

# 台灣與挪威高等教育 改革之比較

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## 摘要

在全球化的壓力下，世界各國大學莫不致力於機構重組，以使大學所提供的服務，如研究本位的知識和能力等，能更有效率的產出。本文針對挪威與台灣的高等教育改革進行研究，研究問題為：在大學重組的過程中，兩國的大學決策模式和關鍵人員參與模式有何差異？本文之研究觀察、分析與討論兩個國家進行大學重組過程中面臨的各種回應。研究發現在大學重組過程中，台灣的大學在全球知識經濟發展中似乎是贏家，但卻面臨因學術自由削減而產生的相關問題；相反地，挪威的大學在全球知識市場的競爭上雖面臨落後的危機，但大學中的民主價值與學術自由卻仍極受珍視，不因改革而稍減。

**關鍵詞：**高等教育、重組、台灣、挪威

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# A Comparative Study of the Higher Education Restructuring of Taiwan and Norway

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## Abstract

This paper studies the process of university restructuring in accordance to the global demand for more efficient production, knowledge and competence. I am concerned here with the difference of the decision making and the norms taken by Norway and Taiwan. The result of my analysis shows that Taiwan, despite its success in the global knowledge economy, seems to dysfunctionally loses some academic freedom. In contrast, Norway may lose a little bit in the global knowledge market, but is still a champion in holding fast democratic values and academic freedom.

**Keywords:** higher education, restructuring, Taiwan, Norway

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## I. Introduction

All over the world universities face the same challenge. Government policies and/or market conditions are requiring restructuring. The former structure and former mode of knowledge and competence production are no longer relevant for the needs of key stakeholders. For public universities it is the government who puts on the pressure. For private institutions it is the market—students asking for teaching of quality and customers requesting quality research products. Over and above it is primarily the financial situation that pushes institutions to restructure.

Although restructuring appears as a converging global tendency, there are significant differences between countries, and the speed of restructuring processes is varying. The reasons for this are different norms, governance and finances. Universities' change strategies differ between countries due firstly, to whether the institution's operations are primarily steered internally or from outside. Secondly, the situation between countries differs depending on whether the actors in the university have shared or conflicting norms (Olsen, 2005). Restructuring will affect key actors, e.g. professors, and, quite often result in conflicts and resistance to attempts of restructuring (Currie & Tjeldvoll, 2001). These observations—general restructuring tendencies and the differences between countries when it comes to who is deciding university operations and to whether actors share norms or not—have instigated this comparison of two states' restructuring battles—Norway and Taiwan. The former is influenced by a Humboldt university tradition and culture, while the latter has particular influences from the Confucianism philosophy.

Both states have for some time been in a process of trying to restructure their higher education sector. This paper aims at responding to the following question: How do decision making system and key actors' norms differ between Norway and Taiwan? Main assumptions are, firstly, that Taiwanese universities primarily are steered by external factors, while Norwegian universities are governed by internal factors. Secondly, it is assumed that Taiwanese university actors primarily have shared norms and objectives, while the Norwegian counterparts have conflicting norms and objectives.

In the following sections, there will, firstly, be observed how globalisation processes push higher education for structural change, and affects conflict and resistance within

universities to such pressures. Then, structural change and related battles in Norway and Taiwan will be described, followed by an analysis of differences between them. Finally, concluding remarks are made about what are likely future developments in the two countries.

## II. Globalization and resistance to structural change

A key feature of the process termed globalisation is change in next to all organisations, caused by the new information technology and the logic of market economy. The new technology and the dynamic of the whole world as increasingly one market, make knowledge production and competence transmission crucial for competitiveness, both for corporations and for nations. Sociologist Manuel Castells has distinctly set the stage for analysis of social, economical and cultural changes globally, in his three volume work, *The information age: Society, economy and culture* (Castells, 1996). In the first volume, *The rise of the network society*, he outlines how all organisations in society are forced to change, because of what he terms "the information technology revolution".<sup>1</sup> In general, a networking structure will be dominant in all spheres, and it will have profound implications for management, marketing, culture and learning. For historical and cultural specific reasons Castells claims that the global power centre in the future will move from North America to East Asia/the Pacific Rim. He sees Confucian cultural values as a particular advantage in the world regions' power struggle under globalisation.

Comparative education researcher Martin Carnoy (1998) has furthered Castells' thinking into the field of education internationally. He claims that globalization is having profound impact on the field of learning and education, and on how countries shape their education policies. Two key aspects of the globalised world are that firstly, competition and competitive thinking is penetrating minds of people all over the world. Secondly, most key production processes are becoming highly knowledge intensive. Moreover, much knowledge is short-lived. Changing surroundings of organizations are leading to continued change of organizations themselves (cf. organizational learning), and implies

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<sup>1</sup> The second volume of Castells' work is titled *The Power of Identity*, and presents how both oppressed groups and crime can benefit from the new information technology. The third volume—*Towards the New Millennium*—is primarily analyzing while the structure of the Soviet Union had to collapse, or put otherwise, why this geographical area had to restructure—to fit with the new global economical and technological surroundings.

that new knowledge, for new solutions, is all the time required. In order to stay competitive, either it is an individual, an organization or a nation; it is paramount all the time to learn new knowledge, to see the solutions that will make the actor competitive. Effective access to information is a prerequisite, but equally important is that there are people who are creative in posing new questions, and seeing new solutions. Another word for this capacity is innovation. To stay competitive under globalisation requires being constructive, creative and innovative.

Nations acknowledging this situation turn sensitive to the quality of their systems for knowledge production (universities and research centres, public and private) and systems for transmitting knowledge effectively to the whole population, schools at all levels, and, they turn increasingly conscious about the challenge to organise life long learning for the whole population. The optimal level of knowledge achievement by every member of the nation will accumulate to the optimal human capital of the whole nation, and, by implication, indicate the nation's international competitiveness. This reality is background of national rankings in education. While OECD's (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) PISA(The Programme for International Student Assessment) studies (Olsen et al., 2001) for several years have been focusing the compulsory school level, recently also higher education has increasingly come under scrutiny, as, particularly seen by the two most cited rankings, Times Higher Educational Supplement's and Shanghai Jiaotong University's (Tjeldvoll, 2007). This development may be a consequence of competition in producing new knowledge. Castells sees universities as "the power stations for the global knowledge economy" (Castells, 1994). There is fair reason to wonder whether OECD will also create a "PISA for Universities". Interestingly, Finland (population 5 million) is right now establishing a world class university—Alvar Aalto University (Tjeldvoll, 2009). Is there any connection between this university ambition and the impressive PISA—achievements for 15 years olds, of this small nation? Its present education policy ambition is to merge and restructure three existing institutions into one, with the ambition of being able to compete with the best universities in the world (Tjeldvoll, 2009).

Restructuring is not necessarily a pleasant process—for the people working in the institutions that have to change. Research literature on international higher education is packed with articles where eloquent academic writers are fighting boldly against "the-

destruction of the university". This academic battle has gone on for more than fifteen years. The academic community has been met with wide criticism on the part of governments and industry of the function of the university. At the same time defenders of the research university have referred to the symbiosis between top university breakthroughs the likes of which we can see between Stanford University and Silicon Valley (Tjeldvoll, 1998).

The main argument of the academic community has been that the research university represents a decisive factor in the development of regional and national technology. Critics of the traditional university have claimed on their side that this kind of relationship is a myth. They have pointed to the phenomenon of inbreeding in the recruitment of researchers and that the university has not been sensitive enough to the present needs of society in the way of the production of knowledge and its transmission to user groups. They have questioned the relevancy of the present production of knowledge and education. How effective is the university's use of resources, and how does cost-consciousness operate in relation to the massive government funds the institution regularly receives (Tjeldvoll, 2000) ?

Some researchers claim, in consequence of this criticism, that there is an internationally pervading tendency for governments to exert more direct control over university than before (Buchbinder & Newson, 1988, 1990, 1991; Johnston & Edwards, 1987; Rosenzweig, 1992). Changes in the university policies of governments are particularly salient in countries which previously were characterized by a modest intervention from the State, countries with the so-called "state supervision model" for management of universities, i.e. Canada, England and the United States. Concretely governments are now simultaneously implementing two measures: decentralizing authority of decision-making from the government to the university, that is to say giving greater institutional autonomy than previously. At the same time the State is reducing its allocations to the university. Increased autonomy is expected to be translated into independent initiative on the part of the universities to maintain their budgets. This new economic reality is expected to result in the university attempting to market/sell some of its products to maintain its budgetary liberty of action (Tjeldvoll, 2000).

When this takes place, it becomes necessary for university management to find out which products have demand value. From here on arises a natural need for evaluation

and quality control of the products, and restructuring of the university organization. The university is no longer alone in the production of knowledge and higher education. Other institutions on the tertiary education level (research institutes and the junior and senior colleges) are showing interest in the same products traditionally produced by the university. More and more organizations themselves are defining their education needs and organizing their own learning processes, or they are contracting tailor-made training programs from the institution which offers the best product. In Norway the college sector is well on the way to entering the market with its products. The university seems to be forced into becoming more product and cost-conscious (Tjeldvoll, 2000).

In the next section attention is on the geographical foci of this paper——Norway and Taiwan. What have been reactions to pressures for restructuring the universities in these two states?

### **III. Structural change battles in Norway and Taiwan**

#### **A. The Norwegian scene**

##### **a. University leaders and university clients**

In 1997, a pilot study was undertaken on how key actors within the University of Oslo (UO) reacted to global tendencies of restructuring, connected to the label of "the service university". In concise terms, the Oslo-study (Tjeldvoll & Holtet, 1998) showed that the Government wanted universities to take on greater responsibility for their budgets in the future. In the pilot study on UO and the Oslo region, the following questions were posed:

(a) How do you assess a transition in the financing policy toward the universities - from mainly a responsibility of the State, to a greater dependence on selling research-based services to their clients in the region? (The respondents: Administrative and academic leaders at the UO);

(b) What are your expectations to the UO's possibilities of offering research-based services? (The respondents: User groups in the Oslo region).

In concise terms and in matrix form, the replies from the Oslo study Table 1 as follows:

Table 1 Assessment of the Service University at the University of Oslo by Key Stakeholders

Level	Negative(-)	Reluctant	Positive (+)
Central Administration (CEO+4 directors)			5
Central elected leadership (1)		1	
Faculty level (8 deans)	3	4	1
Department level (4 chairs)	4	3	1
Central public actors (4)			4
Regional customers (3)			3

Within the University of Oslo the following findings were made. Through its plans and programs the university had taken the consequences of the government's signals of future reduced allocations from the State. The central leadership was divided over the concept of the service university as a principle. Administrative leaders had conceptions that were more in accordance with plan documents and government intentions. Elected top leaders, amongst which tenured personnel expressed a more ambiguous view. Elected tenured leaders on faculty and institute level were negative to or hesitant of, the principle of a service university and its consequences. The most salient objection was that the university's traditional autonomy, its possibility to conduct basic research and its role as an independent critic of the political and administrative system, would be threatened if university budgets became dependent upon selling its services. The University of Oslo's possible "clients" in the Oslo region had positive expectations of an improved "client relationship" to the university, but conceived the university of today as "a closed door".

#### b. Professors at University of Oslo resisting globalisation

In 1999 another study was made at the University of Oslo, aiming at mapping the assessment of professors at three faculties (Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Education Sciences) (Currie & Tjeldvoll, 2001). The professors were asked to give their assessments of the following factors related to restructuring:

- (a) Governance and management,
- (b) Accountability,

(c) Financing,

(d) Use of information and communication technology (ICT).

The general finding was that among the sample of 30 professors roughly two thirds could be labelled a "resistance group" towards globalisation's effect on the university organisation. One third, on the other hand, expressed opinions in favour of the changes. While the majority group feared the loss of the university as an institution in its traditional sense, "the modernists" claimed the necessity of changing in order to survive as an independent university.

More specifically, the professors saw the upcoming changes in the management structures as giving more power to department heads, and, thereby threatening the university democracy. However, on the positive side, they had noticed fewer meetings and less administrative burdens. In terms of increased accountability, the observed change was a lot more forms to fill in than before. Bureaucracy, in a negative sense, was seen as having increased. In general the intended reforms were seen as "meaningless", as "taking time away from research" and the filling in of forms was seen as having no practical effect. On the other hand, indirectly the changes had a positive effect, in terms of not being followed by any negative sanctions, if the new paper work was not done properly, on time and so on. The administrative accountability measures did not result in any ranking of professors or other unpleasant measures. For the issue of financing, the professors all reported observation of reduced funding from the State to the universities, while they experienced that the colleges were relatively better off. Further, there was consensus in seeing programme research as having increased, while funding for "free/basic" research had been reduced.

There had also been noticed some pressure for the university to look for new funding sources (e.g. the private sector). In general all these changes were assessed as negative by a majority of the professors. The use of ICT was primarily a voluntary, individual business. Professor used the new information technology quite extensively on an individual basis, mainly e-mailing contact with colleagues nationally and internationally. For teaching and research projects it was not used very much, and, if used, mostly in a rather traditional way. Moreover, the respondents' comments made it clear that the University of Oslo had no systematic institutional policy on ICT. How was this situation assessed by the professors? As a main explanation of the relatively low and traditional level of

ICT——use it was referred to the lack of incentives to individual professors for using ICT. Another interesting assessment was that many feared ICT's dehumanising effects. Increased use of ICT was expected to create more distance between people.

#### c. Political attempts of change after 2000

In 2000, a Government Higher Education Commission presented a rather dramatic proposal for restructuring the higher education institutions (NMOE, 2000). In general, the proposal implied adaptation to the European Bologna model of higher education, especially in terms of degree system and European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS) (The European Calcified Tissue Society). Proposals in the following areas were refused by the Government, because of pressures from the professoriate and the university secretaries' trade union: more autonomy, appointment (not election) of presidents, external majority of university board members, university board's chair to be appointed by the Government, reduced number of professor representatives on the board.

In 2001 a new Government took office, and quickly drafted a revised law for higher education, where the entire refused proposals by the former government were restated (NMOE, 2001). However, during the hearing process, strong resistance to the new law from lobbying groups of professors and administrative staff resulted in a significantly modified proposal put before the law makers finally. One of the most important steps of restructuring——to change the manning of the top position (President) from being elected by internal stakeholders to be appointed by the board (with a majority of external members and definite control by the Government)——was watered out. Instead of the Minister's wish (appointment system) the law states that the university itself can choose between electing or appointing president. After the law became effective, one university only (The Norwegian University of Science and Technology) has chosen to go for the appointment system.

In 2007 a new government with a Minister of Education from the Socialist Party, appointed a commission for restructuring the whole higher education sector. It submitted its report in 2008, with wide-ranging suggestions for restructuring the sector, among other things removing the distinction between universities and colleges——by merging all institutions into four university regions of the country, and label the merged institution——the university of that region (NMOE, 2008). Each university would have many campuses. A number of smaller colleges were suggested closed. The Report created a

storm of protests from key stakeholders within the institutions, and from local politicians who cared strongly for continuing having independent institutions in their districts. The proposal was politically unacceptable and was laid aside. The Minister of Education soon after left office.

#### d. Status change by 2009

Despite a number of efforts by shifting governments, both left and right politically oriented, the Norwegian universities have mainly been resistant to significant restructuring efforts by the governments. However, the actors inside the university have not been in clear agreement about the objectives of the institution. Minority groups of professors have been in favour of constructive restructuring. Minor changes, mostly window dressing, have occurred. An increasing number of institutions use their now legal right to appoint both deans and department heads. The professors' general right to have 50% of their working time exclusively for research on topics decided by themselves has been changed. It is now left to the individual institution whether the professors should continue to have this right. There is a diffuse pressure for more accountability, but two factors make the whole situation very stable, and dramatic structural changes not likely. Firstly, the trade unions of the universities (professors of all categories, assembled in the "Researchers' Union", and, equally strong, the unions of the administrative personnel) have a strong lobbying power towards the political level. Secondly, the national economy is affluent. There is not a real need for increased accountability and efficiency. Despite considerable public rhetoric about the importance of quality higher education, the knowledge society and global competitiveness, no significant structural changes take place.

### **B. The Taiwanese scene**

The state monopolized the provision and regulation of higher education in Taiwan before the 1990s. In 1991, the number of total HEIs in Taiwan was only 50. In 1997, there were 78 colleges and universities in Taiwan. By 2008, the number had gone up to 147, including 102 universities and 45 colleges (MOE, 2009a). The number of students had increased by more than 2.5 fold. As a result, many HEIs in Taiwan are increasingly experiencing difficulty in recruiting students as the birth rate has dropped rapidly.

Besides the domestic competition for resources, there is a need for universities to compete internationally. In response to the challenges of the globalizing economy and

Taiwan's entry into WTO, Taiwan has tried hard to transform its higher education system to become more globally competitive. This has resulted in higher education institutions in Taiwan coming under great pressure to perform. Below, the authors will examine various high education initiatives as well as academics responses toward them.

a.Change of university governance

To face the new challenges, Taiwanese universities and colleges have been granted more autonomy. Universities used to be run with government supervision. In 1994, "the University Act" was revised, establishing the principles of university autonomy and academic self-determination. Universities are authorized to enroll students and prepare curriculum by themselves. Presidents and academic heads of various levels are chosen by the school with administrative boards being the highest decision-making body.

In 1996, legislation of the Statute Governing the Establishment of School Funds of National Colleges and Universities was completed and was enacted in 1999, giving public universities more power in the use of funds (Laws and Regulations Database of the Republic of China, 2001). The separation of government and education gave public universities more room to operate independently. Through relaxing certain regulations regarding revenues and expenditures, HEIs were expected to further increase their income and reduce spending and raise the operating efficiency of financial management. The revised University Act in 2005 is another example of the deregulation in higher education governance. Since 2005, presidents of national universities are appointed by a selection committee which consists of members from the universities, external parties and officials of MOE (Article 8) rather than gaining final approval by the MOE as in the past. This shows a simplification of the appointment procedures. In addition, universities are now allowed to appoint overseas scholars to be presidents as well as other key positions of the universities (Article 8 and 13). This amendment is intended to facilitate universities to recruit excellent academics world-wide.

Furthermore, the pay and working conditions of university teachers may vary more than in the past and teachers risk losing their jobs if they do not provide satisfying performance. In other words, the pay could be performance-related, depending on individual performance in research, teaching and other services provided to the university. The Ministry also allows universities to have more flexible organization structures and no longer tries to regulate the titles and the functions of organizations within the university.

### b. Political attempts of change after 2000

Political attempts of change in higher education after 2000 can be summarised as three key aspects: the ambition of creating world-class universities, restructuring of higher education institutions, and the establishment of a higher education evaluation mechanism for all.

First, due to the concern of limited resources and the need to create world-class institutions, the MOE found it was necessary to classify institutions by functions so that a greater portion of funding would be able to be invested in elite universities (Lu, 2003). This shows higher educational reform in Taiwan took a similar path with other parts of globe, such as Project 985 and Project 211 in China, COE Program in Japan and Brain-Korea 21.

The MOE started to provide competitive research funds with the objective of raising the level of university research since the 1990s. In 2005, the project "Plan to Develop First-class Universities and Top-level Research Centers" was launched. Fifty billion NT dollars (approximately \$1.7 billion USD) is distributed over a five-year period. By the end of 2005, twelve (research) universities were selected. For the government, the ultimate goals are: at least one local university will be ranked among the top 100 universities in the world within the next decade, and at least 15 key departments or cross-university research centres will become the top in Asia within the next five years (Lu, 2004).

This program has been very controversial. Many academics criticize that the government's the lucrative fund only goes to a small number of institutions and the means of allocation of government financial support attaches too heavy a weight on the research capacity of the institutions. Furthermore, the industry is increasingly dissatisfied with university graduates. The fact that most universities are struggling to cope with the changing nature of higher education—from elite to popular education and the growing complaints from the industry, has led to many discussions that more attention should be paid to teaching.

In response to these criticisms, the MOE launched the Program for Encouraging Teaching Excellence in Universities in 2005. NT\$1 billion was allocated to 13 universities for promoting good teaching practices and developing models of teaching excellence. Due to the wide recognition of the project by universities and all concerned parties, the annual budget was increased to NT\$5 billion from 2006 (see Table 2). In 2009,

this program has launched its second stage (2009—2012).

Table 2 Number of Universities Receiving Teaching Excellence Fund (2005—2008)

	Academic Year	Universities
General universities and colleges	2005	13
	2006	28
	2007	30
	2008	30
Universities of science and technology	2006	30

Source: Executive Yuan (2008).

Chen (2008) argues that the Ministry expects that the above two funding mechanisms will contribute to the formation of the HEIs classification system. In reality, virtually all HEIs are unwilling to be categorized as 'teaching universities' due to the huge research fund provided mentioned above.

Second, the government also adopts strategic approaches to facilitate intra- and inter-institutional integration in the higher education sector. In 2002, the MOE launched the Program for University Integration and Inter—institutional Cooperation. In 2004, it was renamed the Program for Promoting Integration between Research Universities. The aims of the program are to offer grants for universities to integrate their research resources, including manpower, facilities and techniques. For institutional integration, the MOE proposed three strategies: establishing cross-university research centres, formulating university systems and implementing mergers between higher education institutions (MOE, 2001).

The MOE has been successful in promoting institutional integration and deep collaborations by establishing inter-institutional collaboration systems. Since 2002, more university alliances have been formed, including Taiwan University System (TUS, headed by National Taiwan University), University System of Formosa (USFO), University System of Taiwan (UST, including National Tsing-Hua University, National Chiao-Tung University, National Yang-Ming University and National Central University). The purposes of forming alliances are for integrating resources and strengthening competitiveness of the institutions.

Merger is not widely accepted by faculty members in virtually all universities involved. The only successful case was the merger of the National Chiayi Institute of Technology and National Chiayi Teachers College in 2000. Started in 2005, MOE initiated another stage of merger negotiation, eight universities and colleges were encouraged to merge. MOE learned from the previous failures and tried to act as a coordinator rather than a commander from the top. A huge merger fund was promised as an incentive. The best example is the merger of National Tsing Hua and National Chiao Tung University in 2005. The MOE had implied that if the two prestigious universities would not merge, their chances of getting the Plan to Develop First-class Universities grant would be affected (Liberty Times, 2005). The deal collapsed eventually. Nevertheless, both universities had won the grant in the end of 2005. Still, most of talks have failed except the case of National Dong-Hwa University and National Hualien University of Education in 2008. The two universities finally reached an agreement after more than a decade's negotiation.

Finally, the government starts paying more attention to university evaluation in order to ensure the quality of HEIs. The first formal evaluation was conducted by the MOE in 1975. However, due to the lack of resources, higher education evaluation was not undertaken on a regular basis. The revised University Law in 1994 authorized the MOE to take charge of the evaluation. In 2001, the MOE started to grant universities the rights of self-accreditation. The revision of University Law in 2005 further authorizes universities to formulate their own regulations on evaluation (Chen & Lo, 2007).

In 2005, the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) was established and was commissioned by the MOE to conduct a nationwide university program evaluation and to prepare the groundwork for promoting a research ranking of universities. The evaluation started in 2006 and would be undertaken in a five-year cycle. This is the first evaluation involving all higher education institutions and programs in Taiwan. The assessment result is also open to the public. According to HEEACT, the focus of the evaluation is the quality of teaching. If a program cannot pass the evaluation for two consecutive years, the MOE would request the university to terminate the operation of the program. However, the fact is virtually all universities which failed in the first round manage to pass in the following year.

The University Evaluation Regulation promulgated in 2007, requires all universi-

ties to be evaluated by the MOE and its agencies. Thus, this regulation has provided the legal basis for university evaluation. Chen and Lo (2007) have argued, the evaluation system has become a tool for the MOE to implement its managerial governance, the development of which would be a challenge to academic freedom and university autonomy.

On the other hand, MOE also started another kind of 'evaluation'. In 2003, the MOE published the league table of the university research assessment for the year 2002. The major indicator of the assessment is the number of publications in the journals listed in SCI(Science Citation Index), SSCI(Social Science Citation Index) and EI(Engineering Index). This has drawn heavy criticism from the academics and they argued certain disciplines (social sciences and humanities) are less likely to have publications in internationally refereed journals because their research is restricted by language and social context (Chen & Chien, 2005; Lai, 2005). These arguments have continued until today. Although the MOE claimed that instead of an evaluation of the research outputs of the universities the assessment is only a reflection of the university's international publications (MOE, 2003b), this has had significant impacts on Taiwanese academics and their research work.

#### c. Academics responses

Higher education reform in Taiwan has pushed university managers as well as academics working along with the ideas of cost-effectiveness and value for money. As a result, university managers are more proactive to face changes and exercise more discretionary power in financial arrangements and decision-making process.

On the other hand, as most universities share a similar set of criteria in their staff assessment (Peng, 2006), this has resulted in academics striving only for research and publications while the role of teaching is ignored and marginalized in the university. In various conferences and seminars, scholars criticized the current higher education policies such as plan to develop first-class universities and pursue for top research centers, the institutional and external evaluation mechanisms for overemphasizing the importance of journal articles in English and undervaluing the contributions of books and translated publications in the fields of humanities and social sciences. In response to the discontents and anxiety in the academia, HEEACT claimed that the overemphasis on the number of publications in internationally refereed journals would be reviewed (HEEACT, 2007). Even though it seems that the Taiwan government has recognized the resis-

tance from the academics, not much has been done so far and the chilly climate for academics in social sciences and humanities remain.

#### d. Status change by 2009

Currently, the government is determined to learn from the experience of Japan to pursue university corporatization, regardless, the issue is still much debated in Taiwan. Due to the low birth-rate, the MOE further issued Standards for Student Admission Quotas and Resources at Universities and Colleges in 2009 (MOE, 2009b). The MOE has made it clear that it is impossible for any higher education institution to increase the enrolment of student. Universities have to justify the quantity and quality of staff at departmental and program levels and, for the departments/programs which have no satisfying performance in recruitment and in evaluation, their quota of students will be reduced.

In 2009, MOE released the new version of the Program for Developing First-class University and Top Research Centers, which means this program is moving into the second phase. Beside reaffirming the quantitative goal that at least one local university will be ranked among the top 100 universities in the world within the next decade, and at least 10 key departments or cross-university research centres will become the top in Asia within the next five years, the MOE has requested universities must promise to move towards corporatization so that they will be eligible to apply for funds. The fund will also give priority to those HEIs which are planning a merger in a near future. A Memo of Understanding and detailed merging timetable should be included in the application forms. These universities also have to promise that the major merger procedures should be completed within 5 years (MOE, 2009c).

In the summer of 2007, it came as a shock that the admission rate of HEIs reached 96.28%. In 2008, the admission rate increased to 97.1% (University Admission via Examination Committee, 2007, 2008). In reality, and despite university entrance examination, virtually anyone who applies to the university can be admitted. This has triggered the sense of crisis from certain universities. They realize the key to survival is to merge with other universities. Thus, despite the earlier failure of adopting university merger, more and more universities have started the process of renegotiation (see Table 3). However, the negotiation posts great challenges for Ministry of Education as well as for universities. Even for universities (National College of Physical Education and Sports, National Taichung Physical Education College, National Hualien University of Edu-

cation National Dong Hwa University) which have agreed to merge, these deals could still collapse at any moment.

Learned from the past failures, instead of imposing the timetable, the MOE allows universities to work according to their own pace. Another huge merger fund is promised as before. For this round, the government targets the nine teachers colleges. Among them, three have been merged or upgraded as universities earlier. The six remaining teachers colleges were upgraded to universities of education in 2005 under the condition that their intake of students in teacher training programs should be reduced by half in 2007 and they should start the negotiation of merger with neighbouring universities and complete the merger by 2010.

Table 3 The Merged Cases Discussed in Taiwan in Recent Years

Year	Universities involved	The new university
2000	National Chiayi Institute of Technology National Chiayi Teachers College	National Chiayi University
2008	National College of Physical Education and Sports National Taichung Physical Education College	National Taiwan Sport University
2008	National Hualien University of Education National Dong Hwa University	National Dong Hwa University (The negotiation failed once in 2003)
Failed		Notes
2002	National Taiwan Normal University National Taiwan University of Science and Technology	Initiated from the MOE.
2005	National Tsing Hua University National Chiao Tung University	Initiated from the MOE.
2005	National Formosa University National Yunlin University of Science and Technology	Both were interested.
2005	National Kaohsiung Normal University National Kaohsiung University of Applied Sciences	Both were interested.
2005	National Taichung University of Education National Chung Hsing University	Both were interested.
Currently under negotiation		Notes
National Tsing Hua University National Hsinchu University of Education		Likely to succeed.
Taipei Municipal University of Education Taipei Physical Education College		
National Pingtung University of Science and Technology National Pingtung University of Education National Pingtung Institute of Commerce		
National Taiwan University National Taipei University of Education		

Above all, the reforms in Taiwan in the last decade have shown the government's intention in steering the higher education development. Even though the autonomy of higher education institutions has seemed to be strengthened, it does not mean that the government is weakening. The academics in Taiwan are unable to resist the government's reform up to this point.

#### **IV. The Comparison of Norway and Taiwan**

In order to highlight reasons for restructuring differences Taiwan and Norway in terms of steering and norms about the function of universities, four visions of western universities, developed by Johan P. Olsen will be applied (Olsen 2005).

##### **A. Four different visions of (European) universities**

In Table 4 below, four main visions or models of the western university are contrasted, in terms of their (a)rationale or constitutive logic, (b)criteria of assessment, (c)reasons for autonomy and (d)change. The two upper fields are similar in the sense that they both have universities where there are shared norms and values. In terms of steering, the one to the left has internal steering, while the one to the right is externally steered. The two lower fields are similar in terms of having conflicting norms within them. In terms of steering the one to the left has internal steering, while the one to the right is steered by external forces.

Using Olsen's visions as framing model, steering and norms of universities in Taiwan and Norway can be contrasted.

##### **B. University Steering and Norms in Norway and Taiwan**

###### **a. Steering**

The Norwegian university fits quite well with the vision of the lower left field. The internal steering power is obvious, reflected in the successful resistance strategies towards the Government's different efforts to take charge, and to make the institutions more effective means for national higher education and research policy goals. Taiwan, on the other hand, quite clearly reflects the vision of the upper right field of the model. In Norway, universities are primarily steered by internal factors—the interests and values of academics, administrators and students. This internal power (by tradition) makes it

Table 4 Four Visions of the University

Conflict \ Autonomy	University operations and dynamics are governed by internal factors	University operations and dynamics are governed by environmental factors
Actors have shared norms and objectives	<p>The University is a self-governing community of scholars</p> <p><u>Constitutive logic:</u> Free inquiry, truth finding, rationality and expertise.</p> <p><u>Criteria of assessment:</u> Scientific quality.</p> <p><u>Reasons for autonomy:</u> Constitutive principle of the University as an institution: authority to the best qualified.</p> <p><u>Change:</u> Driven by the internal dynamics of science. Slow reinterpretation of institutional identity. Rapid and radical change only with performance crises.</p>	<p>The University is an instrument for national political agendas</p> <p><u>Constitutive logic:</u> Administrative: Implementing predetermined political objectives.</p> <p><u>Criteria of assessment:</u> Effective and efficient achievement of national purposes.</p> <p><u>Reasons for autonomy:</u> Delegated and based on relative efficiency.</p> <p><u>Change:</u> Political decisions, priorities, designs as a function of elections, coalition formation and breakdowns and changing political leadership.</p>
Actors have conflicting norms and objectives	<p>The University is a representative democracy</p> <p><u>Constitutive logic:</u> Interest representation, elections, bargaining and majority decisions.</p> <p><u>Criteria of assessment:</u> Who gets what: Accommodating internal interests.</p> <p><u>Reasons for autonomy:</u> Mixed (work-place democracy, functional competence, realpolitik).</p> <p><u>Change:</u> Depends on bargaining and conflict resolution and changes in power, interests, and alliances.</p>	<p>The University is a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets</p> <p><u>Constitutive logic:</u> Community service. Part of a system of market exchange and price systems.</p> <p><u>Criteria of assessment:</u> Meeting community demands. Economy, efficiency, flexibility, survival.</p> <p><u>Reasons for autonomy:</u> Responsiveness to "stakeholders" and external exigencies, survival.</p> <p><u>Change:</u> Competitive selection or rational learning. Entrepreneurship and adapting to changing circumstances and sovereign customers.</p>

Source: Olsen (2005: 9).

very difficult for the government to change university practices. In Taiwan, the external power steering by the government is quite strong. Different from Norway, Taiwan's government is more successful in changing its universities, aligning them to national power.

#### b. Norms

Also in terms of norms (university values) the Norwegian university seems to fit with the lower left field—the vision labelled "The University as a representative democracy", because different internal stakeholders have conflicting norms. Academic staff, administrative staff and students have different values, or motivation for their activities. The conflicting norms become visible in the board discussions, where the different groups are all represented, and behind them are powerful trade unions. The "loosing norm-stakeholder" is the Government, representing the wider democratic society. In Taiwan there seems to be a higher level of shared norms, although distinct dissatisfaction is expressed by academic staffs in the humanities and social sciences. However, the dominant impression of Taiwan is that shared norms of the academe are reinforced by the Government's incentives for research. The problem reflected by the critiques from humanities and social sciences is that there may be a lack of balance between the natural science and "human science" disciplines.

Summing up the differences in steering and norms of the two states' universities, it seems fair to claim that both are inspired by the Humboldtian model (the upper left field of Table 4). However, the two states seem to come out diagonally opposite in terms of vision—Taiwan seeing the university as an instrument for national policies, and Norway seeing it as a representative democracy, steered by the (conflicting) values of the different internal stakeholders.

## V. Discussion

Continuing to apply Olsen's model, a comparison of the four distinctive features of the four fields may contribute to seeing more clearly the differences between the university sectors of the two states, in terms of steering and norms—and why the restructuring battles are different.

### A. Constitutive logic

While the most important concern in Taiwan universities seems to be effective or-

ganisational implementation of national policy goals (e.g. more effective leadership), the Norwegian primary concern is interest representation, election, bargaining and majority decisions. While the strongest driving motive in Taiwan is national competitiveness preparing for the global knowledge economy, the Norwegian primary logic seems to be equal participation of different interests groups—based in university democracy as a fundamental value. It might be claimed that while the overall rationale of Taiwan universities is achievements for global competitiveness, the Norwegian overall rationale is not such achievements, but the democratic processes for making decisions. In Taiwan, the achievements are the most important. In Norway, the processes are the most important

### **B.Criteria of assessment**

In Taiwan, evaluations are means to ensure effective and efficient achievements of national purposes, which is a logical consequence of the constitutive rationale. To a quite high extent, evaluations are external. Poor achievements will have negative consequences for the institution/department, and, opposite, high achievements pay off, in terms of getting extra funding. In Norway, evaluations are mostly internal, and, when external, mostly peer-based. Consequences of the evaluations are seldom dramatic. More than effecting specific consequences, the evaluation is a means to accommodate internal interests. The Norwegian "relaxed" evaluations are logical seen in relation to the constitutive rationale, where democratic processes are more important than achievements.

### **C.Reasons for autonomy**

In common, the two states have given great autonomy to the universities. However, the logic behind is rather different. Taiwan's institutional autonomy is connected to the purpose of producing achievements more efficiently. This thinking fits well with general arguments for decentralisation. While over all goals are decided centrally, the implementation and achievement of goals are more efficient when it is left to the local level to decide on "how to do things". Norway's main argument is the value of academic freedom, for the individual professor, and the institution. This is a key part of the Humboldtian university legacy (cfr. upper left field of the model, Table 4). The autonomy principle in Norwegian universities is also connected to the value of work place—democracy, which is a widespread value and principle in many sectors of Scandinavian working life.

### **D.Change**

Why changes in universities occur——actual restructurings——plays out highly differently in the two states. In Taiwan, changes, as restructuring of universities, comes as a function of national priorities. The universities do not have the choice of "opting out". The Government/Ministry of Education executes distinct leadership in terms of taking the necessary steps to make the universities better instruments for national knowledge and competence policies. The Norwegian context is quite the opposite. Strictly speaking, all government efforts to change the sector have mostly failed, the reason being the different values and interests of the universities and the Government. Any change depends on bargaining and conflict resolution, and changes in power of different internal stake holders, their interests, and how the different groups are able to make alliances. The lack of change in Norway is also due to the strong financial situation of the country, and the general strong power of trade unions. These background factors make it very difficult for the Government to achieve the efficiency policies that it thinks necessary, from a global competitiveness perspective.

## **VI. Concluding remarks**

The purpose of this paper was to respond to the following question: How do decision making system and key actors norms differ between Norway and Taiwan? Relating developments in the two states to Olsen's four visions——it is fair to conclude that Taiwan fits quite well with the vision labelled "The University is an instrument for national political goals", while Norway fits even more closely to the vision termed "The University is a representative democracy".

However, taking into account the "dissidents" of Taiwanese universities, staff at the humanities and social science faculties, as well as the Norwegian Government's continued efforts to change the university sector——the two states may have in common a drift towards the vision of the lower right field of Olsen's model——"The University is a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets". In this vision there are conflicting norms——such as what is identified in Taiwan——and intensified steering from outside——in Norway indicated by the Government's relentless efforts to make the university a better tool for national interests. Over and above, in both states, there is likely to

be an increased influence from the market. Both national and international clients looking for the competence and knowledge they need to stay competitive in their businesses will increasingly be challenging the relevance of the universities production knowledge and competence services.

In an assumed rather rough future global knowledge economy, it looks like Taiwan is a lot better prepared than Norway, in terms of becoming competitive in the knowledge market. However, Taiwan may be left with a deficit on the democracy account, which may have dubious effects on the quality of competence and knowledge production. Lack of academic freedom may harm creativity and innovation. Norway, on the other hand, may risk going bankrupt in the international knowledge market, however, with its democracy flag flying high.

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