intellectual traditions? Or is it just an excuse to avoid earlier burdens and difficulties in analyzing the dynamics of higher education institutions? These questions have bothered me while writing articles for my dissertation. During the process of writing these papers I have understood culture as an 'organizing' concept to examine how cultural dimensions (national, disciplinary and organizational settings) influence the academic communities. In this last article I will continue with this line of thought and define the cultural approach as a regulative idea through which I can examine what the contextual dimensions are in higher education, and try to find interpretations on how these dimensions have been defined and examined in higher education research.

Higher education research field belongs to social studies (Fulton 1992). As an academic field higher education research has served practical interests rising both from outside the higher education institutions and from inside the institutions. In the American tradition the practical interests inside higher education institutions have contributed to the development of institutional research which, in turn, has provided data that has supported the development of academic interests. The outsiders' interests, in turn, have contributed to the development of various testing systems in the United States, whereas in the European context these interests have mainly been expressed by central authorities contributing to contract research funded by ministries. As an academic field, higher education research is characterized by a variety of approaches, traditions and methodologies (Dressel & Mayhew 1974, Fulton 1992).

My perspective is rooted in the European higher education environment, especially in its continental form of the higher education system. Thus, when I refer to European higher education I refer to this

continental model. For this reason my line of reasoning easily follows categories where the U.S. higher education represents the market oriented higher education system as opposed to the nationally steered higher education systems on the European continent. These ideas are supported by Burton Clark's theoretical work *The Higher Education System* (Clark 1983). On the following pages I will not challenge these ideas even though the clear distinction may be fading away as some researchers have suggested (Kells 1992).

1.1 Search for Contextual Understanding

As in other fields of applied studies, the instrumental demands of the funders may strongly influence the research methodologies chosen and the outcomes favored (cf. Välimaa & Westerheijden 1995). Quite easily, together with the funders' interest the instrumental or managerialistic rationalities also shape the understanding of higher education institutions as complex organizations run by chaotic academics. Following the managerial approach we may say that

"To lead an expertise organization requires a strong distinct objective. Do the university, the faculties and departments have distinct objectives and a common interest to which the personnel commit themselves in such a way that there exists grounds for good leadership on all levels? Or is it so that the objectives of a multidisciplinary university cannot be as distinct as a company's? As we know, pluralism and the existence of several interest groups are part of the characteristics of the university. ... Pluralism, however, reduces the personnel's commitment and forming of a strong university culture- perhaps it reduces producing of good results as well, which imposes strong challenges to leadership" (Oulu Evaluation 1993, 26).

In Finland, this quotation reflects the present values of university administrators and managers. In this context culture, if it is noted at all, is understood mainly as a factor that may have a positive or negative function in the organization. In managerial vocabulary "pluralism", the simultaneous existence of many cultures, may indeed present a problem for academic leadership. Consequently, academics may appear as grown-up children with their unpractical interests, speaking their incomprehensible jargon. For the university managers and administrators this can be the real picture of the academic world. In public discussion the ivory tower easily labels higher education institutions indicating

alienation from "the real world" and the waste of tax-payers' money. Supported by some theoretical considerations, academic organizations can be seen as organized anarchies (Cohen, March & Olsen 1972), or as collegial discussion clubs, or as political playing fields (Birnbaum 1989). In the light of rational and positivist tradition, and in the public sphere as well, higher education institutions, indeed, may appear as organizations characterized by irrational behavior.

In the following I will suggest that we should reconsider these rationalistic assumptions that easily lead to misunderstandings concerning the dynamics of higher education. Even though I do not wish to praise irrational behavior, I argue that we should consider seriously what is "rationality" and "irrationality" in the academic world. Robinson (1985) has described the difficulty to apply any external criteria of rational behavior into analysis of human behavior in certain social situations. To apply this notion into the study of academic communities, we may say that it is difficult to understand the dynamics of academic life if we use intellectual devices developed in other fields of human activities such as economics or public administration. However, if the criterion of rationality is not taken for granted, or derived from a general theory, but it is created contextually, then the notions of "irrational behavior" of academics can be seen as theoretical perceptions based rather on rational tradition, or popular political needs, than on the actual behavior of the academic communities.

I maintain that cultural studies that I call "the higher education cultural approach" have raised the issue of the need for interpretative, contextual understanding of academic communities. In this sense, the cultural approach in higher education research is related to the notions of "irrational social behavior" of human beings in organizations that are, in turn, originated in the thinking of the founding fathers of sociology and anthropology (Ouchi & Wilkins 1985). Furthermore, the special character of higher education institutions owes to the production and transmission processes of the most important cultural product: knowledge. As has been noted by many scholars, the production of knowledge is the process that creates the unique basis for the functioning of higher education institutions, basic units and individual academics (Clark 1983, Becher & Kogan 1992). It also is the link that both separates and combines the academic world, universities, to society. This social relation, in turn, requires perspectives and methods of analysis that seriously take the special characteristics of higher education as an object of research. Academically, the omission of the epistemic and local traditions may weaken the explanatory power of the analysis as well. It may also have influence on the higher policies adopted. Thus, I suggest that the dynamics of higher education should be examined with the perspectives and conceptual tools that recognize the epistemic, disciplinary,

institutional, and local traditions of the academic communities. In short, the cultural elements of the academic communities. For a long time the study of these culturally-oriented institutions has neglected the cultural dimensions of these institutions (cf. Dill 1982).

1.2 Aims of the Study

While writing the articles for my dissertation my interests and motives have been driven by the understanding of the Finnish higher education field as consisting of different socially constructed realities. I have defined these as faculty cultures (Välimaa 1992), disciplinary cultures (Välimaa 1994) or social discourses (Välimaa & Westerheijden 1995). Furthermore, the cultural perspective has challenged me to examine the social role of Finnish higher education with the help of the concept "intellectual" (Välimaa 1995b) as well as to define my identity by using the ideas of disciplinary cultures as a heuristic device (Välimaa 1995). I also have analyzed and monitored the functioning of Finnish higher education from the perspectives of various social realities and disciplinary traditions (Välimaa 1994b). Practically, cultural understanding has provided me with reflexive instances in terms of the dynamics of academic communities and Finnish higher education policy as an arena.

In this article I will try to specify what the cultural approach in higher education research is, what its intellectual origins are, and what are its present trends. I have two main tasks in this examination. First, I wish to look into the intellectual roots and neighbors of the higher education cultural approach. Theoretically I can see two traditions that derive from different intellectual traditions and aim at different directions as well: the research of disciplinary-based cultures and the examination of institutionally-based cultures. I think that it is useful to reflect on these differences to see the future avenues for cultural studies in higher education.

Secondly, I reflect on the intellectual traditions that have contributed to cultural understanding of higher education institutions and academic communities: humanist and rational traditions. The distinction into two hostile traditions, the humanist and rational tradition, has been developed by Stephen Toulmin (1992) to show the differences between traditional rational western science and its opponent, the more qualitative humanist tradition. I use this dichotomy, because it provides both historical and philosophical dimensions to the distinction that seems to divide disciplines into "hard" and "soft", but also reflects the intellectual

variation inside the social sciences. Historically, the dichotomy also contextualizes the academic endeavors into the social context where they are born and killed. For this reason also, I will reflect on the development of the cultural perspective in relation to social environments where they have been born and developed, even though I am conscious that my notions can be only fragmentary comments.

Consequently, the following questions will structure my discussion: what are the origins of the cultural perspective in higher education? How has the higher education cultural approach developed? How can the present cultural discussion be analyzed? What are the most promising future perspectives for cultural studies in higher education?

1.2.1 Cultural Approach: Definitions and Limitations

Culture is a tempting concept because it provides researchers with a conceptual bridge between micro and macro levels of analysis, as well as a practical bridge between organizational behavior and management interests to university managers and administrators (cf. Smircich 1983, 346). However, the concept "culture" can be defined in almost every possible way. It can be stated that as a concept culture is "complex, multifaceted, holistic, and paradoxical" as Kuh and Whitt (1988, 41) put it. Culture also is problematic as a general framework of analysis. As Kuh and Whitt emphasize "the framework had to include as many elements of culture as possible, acknowledge the ecological characteristics of colleges and universities, and acknowledge historical events that shape and perpetuate institutional traditions and missions" (Kuh & Whitt 1988, 41). Furthermore, as Kuh and Whitt maintain "the framework had to accommodate multiple and sometimes conflicting theoretical positions, such as the phenomenological view from anthropology and the nonrational as well as rational, structural views from sociology" (Kuh & Whitt 1988, 41).

These quotations reflect the difficulty related to the tradition of definitions that I call as the "positivist trap". It seems to me that the tradition of definitions is based on limitations to reach logical consistency and conceptual clarity of the concept in order to be able to use it as an intellectual tool. Even though all these are good and useful categories and, indeed, may increase the intelligibility of the text, this tradition may also turn to its contradiction: definitions of the concept may limit the understanding of the phenomenon, especially, if we follow the tradition of the "objectifying definitions" of concepts (Horkheimer & Adorno 1994). According to Horkheimer and Adorno (1994, 15)

"the concept, which some would see as the sign-unit for whatever is comprised under it, has from the beginning been instead the product of dialectical thinking in which everything is always that which it is, only because it becomes that which it is not. That was the original form of objectifying definition, in which concept and thing are separated".

As to culture as a social phenomenon to be studied this is evident, because as researchers we are part of the culture we study. Thus, to make the distinction into the "positivist trap" of definitions rooted in the rational tradition, I will not define the concept of culture, but describe my understanding of culture as a social phenomenon as follows: for me culture is a context where human actions take place. Culture is a "network of meanings" according to Geertz (1973). Essentially, as Tierney and Rhoads (1993, 1) put it: "sense of culture is captured best in the notion of "webs of significance", where people simultaneously create and exist within culture". For me culture is a regulative idea that includes both individual and collective dimensions and reveals the interconnectedness of these two dimensions.³ Methodologically, culture provides a standpoint when taking into account the connection between men and ideas, and the interaction between values, norms, and actions of the academic communities. From this methodological standpoint I can ask questions that reveal cultural dimensions of academic communities and higher education institutions.

In this paper I use "cultural approach" as a generalization of a variety of approaches in higher education research. However, a combining element in these approaches is to define and examine academic world as *cultural entities that are based on social constructions of reality*. Thus, I do not understand the concept as a uniform and consistent concept with only one "right" definition. For me the cultural approach is an umbrella concept that reflects a variety of traditions and methods developed mainly in sociology and anthropology. Like in qualitative research in general I see that "diversity is not a sign of misunderstanding or disagreement, but rather a reflection of various approaches" as Jacob (1993, 55) puts it.

³ The distinction of cultures into subcultures, and countercultures, and anti-cultures is not in focus of my interest since I do not have a classifying interest to academic cultures.

1.3 Cultural Approach and Rational Tradition

According to Toulmin the interest in oral, particular, timely, in a word, *contextual cultural issues* has its origins in the humanist tradition of western thought, whereas the prevailing tradition, defined by Toulmin as rationalist tradition, focuses its attention on the measurable and general issues with generalizing purposes and perspectives. Since this argument is essential to me, I will deepen my argumentation by referring shortly to the statements presented by Stephen Toulmin in the book *Cosmopolis*. According to the author the foundations of modern rational (western) science were laid during the 17th century. According to Toulmin (1992, 22-30) the 17th century philosophers (especially Descartes) "disclaimed any serious interest in four different kinds of practical knowledge: the oral, the particular, the local, and the timely". Consequently, the humanist insights emphasizing toleration and the humanist respect for complexity and diversity were lost.

As to the shift from oral to written knowledge, the intellectual debate started by Descartes argued that questions about the "soundness or validity of "arguments" as referring not to public utterances before particular audiences, but to written chains of statements whose validity rested on their internal relations" (Toulmin 1992, 30-31). According to Toulmin "the research program of modern philosophy thus set aside all questions about argumentation - among particular people in specific situations, dealing with concrete cases, where varied things were at stake - in favor of proofs that could be set down in writing, and judged as written" (Toulmin 1992, 31). In a phrase, "formal logic was in, rhetoric was out".

A parallel shift took place in the scope of philosophical reference as well. According to Toulmin, "after 1650, Henry More and Cambridge Platonists made ethics a field for general abstract theory, divorced from concrete problems of moral practice; and, since then, modern philosophers have generally assumed that -like God and Freedom, or Mind and Matter - the Good and the Just conform to timeless and universal principles." In short, "general principles were in, particular cases were out" (Toulmin 1992, 32).

As to the local versus general knowledge, the same held true. Renaissance humanists' interests in diversity and complexity were supported by material drawn from ethnography, geography and history. Descartes, however, taught that philosophical understanding never comes from accumulating experience of particular individuals and specific cases. For Descartes the aim of rational philosophy was to "seek out abstract, general ideas and principles, by which particulars can be connected

together" (Toulmin 1992, 33). The modern philosophers, in fact, excluded from their enterprise issues and questions that were relevant to Renaissance humanists like Michel Montaigne. In a phrase, "abstract axioms were in, concrete diversity was out". According to Toulmin the questions of timeliness were also replaced by Descartes and his successors. For modern philosophers the aim was to bring light to permanent structures underlying all the changeable phenomena of Nature. The goal was to reveal the timeless principles instead of sharing the interest of humanists' for seeing all problems in the practice of law and medicine as timely referring to specific moments in time (today, yesterday, later). For Descartes and his successors "attention was paid on timeless principles that hold good at all times equally: the permanent was in, transitory was out" (Toulmin 1992, 33-34).

The importance of this kind of distinction into two traditions underlying the western science is important in my study for two reasons. First, in this historical context it is easier to see that the interest in the local, particular and timeless dimension of human communities is a tradition rooted in the foundations of modernity through Renaissance humanists and inherent in the traditions of western science. Thus, the supremacy of "hard" sciences can be defined as a historically developed discourse to define the nature of knowledge that emerged during the 17th century. As Toulmin argues, the birth of this definition of modernity was rooted in the social and political uncertainties of that period. At that time the tolerance of different views was not supported by the horrors of the Thirty Years' War: there was a moral need to find a secure basis for human knowledge (Toulmin 1992, 72-80). The method of "systematic doubt" introduced by Descartes provided the sound rational basis needed both morally and practically. After this innovation "the dream of logical rationality", as Toulmin puts it, has influenced the development of the social sciences as well. I refer only briefly to an extreme form of the rational tradition, *the positivist approach* as introduced by Karl Popper (1980), that seems to have been inspired by the idea of logical rationality combined with the will to imitate the methodological principles of natural sciences by testing hypotheses. Quite naturally, the interest of knowledge has focused on finding and defining the general principles of human behavior by using measurable data. However, the conceptual map drawn by Toulmin historically contextualizes the emergence of qualitative methods in social sciences into an intellectual tradition denied by the rational tradition of western science. Historically, the interest of knowledge focusing on the search for contextual rationalities, that is: interest in the local and particular situations of human beings connects the cultural approach to the humanist tradition in western science.

Second, as to the higher education field, the distinction into humanities and sciences is a cultural theme existing in the civilizational

foundations of western science, and in the development of western universities. Consequently, the practical aim to discuss the nature of universities should seriously take this distinction into different cultural aims of the scientific and scholarly traditions. As Toulmin (1992, 43) puts it

"indeed, the contrast between humanism and rationalism - between the accumulation of concrete details of practical experience, and the analysis of an abstract core of theoretical concepts - is a ringing pre-echo of the debates on The Two Cultures provoked by C.P.Snow's Rede Lecture to the University of Cambridge."

As I argue in Chapter 2.1 the lecture of C.P. Snow, in turn, signified one of the starting points in the argumentation that contributed to the development of cultural understanding of higher education preparing the way for the higher education cultural approach as well.

As to this philosophical conceptualization it seems to me that the cultural approach potentially challenges the positivist definitions of rational research objects and methods in the higher education field as well. Philosophically, the search for contextual understanding is in the core of the cultural approach in higher education. Cultural studies in this context do not aim at searching for "irrational" elements in the academic life in a sense positivist would put it, but it is the search for "other rational", that is, for particular and local understanding of the academic communities. I also suggest that the nature of social life is not general and permanent, but particular and timely. Thus, intellectual tools provided by the rational approach based on logical rationality do not fit well in the reasoning of social life. For this reason it should be described with contextual terms as well. By saying this I do not intend to say that social life is irrational, or non-rational. What I intend to say is that logical deduction is not the appropriate way to describe the social behavior of human beings because it is not based on rational calculations.⁴

The search for contextual understanding also challenges the researcher to be more conscious of his or her own position as to the phenomena to be examined. Even though this is not a brand new idea, in fact, it is a notion rooted in different traditions of the present

⁴ According to Taylor (1991) the moral foundation of the instrumental reason (read: rational tradition) is based on the ideal of disengaged reason. As he notes "the ideal of disengaged reason must be considered precisely as an ideal and not as a picture of human agency as it really is. We are embodied agents, living in dialogical conditions, inhabiting time in a specifically human way, that is, making sense of our lives as a story that connects the past from which we have come to our future projects" (Taylor 1991, 105-106).

discussion in social sciences⁵, it is a topic that has not been addressed empirically in higher education research. As we maintain (Välimaa & Westerheijden 1995), the position of a researcher may have influence on the process of knowledge production. The ideological preconditions, like nationalism in Finland, may also have influence on the parameters of knowledge as I have mentioned elsewhere (Välimaa 1995b). Thus, the position of a cultural researcher should be defined not only in relation to intellectual traditions and personal motives he belongs to but also in relation to the other social contexts and to the funding body. If we adopt the Luhmannian concept, autopoiesis⁶, we may say that the researcher in a field, and especially in an applied field like higher education research, is part of the higher education system, because he reflects on it and provides intellectual devices for himself and for others in the field for the consideration of its functioning (Luhmann 1989). Without going deeper into systems theory, autopoiesis is a concept to clarify the position of a researcher in the higher education field. In this conceptualization everybody is an insider. The strength of the cultural perspective is to take this position seriously. Accordingly, Tierney (1993, Tierney & Rhoads 1993b) develop concept critical cultural researcher referring both to critical tradition and to postmodern condition in order to emphasize the role of the researcher in empowering the academics in the building of the communities of difference.⁷ Therefore, the use of "objectifying methods" and definitions should be replaced by uncovering the research process and the motives of the researchers.

The questions on nonrational behavior are easily related to problems of relativity. From the positivist viewpoint, the acceptance of relativity means that there are no criteria to judge whether an argument is true or not. Because the search of truth is the moral, ethical and political basis of the science as a social system (Luhmann 1989) this argument aims at saying that relativist perspectives are wrong because

⁵ To name some of the main contributors in the modern debates: feminists (cf. Glazer, Bensimon & Townsend 1993), Niklas Luhman (1989), critical theory, postmodernism (Tierney & Rhoads 1993b) and the discussion on Reflexivity and Modernization (Beck, Giddens & Lash 1994).

⁶Autopoiesis refers to systems "that reproduce all the elementary components out of which they arise by means of a network of those elements themselves and in this way distinguish themselves from an environment. Autopoiesis is the mode of reproduction of these systems" (Luhmann 1989, 143).

⁷ In the social sciences critical cultural researcher could be defined with the help of concepts reflection and reflexivity. However, as Risto Eräsaari (1995) has noted reflexivity easily has the status of a "wonder conception" (ihmekäsiste) - especially in the work of Giddens (1991).

they allow the disobedience of rules that guarantee the search for truth.⁸ There are, however, important distinctions to be made. First, even though the academic world may have contradictory sets of norms and rules it does mean that there are no rules for the search of truth. Inside disciplinary communities there normally exist sets of ethic and moral codes either written or not. Second, the search for different criteria of truths does not mean that the researcher has no personal criterion of truth. The search for different rationalities, different disciplinary or academic cultures is based on the assumption that all academic communities have their own rules concerning the criteria of truth as well. The aim of cultural studies is, in turn, to find the contextual (disciplinary or institutional) criteria of truth. This conviction on the existence of contextual rationalities also is my ethic basis, my personal corner stone of academic moral in the search for truth.

From the rationalist perspective it also could be argued that the cultural approach is not theoretical, because it does not aim at creating a theoretical hypothesis concerning general human behavior. I would say, however, that it is "pretheoretical" in the sense that the interests focus on the values, norms and cognitive assumptions of academic communities. If there is "a theory" in the cultural approach it is not a theory of general human behavior, but a theory of particular human behavior. The rationalist approach in higher education is apparent especially in policy-analysis oriented research, where one of the aims of the research seems to be to create general theories concerning higher education.⁹ I claim that this tendency is based on the assumptions that there are general laws in human behavior, thus following the tradition of Descartes, Locke and Hume (Toulmin 1992). The cultural approach in higher education is, in turn, interested in the "meaning production" of academic communities.

Traditionally the managerial, political and social sciences dealing with higher education institutions have defined the rationality of academic life and the rationality of processes taking place inside higher education institutions from their own generalizing theoretical perspectives. As Foster (1991) has suggested "the functionalist vision of

⁸ According to Toulmin (1992, 86) "Karl Popper's insistence that the criteria of scientific rationality are universal implies that we can decide, here and now, what is "scientific" to consider anywhere and at any time". For a recent example of this line of argumentation see Searle (1995).

⁹ As a recent example, see Goedegebuure & Van Vught (1994). The studies in this "paradigm" easily cover the process of formulating the research hypothesis. In this sense it is contradictory to the qualitative methods where one of the most essential aims of the researcher is to open up the research process (cf. Mäkelä 1990). Thus, despite the rational aims and methodologies of the positivist studies, the reader often feels confused because it is uncertain what the interaction between the research object and the researcher is.

social reality" rules the practical world of the American university management. This seems to describe the situation in Finland as well (cf. Hölttä 1992). According to Foster the "structural-functionalist account of social reality is supported by a positivist approach to social inquiry" (Foster 1991, 123). Despite the critique of MacIntyre (1984) that "a science" of management is a moral fiction as Foster (1991) puts it, the idea of general laws seems to be seducing the minds of some European policy researchers, too. This way, rational tradition is married to the functionalist perspectives of practical management.

What are then the advantages of the higher education cultural approach? First, theoretically the cultural approach challenges the rational tradition by emphasizing the importance of the local, particular and timely nature of the academic communities. In fact, the cultural perspective provides intellectual tools to reveal the simultaneous existence of different social realities of higher education institutions. Second, the aim to contextualize both the object of research and the position of the researcher creates new criteria for critical research and the critical researcher. In the critical cultural approach the researcher cannot hide between objectifying methods and a passive voice (Tierney 1993). Finally, in practical terms, the cultural approach can provide new perspectives for university managers and administrators concerning the functioning of higher education institutions (Tierney & Rhoads 1992). For these reasons, I maintain that the higher education cultural approach both theoretically and practically provides seminal perspectives to a more comprehensive understanding of the academic institutions and academic communities. My wish also is that in this way the higher education cultural approach can contribute to higher education research.

1.4 Two Traditions of the Cultural Approach

The higher education cultural approach is rooted in mainly two different intellectual starting points to analyze the higher education field as cultural entities. I call these studies on *disciplinary cultures* and studies on *institutional cultures*.

Notions of disciplines as cultural entities have been developing in Europe. As I will show, they are rooted in the civilizational anxiety concerning the split in the academic world into two hostile cultures that are not able to communicate with each other. In my study, Tony Becher represents this tradition. The institutional studies tradition is, in turn, rooted in the American intellectual traditions, where cultural concerns

emerge from the institutional level phenomena whether they concern students, faculty (university teachers) or higher education institutions. In my study, William G. Tierney represents this tradition. Despite geographical locations, these categories do not follow geographical areas, because organizational studies have been conducted on both sides of the Atlantic. However, geographical locations indicate that studies focusing on institutional cultures are more popular in the North American context than in the European context. Academically institutional studies are rooted both in sociological and anthropological traditions, whereas the search for disciplinary cultures takes support from other humanist disciplines as well.

The most visible difference between these two categories is revealed by the understanding of culture. According to Tony Becher, the disciplinary-based cultural approach is interested in the interplay between men and ideas. Typically, disciplinary-based understanding of culture is rooted in the academic interests more than in the practical orientations of researchers in order to improve the functioning of higher education institutions. The latter aim is more typical of the institutional culture-approach.

In the studies of institutional cultures the definitions of culture are mainly rooted in the anthropological (semiotic) tradition where culture is one of the most essential organizing concepts. E.g., the Geertzian notion of culture as "webs of significance", where people simultaneously create and exist within culture" (Tierney & Rhoads 1993, 1) does not, in fact, define the concept 'culture' but describes the foundations of cultural understanding. In this sense culture is more like a regulating idea than a methodological device.

In my study the most important matter that separates the studies of disciplinary cultures and institutional cultures is the unit of analysis. Studies of institutional cultures are structured by higher education institutions, whereas the studies of disciplinary cultures skip the institutional level and focus on an individual academic to reconstruct the international disciplinary cultures. With this difference in mind we can make the distinction between internal and external interests of knowledge. The internal interest focuses on the processes taking place inside higher education institutions, whereas the external one is more interested in the cultural dimensions existing outside higher education institutions. Thus, the institutional cultural studies reflect institutionally-based internal interests and aim at reconstructing cultures of locally determined academic communities, whereas the search for disciplinary cultures focuses interest on the external cultural influences through studies of international epistemic traditions.

In the following I will analyze the development of the higher education cultural approach within these two traditions. I will start with

the analysis of C.P. Snow's seminal book *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* and continue with the comparative analysis of sociology of science and cultural perspectives in higher education research. I will conclude with an analysis of disciplinary cultures as presented by Tony Becher in his book on *Academic Tribes and Territories*. In Chapter 3 I will describe the development of the institutional culture-perspective through the studies of students and faculty (university teachers). In Chapter 4 I will analyze the interplay between the studies of organizational cultures and the research of higher education institutions as cultural entities. The theoretical perspectives suggested by William G. Tierney offer illustrative examples on this. In the last chapter I will discuss the possible future avenues for higher education cultural studies.

2 DISCIPLINARY CULTURES

2.1 Disciplinary Cultures Theme in Higher Education

C.P. Snow's *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* is an important starting point in defining the object of cultural studies in higher education. In addition, it has had a wider cultural and academic value in the debates on the nature of academic world consisting of two or more divisions and cultures (Rabinow 1994, Toulmin 1992).

In the following I will read the book from the perspective of the higher education cultural approach. To reflect how Snow has influenced the development of the higher education cultural approach I ask, what did Snow say about the nature of these two cultures? And, how important a theme was "two cultures" actually in the book?

2.1.1 The Two Cultures

C.P. Snow's Rede lecture and the book *The Two Cultures and The Scientific Revolution* awakened and promoted discussion focusing on the cultural dangers of the division in the academic world into two hostile camps not able to communicate with each other. It is remarkable, however, that the debate was based only on a couple of pages in his book. On those pages C.P. Snow claims that literary intellectuals and scientists, or non-scientists and scientists, belong to two different cultures. However, in the discussion inspired by this booklet the literary intellectuals were

understood normally as "humanists" residing inside universities, even though Snow referred to literary intellectuals as representatives of the traditional literary culture as Collini (1993) has emphasized. In this sense the debate was based on misinterpretation, or at least, on overinterpretation.

In his most famous lines Snow wrote

"There have been plenty of days when I have spent the working hours with scientists and then gone off at night with some literary colleagues. I mean that literally. I have had, of course, intimate friends among both scientists and writers. It was through living among these groups and much more, I think, through moving regularly from one to the other back again that I got occupied with the problem of what, long before I put it on paper, I christened to myself as the 'two cultures'. For constantly I felt I was moving among two groups - comparable in intelligence, identical in race, not grossly different in social origin, earning about the same incomes, who had almost ceased to communicate at all, who in intellectual, moral and psychological climate had so little in common that instead of going from Burlington House or South Kensington to Chelsea, one might have crossed an ocean. ... by and large this is a problem of the entire West" (Snow 1959, 2-3).

In his essay Snow does not refer to historical or sociological studies on universities, neither does he refer to statistical information nor to other written sources, but fixes his argumentation on his own experiences.¹⁰ This methodological choice is, however, not a methodological weakness, because the Rede lecture was meant to be a lecture and not a systematic study. It was meant to be provocative as Collini (1993) has argued, and in this sense it was a very successful presentation.

However, the book by Snow (1959) seems to belong to the widely referred but poorly read books in the western intellectual tradition. I maintain this, because the description of the two cultures is like a draft based on his personal observations rather than a description or an analysis of the differences. As a theme the two cultures was, however, essentially important to the structure of the lecture. By showing the two culturally hostile poles in the intellectual life Snow was able to present his ideas on the problems of the western educational system and cultural dangers it causes to western civilization. In the climate of the 'Sputnik shock' Snow claimed that the educational systems in Britain and in the United States must be changed in order to better respond to the needs of the changing world. He demanded that the teaching of science and

¹⁰ Snow was trained as a chemist in the Cambridge University during the early 1930s. His career did not, however, proceed according to plans and after a couple of years as a chemist he managed to change his intellectual field into literacy (Collini 1993).

humanities must be better united in the educational system.¹¹ He further argued that the difference in the intellectual cultures is a hindrance for the development of mankind. In this argumentation Snow saw science as a major contributor to progress and development of the poor countries (Snow 1959). This concern was more a cultural than a political issue for him. As Collini (1993) has pointed out, Snow was not alone with his arguments, but belonged to a larger group of social scientists demanding the transportation of western development to poor countries. Furthermore, as Collini (1993, viii) has emphasized "beyond those pressing and consequential questions, he was asking what Britain's place was to be among the leading countries of the world". Therefore, Snow was not interested in the two cultures as an academic problem but as a cultural danger causing social problems.

From the perspective of higher education research, it is noteworthy that it was mainly this short description of the two cultures that caught attention in the academic world. No wonder that Snow was astonished at the popularity of his arguments concerning the two cultures. Snow assumed that he had happened to touch on a hot issue at a proper moment "a nerve had been touched almost simultaneously in different intellectual societies, in different parts of the world". He also assumed that "these ideas were not at all original, but were waiting in the air", and furthermore, "there must be something in them" (Snow, 1993, 54-55). What is the "something" in them and what was the "in the air"?

According to Collini (1993, ix) in Great Britain, "as a cultural anxiety, concern about the divide between the 'two cultures' essentially dates from the nineteenth century".¹² In this tradition, begun by Sedgwick and continued by Huxley (1893)¹³, the formulation of the "Two Cultures" given by C.P. Snow is a historically developed theme in the British culture. Even though this may be a historical exaggeration, I suggest that the notion of two hostile cultures is supported by the social environment and historical traditions of the British class society and with

¹¹ An example of this effort is provided by Kerr. He describes the motives for founding new universities in California during the 60s (Kerr 1972, 149-150).

¹² This cultural theme was expressed by Adam Sedgwick already in 1833. According to Ashby and Anderson the themes of Adam Sedgwick resemble the themes brought up by C.P. Snow in his famous Rede Lecture, but expressed, however, in "Victorian dress". Namely, Sedgwick argues that "Honourable men - the prime preoccupation of serious dons - were, even in that day, too specialized in their studies, and needed reminding that there was a wide world outside classics and mathematics" (Ashby & Anderson 1969, 19).

¹³ According to Collini T.H. Huxley "denounced the resistance to the claims of scientific education by the defenders of the traditional classical curriculum as, therefore, both unjustified and short-sighted" (Huxley 1893 in Collini 1993, xiv).

its strong hierarchy inside the higher education field between Oxbridge and other higher education institutions. I do not maintain that these elements in the British culture are in causal relationship to the ideas expressed by C.P. Snow, but I wish to say that perhaps this notion easily emerges in an environment where there are both dichotomic differences in society and a tradition of conceptualizing these differences. It is remarkable, however, that the notion of two cultures has had worldwide resonance in the cultural and social concerns of modern society. Furthermore, the reactions and reflections concerning the notion of two cultures clearly showed that Snow had touched the culturally most important issue, and even more: he had described and analyzed a cultural phenomenon that existed but had not yet been defined as a social, educational and cultural problem. It is perhaps because of these new contexts that Snow was able to make visible the cultural division between Humanists and Scientists originating in the tradition of modern science (Toulmin 1992).

Clearly, Snow's book is a landmark in the development of the cultural approach as well, because it promoted intellectual interest in higher education consisting of cultural entities. This understanding of the academic world as consisting of cultural entities with their own socially constructed realities, in turn, leads towards the development of the cultural approach in higher education research. Furthermore, Snow's anthropologically inspired ideas expressed through two cultures have challenged researchers in the field of higher education studies to define and develop this phenomenon. It is no accident that Tony Becher (1987, 1989) refers to Snow in the preface of his book on academic tribes and territories when further developing the dichotomous picture presented by Snow.

2.2 Cultural Perspectives in the Sociology of Science

The other important contribution to the development of cultural understanding of the academic world is originated in the tradition of the sociology of science. I see that the influence has been both direct and indirect. Direct in the sense that conceptualizations like "paradigm" have structured the understanding of knowledge production in the academic world. Indirect influences have affected definitions of the academic world as an object of research and developing the idea that academic disciplines consist of both men and ideas (Merton 1963). Traditionally, sociologists of science have examined empirically the fine details of how scientific

knowledge is socially constructed (Pinch 1990). Becher has, however, criticized especially the Mertonian tradition for its "tendency to lump all scientific disciplines together, rather than to take account of internal differences". He argued furthermore that this tradition puts "emphasis on certain salient features of a scientist's way of life, such as the attribution of excellence, the nature of discovery and the problems associated with establishing priority" (Becher 1987, 173-174).

However, this kind of distinction-making is far too black and white since the present studies in the sociology of science have a rich variety of approaches (cf. Mulkey 1991). Swidler and Arditi (1994, 306)¹⁴ suggest that "newer work in sociology and cultural studies in sociology suggests that formal systems of ideas are linked to broader cultural patterns - what we might think of as social consciousness". According to them (Swidler & Arditi 1994, 306): "The new sociology of knowledge examines how kinds of social organization make whole orderings of knowledge possible, rather than focusing in the first instance on the differing social locations and interests of individuals or groups." Thus the themes defined by Swidler and Arditi: "media and the structure of knowledge", "collective memory", "authority and organization", "power and practices", "identity, boundaries, and difference", "informal knowledge", suggest that the traditional field of the sociology of knowledge has come closer to the sociology of culture (or the sociology of consciousness). Simultaneously, however, the traditional Mertonian sociological themes dealing with power and authority in relation to the production of knowledge have not been forgotten. As Pinch (1990, 298) noted inside the sociology of science "perhaps surprisingly, the issue of disciplinary culture has received little analytical attention". In this sense what has not changed is the difference in the focuses of interest of knowledge between the cultural approach and the sociology of science. In short, sociological traditions in higher education research focus their interests on the social process of knowledge production, whereas cultural studies - especially the study of disciplinary cultures - examine the relationship between men and ideas. I feel that this issue is worthy of a deeper discussion, because difference in goals leads to differences in the studies.

In the research of disciplinary cultures the starting point is the notion of the difference in epistemic structure (Becher 1989) or institutional missions or traditions structuring the social constructions of reality (Tierney 1991, Välimaa 1994). Thus, the aim of cultural studies is to explain and to understand the differences by assuming that culture in

¹⁴ Swidler and Arditi (1994) provide a broad overview on relevant literature concerning recent works in the sociology of science.

academic communities carries the shared social construction of reality. For this reason higher education cultural studies do not pay much attention to the interplay between social structures and knowledge production, but on the interplay between knowledge and the social construction of reality. This concern leads to reflections on the behavior of academics in relation to their conceptions of reality. As a research question, in short, cultural researchers ask "What constitutes reality" (cf. Tierney 1991). Whereas the sociologists of science reflect the relationship between differences in the language, science and society. As Mulkay puts it:

"I have come to see sociology's ultimate task, not as that of reporting neutrally the facts about an objective social world, but as that of engaging actively in the world in order to create a possibility of alternative forms of social life." (Mulkay 1991, xix).

Thus, the aim of the sociology of science, as well as other sociologies, is to reflect the nature of "social": social processes, social structures, and social forms (cf. Österberg 1989). According to Pinch, Whitley (1984) provides an interesting example on how "to describe and classify different disciplines in terms of some sociological ordering principles". For Whitley these "ordering principles" were the treatment of science as a form of work with respect to their dependence and to their degree of task certainty (Pinch 1990). This kind of sociological investigation is, in turn, supported by the intellectual interest in the general social dimensions in the production of knowledge.¹⁵ Cultural studies, in turn, focus interest on the particular forms of knowledge whether it be disciplinary-based or institutionally determined.

The sociology of science has, however, contributed to the development of the cultural approach even though there is no direct link from sociology of science to cultural studies in higher education. Especially the issues raised by Thomas S. Kuhn in his seminal book on the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* has made a major contribution to redefine the important issues in sociological studies.

¹⁵ To take an example, Pinch (1990, 302) maintains that "despite the variety in the culture, certain processes of knowledge construction seem common through the sciences." Without commenting on the validity of this argument, it shows the general interest of knowledge.

2.2.1 Kuhn and the Study of Disciplinary Cultures

Philosophically, as Rorty (1980) and Bernstein (1988) among others have claimed, Kuhn was critical towards the rational tradition in western science, and especially in philosophy, when he argued that scientific revolutions were not caused by rational choice but by social choice:

"As a result, the superiority of one theory to another is something that cannot be proved in the debate. ... instead theory must be chosen for reasons that are ultimately personal and subjective." (Kuhn 1970, 198-199).

And furthermore:

"There is no neutral algorithm for theory-choice, no systematic decision procedure which, properly applied, must lead each individual in the group to the same decision. In this sense it is the community of specialists rather than its individual members that makes the effective decision." (Kuhn 1970, 200).

According to Kuhn the development of science requires both epistemic and social change in the academic communities. In short, Kuhn has treated the development of science as a historical process with social roots.¹⁶ The concept "paradigm" also has been seminal in the way that it has provoked debates on the nature of the interaction between epistemic and social communities. In fact, Paradigm comes close to the concept "disciplinary culture" as defined by Becher (1989) because according to Kuhn

"On the one hand, it [paradigm] stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community. On the other, it denotes one sort of element in that constellation, the concrete puzzle-solutions which, employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science" (Kuhn 1970, 175).

Furthermore, Kuhn defines that "a paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share, *and*, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a paradigm" (Kuhn 1970, 176). From the cultural

¹⁶ Kuhn also has been accused from irrationalism. Without going more deeply into the wide philosophical debates concerning Kuhn and his theories, I refer to Rorty who has argued that this kind of thinking was fiercely opposed by philosophers belonging to the tradition of logical-empiricist philosophy of science (Rorty 1980, 322-330).

perspective, it was important that Kuhn paid attention to the fact that there are no general rules or laws to explain the dynamics of academic communities. In this sense he was asking questions that led Robinson (1985) to define the concept "situational rationality" in order to criticize the traditional way to define the rules of rationality from theory and then applying it to the analysis of social situations. When these kinds of deductive methods are used, human behavior normally appears to be irrational. A seminal starting point for the development of cultural argumentation was also the Kuhnian notion on the interplay between epistemic and social structures of the academic world. This idea has been adopted by Becher when he has developed the theory of disciplinary cultures. In this sense Becher belongs to the tradition of sociological studies of the academic world. There is also another link from Kuhn to Becher. Namely, Kuhn's ideas of paradigmatic and pre-paradigmatic disciplines with their different social coherences prepared way for the studies of the academic world as consisting of disciplinary-based communities (Kuhn 1970). Lodahl and Gordon (1972) noted significant differences in the opinions between physics, chemistry, sociology and political science (Becher 1987b).

To reveal this connection in a more detailed way I will describe the study of Anthony Biglan, who empirically developed dichotomies hard and soft, pure and applied, with the help of Kuhn's theories. These results have strongly influenced the studies of disciplinary cultures (Becher 1989).

2.2.2 Paradigm and Disciplines

Referring to the Kuhnian framework the author carried out one of the first empirical studies to examine the ways in which subject matter characteristics require particular forms in academic activities at basic units. On the basis of an empirical study on American academics (N=222) Biglan introduced three characteristics of academic subject matter that separate the academic departments. First, according to Biglan the dimension between "hard and soft" sciences provides a clear distinction between departments. Engineering and agriculture represented "hard" disciplines as compared to social sciences, education and humanities as "soft" sciences. The research outcomes showed that there are, indeed, differences according to disciplines. Pure - applied dichotomy between disciplines was also supported by the data collected from the American academics. According to Biglan "this dimension also appears to be used by scholars regardless of the kind of institution they are associated with"

(1973, 202). The third dimension introduced by Biglan was the distinction into biological and social sciences and those that deal with inanimate objects. Biglan called these "life" and "non-life sciences".

The categories Biglan used were mainly borrowed from the studies in the field of sociology of science. First, the dichotomy between "hard" and "soft" disciplines was developed from Kuhn's theory on paradigmatic and nonparadigmatic sciences. Normally, "hard sciences" were paradigmatic, whereas "soft sciences" were in the pre-paradigmatic phase of their development. Second, the dichotomy between useful disciplines (applied) and disciplines that are not applicable to practice (pure) has been developed by Merton (1963, 620-627) who defined the natural sciences as consisting of "pure" (no practical applications) and "science related to socio-economic needs" (applied).

Referring to Kuhnian concepts Biglan analyzed which of the disciplines were paradigmatic, i.e. "characterized by greater consensus about content and method than will field lacking paradigm" (Biglan 1973, 202). According to Biglan the research outcomes supported the idea of paradigm presented by Kuhn in the way that engineering and agriculture can be defined as paradigmatic fields with strong consensus on the research methodologies and contest of research. Education and humanities are not paradigmatic disciplines, because they lack these dimensions. Thus, theoretically the value of the Kuhnian term paradigm proved significant to Biglan when he studied academics in different disciplinary fields. Furthermore, by using the term paradigm Biglan was able to connect his outcomes to the general discussion on the nature of academic activities. However, despite the fact that his research outcomes did not fit well with the Kuhnian theories on the development of paradigm in different disciplines, he did not develop this contradiction any further than the level of notions "Kuhn (1962) has shown how changes in scientific theory can be understood as a process of cognitive reorganization on the part of people in the field. ... The present analysis provides a systematic framework for exploring the role of cognitive processes in academic fields" (Biglan 1973, 202). Biglan did not say the most evident fact, i.e. that the dichotomy into paradigmatic and pre-paradigmatic sciences does not fit with his observations. Instead, Biglan notes that "[Hard-soft] dimension appears to provide one kind of empirical support for Kuhn's analysis of paradigm" (Biglan 1973, 201).

As has been discussed (Lakatos & Musgrave 1970) it is questionable whether Kuhn's theories are applicable to other disciplines. The concept paradigm also has been a confusing experience since it refers simultaneously both to epistemic communities and to social communities

without a clear idea on the differences of these two.¹⁷ From this perspective the concept disciplinary culture as introduced by Tony Becher (1987) manages to define the interplay between social and epistemic traditions in a more elaborate way. As noted by Becher (1989) the empirical notions on differences according to disciplinary borders was a significant starting point for taking seriously the disciplinary-based notions of difference. Biglan's was an essential empirical contribution in this argumentation.

It is theoretically interesting that especially the studies of disciplinary cultures have been influenced by the Kuhnian notions on paradigm in two ways. First, theoretically, the Kuhnian notions on paradigmatic and pre-paradigmatic disciplines has challenged Becher to define the social dimensions of academic communities in a more detailed manner. Second, Biglan's research outcomes contributed to seeing disciplinary cultures as a social phenomenon existing in the academic world.

2.3 Academic Tribes and Disciplinary Cultures

In addition to Biglan's studies the definitions of disciplinary-based differences of academics were noted by Gaff and Wilson during the early 1970s. Gaff and Wilson (1971) noted that problems in organizing interdisciplinary teaching were partly caused by disciplinary-based differences. On the basis of their empirical research they maintained that opinions on both social issues, lifestyles and educational values varied according to faculty cultures. They found four faculty cultures among academics: humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and professional-applied fields (Gaff & Wilson 1975, Chapter 6). However, they did not develop further their empirical findings towards the study of disciplinary cultures, because they were interested in "overcoming the cultural barriers" to improve interdisciplinary teaching. For them disciplinary cultures were not a research issue, but a hindrance to applying interdisciplinary studies in higher education institutions.

Thus, despite the notions of disciplinary-based differences of the academics concerning various social and political as well as academic and practical issues (Huber 1990) the topic "Disciplinary Cultures" has been

¹⁷ The concept "paradigm" does not seem to provide clear advantages as an intellectual device for practical research because of its unclarity. The confusion is supported by Kuhn himself who gives it no less than 21 senses (Masterman 1970).

developed mainly by Tony Becher (Becher 1981, 1987, 1987b, 1987c, 1989).

The moral goal of the study of disciplinary cultures is basically a cultural theme motivated by a concern for the future of western culture. As Becher states "by understanding the parts and acknowledging their particularity one can better understand the whole" (Becher 1987, 298). And furthermore, this understanding as a "counter-culture of specialization" may have practical dimensions for academics because "at a time when institutions of higher education in many countries are facing strong external pressures in one form or another, it becomes the more important to generate some overriding sense of academic unity in the endeavour to retain a measure of collective independence" (Becher 1990, 345). Furthermore, intellectually the studies of Tony Becher are a reaction to the theses presented by C.P. Snow. Namely, Becher wrote that

"It is my conviction at the time [in the 1950s], however, and has been ever since, that Snow's sharp division between the worlds of science and humanities was both damaging and misleading. I have to admit myself a long-standing, if not altogether laudable, desire to vindicate my dismissive decision about his Rede Lecture" (Becher 1987, 165).

The interest in disciplinary cultures focuses on the interplay between intellectual and social structures in the academic world. Through the search for particular rationalities based on disciplinary-based traditions, the search for disciplinary cultures is grounded in the tradition of humanist reasoning of the world.

Becher's most important theoretical assumption is that academic communities are both epistemological and social communities. The central thesis in his main book *Academic Tribes and Territories* (Becher 1989) is to analyze the relationship between (academic) people and (disciplinary) ideas. Becher analyzes the epistemic differences in the academic world with the help of the categories, focus of knowledge and structure of knowledge. According to Becher "there is an important set of contrasts between activities that seek to establish general propositions and those that have to do with particularities" (Becher 1987, 186). If we believe in Toulmin (1992) this distinction repeats the general distinction of the modern western science between the humanist tradition and the rationalist tradition. Furthermore, according to Becher, another important dichotomy can be found in the distinction between search for simplicity and those who embrace complexity. Thus, the intellectual task of the "simplicity disciplines" is to show how simple a phenomenon is. Physicists normally face this problem, whereas historians normally say that things are more complex than they seem. Becher provides also a third polarity to support his argumentation. Namely, the distinction between academics that are characterized by their search for uniformity as compared to the academics

exploring diversity. These differences in the properties attributed to knowledge are, in turn, related to differences in the methods and techniques of research. Furthermore, this issue is related to the structures of academic work in the way that some disciplines (normally sciences) prefer team work, whereas "human sciences" find it natural that academics work alone: "the historian is an individual, lonely scholar", as Becher cites (1987, 191).

The central analytical device to analyze the differences between knowledge is to make a distinction between *hard, pure, soft* and *applied knowledge*.¹⁸ With the help of these dimensions Becher is able to classify disciplines into four categories: hard pure, hard applied, soft pure, soft applied. A typical hard pure science is physics with a relatively steady cumulative growth of knowledge. This domain favored normally by natural sciences is labelled by the clarity of the criteria "for establishing or refuting claims to new knowledge. Major claims, if accepted, are regarded as discoveries, and may result in novel types of explanation" as Becher (1989, 13) puts it. The image of soft pure knowledge (normally sociology) can be described by the "lack of consensus about, what constitutes an authentic contribution to a particular field. Widely recognized contributions commonly take the form of interpretations, resulting in an enhanced insight into, or an understanding of, familiar objects of knowledge" (Becher 1989, 13). The differences between these knowledge fields can be described further with the help of opposing analysis and synthesis. Thus natural sciences normally use the method of breaking down complex ideas into simpler components, whereas in humanities this method is hardly applicable. "In the soft pure domain, complexity is regarded as a legitimate aspect of knowledge, to be recognized and appreciated as a holistic feature rather than served as a candidate for reductionism" as Becher (1989, 14) maintains. Quite naturally, causal explanations are easier in hard pure disciplines, whereas in soft pure disciplines "data demand complex forms of reasoning in which judgement and persuasion play a more prominent role" (Becher 1989,14). For these reasons the distinction between the impersonal, value-free nature of scientific knowledge and the personal, value-laden nature of knowledge in humanities and social sciences forms another relevant demarcation line between these academic domains (Becher 1989, 14-15).

¹⁸ As Becher notes, the distinction is based on the research of Biglan (1973) examining the characteristics of subject matter in different scientific areas. Also David Kolb's studies (1981) have supported this distinction according to the nature of knowledge in different disciplines. Another line of reasoning has been developed by Dressel and Marcus (1982). According to Lattuca and Stark (1995, 319) Dressel and Marcus described a discipline as a systematic way of organizing and studying phenomena that consist of five components: the substantive, linguistic, syntactical, value, and conjunctive component.

In hard applied disciplines - like engineering - the nature of knowledge is based on trial-and-error approaches. The knowledge is not necessarily cumulative because building a bridge over one river does not inevitably give the sufficient information for building a bridge over another. Becher has described the aim of these disciplines as "mastering the physical world, the activities to which they give rise are typically directed towards some practical end and judged by the effectiveness with which they work" (Becher 1989,15).

The soft applied disciplines - like education and social administration - aim at understanding and mastering the human world. The knowledge is rooted in the frequently reformulated interpretations of the humanities and social sciences.

Reading these descriptions with a critical eye it seems that Becher is suggesting "ideal types" of academic disciplines based on their epistemic structures. In research practices these kinds of ideal types may cause problems if they are not used as hermeneutic devices, but as a basis for empirical categories.¹⁹ Theoretically, the use of disciplinary cultures as an empirical category is contradictory to the aims of the humanist tradition because it focuses attention to the general dimensions of academic disciplines at the cost of particular and local dimensions of academic communities. However, these descriptions can be used as hermeneutic devices to reveal the differences in the nature of problems as Becher has maintained.

As to social dimensions, Becher makes the distinction between rural and urban modes of research containing different patterns of communication and publishing the research outcomes. Urban researchers (normally physicists) travel a lot, work in international research teams and have large networks of colleagues. They publish their research in short articles as fast as possible. The rural researchers (normally historians or sociologists) do not attend many international congresses because they prefer working at their own universities. They write extensive articles or publish books. Thus, the time of publication may take several months or even years (Becher 1989, chapter 5).

In addition, as to the social dimensions of academic tribes, Becher maintains that the disciplines can be analyzed as socially convergent or divergent disciplinary communities. This assumption is basically related to the work of Kuhn (1970). Namely, Kuhn assumes that there are social differences between paradigmatic and pre-paradigmatic disciplines. According to Lodahl and Gordon (1972) all hard disciplines are

¹⁹ Articles of Moses (1990) and Stark, Lowther, Bentley & Martens (1990) reveal the problems related to an approach where disciplinary cultures are used as empirical categories and not as hermeneutic devices. On the nature of ideal types as hermeneutic devices see also Sadri (1992).

convergent and all soft disciplines are divergent. Becher develops this "misleading simplification" by including both soft and hard disciplines in both social categories. Becher aims at developing it further by bringing more variety into these categories. Thus, Becher maintains that physics, mathematics, economics and history represent convergent disciplines even though they do belong to soft and hard science. Examples of divergent disciplines obey the same logic by consisting of both of hard and soft disciplines. Thus, sociology "a multiparadigm science", geography and pharmacy as "highly multidisciplinary" fields, and mechanical engineering, and modern languages represent socially divergent disciplines. The author has, however, evident difficulties in this task: what to do with chemistry, law and biology? Intellectually it is not satisfying, nor convincing to state that these disciplines occupy "the intermediate ground between the convergent and divergent" academic communities (Becher 1989, 155-157).

I maintain that this is the main theoretical (as well as practical) problem in the approach. It is caused by the aim to unite disciplines according to epistemic and social dimensions. Namely, as Becher states in another paper, the main goal is "to generate an explanatory framework that has something to say about causes and effects" (1987, 177). To my mind, this goal is contradictory in itself. I believe that disciplinary cultures can be used in a seminal way as a heuristic device for analyzing academic communities. It is, indeed, useful to remember that epistemic traditions "the nature of the problem" are related to academic work (individualistic or team work), to funding of research and to patterns of communication (rural vs. urban dimension). However, when we begin to classify the disciplines into these epistemic and social "boxes" we try to use disciplinary cultures as an instrument to create causal relationships between epistemic and social structures. Theoretically, this aim is contradictory to the hermeneutic use of disciplinary cultures. It also violates the contextual interest of the humanist tradition by trying to create general rules for particular behavior. Furthermore, if we build these causal relationships between people and ideas we should take into account the local conditions and traditions that shape the behavior of academic communities in a certain place and time.

According to Becher, the epistemological makeup of disciplines (in essence: disciplinary cultures) may be "shaped by environmental forces". According to Becher these "environmental forces" can be national or institutional contexts, or organizational settings. Becher does, however, consider these environmental forces less important for the analysis of academic disciplinary cultures even though he recognized remarkable differences between American and British academics working in the same disciplinary fields. Thus, American historians, i.e., "are admitted by some of their British counterparts to be methodologically more versatile,

because of their exposure to other disciplinary approaches" (Becher 1984, 180). The same is true with the lawyers as well. These notions do not, however, challenge Becher to reflect the influence of "environmental forces" to the academic behavior surrounded by 'academic shields', disciplinary cultures. Ludwig Huber has criticized this kind of use of disciplinary cultures in isolation from society (Huber 1990). It is, indeed, fruitful to ask, why are the boundaries of the disciplines where they are?

It is quite difficult, e.g., to think that a historian or a chemist living in a university in the United States would face the same practical problems as their colleagues in the present-day Estonia. Also, on the basis of my empirical studies, it is evident that local traditions and experiences have more impact on the academic attitudes and opinions than disciplinary traditions (Välismaa 1994). Especially, when we analyze the use or implementation of an innovation the "external forces" are essentially important. Indeed, it is very problematic to explain the dynamics of academic communities without taking into account the "environmental factors" like society, economics, politics and national cultures. Thus, I argue that it is both theoretically and empirically controversial to use disciplinary cultures as the only explanatory factor of academic behavior.

To my mind this does not, however, signify that we should give up the original question raised and supported by the study of academic cultures as cultural entities. Becher's work alone suffices to show that cultural dimensions have influence on academic behavior and there are, indeed, disciplinary-based differences according to disciplinary boundaries. The study of epistemic and social traditions also reveals the importance of disciplines in defining academic identities. Disciplinary culture is a useful intellectual instrument when used as an intellectual device to analyze the differences between academic disciplines. In fact, we could support this idea by taking seriously into account the "environmental forces" of national, institutional and professional cultures. What is required is more profound discussion on the cultural contexts that influence the behavior of academic communities.

I will return to this issue in the discussion. In order to be able to develop these ideas I will, however, first discuss the tradition that is based on notions of "environmental forces": institutional cultures.

3 INSTITUTIONAL CULTURES AS AN ORGANIZING IDEA

According to Oliver Fulton (1992), the American context for higher education research with its traditions of institutional research has influence on the understanding of higher education research as a practically-oriented and institutionally-based academic activity. According to Fulton (1992, 1811)

"Universities and colleges, operating in a competitive framework in which their status and even their survival depend on their ability to attract students and to recruit and retain staff have long needed to collect information with which to assess and promote their position in these two markets, and to match it to a distinctive institutional mission."

According to Dressel and Mayhew (1974, 7) practical policy interests

"undergirded work at the University of Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s when such men as Floyd W. Reeves, A.J. Brumbaugh, and John Dale Russell examined various higher education institutional practices as a basis for establishing principles of administration or finance. Closely associated ideologically with these activities was the evolution of institutional research as a way of better understanding how individual institutions function."

The institutionally-based research conducted at the offices of institutional research has provided

"both direction for the study of higher education and empirical evidence upon which some of its generalizations could be based (Dressel & Mayhew 1974, 8)

I suggest that the practical orientation and institutionally-based studies have influenced the American understanding of higher education as consisting of higher education institutions. Furthermore, as Dressel and Mayhew (1974, 9) put it

"the testing, counselling and guidance movements contributed to elements of theory, techniques for empirical study, and a substantial cadre of individuals who found their way into the mainstream of the study of higher education".

As to the higher education cultural approach, the influence of these academic environments and traditions is apparent. A recent example of this understanding is provided by Bérubé and Nelson (1995). The authors describe the difficulties in defining what is the real picture of teaching in the American universities by referring to the variety of disciplinary-based differences. According to them

"ignorance [on disciplinary-based differences] begins on campuses themselves, where humanities and science faculty generally have no notion of one another's responsibilities. This ignorance then extends to legislators, parents, and alumni, very few of whom are informed about discipline-based teaching loads" (Bérubé & Nelson 1995, 10).²⁰

However, the authors conclude, that "among the things increasingly lost in this debate is public awareness of the institutional diversity of colleges and universities" (Bérubé & Nelson 1995, 12). It is remarkable that the authors see no contradiction in describing first disciplinary-based differences and after that concluding that there are differences between institutions. In the American context this seems to be a rational argumentation even though from the perspective of disciplinary cultures this would be a contradictory conclusion. What I wish to say is that there seems to be a basic difference in the understanding of what is the cultural dimension in higher education between the studies of disciplinary cultures and institutionally based cultures. Therefore, the American understanding more easily begins the analysis with institutions, whereas the studies of disciplinary cultures treat disciplines as natural units of analysis. E.g., Lincoln (1991, 21) paid attention to the institutional issues in her analysis of literature concerning leadership in colleges and college

²⁰ This quotation does not describe a pure research article, because it is intentionally polemic. However, for me it reflects a common cultural understanding of the American higher education.

students.²¹

In the following I will reflect on the development of cultural studies in the American context asking what their focus of interest is and how it interplays with their disciplinary traditions. I will proceed historically starting with the analysis of the studies of student cultures in the American colleges that have contributed to the development of cultural perspectives, and continue then with the analysis of faculty cultures.

3.1 Student Cultures

In the American context general social interest in college education took place during the 30s. According to Tyler (1963) the studies of adolescents were contributed by the Great Depression "which highlighted serious problems of American youth. Jobs for young people were very scarce, and they were remaining longer in school". This situation, in turn, created problems for schools which were not prepared for the variety of different students (Tyler 1963, 3-4). Thus, practical problems and interests at local level contributed to the refinement of intellectual tools for examining the behavior of students as research objects as well. Following this trend, Newcomb among others examined students during the 1940s thus strengthening and creating the academic interest in the student subcultures that flourished from the 1950s onwards. Becher (1987, 172) also noted that the cultures of university and college students have been "well served by research".²² Well-known studies were Howard Becker's *Boys in White* (1961), a study of student life in a medical school, and *Making the Grade* (1968) that concentrated on the academic side of college life.

I will mainly concentrate on the article *Student Culture* where Becker analyzes their understanding of student cultures. According to Becker when they speak of student cultures

"we refer to a set of understandings shared by students and a set of actions congruent with those understandings. Student culture, on this view, is a

²¹ According to Lincoln (1991, 18) "they are important areas because both leadership and student attrition/retention interact with other policy areas".

²² Becher (1987) contains a consistent bibliography of the relevant literature concerning the studies of student cultures. In Finland, Aittola (1992) reveals the latest developments from the perspective of the sociology of education.

shared way of looking at one's world and acting in it (Becker 1963, 12).

Culture in this context has been understood as "a set of perspectives on one's situation". When adding the qualifying adjective student to this definition of culture Becher argues that

"we mean to indicate that the understandings and actions grow up around the student's role as a student - they are specific to the student role. By focusing on the student role we imply that other roles students have in other areas of their life are not of major importance to their activities as students. That is, we do not expect that the latent identities or roles of students - such as roles as members of a particular social class, for instance - will have as much to do with student behavior as will factors that are immediately and directly associated with the role of the student" (Becker 1963, 13).

In short, this definition excludes social, economic and political environments because they do not consider other roles students may have in "other areas of their life". To my mind this is an important exclusion, because it implies that social environments have influence on the students even though the aim of the study is not to examine it. Thus, the exclusion is theoretically and methodically important in order to restrict the object of research. Furthermore, the exclusion goes well with the generalizing tendencies in the rational tradition and that of sociology by focusing attention into roles. Therefore this study seems to be based on the idea that student cultures can be understood as isolated cultural entities. From an anthropological perspective this idea could be criticized as one leaving the most important tension fields (social, economic and geographic environments) without attention. Furthermore, it could be stated that they were only interested in the values of white middle-class boys. In their article on student culture and academic effort Hughes, Becker and Geer maintained that student cultures have at least two functions:

"... that of providing a means of accommodation for the students to the difficulties of school life, and that of providing the basis for redirection of effort on the student's part, possibly in defiance of faculty standards and ideals" (Hughes, Becker & Geer 1963).

In short, they saw culture as a factor that helps to socialize students into student life and into their institutions as students. Despite the fact that Howard Becker et al. applied anthropological methods to their sociological studies as Becher (1987, 172) has noted, their studies of student cultures thematically belong to the tradition of sociological studies

because of their focuses of interest.²³

During the 1960s one of the most cited investigations on student cultures was published by Clark and Trow (1966). In the article "the organizational context" Clark and Trow defined four different student cultures that could be found on most American campuses during the 1960s: *collegiate culture, vocational culture, academic culture, and nonconformist culture* (Clark & Trow 1966). By defining different student cultures Clark and Trow wanted to develop a heuristic device for understanding the differences among student populations. I argue, however, that the most interesting notions in this study are not the descriptions of these student cultures, but the description of how can these cultural categories be used and misused in colleges and universities. Basically, the issues of student cultures emerge from the interaction between students and their institutions. Clark and Trow wrote

"we would not like to encourage the game of naming subcultures and then pigeonholing individuals, groups of students, or colleges. Rather, we think of this typology as a heuristic device for getting at the processes by which social structures shape student styles of life in different kinds of colleges" (Clark & Trow 1966, 20).

This statement can be interpreted at least in two ways. First, practically oriented persons, normally managers and administrators, tend to use all categories instrumentally to support decision-making even when researchers suggest them as heuristic devices. Second, categories of student cultures already had been used in the "pigeonholing game" or they would probably have been used in this way. It is evident that besides academic interests in student cultures the other source of curiosity was rooted in the practical management of the institutions where culture is understood as a functional variable. In this sense the study of student cultures has attempted to serve both the instrumental interests of the university and college managers as well as academic interests to understand the variety of the students.

From the European perspective, however, the interest in student cultures is a phenomenon supported by the American market-driven higher education system, where the competition of students is vitally important for the institutions: they bring money. On the one hand, in this social context general social and practical interests seem to have influenced the research interests. Thus, these studies provide examples that reveal the interplay between practical interests of society and those of higher education institutions with the theoretical interests of the higher

²³ Tierney (1992) has shown that the adoption of some anthropological concepts does not make anthropological studies.

education researchers. This kind of interplay describes more the dynamics of the American research environment than that of the European one. Thus, on the other hand, in the American context it seems both institutionally, nationally and academically essential to ask: What are the impacts of colleges to the change and development of the students. As Sanford (1963, 10) asked: do our colleges educate? Furthermore, the local and practical interest aimed at answering the question Chickering (1969) presented: how can knowledge of student cultures contribute to the management of higher education institutions? In short, the notions of student cultures emerged in an environment where it has been both practically and scholarly challenging to define and analyze visible differences of the student populations.

3.1.1 Student Culture at Vassar

In addition to sociological approaches, student cultures have been studied from the anthropological perspective as well. The study of Student Culture in Vassar by Bushnell belongs to the famous examples in this tradition.

Bushnell starts his story by describing the student population. Despite the fact that Vassar is a rich girls' college "wealth differences play a surprisingly small role in student life on campus". According to Bushnell this is caused by the lack of signs of social status (no cars admitted in campus) and by similar dressing (Bushnell 1963, 490). Bushnell continues by characterizing the physical environment of the Vassar students, and especially the role of the Residence Hall in directing the social activities of the students. The author also describes the academic and extracurricular activities. Surprisingly, the description of daily, weekly and yearly cycles of the student life is structured by the use of student's time and not in relation to courses, classes or the structure of curricula. In addition, the yearly cycle is described with the help of rituals that are related to the academic year and not only steered by faculty or college administration.

"The late spring is highlighted by Salve Night (pronounced "solway"), a ceremony which confers senior status to the junior class. Salve Night actually starts in the late afternoon with a college assembly which includes a transfer of symbols - a gavel to the incoming president of the College Government Association and a spade (the one used by Matthew Vassar to turn the first earth for Vassar Female College a century ago) to the Senior Class President -and a singing of the Salve marching song by

seniors only, a prerogative of the graduating class. All others clap in rhythm. At a given point, however, next year's seniors pick up the song, changing, for example, "Salve 1957" to "Salve 1958", and at this moment the juniors have achieved senior standing. The ritual is followed by a picnic on the campus with beer permitted." (Bushnell 1963, 502).

Bushnell also analyses the values and processes of peer groups. He notes that "the role of the student peer group is of fundamental significance in determining the course of event in the college experience" (Bushnell 1963, 510). Roommates are an essential concept to analyze the social grouping of the students living in the dormitory.

"The strength of the immediate group is probably best demonstrated in those instances when a girl slumps into severe and sometimes protected depression. The loyalty and encouragement of roommates and other close friends is often the factor that enables the student to survive, that is, to stay on as a student while weathering a troublesome phase." (Bushnell 1963, 505).

In this charming description of students living at Vassar, the anthropological concepts of time and place are essentially important (cf. Tierney 1988). Time is structured by the students' use of time and by the cycles that structure the life of students living at Vassar. Time is not calculated, time is sensed. Place, in turn, structures the social activities through the Residence Hall and dormitories. Social life of the students is thus described in its physical and temporal context. The excuse for students to live on campus, studying, is only one of the activities they participate in.

What is the role of culture in this story? Bushnell does not define the concept "culture" but uses it as an environment consisting of social and physical environments and students acting in them. For him culture is a regulative idea more than a methodological device. Interestingly, Bushnell discusses colleges as places where two societies, i.e., those of students and faculty meet. He also suggests that "campus provides a culture-contact situation". Anthropologically,

"whenever two societies are in contact the process known as acculturation is also under way, i.e., there is an interchange of cultural elements (language, ideas, artifacts), even in those instances where a strong antagonism exists" (Bushnell 1963, 510).

The other important anthropological concept introduced by Bushnell is enculturation.

"The learning which takes place among students is, in terms of cultural dynamics, enculturative by nature. Enculturation, the acquisition of one's own culture, is at the college level a continuation of the socialization process formerly in the hands of the family and play group and now mediated by friendship units, campus organizations etc." (Bushnell 1963, 512).

By using Vassar as an example Bushnell discusses the nature of these anthropological categories in relation to higher education in general. He concludes by stating "hopefully, the concept of two cultures on the campus with their potentials for conflict and congruence will facilitate the task of analyzing contemporary processes and perhaps predicting and directing future trends in our colleges and universities" (Bushnell 1963, 513).

It is striking that the studies of "the other culture", that of faculty remained scarce before the 1970s and 1980s especially in comparison to the study of student cultures. In the following I will continue with the theme of faculty cultures to reveal the categories that were developed to examine faculty (in Europe: university teachers) from cultural perspective.

3.2 Cultures among University Teachers

In the following I will refer to the American definition of the concept faculty. In this definition faculty refers to American university and college teachers, mainly professors. It does not signify the administrative entity in the European sense of the word. In the European context a university teacher is synonymous to faculty, whereas the European word "faculty" signifies the school level in the American higher education institutions.

3.2.1. Faculty Cultures

Burton Clark was among the first to examine faculty cultures by defining the dimensions along which faculty values vary. He made the distinctions according to loyalty to the college, orientation toward work, and modes of thought. Consequently, Clark defined three dichotomies: local versus cosmopolitan academics, pure versus applied research, and humanistic versus scientific modes of thought.

Following the suggestions of Gouldner (1957, 1958) Clark defined

local vs. cosmopolitan as a dimension to describe the commitment and loyalty to the institution. Accordingly, faculty is primarily committed to his college (local) or to the world outside the college (cosmopolitan). In this distinction, the local is loyal to the campus, whereas cosmopolitan counts for the professional or disciplinary peers. Local is a "company man", whereas Cosmopolitan is an "itinerant expert".²⁴ The second dimension describes largely the social definition based on people and work. The distinction between abstract study versus practice, the pure versus the applied, describes the sense of difference these groups feel towards each other. "To say that these respective parties have a sense of difference, hold to different values, and associate in different circles would be putting it mildly for many campuses" (Clark 1963, 42). Interestingly, the third dimension to describe faculty cultures is a "foreign loan" from C.P. Snow: humanistic modes of thought as compared to scientific ones. For Clark, however, this dimension revealed the competitive sectors on campus but not the disciplinary-based identities or disciplinary-based cultural entities.

By uniting these differences Clark created four sociological types of academics: *the teacher* is identified with his college; *the scholar-researcher* is a cosmopolitan; *the demonstrator* is a non-mobile professional; and *the consultant* is the big-time professional man. Clark also noted that both the work and the points of view are commonly connotated in higher education by the term "discipline" (Clark 1963, 53). However, in his study Clark did not define similarities and/or differences according to disciplinary borders. According to him "the array of these orientations on campuses" were determined by: 1) the role of the college; 2) the objective interests of the faculty, induced partly by the role of the college and partly by the structure of rewards of the academic profession; 3) and the scale and autonomy of the college. In short, Clark suggested strongly that colleges and universities as organizations and as social environments shape the differences of faculty subcultures. In addition, he suggested that professional values and disciplinary traditions also have influence on the array of faculty subcultures. In the conclusion Clark even argued that

"disciplines exist as separate estates, with distinctive subcultures, and are coordinated by the impersonal means of large organization. To understand faculty culture on the larger campuses, we must, in all likelihood, let go of the ideas of community and unified culture, and instead focus on the departments and the array of disciplinary subcultures that today split the faculty." (Clark 1963, 54)

²⁴ This Mertonian concept as introduced by Gouldner (1957) into higher education research belongs to one of the most referred concepts in the study of academic professions (see Becher 1987b, Clark 1987b).

The paper did not, however, provoke further research interests in the differences of institutional faculty cultures, or in the disciplinary-based differences inside the academic world, or in the interplay of these two dimensions, even though it clearly contained building blocks for both of these approaches. Namely, the distinction between pure versus applied and humanist versus scientific is almost identical with the dimension introduced by Tony Becher (1989) 26 years later with the important distinction that Becher combined modes of thought and structures of knowledge in order to describe disciplinary cultures. Why did this not take place earlier? Historically speaking this is an impossible or even an irrational question. However, to develop my arguments, I will try to answer the question.

I suggest that in this case the disciplinary-based and institutionally-oriented approaches did not reach a common starting point because of the conflict in the interest of knowledge. It seems to me that the generalizing interest of sociological knowledge focused attention to the generalizing concepts leaving aside the conceptualization that emphasizes particular and individual differences of academics.²⁵ It is perhaps due to this difference that the profound notions concerning institutional and disciplinary-based dimensions of faculty sub-cultures noted by Clark did not start to develop towards cultural analysis, but towards characterization of behavior in different institutional and professional settings.

This theme is, in fact, related to the studies of the academic profession, an issue related to the study of faculty and institutional cultures. However, there is no direct link between the studies of faculty cultures and those of the academic profession before Burton Clark's studies in the 1980s. In the following I will concentrate on the studies of university teachers. Thus, I will not refer to the sociological tradition where the concept profession and professional are theoretically rooted in the works of Weber and Durkheim.

3.2.2 Academic Profession and University Teachers

According to Anderson and Murray (1971) Logan Wilson's *The Academic*

²⁵ As to higher education research, sociological studies easily focus attention to social relationship between a person and an institution. "Type" can be taken as example of this kind of sociological conceptualization. Naturally, by using the concept "type" the interest of knowledge focuses on general social behavior and not on individual and particular ways of thinking.

Man (1942) "offered a rather well-developed profile of the professor as a social type, although much outdated, remains as the only attempt at a comprehensive treatment of the academician in the institutional setting" (Anderson & Murray 1971, 5). Quite easily, the aim of the traditional sociological studies of university teachers has aimed at defining the academic man as a social type (Anderson & Murray 1971). In these studies academic personality has easily been seen in relation to work. Thus, the issue easily focuses on the question of the academic work being as a job, as income, as leisure, as alienation, as a community, or as political responsibility (Anderson & Murray 1971). In a word, academic work has been traditionally defined as a homogeneous profession defined with different sociological categories. As an example of this kind of a sociological tradition is provided by Halsey and Trow (1971) in their study on *The British Academics*. Their main attention was "to provide a sociological portrait of the academic professions" and they ended with a typology of orientations: elitist researchers and elitist teachers as opposed by expansionist researchers and expansionist teachers (Halsey & Trow 1971). Remarkable for this study, and many others, is the neglect of disciplinary-based differences.

This is not, however, a complete picture of the studies dealing with the academic profession. Burton Clark and others (1987, 1987b) have paid attention to the various dimensions of academic life that shape the self-understanding of academics as professionals. Clark has also introduced the epistemic dimension to be considered when studying academics as I have shown in the above. As to the disciplinary-based differences among American academics Clark maintains that "the academic culture is probably fragmented into a thousand and one parts defined by the crosscut of many disciplines and in many types of institutions" (Clark 1987b, 105).²⁶ According to Clark

"in understanding the culture of the profession, the places with which to start in American academia are not father's income or mother's education or church in which one was raised but immediate disciplinary and institutional locations. ... it is most important to know whether individuals teach in community colleges or in small leading liberal arts colleges or in research universities. Discipline and sector are intrinsic, deeply structured into the system" (Clark 1987b, 108).

Inside all these different dimension and environments it is, indeed, important to ask "is there anything left, any ties that somehow connects the many parts to the whole?" (Clark 1987b, 141). In order to analyze the

²⁶ Ruscio (1987, 331) also noted that both the discipline and institution link the individual to the profession.

variety Clark refers to the processes of fragmentation and integration. According to Clark the differentiation can be treated as a fact. The forces of integration, however, are much harder to prove empirically. Clark argues that

"Integration in American academia comes primarily not from similarity of function, nor from common acquired values, nor from united membership in a grand corps. In a powerfully pluralist fashion, it comes from incremental overlap of narrow memberships and specific identities, with disciplines and institutions serving culturally as mediating institutions that tie individuals and small groups into the enclosure of the whole" (Clark 1987b, 144).

Without denying the power of this kind of reasoning, it should, however, be noted that this kind of argumentation is rooted in the sociological tradition where the problems of modernity were seen in the increase of differentiation of the modern society (cf. Collins 1994, Noro 1991). The issues of fragmentation and integration are central themes in sociology. However, it is problematic to take it as an organizing principle to study academic cultures, because the culture of a profession is a conceptual construction based on the idea that there is a "professional culture" behind all the variations. It could be asked, do we really need this kind of generalizing assumption: whom does it serve? And furthermore, is integration versus differentiation a really important dichotomy in the analysis of the culture of a profession, or should we define other factors to examine the dimensions of an academic profession? By this I wish to suggest that in this case the sociological tradition may have had more influence on the process of analysis than respect for the cultural variety of higher education institutions and academic professions.

In order to illuminate this interplay between the sociological tradition with a generalizing interest of knowledge and the humanist tradition emphasizing the particular dimensions of academic life I refer to the work of Richard Startup (1981), *The University Teacher and his World*. In Europe, Startup belongs to the pioneers in raising cultural questions concerning the nature of the academic work of university teachers. For me the interest in the institutional and organizational contexts of academic work is a cultural interest of particularities. Startup formulated his interest in the interplay between teachers' role and the organisation as follows:

"Given the interdependence between role and organisation, initial consideration is appropriately given to the character and functions of the university itself and this then leads to an examination of the university teacher's occupation" (Startup 1981, 1).

As Becher (1987, 171) notes, the study "edges towards a study of departmental and disciplinary subcultures, in that particular emphasis is given to the similarities and differences of the practices of four departments". Startup analyzed the departments of classics, pure mathematics, civil engineering, and psychology noting significant differences according to different academic tasks (teaching, research, administration, private study, other work within university and work outside university) they carry out.

As to teaching, Startup noted that the opinions and attitudes of academic staff were related to the position of a teacher together with disciplinary backgrounds. The heads of departments had different views from lecturers and other academic staff (Startup 1981, 157-159). As a cultural study, these notions could have raised ideas on the sources of identity in different academic matters. However, this is not the line of reasoning Startup follows. According to Startup the performance of the role depended upon the structure of the department (size and division of labor), the availability of material resources and the utilisation of ideas (Startup 1981, 155-157). For Startup these differences are not caused by disciplinary traditions, but by organizational context. Again, from the perspective of disciplinary cultures it could be argued that the division of labor is strongly related to the disciplinary-based traditions and patterns of work, and to the nature of problem. In addition, the availability of resources as well as the utilisation of ideas are issues clearly related to disciplinary practices. Startup (1981, 156) notes that teaching and research provided spheres "characterized by disciplinary variations". In addition the professional activities (especially the institution of consultancy), "there were striking disciplinary variations". The author does not, however, develop further these cultural notions, but focuses attention to the social forces causing integration and differentiation. In the academic world, "disciplinary ideas so often lead to differentiation", whereas the fundamental role of material resources is integrative as Startup points out (Startup 1981, 157). Thus, the sociological way of asking question produces, naturally, sociological answers: what are the forces causing differentiation or integration? The conclusion Startup draws is revealing: "If disciplinary ideas led so frequently to differentiation in role performance, it was material resources together with certain shared elements of a pedagogical perspective which were an integrative counterweight" (Startup 1981, 157). Thus, the notions of disciplinary-based differences or the value of institutional traditions are replaced by the analysis of social forces causing integration and differentiation. In the sociological tradition this is a relevant question. From the perspective of the disciplinary culture-theme it also opened fruitful perspectives to the interplay between epistemic and social dimensions (Becher 1987). However, the omission of cultural dimensions related to the knowledge

production may cause problems for the analysis as well. Startup provides an example of this as well.

3.2.3. General and Particular Interests in the Studies of Students and Faculty

From the perspective of the disciplinary cultures, the studies of faculty cultures and academic profession raise two problems. First, the sociological categories that have been utilized (like type and role) focus attention on the social dimensions of academic (and student) communities without having paid attention to the epistemic differences that also influence the social behavior of academics (and students). This seems to have been the case both in the studies of student cultures and faculty cultures. The second problem emerges from the first one. Namely, the lack of notions concerning the interplay between epistemic and social dimensions has not focused attention on the value of academic self-understanding, on academic identities, and the role the different disciplinary traditions may have in this process.

Referring to Toulmin (1992), it seems that the general interest of knowledge has guided especially the sociological studies of students and faculty. However, the humanist interest in the local and particular conditions, especially the study of Vassar College, has revealed the importance of institutional cultures. Furthermore, Clark's study on the academic profession has emphasized the importance of the institutional dimension in analyzing academic life. In the following I will continue further with this theme and ask how the institutional cultures have been studied and how they can be defined?

4 DEFINING INSTITUTIONAL CULTURES

As I have tried to show the interest in students and faculty have gained support from institutionally-motivated interests. This does not, of course, mean that the unit of analysis would always have been an institution. What I intend to say is that the focus of interest, especially in the American context, treats an institution as a natural context to explain the differences, whereas in the European tradition the institutions are treated as parts of homogenous national systems in legal terms (Neave 1993). In the U.S. context the notions of differences are based on the institutional differences, it is an institutional issue, whereas in the European context the traditional aim of the higher education policies has been to dissolve the differences (Neave 1993, Kivinen & Rinne 1993). Therefore, the analysis of differences has been started as an academic endeavor related to the disciplinary cultures and unrelated to the practical interest raising from the institutional level.

In the following I will proceed with these ideas in mind in order to map the connections between institutions, cultures and studies of institutional cultures. I will start with the description of organizational cultures even though academically speaking it is a departure from the higher education research field. However, there are three reasons that justify my solution. First, the history of organizational sociology reveals an interaction between society and academic research suggesting that societal demands mediated through business community have influenced the development of academic issues. Second, the development of organizational culture studies reveals the contribution that higher education research has had to the "mother science", sociology. Burton Clark provides examples on this. Third, interest in organizational culture has created both intellectual and practical contexts that have supported the studies of higher education institutions as cultural entities as well.

4.1 Organizational Cultures and Higher Education Research

The interest in the nonrational, implicit and subjective elements of organizations dates back to the founding fathers of sociology and anthropology as Wilkins and Ouchi (1985) have stated. Durkheim suggested that simple symbolic representations of a complex social reality are fundamental in social life. The notion that the symbolic structure of society can be understood through the study of myths and rituals lying under the surface of social life gave a strong impact on the study of organizations. "Finally, Durkheim (1893), like Weber (1968) and Tönnies (1957), drew distinction between the explicit and the implicit features of social life and regarded the study of both as essential" (Wilkins & Ouchi 1985, 463). However, by referring to the Weberian tradition organizational sociology directed attention towards the bureaucratic (rational and explicit) forms of organizations. One of the most fruitful theoretical assumptions, developed by Herbert Simon (1945), was the idea of "bounded rationality". Simon explained that human behavior that appears contrary to organizational aims and goals is, in fact, quite rational if we take into account the limited and imperfect information-processing ability of human beings. This theoretical assumption provided a basis for combining the rational and the nonrational views of organizations.

Besides this sociological tradition aiming at generalizing explanations, the other mainstream of organizational cultures more related to the humanist tradition, has developed inside anthropology, a discipline defined as "the science of man and culture". Especially cultural anthropology organized into disciplines of ethnography, ethnology, social anthropology and linguistics has contributed to the understanding of "hidden" phenomenological and nonrational aspects of culture (Kuh & Whitt 1988, 29-35). In the anthropological tradition the functionalist approach encourages the researcher to consider a group or a society as a whole and to analyze how its practices, beliefs, values and other cultural elements function to uphold social structure.²⁷ The semiotic approach, in turn, focuses on the language and symbols as the principal tools for apprehending the native's perspective. As Ouchi and Wilkins (1984) stated, the studies belonging to the semiotic tradition aim at giving a "thick description" of reality more than creating a precise method for research (Ouchi & Wilkins 1985). The other anthropological tradition, ethnoscientist approach, is, by contrast, willing to see culture as the

²⁷ Two of the most eminent scholars in this approach are said to be Radcliffe-Brown (1952) and Malinowski (1961).

system of standards or rules to perceive, believe and act in order to be able to know how to operate in a manner acceptable to the members of the culture. In this tradition, defined by Goodenough (1971), scholars have developed more accurate methodology than the semiotic approach represented by Geertz. However, as Ouchi and Wilkins (1985, 461) maintain "most scholars currently working in the area of organizational culture refer to Geertz to suggest the need for "thick description", it appears that those who engage in empirical work instead use some variant of the methods suggested by Goodenough".

A seminal question from the perspective of higher education research is to reflect on what caused the erosion and abandonment of the rational organizational sociology approach? Referring to Ouchi and Wilkins (1985), the crisis in the field of organizational sociology emerged from both academic and social frustrations. They see basically three reasons for the shift of interest from rational to nonrational elements in organizations. First, the academic frustration was based on notions that the organizations cannot be analyzed as purely rational entities, and not even as "bounded rational" organizations. Second, beside the mainstream of academic studies new ideas had been developed to describe and analyze the non-rational elements of organizations. These investigations prepared the academic audience to see the problems of the rational approach. One of the landmarks in this tradition was Burton Clark's study (1970) *"The Distinctive College: Antioch, Reed and Swarthmore"*, where he examined the organizational saga of these institutions. According to Clark the concept "organizational saga" describes how the academics in a given institution develop stories that help them to create and maintain a sense of unity and institutional identity (Clark 1970). Clark defined organizational saga as a "unified set of publicly expressed beliefs about the formal group that (a) is rooted in history, (b) claims unique accomplishment, and (c) is held with sentiment by the group" (Clark 1972, 179). Furthermore, "the study of organizational sagas highlights nonstructural and nonrational dimensions of organizational life and achievement" (Clark 1972, 178). The use of this concept in research literature outside higher education research also provides an example of how higher education research has contributed to the development of mother science, to organizational sociology.

Third, the social environment of business organizations changed during the 1970s and 1980s when Japanese firms were widely considered to have superior operating characteristics compared to western firms. However, the prevailing rational approaches emphasizing the formal organizations failed to explain the causes for this superiority. As an academic response to this practical problem "scholars begun to examine the possibility that different national cultures might have penetrated modern corporate forms, thus creating differences in organizational

culture" as Ouchi and Wilkins (1985, 458) put it.

To conclude, the main reasons for the expansion of the cultural approach in social sciences were related both to academic and social frustrations in explaining the visible reality. This frustration gave space to the development of new approaches. These interpretations provide an intellectual link to the development of the higher education cultural approach as well, even though there hardly exists a causal relationship between the business community and that of higher education research. There are, however, clearly common factors that have supported the rise of cultural studies in higher education research. On the one hand, the cultural studies of business enterprises challenged the researchers to study higher education institutions as cultural entities as Tierney (1988) and Dill (1982) noted. Furthermore, with the help of the concepts developed in the cultural studies of business organizations it was easier to define and study academic organizations as cultural entities. On the other hand, referring to cultural studies in the business community it was easier to argue for the need of cultural studies in higher education research (Tierney 1988). Time was mature to accept new crossdisciplinary approaches and adopt ideas from anthropology to sociology to management sciences and back.

However, with these crossdisciplinary transportations the basic ideas that developed in the shelter of disciplinary traditions may easily be molded by the new academic environment as Wilkins and Ouchi (1985, 469) have noted. In the following I will continue with this idea asking what are the "moldings" that have been developed in higher education research. First, I argue that anthropological ideas may easily be translated into functionalist vocabulary where culture may be understood as a managerial tool. In chapter 4.2. I will continue with this to reveal the theoretical basic assumptions of this functional approach as Tierney (1989) has called it. Second, the development of the higher education institutional cultures approach can be analyzed with the help of defining the key concepts. This is the theme in chapter 4.3.

4.2 Functional Approach

According to Tierney the functionalist approach treats culture as "causal variable that makes organizations more effective" (Tierney 1989, 24). Functionalists assume that culture can be interpreted similarly by participants and researchers. They also assume that it is possible to codify abstract realities to make them function more effectively (Tierney 1989,

24). As to researchers, the methodological effort is to "uncover the abstract and universal laws of the organization" (Tierney 1989, 25). Applying the dichotomy presented by Toulmin (1992), this kind of interest of knowledge is rooted in the rational and logical tradition of western science. As to the cultural approach, it is contradictory to the hermeneutic aims of the cultural approach to understand the local and particular contexts of organizations. In fact, the functionalist approach is a contradiction itself.

A recent example on the functionalist approach in the higher education field is provided by Bergquist (1992).²⁸ Inspired by the instrumental interest of knowledge, Bergquist offers intellectual tools to university managers to understand universities and colleges as cultural entities. The author defines four cultures: collegial, managerial, developmental and negotiating. However, as the author states, the developmental culture has developed from collegial culture "in response to faults associated with the collegial culture". Accordingly, the negotiating culture grew out of faculty opposition to the managerial cultures. However, it seems to me that on the basis of the author's definitions (Bergquist 1992, 2-6)²⁹ there is actually only one dichotomy: collegial vs. managerial culture. The other two (developmental and negotiating) are subcultures or varieties of the original ones. In the Finnish context, developmental and negotiating activities could be defined as discourses, social constructs of reality with their own social structures (labor unions and development agencies inside higher education institutions) and specific political aims (Välmaa 1994, 1994b). In Finland, the naming of these activities as cultures would be an exaggeration of these functions. In fact, the two "extra cultures" are contradictory to the definition given by Bergquist himself: these activities are not cultures that "provides meaning and context for a specific group of people". Furthermore, these are not traditions that "hold the people together and install in them an individual and collective sense of purpose and continuity" (Bergquist 1992, 2).

However, it would be exaggeration to maintain that the book is destroyed by the functionalist approach. There is namely an element that

²⁸ Birnbaum's (1988) *How Colleges Work* provide another example on the functional approach. Namely, Birnbaum (1988, 191) states that "the organizational culture establishes the boundaries that guides the interpretations of reality". Thus, in Birnbaum's cybernetic model culture functions as an integrative factor.

²⁹ Bergquist (1992, 2-3) suggests that "culture provides meaning and context for a specific group of people", and furthermore, "culture helps to define the nature of reality for those people who are part of that culture". Bergquist also emphasizes that "a culture is established around the production of something valued by its members".

is important in explaining and understanding higher education institutions as complex organizations. Bergquist maintains that the four cultures exist simultaneously in "virtually every collegiate institution" (1992, 6). This notion is important because it helps to explain the functioning of the complex academic environment. In this way it also provides intellectual tools to adapt to these different cultural environments. Essential notion also is that these cultures interact with each other in one institution. In this sense, Bergquist avoiding the functionalist trap in believing in only one possible culture that can be interpreted by all participants (and researchers) similarly.

This notion in an introduction to the following chapter: what are the key coordinates in the research of institutional cultures? How to examine the variety inside higher education institutions?

4.3 Studies of Institutional Cultures: Defining Key Concepts

The studies of higher education institutions as cultural entities have expanded during the 1980s and 1990s. In the American context the expansion of organizational studies in organizational sociology and business sciences also supported the understanding of higher education institutions as cultural entities. In Europe, the new governmental steering policy called "strategy of self-regulation" based on neo-liberal ideas and the increasing need to assess and evaluate higher education institutions have raised questions, what is actually happening inside higher education institutions (Välilmaa 1992, Välilmaa & Westerheijden 1995). Academically and practically, there is a need for a comprehensive perspective to analyze the dynamics of higher education. However, the higher education cultural approach that focuses attention to institutional cultures is moulded by a group of cultural points of departure mainly rooted in the traditions of sociology and anthropology as Kuh and Whitt (1988) have emphasized. In the lack of a unified corpus of cultural studies I choose to analyze the most interesting articles in order to disclose the theoretical points of departure in defining the focuses of institutional culture studies. Riesman and Jencks (1963) and Tierney (1988) provide the most illustrative examples.

Already in early 1960s Riesman and Jencks (1963) wrote:

"we have tried to look at colleges as complex wholes, describing in an impressionistic manner different sorts of students, faculties, administrations, and publics that have practical and ideological stakes in the colleges, and that provide the faith, hope, charity, tuition, and taxes to

allow colleges grow more numerous" (Riesman & Jencks 1963, 74)

For them college appeared not only as an organization, but as a subculture "with its own idiosyncratic customs and concerns". They even argued that "an anthropologist can study it much the same way that he studies a primitive tribe or a modern community" (Riesman & Jencks 1963, 104). They also suggested that there is a need for anthropological field work to investigate not only students but also "the student culture", the "faculty culture", and other subgroups that make up the college (Riesman & Jencks 1963, 105). Furthermore, in their study on the viability of the American College they considered the influence of different cultural environments. In accordance with anthropological traditions they explained the cultural patterns by studying college in relationship with the geographic, political and social environment. Geographically, they made the distinction between urban, suburban and rural environments. Politically, they described the interaction between college and its political environment through trustees and alumni and by describing the various social ties between faculty and political through Rotary, sports, or ideological ties (Riesman & Jencks 1963, 105-108). According to Riesman and Jencks the value of this kind anthropological study is that

"the study of colleges, like the study of other societies, needs a much greater body of ethnographic data than is now available. Many of our misunderstandings have been based simply on the absence of any body of relevant information against which to check our observations and surmises" (Riesman & Jencks 1963, 131).

However, these ideas were not developed further during the 1960s. In fact, this study was more like an exception. I have referred to it because it considered higher education institutions as cultural entities comparable to other cultural entities in the modern society. In this sense it has been an important starting point to study higher education institutions as cultural entities.

Theoretically, the issue of institutional cultures has been developed by William Tierney. In his article on *Organizational Culture in Higher Education: Defining the Essentials* Tierney maintains that "a comprehensive study of organizational culture in academic settings will demand increased awareness of determinants such as individual and organizational use of time, space, and communication" (Tierney 1988, 18). Organizational culture, in turn, "is the study of particular webs of significance within an organizational setting. That is, we look at an organization as a traditional anthropologist would study a particular village or clan" (Tierney 1988, 4). This definition connects the aim of the studies into the Geertzian tradition, where the aim of the analysis is "not

an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretative one in search of meaning" (Geertz 1973 in Tierney 1988, 4). As has been stated in the above, in this frame of reference, culture easily is a regulative idea directing the understanding of the phenomena more than showing the methods how to examine it. Consequently, the aim of the cultural frame of analysis of the higher education institutions is not to provide a general pattern for analysis, but define question which enable dialogue with the institution concerned. With its hermeneutic interest in knowledge cultural research of higher education institutions belongs to the humanist tradition in the western science as suggested by Toulmin (1992). Tierney writes

"the rationale for a cultural framework is not to presume that all organizations should function similarly, but rather to provide managers and researchers a schema to diagnose their own organizations" (Tierney 1988, 17).

Theoretically important is that Tierney also suggests an analytical framework to study organizational cultures in higher education. The framework puts emphasis on questions to be asked while conducting a cultural study. According to Tierney "we need to consider what cultural concepts can be utilized by cultural researchers when they study a college or university" (Tierney 1988, 8). According to Tierney cultural researchers should pay attention to:

Environment	How does the organization define its environment? What is the attitude toward environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)
Mission	How is it defined? How is it articulated? Is it used as a basis for decisions? How much agreement is there?
Socialization	How do new members become socialized? How is it articulated? What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?
Information	What constitutes information? Who has it? How is it disseminated?
Strategy	How are decisions arrived at? Which strategy is used? Who makes decisions? What is the penalty for bad decisions?
Leadership	What does the organization expect from its leaders? Who are the leaders? Are there formal and informal leaders? (Tierney 1988, 8)

Accordingly, this frame of questions does not presume that all institutions are alike. Quite contrary, it focuses attention to the dimensions that make

a difference between the institutions. I will shortly consider these themes to discuss the dimensions that this analysis reveals.

Environment and mission. The emphasis with the environment repeats the notions made by Riesman and Jencks (1963) emphasizing the value of different kinds of environments (political, social and geographical) of the higher education institutions. The focus of mission, in turn, can be understood in the American context as an interest on the traditions and on the future of an institution. In addition to what I wrote in another paper that mission directs attention to future activities (Välilä 1994), it seems to me that in the American context mission may include the traditions of the institution as well. Thus, mission can be understood as a concept that combines the past with the future. Through institutional mission there can be found a connection to the production of knowledge as Tierney (1991) has maintained.

However, from the continental European perspective, and especially in the Finnish context, this argument should be redefined because we have a higher education policy tradition that stresses the homogeneity of national higher education systems. Neave has called this as the principle of legal homogeneity (Neave 1993, Välilä 1994). Thus, in the European higher education environment that is not driven by market forces (and its dynamics based on competition, cooperation and symbolic differentiation of the higher education institutions), the knowledge production is not guided by institutional missions. This argument does not, however, aim at saying that higher education institutions would live in a social vacuum. Quite the contrary, I wish to emphasize that in the European context external environments create different social dynamics than in the U.S. context. In the European context the relationship most important for the higher education institutions is the relationship between central authorities - normally through the Ministry of Education - and higher education institutions. Consequently, in the Finnish cultural context, the national cultural goals have had influence on the functioning of the higher education institutions and on the self-understanding of Finnish academics as intellectuals as well. Thus, the national parameters of knowledge have had influence on the production of nationally relevant knowledge (Välilä 1995b). Therefore, if we think that knowledge is a socially constructed product we may ask what the political roots of knowledge production are? In the European context it seems that the national higher education policies have more influence on the activities of higher education institutions (including knowledge production) than the marketplace. Concerning the institutional missions, if political is understood as a concept to describe the struggle for power inside universities and colleges rather than an ideological issue, we may indeed assume like Tierney (1991) that institutional missions have influence on the production of knowledge.

Socialization and information. The theme socialization is related to the anthropological and sociological traditions. As Tierney and Rhoads (1993) have pointed out, the socialization can be essentially important for the future and functioning of in higher education institutions, because

"The role that faculty play in the formal and informal life of the institution is a key to understanding academic communities as cultures, since faculty is shaped by, and in turn, shape the institutional culture. The behaviors that faculty enact in institutional settings largely reflect their socialization experiences and the values and commitments of their institutions."
(Tierney & Rhoads 1993, 3)

Information and communication, "the life blood of academia" as Becher (1989) puts it, connects the issue of organizational culture into the issue of disciplinary cultures. Namely, as Becher has maintained, the communication and publication patterns may vary strongly according to disciplinary borders. The issue on what constitutes information is important, because academic communities easily give a disciplinary-based definition of a concept that has many meanings inside academia. These implicit assumptions, in turn, may be a source of misunderstanding inside institutions as Harman (1990) and Becher (1994) among others have noted.

Strategy and leadership. Besides a research issue, the cultural approach may have practical value for university managers and administrators through opening seminal perspectives to the functioning of the institutions. According to Tierney and Rhoads (1992, 47) university managers could consider the following questions:

"What meaning does a certain action have for different members of the organization? What is the underlying significance of certain practices? How do others perceive academic leaders and their actions? What values and beliefs do organizational members bring to the institution? What values and beliefs does the institution reinforce? How do people conceive of the organization?"

In this sense, the cultural approach can be understood as a managerial resource to increase the institutional cultural self-understanding, even though it does not provide direct managerial tools for decision-making.

4.3.1 Foundations of Institutional Cultures

Like the studies of organizational cultures, the studies of institutional cultures in higher education seem to get support from two different intellectual foundations: anthropological and sociological.

However, the use of these disciplinary traditions takes special forms in the study of higher education institutions. Analyzing the cultural framework suggested by Tierney, it seems to me that the cultural understanding of higher education institutions is based on anthropological understanding that utilizes the concepts of *space* and *time* (concretized through environment and mission) and *communication* (concretized through socialization and information) and focuses attention to cultural processes such as socialization and decision-making to explain the functions of these social constructs of reality. Furthermore, in the actual analysis of institutions the central operating concepts (mission, information, strategy, and leadership) are derived from the sociology of organizations tradition. Thus, theoretically the search for institutional cultures is a combination of anthropological understanding and sociological conceptualization. However, this seems to be a seminal methodological standpoint because the dialogue with the academic communities should recognize both the formal structures of institutions as organizations and the social interplay with the different environments of higher education institutions.

It seems that the rationale for referring to these two disciplinary traditions can be found from the institutionally-based practical orientation Tierney has satisfied. Therefore, in the practical world of institutional managers and administrators the focus on the organizational dimension is essential. As Tierney (1988, 19) writes

"by developing this framework and improving ways of assessing organizational culture, administrators will be in a better position to change elements in the institution that are at variance with the culture."

However, the choice to refer to organizational culture as the organizing concept has its side effects. According to Tierney "I have used the term "organizational culture" but have made no mention of its subsets: subculture, anticulture, or disciplinary culture" (Tierney 1988, 18). From the practical perspective this is a logical choice. However, from a theoretical perspective it could be argued that, in its purest form, the analysis of institutional cultures excludes the dimension that is most important for the functioning of the academic communities: the disciplinary cultures. From the disciplinary cultures approach a critical point would be: why are the higher education institutions defined as

cultural entities? And furthermore, do the cultural boundaries of the academic communities residing in the institutions follow the organizational boundaries of the institutions?

In order to create more comprehensive understanding of the academic communities as cultural entities I suggest that we consider the value of disciplinary-based epistemic traditions in relation to institutional cultures. In the concluding chapter I will consider these two traditions of the higher education cultural approach in order to create future avenues for research.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

During the writing process of this paper I have had in mind at least three issues that have structured my study: socio-economic contexts, the history of the cultural approach, and the intellectual devices of the analysis. In respect of the qualitative research traditions I will try to reveal the changes in my opinions during the research process. After the concluding chapters I will discuss both practical and theoretical perspectives concerning the use of the cultural approach in higher education field.

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1. Socio-Economic Contexts

When I started writing this paper my first aim was to analyze the cultural approach in higher education research as a social construct interacting with socio-economic environments. As to the work of Snow this aim seems possible to attain. As I have argued the "Two Cultures"-theme can be understood as a cultural product supported by the British traditions and social structures. However, when I continued my work with new research material it became evident that the contextual analysis concerning the relationship between research and society would require a more comprehensive data collection and a more detailed historical analysis that would have been possible in this paper. In fact, it would have required rethinking the history of western social sciences - or at least analysis of the sociology of knowledge and anthropology - from the

perspective of the higher education cultural approach. Essentially, the analysis of the relationship between society and knowledge production belongs to the central issues in the tradition of the sociology of science. Therefore, I have only suggested that socio-cultural environments have structured the understanding of what the cultural units in the academic world are. According to me this understanding has two starting points: the disciplinary-based and the institutionally-based understandings. It seems evident that in the American context the market oriented higher education environment has supported the studies of institutionally-based cultural studies of students and higher education institutions, whereas in the European context this support is weak. This state of affairs is, perhaps, supported by the strong American tradition of cultural studies focusing on student cultures. Student cultures are, by definition, local and institutional as Bushnell's study of Vassar College shows (Bushnell 1963). Furthermore, the studies of higher institutions as cultural entities are natural in the American academic world that is characterized by diversity and differentiation of the institutions. In Europe the dynamics of the higher education systems has been characterized by the principle of legal homogeneity as Neave (1993) has argued. In the European context the cultural interests have gained support from the academic interests of disciplinary cultures complemented with sociological traditions and unrelated to the institutionally-oriented practical interests.

Thus, the practical orientation so natural in the American context has contributed to the understanding of the higher education institutions as cultural entities residing in the organizational structures (Bergquist 1992, Tierney 1988). Furthermore, according to Becher (1989) the boundaries in the academic world are not shaped by institutions but by disciplines and epistemic traditions, whereas Clark (1963, 1987b) and others (Ruscio 1987, Tierney & Rhoads 1993) emphasize the interconnectedness of the institutional dimension with the disciplinary traditions. Therefore, one of the basic differences between these two traditions seems to be the understanding of what constitutes academic culture. In the institutionally-based studies the culture of the faculty (university teachers) easily becomes an institutional issue, whereas in the disciplinary culture studies academic culture is only defined with the help of epistemic traditions. It is an academic identity issue.

5.1.2 History of the Cultural Approach

Together with the socio-economic issues I have reflected on the question whether the cultural approach in higher education research has a history of its own. It seems evident that Tony Becher (in 1987) has created the history of the (disciplinary-based) cultural approach in order to prove that the cultural perspective has, indeed, been an invisible line in higher education research before its explication. Thus, the history writing of "a new" approach aimed at legitimizing the approach as "the new" approach in the higher education field.

From the perspective of the studies analyzed, especially those of Startup (1981) and Biglan (1973), my analysis can be "unfair", because I begin with the questions and perspectives that have not been in the minds of the authors. However, through these examples I have examined the boundaries of the cultural understandings of the academic communities. Therefore, I argue that both the conscious history-writing of this new cultural approach (which I naturally do while writing this paper) and the research of higher education institutions as cultural entities support the cultural understanding of higher education institutions. Furthermore, in social sciences, it seems to be quite impossible to think about academic research activities without the interplay between theoretical discussions on the principles of research and empirical research to see how these theoretical assumptions match with reality. I do not, however, maintain that the dialogue between theory and research should be based only on the positivist approach with the testing of hypotheses. Quite the contrary, I maintain that the dialogue with reality requires both theoretical reflections and practical research in order to see the interconnections between theoretical reasoning and practical activities, being conscious of the position of the researcher and the impact research may have on the practices of the academic communities concerned. In this sense I see the cultural researcher in a critical (postmodern) situation as Tierney has suggested (Tierney 1993). This way the history-writing of the new approach may also contribute to the future research by pointing out the central issues in the cultural tradition.

5.1.3 Intellectual Devices of the Analysis

My third theme was developed while analyzing the articles and books sharing the cultural interest in higher education. How to analyze the contents and purposes of the papers: what are they trying to say? The

intellectual devices developed by Toulmin (1992) provided me with perspectives that helped in approaching these questions from the perspective of the interest of knowledge. The distinction into rational and humanist traditions in the western science provides intellectual devices that are not fixed to certain disciplines, not to research methodologies (qualitative vs. quantitative), but to the intellectual traditions in western science. From this perspective it is fruitful to ask what the different interests are that the writer explicates without the need to assume that there is only one tradition inside every disciplinary tradition.

I have reflected on the differences between sociological and anthropological traditions in order to reveal that inside higher education research there are and have been tensions between the general interest of knowledge (the rational tradition) and the particular interest of knowledge (the humanist tradition) inside the disciplines as well. I have come to see that the black and white assumption that sociology occupies the territory of the rational tradition and anthropology inhabits the humanist soil would be a dichotomous exaggeration. However, the sociological interests seem to have more easily focused on generalizing issues and anthropological curiosity in particular, local communities. As I have argued in the above, "the typical" sociological tradition with its generalizing interests of knowledge has not necessarily been very sensible to the epistemic characteristics of higher education institutions. It seems to me that the traditional ways of seeing the world as power relations, or through forces causing integration or differentiation, or through role types etc. may have guided the research interests more than the nature of the research object.³⁰ Furthermore, as I have argued this generalizing interest of knowledge has not supported the studies of disciplinary-based differences of the academic world.

The problem of difference seems to be one of the central issues separating the two intellectual traditions from each other. In the humanist tradition, the difference of the human communities is the methodological and ideological starting point of the examination. In the rational tradition, in turn, difference is treated like an empirical fact. Therefore, in the humanist tradition the focus of attention is to define the particular, timely and local differences, whereas in the rational tradition the aim is to overcome the differences in the search of general principles.

Methodologically, the issue of difference has a dimension that may

³⁰ Leena Eräsaari (1995) referring to Plummer (1983) and Deegan (1988) suggests that interest in the general "scientific" issues at the cost of other perspectives is a more general phenomenon in the history of sociology.

influence the cultural understanding of higher education as well.³¹ Namely, it seems that together with the epistemic and philosophical distinctions the methodological differences between sociology and anthropology also have directed research interests. However, I suggest that in order to develop the higher education cultural approach we should try to see ways by which these two traditions - or two genres - would supplement rather than exclude each other. As we have argued elsewhere (Välimaa & Westerheijden 1995), knowledge production in the higher education field is influenced more by the researchers' position than their epistemic traditions. Thus, I suggest that the consciousness of one's own epistemic basic assumptions and the understanding of the researcher's position are even more important coordinates of knowledge than the methodologies used. This critical cultural perspective also helps to reformulate the traditional contradiction found in the distinction of qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. Normally, the cultural studies in higher education research gain support from qualitative studies. However, this is more a matter of practice than a matter of principle. Tierney and Rhoads (1993b, 326) are helpful in developing my methodological point:

"One of the reasons that quantitative research methodologies are not utilized as much as interviews and observations is that statistical surveys and analyses do not provide a self-reflexive quality that a critical/postmodern theory demands. Quantitative research often seeks to synthesize and create norms, which is not a goal for the kind of research discussed here. Yet, as noted, simply because quantitative analyses have been used in one way does not preclude their use in other aspects of postmodern or critical work."

In short, despite the fact that the rational tradition is rooted in the (generalizing) quantitative methods of inquiry, it does not mean that humanist reasoning could not be used in a more quantitative way in the dialogue with "the reality". The essential methodological point would be the opening up of the (hidden) research process. With this I mean that the reader should know what the process of hypothesis formulation is, and why certain questions are accepted and others rejected.

³¹ Tierney (1989, Appendix) discusses the methodological principles of higher education cultural research. Referring to Lather (1986) Tierney maintains that "the guidelines for guarding against researcher bias" include: triangulation, face validity, catalytic validity, and source validity.

5.2 General, Particular and Practical Interests

So far I have mainly restricted my study to reflect on the interplay between humanist and rational traditions inside the disciplines of sociology and anthropology in higher education cultural studies. Higher education research, however, is an applied field of research that is strongly influenced by the practical social demands rising both inside and outside higher education institutions. The issues of the general and particular nature of knowledge may be theoretically interesting also from the practical perspective of university management and the steering of the national higher education policy. Therefore I ask, is the practical interest of knowledge closer to the particular knowledge rooted in the humanist tradition? Or does it more easily cope with the general principles rooted in the rational tradition?

Theoretically the particular interest of knowledge may come close to the practical needs of management because university and college managers and administrators face the particularity of their institutions almost daily. However, this does not seem to be the case because Bergquist (1992) and Tierney and Rhoads (1992) are more like exceptions than the rule in the higher education field. Perhaps this state of affairs is caused by the different focus of action: for a cultural researcher the aim is to understand academic behavior, whereas managers and administrators aim to change and lead academic behavior. Furthermore, the aim of the anthropologically inspired researchers is not to change the behavior of the academic communities they are investigating (Tierney 1989). The managers (in Europe: administrators), in turn, try to find intellectual and practical tools to steer or change the academic behavior (cf. Birnbaum 1988). Thus, the problem rises from the functionalist interests of managers as compared to the academic research interests of researchers. A possible practical solution for the university managers would be to understand the cultural perspective as a check list to be kept in mind while making decisions in the institutions as Tierney and Rhoads have suggested (Tierney & Rhoads 1992).³² Naturally, this is a contextual matter. In the American higher education context with a traditionally strong institutional level the theory of cultural leadership of higher education institutions may be more easily applicable than in the European context with its traditional emphasis on administration.

³² Theoretically, another way of reasoning would be to consider a researcher as a change agent in the spirit of critical theory aiming at advancing the communities of difference in the postmodern world as Tierney (1993) has suggested. I will not, however, follow this line of reasoning because my focus is in the management of institutions.

In Europe, the national level administrators aim at steering national systems of higher education (cf. Clark 1983). In this context the interest of knowledge is normally instrumental focusing attention to general features of the national higher education systems. Thus, the general interest of knowledge inherent in the rational tradition in western science may easily be adopted and shared by national level administrators. As Foster (1991) has argued the functionalist perspectives of the university administration are normally supported by positivist academic traditions. However, there is a cultural possibility to contribute to the instrumental policy discourse as well. As we have maintained (Välilmaa & Westerheijden 1995) researchers should aim at producing concepts and perspectives rather than trying to serve the instrumental interest of knowledge taking form in numbers and figures. This definition of researchers' tasks, in turn, starts from the assumption that contextual understanding has more policy relevance than do the general principles.

What are then the connections between cultural perspectives and the practical interests related to the steering or management of higher education? I see a possible connection through particular and personal experiences that especially anthropological research can produce to the reader. Anthropological knowledge provides each individual the possibility to check his or her personal experiences through comparisons: did those kinds of things happen to me, or are these things happening to my friends, or to my children? Furthermore, the descriptions of different worlds, different realities or "academic tribes" can have the value of a mirror through which the reader can see himself by comparing his or her own experiences and feelings. At best, the story has resonance in a reader who through concrete descriptions can get in a personal touch with the world the writer is describing. Thus, even though the knowledge concerning particular, timely and local communities does not aim at general explanations it can, however, have a general value in the higher education field, because it provides information "against which to check our observations and surmises" as Riesman and Jencks (1963, 131) pointed out.

5.3 Disciplinary and Institutional Cultures

I feel that one of the dangers for the higher education cultural approach would be the separation of the disciplinary cultures-approach from the studies of institutional cultures. Thus, the disciplinary cultures-approach, in its purest form, would only focus on the individual academics and

their relation to international disciplinary cultures. As I have shown, this goal is problematic both theoretically and practically. The institutional cultures approach may, in turn, pay too much attention to the institutional settings of academic communities. Especially in the European context, this is a problematic assumption, because European higher education institutions are strongly influenced by national higher education policies and national traditions. To show the way for future studies in the higher education cultural approach I suggest that we should reconsider both these traditions from new perspectives.

Cultural concern for the disintegrated academic community with its isolated groups of specialists is one of the leading motives behind the disciplinary-cultures approach. As I have tried to show this theme is a continuation of the thoughts provoked by C.P. Snow. Thus, one of the most essential aims of the disciplinary studies has been to show the differences to create a possibility for unity, for understanding the different "small worlds" of academia (Clark 1987, Becher 1987, 1990). This goal is basically a moral theme motivated by a concern for the future of western culture. However, we also may think about the study of disciplinary cultures from new perspectives not related to moral concerns. Namely, first, if we adopt the idea that definitions of disciplinary cultures are based on "ideal types" of disciplines, we may indeed argue that there is a constant need to redefine what the dimensions are that define the borderlines between disciplines. I argue that it is, indeed, useful to reflect on what the nature of the problem is and what kinds of social forms it promotes. From this perspective, the study of disciplinary-based differences is just about to begin. Second, if we accept the idea that one of the problems of the disciplinary cultures-approach as an intellectual device is the treatment of academic communities as if they would be separated from the rest of society, we may ask how academic communities interact with their environments. These ideas were, in fact, suggested by Burton Clark in the early 1960s in his study of faculty cultures (Clark 1963).

I suggest that a possible solution to the distinction between institutional and disciplinary-based cultures is to reconsider the interplay with international and national cultural and academic cultures from a local perspective. By local perspective I mean that we should take seriously the national and institutional traditions (Välilä 1992, 1994) and missions (Tierney 1991), sagas (Clark 1970) and cultures (Tierney 1988, 1989) together with the international academic disciplinary-based cultures (Becher 1987, 1989) as well as professional values and traditions (Clark 1987b). Theoretically, the local perspective would be a uniting concept including the interplay with many cultural dimensions influencing the academic communities. This way, local may refer both to the institutionally and self-defined groups of academics (cf. Välilä 1992).

Tierney and Rhoads (1993) discuss the various cultural dimensions that must be taken into account when explaining the socialization processes to the academic world. According to them definitions of existing national, institutional, professional, disciplinary and individual characteristics can be made (Tierney & Rhoads 1993).

As a conclusion of the studies referred to in the above, I suggest that relevant cultural contexts may be defined as disciplinary cultures, national cultures, institutional cultures and professional cultures. If this reasoning is essential, we may proceed and ask what is the unit of research that enables the simultaneous analysis of these academic communities? I maintain that both theoretically and practically the academic operating basic unit provides a unit of analysis that enables this analysis: it provides a group of academics united by academic tasks and activities (teaching and research) and tied together locally by time and place.³³

Actually, the search for the cultural dimensions that define academic communities represents search of what constitutes difference in the academic world. Namely, when we are interested in the academic communities as cultural entities we are actually interested in what makes them different from each other. The studies on student cultures, institutional cultures and disciplinary cultures can be taken as examples of this interest. Basically the question is: what are the local and particular conditions limited by time that shape the self-understanding of academics as academics? I maintain that basically the question of differences in the academic self-understanding is the question of different academic identities. From this perspective, one of the leading themes in the higher education cultural approach has been the examination of the cultural dimensions that furnish academics with identity.

In the following I wish to open a discussion on identity in order to both make the leading theme more explicit and to point to a possible future theme for cultural research on academic communities.

³³ Clark (1983) uses the term 'operating basic unit', whereas Becher and Kogan (1992) discuss basic units. Normally, in Europe, the term refers to individual subject department. However, both Clark (1983), and Becher and Kogan (1992) maintain that the basic unit is centrally important for the functioning of higher education as a system because it is responsible for the basic function of universities: knowledge production operationalized through the tasks of teaching and research.

5.4 Defining Academic Identity

Culturally and philosophically identity is related to the foundations of modern world view. According to Charles Taylor (1989) the problems of the "naturalistic project" of western science are caused by the unclarity as to the moral basis of its epistemological foundations. Thus, the problems of the rational tradition are related to the idea of disengaged self. This idea is, in turn, supported by the illusions of freedom, dignity and power of the disengaged self. According to Taylor (1989) the idea of identity that is based on independence from all authorities leads to the adoption of unreliable epistemological theories as well. The paradox in the rational tradition is that even though the moral identity motivates epistemological attitude it simultaneously leads into difficulty to identify one's own epistemological basement (Sihvola 1995). Taylor seems to be saying that the rational tradition assumes itself as an "objective" because it cannot see its own epistemological limitations.

Now it is time to describe my understanding of identity. I refer to Taylor (1991) who maintains that identity is basically a process based on dialogue. Referring to Mead (1934) Taylor argues that the development and change of identity is based on continuous dialogue with *significant others*. Quite naturally these significant others may change during a lifetime. Thus, the questions "who am I", "where do I belong to"? structure our self-understanding throughout our life-time. According to Taylor (1991) the nature of identity remains a dialogical process throughout our life whether we like it or not. It is clear to me that the academic world makes no exception in this regard.

However, when we understand identity as an intellectual device in order to reflect on the cultural perspectives of academic life, we should change our focus from philosophical reflections to practical questions: Who and where are the significant others? What are the culturally-determined groups of reference that demand academics to ask who am I? Where do I belong?

Tierney and Rhoads (1993, 9) lend a hand in developing my argument when they say that

"faculty culture may be understood as a complex interplay of symbolic meanings predicated on five sociological forces: national, professional, disciplinary, individual, and institutional."

I maintain that in the academic world this cultural identity-making process has a dimension that is more latent in other professions. Namely, in the academic world discipline is the carrier of tradition that structures the understanding of the world and the place of an individual in that

world. Thus the disciplinary-based understanding of the world always has an impact on the development of personal identities as well. Because of that fact, the reference groups where academics always belong to are their colleagues both local, national and international. Simultaneously, however, academics belong to other reference groups such as professional groups (assistants, lecturers, professors) and national cultural traditions. More precisely, these academic reference groups can be disciplinary-based communities (national and international colleagues and disciplinary-based epistemic traditions), professional communities (colleagues and/or professional organizations in one's own institution and/or at the national level), institutional level communities (professional colleagues from other departments, administrative staff, institutional traditions and missions) and national culture (as a reference group: friends, relatives, and fellow citizens).³⁴

I also maintain that depending on the issue at hand, different cultural communities and frames of reference may have influence on the opinions and on the actions of academics. For example, when dealing with innovation in an institution - as was the case at Jyväskylä University (Välímáa 1992) - academics were influenced by the disciplinary dimension related to academic matters (organization of teaching and research), and by the institutional dimension: what the local traditions in interpreting and implementing innovations are at an institution (Välímáa 1994). The professional dimension, in turn, was felt important by the university teachers when they interacted with other Finnish university teachers interested in the experimentation, or when they participated in the activities of the academic labor unions, both local and national (cf. Välímáa & Westerheijden 1995). The effects of the national cultural environment were harder to see, because they are shared by us all. However, national traditions in implementing innovations, described as the strategy of "learning by experimenting" (Välímáa 1994b), can be seen at the Finnish higher education policy level. In short, depending on the significant others, university teachers were using different cultural frames of reference in the interpretation of the innovation.

Essentially, during one's career these significant others may

³⁴ The feelings of alienation in the academic world, in other words, the feeling of not-belonging to the academic world can be rooted in working class origins as Ryan and Sackrey (1984) strongly suggest. Thus, the process of making the identity of an academic man can originate from outside the academic world as well. In my scheme of analysis I lump all these "external relations" (relatives, social background, religion etc.) into the category "national culture" in order to make the picture more intelligible. However, this does not mean that these factors should be excluded from the analysis even though they are not explicitly described in the scheme.

change. Thus the peer groups for students, assistants and lecturers (or junior faculty members) and professors are different. Also the physical environments may change. Furthermore, because of the process-nature of identity we ask the same question in different situations.³⁵

The following figure, after the original by Chickering (1969) presents the idea:

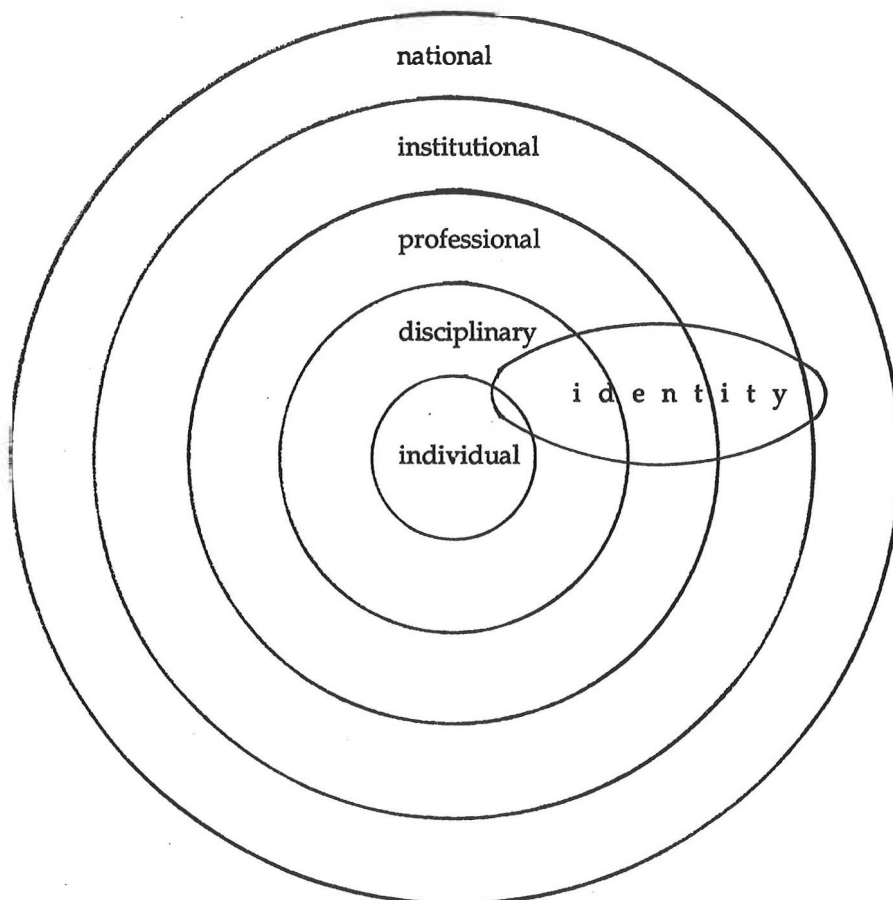


Figure 1. Dimensions of academic identity

³⁵ Without going deeper into the sociological discussion I note shortly that this kind of understanding of identity based on various significant others, or "circles" as Simmel has put it, has its resonance in the sociological tradition as well. According to Noro (1991) Simmel (1908) suggested that modern identity is constructed of many social circles where the modern individual participates in. These kinds of social circles can be found in civil associations, in the workplace, through professional organizations, in hobbies etc.

Identity in this pattern covers the interactive processes between various significant others. Therefore, the pattern should not be understood as a psychological category but as an interpretive device used to concretize the simultaneous cultural processes of interaction. As Tierney and Rhoads (1993) have noted this interaction is based on "a complex interplay of symbolic meanings". These symbolic meanings may be represented and produced by academic institutions and organizations, or by groups of people, or by individuals, or by epistemic traditions. Therefore, this figure is not meant to be a static description of the nature of academic identity. On the contrary, it should be understood as a check list for asking questions related to the dynamics of academic communities in order to see the difference. Questions like: what are the national traditions? What is "normal" in a related national context? How are the institutional traditions/missions interpreted? How does the nature of the problem structure the definitions of the world in academic communities? How is the nature of the problem related to the ways of understanding and organizing academic work? What are the impacts of professional values and traditions on the institutional and departmental decision-making processes? How are students defined?

These and many other questions can be asked more easily if we are conscious of the many cultural dimensions (traditions and value systems) working simultaneously in interaction with each other. On the one hand, by using this kind of pattern I wish to emphasize that the process of creating academic identity connects the individual to various social communities with their own cultural values, norms, and traditions. Conceptually, 'identity' helps to understand the individual as a member of different communities and in interaction with the different communities. On the other hand, as an intellectual device 'identity' may be helpful in defining these significant others. Thus, identity as an instrument of research may open new vistas for the study of academic communities as cultural entities based on the social constructions of reality, and contribute to the search for contextual understanding.

YHTEENVETO

KORKEAKOULUTUTKIMUKSEN KULTTUURI- NÄKÖKULMA

Johdanto

Miten korkeakouluja pitäisi ymmärtää ja miten niiden toimintaa voidaan selittää? Väitöskirjan teoreettisessa yhteenvetoartikkelissa väitän, että yliopistojen ja korkeakoulujen toiminnan analyysissä oleellista on määrittää niitä kontekstuaalisia toimintatapoja ja rationaliteetteja, joissa akateemiset yhteisöt toimivat. Työssäni määritelty lähestymistapa - korkeakoulututkimuksen kulttuurinäkökulma - perustuu oletukseen siitä, että toiminnan selittämisessä ei pidä lähteä yliopistojen "ulkopuolisista" analyysivälineistä, joita on kehitetty erityisesti taloustieteissä ja julkishallinnossa, vaan tutkimuksen päämääränä on selvittää korkeakoulujen aikaan ja paikkaan sidottuja, kontekstuaalisia, toimintakulttuureita. Oletamus tukeutuu korkeakoulututkimuksessa (Clark 1983, Becher & Kogan 1992) tehtyyn havaintoon siitä, että yliopistojen toiminnan selittämisessä tiedon tuottaminen (tutkimus) ja sen jakaminen (opetus) ovat ne keskeiset prosessit, jotka luovat yliopistojen ja korkeakoulujen toiminnan erityisen perustan. Tiedon tuottaminen on siten yliopistoja ja muuta yhteiskuntaa sekä erottava että yhdistävä prosessi. Yhteenvetoartikkelissa osoitetaan, että korkeakoulututkimuksen kulttuurinäkökulman suojissa on kehitetty analyysivälineitä, joilla

korkeakoulujen erityistä, kontekstuaalista rationaalisuutta voidaan tutkia.

Yhteenvetoartikkelin keskeinen ajatteluväline on Stephen Toulminin (1992) esittämä länsimaisen tieteentradition erottelu kahteen toisistaan poikkeavaan ajattelutapaan, joita Toulmin kutsuu humanistitraditioksi ja rationaaliksi traditioksi. Toulminin mukaan (1992) humanistitraditiossa tiedon praktista intressiä leimaa kiinnostus kontekstuaalisiin, siis aikaan sidottuihin (timely), paikallisiin (local) ja erityisiin (particular) ilmiöihin. Sen sijaan rationaalissa traditiossa kiinnostusta ohjaa pyrkimys yleisiin ja mitattaviin ilmiöihin sekä ajattomiin ja ikuisiin periaatteisiin. Tämän erottelun avulla tarkastelen sekä tieteidenvälisiä eroja että tieteiden sisällä vaikuttavia traditioita.

Korkeakoulututkimuksen kulttuurinäkökulman kehityksen ja sen nykysuuntauksien analyysi perustuu jaotteluun tieteenlakulttuureiden tutkimusperinteen (disciplinary cultures approach) ja yliopistokulttuureiden tutkimuksen (institutional cultures approach) välillä. Näiden lähestymistapojen erilaiset tutkimuksen kiinnostuksen kohteet johtavat myös erilaisiin tutkimustehtäviin. Tieteenalakulttureiden tutkimuksessa analysoidaan episteemisiä perinteitä ja niiden yhteyttä akateemiseen elämään, kun taas yliopistokulttuureiden tutkimuksessa hahmotetaan organisaatioiden määrittämien akateemisten yhteisöiden kulttuureita.

Tieteenalakulttuurit tutkimuksen kohteena

Tieteenalakulttuureiden tutkimuksessa oletetaan, että tieteenalat ovat sekä episteemisiä että sosiaalisia yhteisöjä. Tony Becherin edustamassa suuntauksessa tutkimuksen päämääränä on osoittaa, millä tavalla tiedon muovaama (episteeminen) ja sosiaalinen akateeminen yhteisö kohtaavat toisensa. Kirjassaan *Academic Tribes and Territories* Becher asettaa päämääräkseen tutkia ideoiden ja ihmisten välistä suhdetta.

Becherin työ voidaan kontekstualisoida tieteensosiologisen tutkimuksen tradition avulla. Tieteen sosiologiassa Becherin luokitteluun ovat vaikuttaneet Kuhnin (1972) teorit. Erityisesti paradigman käsite näyttää strukturoineen Becherin kiinnostusta. Kulttuurisesti työtä on motivoinut C.P. Snow'n teos akateemisen maailman kahdesta kulttuurista, jotka eivät kykene kommunikoimaan keskenään (Snow 1959). Becher haluaa osoittaa, että akateemisessa maailmassa on useampia kuin vain kaksi kulttuuria, ja että tieto erilaisuudesta voi luoda yhtenäisyyttä akateemiseen maailmaan. Becherin peruskysymys on, mikä on ongelman luonne eri tieteenaloilla. Tästä lähtökohdasta käsin Becher jäsentää akateemista maailmaa episteemisten erojen perusteella seuraavilla

ulottuvuuksilla: kova <-> pehmeä, sekä puhdas <-> sovellettu. Kovaa ja puhdasta tieteenalaa edustaa fysiikka. Sosiologia puolestaan on tavallisin esimerkki pehmeästä ja puhtaasta tieteenalasta. Kovaa ja sovellettua tieteenalaa edustavat insinööri- ja lääketieteet. Sen sijaan kasvatustiede ja sosiaalityö ovat esimerkkejä pehmeästä ja sovelletusta tieteestä. Mielestäni ongelmallista tällaisessa tieteiden luonnehdinnassa on kuitenkin se, että Becher antaa tieteenaloista lähinnä "ideaalityypisiä" kuvauksia.

Toisaalta Becher luokittelee tieteenaloja myös niiden sosiaalisen kiinteyden perusteella kiinteisiin ja löyhiin yhteisöihin. Hän pyrkii osoittamaan, että tieteenalojen episteemisellä rakenteella on yhteys akateemisten yhteisöiden sosiaaliseen toiminnan luonteeseen. Tämä oletus on kuitenkin sekä käytännössä että teoreettisestikin hankala, sillä pyrkimys luoda yleisiä lakeja episteemisten ja sosiaalisten yhteisöiden välille on yleistävästä tiedon intressistä lähtevä pyrkimys. Se on vastoin länsimaisen tieteen humanistitraditiota, johon Becherin tutkimukset metodisesti kuuluvat. Becherin väite on siis sisäisesti ristiriitainen. Teoreettisia ja käytännöllisiä ongelmia tuottaa lisäksi Becher oletus siitä, että akateemisten yhteisöiden toiminta voitaisiin selittää ikäänkuin akateeminen maailma olisi muusta yhteiskunnasta eristetty saareke.

Yliopistokulttuureiden tutkimus

Etenkin Yhdysvaltalaisessa korkeakoulututkimuksen perinteessä tutkimusintressejä näyttää suunnannee yliopisto-organisaatioiden käytännön tarpeiden palveleminen. Väitän, että tällä käytännöllisellä orientaatiolla on ollut vaikutusta myös kulttuurinäkökulman kehittymiseen, sillä kulttuureiden havainnoinnin yksikkönä on ollut yliopisto (tai college) tieteenalakulttuurin tai episteemisen perinteen asemasta. Tätä suuntausta on vahvistanut myös markkinavetoinen korkeakoulujärjestelmä, jossa on tarvittu tietoa opiskelijoista ja heidän tarpeistaan.

Akateemisen tutkimuksen kohteena ovatkin olleet pääasiassa opiskelijat. Opiskelijakulttuureiden sosiologinen tutkimus lähti liikkeelle 1930-luvulla lamakauden myötä. Tuolloin päämääränä oli ymmärtää amerikkalaisiin korkeakouluihin tulvineita uusia opiskelijaryhmiä. 1960-luvun sosiologisessa tutkimuksessa (Becker et al. 1961) puolestaan tarkasteltiin opiskelijakulttuuria lähinnä yhteiskunnallisen sosiaalistamisen näkökulmasta. Tuolloin tehtiin myös ensimmäiset opiskelijakulttuureiden antropologiset tutkimukset (Bushnell 1963). Yliopistojen ja korkeakoulujen opettajia ei sen sijaan ole juurikaan tarkasteltu kulttuurinäkökulmasta.

Poikkeuksen muodostavat Burton Clarkin tutkimukset (1963, 1970).

Tutkiessaan amerikkalaisen korkeakoululaitoksen elinvoimaisuutta Riesman ja Jencks (1963) ehdottivat, että niitä pitäisi lähestyä antropologisesti samalla tavalla kuin tutkitaan vieraita heimoja ja kulttuureita. Tätä antropologista suuntausta on jatkanut William G. Tierney. Artikkelissaan *Organizational Culture in Higher Education: Defining the Essentials* Tierney (1988) kiinnittää huomiota kysymyksiin, joiden avulla voidaan tutkia yliopistojen ja muiden korkeakoulujen kulttuurien erilaisuutta. Tierney'n mukaan oleellista on kysyä *miten yliopisto suhtautuu ympäristöönsä* (miten se määritellään); *miten yliopisto määrittelee missionsa* (käytetäänkö sitä päätösten perusteena, vallitseeko siitä yksimielisyys?); *miten uudet jäsenet sosiaalistetaan* (mitä tarvitsee tietää selvittääkseen uudessa paikassa); *millaista informaatio on yliopistossa* (kenellä se on, kuinka sitä välitetään?); *millainen strategia yliopistolla on* (kuinka päätöksiä tehdään, mitä strategiaa käytetään, kuka tekee päätökset, miten huonoista päätöksistä rangaistaan?); *miten johtajuus käsitetään* (mitä johtajilta odotetaan, ketkä ovat johtajia, onko virallisilla ja epävirallisilla johtajilla eroa?). Mielestäni Tierney'n kysymyslista perustuu sekä antropologiseen ymmärrykseen että organisaatiososiologiseen käsitteellistykseen siten, että aikaan, paikkaan ja kommunikaatioon kohdistuva antropologinen kiinnostus operationalistetaan organisaatiososiologisin käsittein korkeakoulututkimukseksi. Tällaisia ovat johtajuus, strategia ja missio. Väitän, että ongelmana tässä lähestymistavassa - ainakin sen puhtaimmassa muodossaan - on akateemisen maailman episteemisen ulottuvuuden unohtaminen.

Diskussio

Korkeakoulututkimuksen kulttuurinäkökulman kehittämisen kannalta keskeistä on löytää analyysivälineitä, joiden avulla voidaan löytää yhdistäviä teemoja näiden kahden lähestymistavan välillä. Ehdotan yhteenvetoartikkelissani, että identiteetti voisi olla käsitteellinen työkalu, jonka avulla voitaisiin tarkastella akateemisen maailman episteemisiä ja sosiaalisia ulottuvuuksia yhtäaikaisesti. Charles Tayloriin (1989, 1991) vedoten määrittelen identiteetin dialogiseksi prosessiksi, joka jatkuu koko elämämme ajan halusimmepa sitä tai emme. Oleellista tässä prosessissa ovat vertaisryhmät (significant others), joiden kanssa keskustelua käydään.

Tutkimuksen välineenä identiteetti-käsitteen avulla voidaan löytää kulttuurisia vertaisryhmiä, jotka määrittelevät akateemista identiteettiä.

Identiteetti ei siten ole psykologinen kategoria, vaan ajatteluväline, jonka avulla akateemista käyttäytymistä voidaan tarkastella kulttuurisena ilmiönä. Oletuksena on, että henkilö kuuluu useampaan kulttuuriseen viiteryhmään samanaikaisesti, ja että asiasta riippuen eri kulttuurisilla viiteryhmillä on erisuuruinen vaikutus myös akateemisten yhteisöiden toimintaan. Suhteessa yksilöön kulttuurisia vertaisryhmiä määrittelevät seuraavat ulottuvuudet: kansallinen kulttuuri, yliopistokulttuuri, ammatillinen kulttuuri ja tieteenalan kulttuuri (ks. kuvio 1). Nämä dimensiot on johdettu korkeakoulututkimuksen empiirisen ja teoreettisen keskustelun perusteella (Becher 1989, Clark 1987b, Ruscio 1987, Tierney & Rhoads 1993, Välimaa 1995).

Kuviota ei kuitenkaan pidä ymmärtää yleistävänä mallina, vaan hermeneuttisena apuvälineenä, joka auttaa muistamaan kysymyksiä, joiden avulla tutkitaan akateemisen maailman erilaisuutta. Identiteetti määrittyy näiden ulottuuksien välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa. Ehdotankin, että tutkimusvälineenä identiteetti auttaa määrittelemään paikallisissa olosuhteissa vaikuttavia kulttuurisia ulottuvuuksia, joilla on yhteyksiä akateemiseen itseymmärrykseen ja siten myös akateemisten yhteisöiden toimintaan.

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