

The Role of Leadership and Governance in Changing Institutional Behavior

Reframing Universities in the Balkans

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ABSTRACT

Over the years higher education in the Balkans has been characterized by the context of turbulent change. When compared with their counterparts in Western Europe, the universities of South East Europe (the Balkans) are clearly faced with both context specific and global challenges. Among the global challenges is surely the notion of Europeanization of higher education inspired by the values of the Bologna Process. However, the universities in the Balkans are also faced with certain local challenges, which are manifested through political instability, economic recession and substantial loss of societal values and norms caused by the large-scale regional conflicts in the 1990s. Yet, while attempting to re-establish cooperation at regional level across the (recently created) borders, the Balkan universities are still being cast to margins of the global revolution due to the consequences of nearly a decade of international isolation and political disintegration (Balkanization).

Nowadays, nearly all of the regional countries find themselves in a process of transition and have initialized reforms of many aspects of their social, economic, and political life. The higher education reform appears to be high on the agenda of the new democratic governments throughout the region. Furthermore, it is generally agreed that struggling economies, outdated academic cultural traditions and obsolete organizational structures of the universities are among the problems facing the higher education in the Balkans today.

This study investigates the dilemma if the shift in traditional university leadership, and possibly a changed governance model will instigate the universities in the Balkans towards a greater responsibility for own development, less dependence on the State, and more innovation in the overall institutional performance. By drawing conclusions and recommendations from a case study research, this study identifies the intricacy of institutional leadership in a given governance model, and the challenges and opportunities that universities meet in the process of adaptation to the new governmental concepts and changes in the environment.

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PART ONE: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The first part of this thesis introduces the research problem and the main research questions, as well as their justification. Later on, the problem statement is analyzed in relation to the theoretical frame of reference and a literature review. The main purpose is to provide an insight into diverse observations and viewpoints that deal with the chosen topic, which was introduced by the key research question and basic assumptions. Yet, “theories easily become theologies, preaching a single, parochial scripture. Each theory offers its own version of reality and its own vision of the future. Each also offers a range of techniques for reaching the Promised Land” (Bolman & Deal 1997, p. 10).

1. Introduction

The title of this thesis implicitly asks if the shift in traditional institutional leadership and possibly a changed governance model will instigate the universities in the Balkans towards greater responsibility for own development, less dependence on the State, and more innovation in the overall institutional performance. The whole issue is about perception of institutional leadership in a given governance structure, and the challenges and opportunities that universities meet in the process of adaptation to the new governmental concepts and changes in the environment. The concept of “university leadership” can be recognized as a tool to apply innovation and lead the change in an institution in the desired direction. Therefore, leadership, as a key concept of this study, is perceived as an ability to cope with change, to establish new direction, and to get institutions and individuals to move in that direction. In that sense, leadership is inextricably linked to change, because change doesn’t just happen, it ought to be led (Scott 2004). On the other hand, the notion of institutional autonomy signifies the capacity of universities to organize their own affairs without obstruction from the State (Mora 2001). For that reason, the level of university autonomy is related to the governance model.

Based on the characteristics of different higher education systems in the world we can distinguish between the two general strategies of higher education governance: (1) the governmental strategy of central planning and control that corresponds with the *state controlled model* of higher education; and (2) the governmental strategy of self-regulation that can be recognized in the *state supervised model*, which is rooted in both, the United States system of higher education, and in traditional British higher education (Van Vught 1994, Bray 2003). The experience indicate that tight central planning and control of higher education has generally resulted in uniformity and rigidity of higher education systems¹, especially in the moment when the diversity, responsiveness, as well as emphasis on quality and relevance are becoming essential.

¹ The state controlled model of higher education governance is deeply rooted in Russia, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in the Balkans.

Most of the higher education policies today are directly affected by the global trends and pressures, as well as by the demands to introduce market values in higher education, which is followed by the need to set in a rather entrepreneurial style of leadership as a substitute for traditional academic approach to university leadership. Van Vught (1999, p. 350) claims that universities have to innovate, which means they need to reconsider their roles and positions towards becoming “more entrepreneurial” in the main areas of their action. Therefore, a traditional university now faces new challenges in providing education and training services to its patrons. Leaders of the institutions do not only face these challenges, but also the governments, which need to reconsider the existing legal framework in order to facilitate considerable changes of the system.

The increasing internal and external demands placed on higher education not only are reflected in increasing concerns about efficiency, but also bring forward the importance of institutional management. Although over the years much attention and debate has focused on issues like strategic planning and management, relatively little attention has been paid to the effects of particular governance structures on the performance of institutions (Goedegebuure and Van Vught 1994, p. 11).

In a state controlled model the autonomy of institutions is fairly limited, whereas in a state supervised model there is more space for genuine university autonomy, as well as for development of true institutional leadership. Moreover, leadership of change in higher education is a key issue in the last five years internationally, and will further continue to affect the heated debates. By focusing on institutional leadership in relation to governance, which defines the relationship between universities and government (Middlehurst 1999), this study can be perceived as an initiative to put the education management as a subject area, or a field of study and research, back on the academic and political agenda in the Balkans. For that reason, the emphasis is put on the present higher education reform in a challenge to analyze different milieus influencing this very complex and versatile level of education. However, the aim is also to shed a light on the role of governance and leadership in changing institutional behavior (i.e. from rigid, to responsive and resilient) due to the predetermined patterns of governance and evolvement of different leadership styles within institutions. Therefore, one of the focal points in this study is to investigate how well today’s universities in the Balkans are responding to the challenges they face.

1.1 The research rationale and motivation

One of the ideas that started me on this research path is the concept that archetype of the Balkan higher education system is very traditionally structured, with a strong belief by the academic community that only the lack of financial resources restrains it from being perfect (Turajlic 2004). Regardless of this deeply rooted prejudice, I believe that, to a great extent, many issues can be related to the so-called “human factor” and its bias with regard to institutions and their development. The idea is that an institution can learn patterns (idiosyncrasies) of intention, movement and activities of its users (the humans), and thus, adjust itself accordingly. It is the humans that make up the organizations (such as universities) and their role, especially the role of those who are in the leading positions, is of critical importance for institutional wellbeing.

By taking an ontological position of constructionism, according to which the “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (Bryman 2004, p. 17), it is suggested that an organization, such as university, is a *negotiated order* and an *emergent reality* that is in a constant state of change accomplished in everyday interactions of the people that participate in reality construction. The people of utmost influence, whose actions can significantly affect institutional performance, are those in the leading positions in an institutional hierarchy. That is why they are perceived, as the key actors in addressing the question how rigid, responsive or resilient are the universities in the Balkans. Hopefully, the user's patterns may possibly evolve over time due to change in governmental steering, training and development, competence building, and learning of the new ways of management aimed at institutional capacity building, which can result in alteration of institutional behavior.

My personal motivation to venture in research on higher education management, particularly in the Balkans, is not only linked to the fact that I have been working in the higher education sector in Serbia since 2001, but it is also related to my professional and academic

involvement in 2003-2005 SAMM² project titled “Education Management Research and Training Project for the Universities in Serbia, Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro”.

1.1.1 The research questions and their justification

Following a clear problem statement that scrutinizes the role of university leadership and predetermined governance model on behavior of institutions in a changing context, this study strives to answer the following research questions. Besides the main research questions, the core assumptions are also given in relation to the possible answers.

- 1) How rigid, responsive or resilient are the universities in the Balkans?

By and large, the universities in the Balkans are rigid to a great extent because they are organized as old-fashioned institutions of higher education with intrinsic fragmented structure³ that is becoming inadequate in the new phase of their development. Due to their structure, the universities lack the sense of identity and are hindered in fulfillment of their basic mission ensuing in rigidity. On the one hand, a responsive institution easily adapts to the challenges in its environment, while on the other hand, a rigid institution opposes to making any change in institutional behavior meaning that change is discarded without openly considering whether the new behaviors are achievable or desirable (El-Khawas 2001).

- 2) How does university leadership, in relation to governance, affect the institutional performance?

Due to a very unusual combination of centralized and decentralized structure⁴, one expects to find the role of institutional leadership within majority of the universities to be largely diminished and incidental. This is also due to a rather limiting legal framework and prevalence of the state controlled model of university governance, which made it very hard to develop the necessary managerial skills. In addition, *Management* in itself was a

² A cooperation project between the Norwegian School of Management BI, University of Oslo, and the universities in Serbia, Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, in the framework of the cooperation programme for South Eastern Europe “Research and Higher Education 2000 to 2005” organized under auspices of the Norwegian Research Council.

³ Universities are no more than weak coalitions of highly independent faculties.

⁴ The centralized management originates from the law, which regulates the organization and functioning of the institutions up to details, whereas highly independent faculties and weak position of university rector feature the so-called decentralization.

forbidden word for a long time during communist rule throughout the region. Furthermore, introduction of the so-called socialist “*self-management*” model⁵ additionally complicated the situation because, in such circumstances, the concepts of accountability and responsibility became quite vague.

- 3) How does university leadership affect creation of institutional strategies with particular emphasis on tradition of collective decision-making?

By focusing on tradition of collective decision-making it would be interesting to see to what extent the university leaders in the Balkans have managed to influence creation of institutional policies (e.g. enrolment policy, internationalization policy or human resource policy). It would be quite remarkable to see to what degree the university leaders in the Balkans have developed strategies to steer the institutional development, whilst coping to overcome the system’s barriers. The main assumption related to this question is optimistic and refers to the existence of “good practice” examples, which are scrutinized in the empirical part of this study.

- 4) What is the relationship between institutional autonomy and leadership in a changing context?

The university autonomy in the Balkans is a rather odd type of institutional “independence”. In the case when the universities represent loose networks of highly sovereign faculties, university autonomy actually means the autonomy of the faculties. This concept is a byproduct of undemocratic regimes and one of the sophisticated modes of political control over higher education (Novak 2005). On the one hand, this rather extreme decentralization of institutions, articulated by the weak position of university rector (mainly an etiquette function), and the strong faculty deans (executive function), “is [seen as] a blueprint for disaster” (Bolman & Deal 1997, p. 113). On the other hand, profound control by the state is far from the true university autonomy, collegial democracy and academic freedom. Related to the widespread debates on autonomy issue it appears that university autonomy in the Balkans was, and still is, perceived as a shield from State political influence on universities.

⁵ In Former Yugoslavia, and especially associated to collective decision-making;

Therefore, at present, every rather serious attempt to substantially alter the higher education system is frequently perceived as an attack at institutional autonomy.

1.2 Focus of the study: higher education in the Balkans

The focus of this study is considerably supported by the fact that research on higher education in the Balkans is yet scarce and sporadic, and only the recent developments have initiated some exploratory studies in this part of the world (Vlasceanu & Purser 2002, Tjeldvoll *et al.* 2005). This came about as the last resort in the era of well-developed research on higher education in the western countries. For that reason, the research on Balkan higher education is not only desired, but it is a necessity that could also serve as a tool in assisting the universities to learn about themselves, and comprehend the scope and significance of changes, especially in the context of the emerging European Higher Education Area.

Some authors have claimed that higher education plays a decisive role in socio-cultural and economic changes in transition countries (Milenkovic *et al.* 2003, Stojanov *et al.* 2005). In transitional economies the role of higher education should be to create a sufficient and adequate intellectual and professional infrastructure by being constantly aware of the new socio-economic challenges. However, as it is explained in the following account, the institutions of higher education in majority of newly emerged countries appear to be yet unprepared for such an imperative role. Majority of the universities in the Balkans suffer from the so-called traditional fragmented structure that offers no perspective for rapid and successful change that would be in line with objectives of the Bologna Declaration⁶.

As the first step in approaching the reform process, many of the universities in the region have ventured in what is known as external institutional evaluation process in the framework of different international organizations⁷. During such process, for the first time since they were founded, the universities had to carefully examine their own organization and structure,

⁶ In June 1999, 29 European ministers of education met in Bologna to create the foundation for establishing a European Higher Education Area by 2010, as well as to promote the European system of higher education worldwide. A joint declaration on the development of European Higher Education Area was a result of this initiative.

⁷For instance, institutional evaluation of Serbian universities was done in 2001 to 2002, whilst the Macedonian and Bosnian universities were evaluated in 2003 to 2004 under the framework of EUA (European University Association).

as well as their performance by engaging in self-evaluation procedure. This was quite unusual, and yet very useful experience in mapping the common problems that haven't been seriously approached before. A snapshot taken during the external institutional evaluations of the Balkan universities didn't show very bright picture of the institutions. The review teams that visited many regional universities noted that numerous internal constraints and inefficiencies are due to, first and foremost, such inappropriate disjointed structure of the universities. Fragmentation, as inheritance from the past, is thus, spotted as the main source of problems related to the issues of universities' organization, governance, management and administration, as well as related to teaching, learning and research. Bolman and Deal (1997) have an interesting observation, noteworthy in the context of the external evaluation process.

The evaluation process often takes the form of high drama. Prestigious evaluators are hired, and the process receives considerable publicity. Participants wear more formal "costumes" than usual. New roles are enacted: evaluators ask penetrating questions, and respondents give answers that portray the world as it is supposed to be. The results are often presented dramatically, especially when they are favorable. Negative results, in contrast, are often couched in vacuous language with high-sounding recommendations that no one is likely to take very seriously. Attempts to solve the problems disappear after the ceremony is over (Bolman & Deal 1997, p. 245).

This is, regrettably, what could be asserted for the process of external institutional evaluation of the Balkan universities, as it appears that recommendations of the review teams still haven't been seriously considered. In the following Chapter, Bolman & Deal's (1997) Four-frame Model, as the main theoretical frame of reference for this study, is applied to the universities as specific organizational forms by emphasizing how these frames fit for the Balkan universities. However, firstly, an introduction to the methodological approach is provided in the subsequent section.

1.3 Methodology

Notwithstanding the fact that the methodological considerations are presented in more detail in a separate part of this thesis, an introduction to the methodological approach is provided. According to the methodology chosen, this research is carried out in the context of a qualitative research strategy by stressing the relevance of the stated research problem rather than a clear hypothesis to be tested. Related to the above-mentioned ontological position that fosters social reality as continually changing and emergent property of humans, a qualitative

research strategy seemed highly justified. As a rather exploratory study, this research focuses on a case study design as the main framework for data collection. Besides an information-rich description of the context and the selected case university, data collection was facilitated through qualitative interviewing of the top-level managers (that shifted in the previous electoral period) within the case institution. Some focused interviews were conducted with the university employees, both administrative and academic staff to explore their views on institutional leadership and its relevance for institutional change. Aside from these primary sources of data collection, some secondary data were collected through the process of analysis of policy documents, reports, and position papers.

1.3.1 Limitations of the study

The present study has certain limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the study and its contributions. For that reason, it is important to critically evaluate the whole study and its results. However, some of these limitations may be seen as fruitful avenues for future research under the same theme.

Firstly, this study has focused on a phenomenon that is very extensive and complex i.e. university leadership, having in mind that “the leadership is universally offered as a panacea for any social problem” (Bolman & Deal 1997, p. 294). Clearly, this represents a challenging task regardless of the more specific interests that the study may have, such as development of teaching, learning and research, quality assurance, and the like. Therefore, the leadership as the main research concept for this study has been studied from a rather narrow empirical perspective. Secondly, selection of a single case study design normally brings forth many limitations concerning the generalization of the results of this study. Thus, the empirical setting (the selected case university) can only be seen as a kind of pilot context for scrutinizing leadership process. Aside from that, there were only 15 participants who took part in the complete study. In general, the informants gave lengthy and very informative interviews clearly demonstrating their deep understanding of the leadership process. Thus, by learning something more about this particular case, one might eventually also learn something more general about the studied phenomenon. Thirdly, it is important to note the lack of resources to conduct an empirical study of a larger scale by using multiple case study design (possibly selecting another, or two other universities in the West Balkans). Therefore, to study leadership phenomenon through multiple case study design, is clearly one of the

future research challenges. Fourth, this study is also limited in geographical terms, as it doesn't cover the whole region of the Balkans. It only focuses on the West Balkan⁸ countries with exception of Croatia⁹.

Moreover, the researcher's biases limit the interpretations and conclusions of the study. Even though influence of the researcher's political values, interpretative method, and a case study design are accepted elements of the qualitative research methodology, these factors are also limiting. In terms of the researcher's biases, I had to look at my preconceptions in an attempt to gain clarity and vision. Thus, when I began my research, I believed that higher education leadership in the Balkans is largely underdeveloped due to my own experiences. Even though some of the available literature supported this, I attempted to also provide evidence to empirically test such claims. This suspension of judgment allowed me to follow and hear what the research respondents were truly saying to me. However, the impetus for this study was my active and continued belief that innovative and resourceful university leadership in the Balkans is quite uncommon.

Finally, due to all above-mentioned reasons, this study does not provide any comprehensive conclusion. However, through combination with other similar studies or many different sorts of data, it should, hopefully be able to appropriately inform the academic and scholarly community about the state of the art of the leadership phenomenon in the Balkan higher education.

1.3.2 Structure of the study

This thesis is divided into four major parts. The theoretical framework and a literature review are presented within Part I, which is further divided into four chapters. The introductory Chapter 1 presents the topic of the study, research rationale and motivation, as well as the main research questions and their justifications. In addition, an overview of the methodological approach is also provided. Chapter 2 establishes a general theoretical

⁸ The countries of West Balkans, as defined by the Research Council of Norway, are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro (see <http://www.forskningsradet.no/english/>)

⁹ Croatia was the only country not participating in the BOSHMAN and SAMM cooperation projects between the Norwegian School of Management BI, University of Oslo, and the universities in BiH (BOSHMAN), as well as the universities in Serbia, Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro (SAMM), in the framework of the cooperation programme for South Eastern Europe "Research and Higher Education 2000 to 2005" organized under auspices of the Norwegian Research Council.

framework by applying Bolman & Deal's (1997) Four-frame Model on the Balkan universities, by highlighting issues concerning institutional autonomy, governance and leadership traditions. Chapter 3 addresses the changing context and the capacity of universities to adapt to changes in the environment by underlying Scott's (2004) nine key lessons of change management in higher education and eight change management myths. Chapter 4 scrutinizes the role university leadership in a changing context.

Part II is mainly focused on the methodological considerations and consists of Chapter 5, which portrays the research design, the main methodological approach, framework for data collection and the related issues.

Part III, which deals with the data presentation and analysis, consist of five chapters. Chapter 6 outlines context specific data related to the milieu of higher education in the region of West Balkans. Chapter 7 exemplifies an information-rich description of the selected case university based on the analysis of institutional policy documents, archival materials and annual reports. Chapter 8 displays an empirical data collected during qualitative interviewing by highlighting the respondents' views upon the main research concepts outlined in the introductory part of the thesis. In Chapter 9, the research topic is approached from a conceptual point of view that involves presentation and analysis of data collected through interviews with the top-level managers (central and faculty level, former and the present), as well as through presentation and analysis of interviews conducted with the university employees, both administrative and academic staff. Chapter 10 focuses on results and discussion of the relevant empirical data in the light of the main research concepts of this study.

Lastly, Part IV is comprised of concluding remarks, emerging recommendations and prospects for further research.

2. Universities in the Balkans in a Four-Frame Perspective

Different global and local processes of change have put special focus on how universities function. Voluntary or by force, the universities will have to adapt to changes that are now facing them in form of the market forces, technological development, emergence of the new knowledge providers, as well as challenges imposed by students and employers (Van Vught 1999). Additionally in the Balkans, there are internal political pressures and contextual divergence that further confronts the universities. But before the Balkan universities face the challenges in their environment, they would have to face their internal problems historically related to their culture, as well as to their fragmented structure. As claimed by Mora (2001) *University culture* is what determines the behavior of members of the academic community, as well as the governance and decision-making process. In order to assess the structure of Balkan universities, and in relation to that, the specific modes of governance and management the institutions are scrutinized through Bolman & Deal's (1997) Four-frame Model, as a theoretical frame of reference for this thesis.

2.1 Four-Frame Model

Organizations are frames of human activity, and they direct social landscape. As Bolman and Deal (1997, p. 5) put it, "the challenge of finding the right way to frame our world has always been difficult, but it has become overwhelming in turbulent and complicated world of the late twentieth century". Like other organizations, the universities are also specific kinds of reality constructions, which refer to the organized form of learning. According to Tjeldvoll (1995, p. 72) "Education [can be defined as] organized learning that has an aim or intention in the context of an organization, or an institution". Tjeldvoll further claims that everywhere around the world, "there is a phenomenon called *school* (an educational organization with a context), where *a teacher* and *student* meet, and *teaching* (method) of some *content* or subject is done, in order to realize an *aim* of some school owner (mandator)" (*Ibid.*). The university, as an educational organization is also composed of these elements. So the universities, as other organizations, are occupied with humans who have different understanding of what is going on, or what should be happening (Bolman & Deal

1997). Each perception of what is the issue carries a glimpse of through, however, none of these perceptions are comprehensive enough to fully understand the organizational reality.

In their book *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership*, Bolman and Deal (1997) explore reframing process in action in the scope of the Four-frame perspective. First, they identify the *structural frame* that emphasizes goals, particular roles, procedures and rules, as well as formal relationships. Problems associated to structural frame arise when structure does not correspond with the situation. Thus, the structural problems may possibly be applicable to the Balkan universities, whose structure, as it was emphasized above, has been characterized as outdated, inadequate and unfit.

Aside from structural frame, there is a *human resource frame* that sees an organization as an extended family, populated by individuals who have needs, feelings, prejudices, abilities and limitations. From this perspective, the challenge is to adapt organizations to people and their needs.

On the other hand, *political frame*, which is rooted in the work of political scientists, perceives organizations as arenas of antagonisms and competitions, or even jungles where different interests compete for power and prevalence. Bargaining, negotiations and compromise are a part of everyday tactics in such environment.

Finally, the *symbolic frame* treats organizations as temples, theaters or carnivals dominated by rituals, ceremonies, different stories, heroes and myths, rather than rules, formal roles and goals (*Ibid.*). This last frame corresponds well with the perception of the university's traditional role over the centuries, as this academic symbolism appears to be a part of cultural tradition of the universities in Western Europe. However, later in this chapter, we will see if actors did play their roles as well in the organizational dramas of the universities in the Balkans. Problems arising from the symbolic perspective appear when actors don't play their roles as it was meant for them, when symbols lose their meaning, and when ceremonials and rituals lose their effectiveness.

Learning to apply all four frames on organizations such as universities ought to facilitate the development of deeper understanding and appreciation of their internal dynamics. The overview of the Four-frame model is displayed in the table 2.1, showing how each of the defined frames has its own image of reality in terms of the following: (a) particular metaphor

for a type of organization; (b) central organizational concepts; (c) image of leadership; and (d) basic leadership challenge.

Table 2.1 Overview of the Four-Frame Model

	<i>Frame</i>			
	<i>Structural</i>	<i>Human Resource</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Symbolic</i>
Metaphor for type of organization	Factory machine	Family	Jungle	Carnival temple, theater
Central concepts	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships	Power, conflict, competition, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
Image of leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy	Inspiration
Basic leadership challenge	Attune structure to task, technology, environment	Align organizational and human needs	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning

Source: Adapted from Bolman & Deal (1997)

2.1.1 University structure

Attuning organizational structure to the real situation is not an easy attempt, especially if the structure has been long withstanding changes in the environment over time. As I have noted above, the present fragmented structure of the universities in the Balkans is becoming unacceptable, because the universities appear to be no more than simple sums of their constituent parts. According to such structure, the faculties (as independent institutions of higher education) accountable directly to the Ministry of Education have their own statutes, governing and executive bodies, as well as their separate educational and employment policies. Independent legal status of the faculties led to numerous limitations that now hamper the universities painless transformation into integrated institutions. The image of the present disjoint structure of the universities in the Balkans is shown in the figure 2.1.

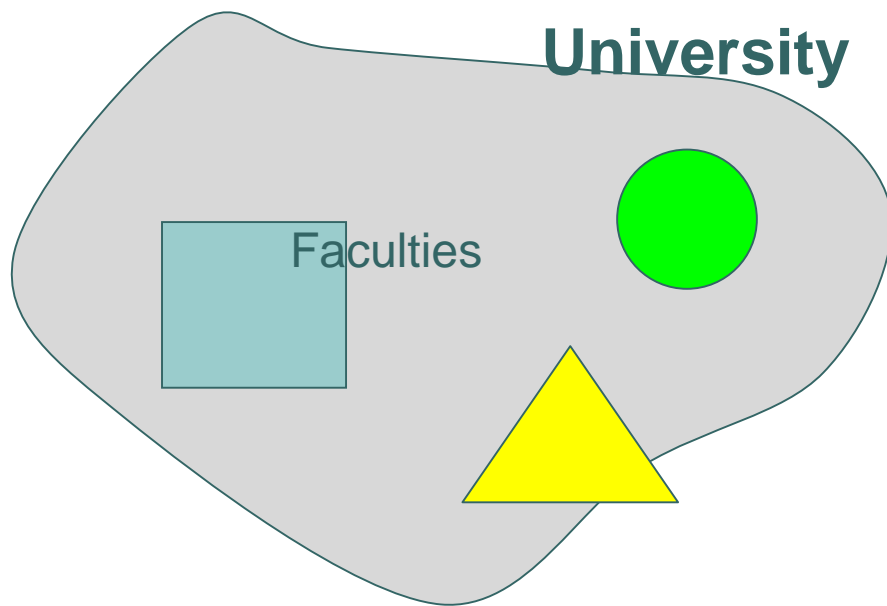


Figure 2.1. Structure of the Universities in the Balkans (Source: Stojanov et al. 2005)

These complex structures are limiting the possibility of development, especially of some uncommon successful parts, which become nothing more than unnoticed pockets of excellence in the overall increase in mediocrity. This, above all, results in the lack of initiative by professors to improve the quality of teaching and other academic processes. Due also to their fragmented structure, the universities in general have poor internal communication tools and practices, which means that it is often very difficult to spread the information rapidly and effectively across all faucets of the institutions. In some cases, there are large parts of the university relatively unaware of the efforts of university leadership in a number of fields. According to Turajlic (2004, p. 54) the situation where actually each faculty represents one highly specialized university (independent institutional development, own administrative infrastructure), inevitably leads to:

- Multiple layers of unnecessary and costly duplications in a number of fields (teaching, laboratories, libraries);
- Multiplication of administration and services on every level (each level has separate accounting department, student services, international offices, etc.) resulting in many wasted resources and high degree of inefficiency;
- Inadequate use of the existing equipment and space;
- Unbalance between the authority of rector (mainly protocol function), and dean (executive);
- Difficulties in organization of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary study programs;

In the context of Bolman & Deal's (1997) structural frame, formal structure has a positive impact on organization if it facilitates its activities. On the other hand, it has a negative impact when it gets in the way of organizational development. Having in mind that the structure of the Balkan universities withstands in fairly, socially and politically, unstable environment, the pattern of roles, relationships and goals no longer corresponds with reality. Thus, the structural frame, aside from structural problems, doesn't seem applicable to the Balkan universities, at least in the sense of Bolman & Deal's reasoning.

Preassure for Restructuring

A differentiated structure of the universities could be a solution that may possibly make it much easier for them to react to diverse environmental demands (Sporn 2001), as it appears that "the right balance between enough centralization and a lot of decentralization is the art of governance" (De Woot 1996, p. 23). A differentiated structure can be achieved by making the university's sub-units relatively autonomous to design and adjust their services, but at the same time, they need to be accountable for their actions to the central university leadership. In her research on *Adaptive Universities* Sporn (2001) discusses that universities need to think about new organizational forms, for instance, by introducing some form of institution-wide integration mechanisms to overcome the structural barriers. According to Sporn "existing university structures throughout their bureaucratic and collegial nature often hinder collaboration, adaptation and entrepreneurial behavior" (*Ibid*, p. 130). Furthermore, a study of Miller and Friesen (1984), cited in Bolman and Deal (1997, p. 72), scrutinized functional and dysfunctional structural patterns. According to their study, troubled organizations fell into one of the following three categories:

- 1) *Impulsive firms* – fast growing organizations, controlled by one, or few top people in which structures and controls have become too primitive, and the firm is increasingly out of control where the profits are falling rapidly, and survival may be at stake.
- 2) *Stagnant bureaucracies* – older; tradition-dominated organizations with outdated product lines. A predictable and placid environment has lulled everyone to sleep, and top management is slavishly committed to old days. Information systems are too primitive to detect the need for change. Lower-level managers feel ignored and alienated. Many old-line corporations and public bureaucracies fit here.
- 3) *Headless giants* – loosely coupled, feudal organizations. The administrative core is weak, and most of the initiative and power resides in autonomous departments or divisions. With no real strategy or leadership at the top, the firm is adrift.

Collaboration is minimal because departments compete for resources. Decision-making is reactive and crisis-oriented.

In view of the above outlined basic structural characteristics of the Balkan universities it appears that they could regrettably fall within third category of troubled organizations, as they are loosely-coupled with weak administrative core and highly sovereign departments (faculties); no strategy at the top, hindered communication and cooperation between the faculties that compete for scarce resources. In the case where there are strategies missing, the decision-making is always reactive and crisis-oriented. Additionally, they, however, have some of the distinctiveness of the second category, as they are predominantly tradition-dominated (committed to old glory), with underdeveloped information systems. Restructuring of such 'headless giants' would be a high-risk task in a short term since restructuring might produce confusion and resistance (*Ibid.*). On the other hand, success or failure of restructuring in the longer period of time depends on how well the new structural model aligns the organization with its environment.

2.1.2 Human factor

As already mentioned, universities are organizations populated by humans and their role, especially the role of those in the leading positions, is of crucial importance for institutional wellbeing. However, university autonomy cannot be considered as equal to collegiality (Mora 2001). On the contrary, autonomy refers to the right of the institution (not of its employees) to set its own objectives and manage its own affairs without interference from the State. Related to the population that inhabits universities, it is further argued that academics belong to a special class of workers. They possess special knowledge as the means of production, and are entrusted a special task of advancing that knowledge (*Ibid.*). Bolman & Deal (1997) emphasize that organizations exist to serve human needs. Thus, people and organizations need each other, since on the one hand; the organizations need ideas, energy and talent, whilst people need careers, salaries and opportunities. When the fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer. On the other hand, good fit benefits both; as individuals find meaningful work and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed.

Many organizations either lack an explicit human resource philosophy, or ignore the one they claim to have. Tjeldvoll (2004a, p. 2) argues that "the human resources are crucial, and in

that sense, former Yugoslavian countries are fortunate like the rest of East/Central Europe and Russia. Education systems under communism and socialism have developed an impressive 'human capital', which is still there, and may prove to be a huge advantage in the knowledge economy under globalization". This rather optimistic observation is true in part. However, it seems that governments of the countries emerged after the breakup of former Yugoslavia, as well as universities, still haven't developed a human resources policy to prevent a massive brain drain that has devastated intellectual and professional infrastructure of the countries in the last decade of the twentieth century. Moreover, if we take a look at the Balkan universities, and again as a result of traditional structures still in place, the universities do not have trained and professional administrators capable of providing the essential core functions a modern university now needs (EUA 2002a). Nevertheless, as the universities move towards greater autonomy and a strengthened university level coordination, so will the need for highly trained and competent university managers and administrators increase.

In addition, if the academics are to advance the knowledge they possess then the need for staff development policies is important, since the successful work of the university rests essentially on the work of its staff and their interaction with the students. In the overall poor state of Balkan universities where the teachers are not motivated to improve their teaching practice, the staff development policies need to focus, among other issues, on new approaches to teaching, modern methods of communication and on mutually beneficial interaction with the students. As I have emphasized, strong and independent faculties have their own human resource policies, albeit it is highly recommended that human resource issues be governed at the university level¹⁰ in order to assure that university can develop its institutional profile according to its priorities (*Ibid.*). Furthermore, election and promotion of the teaching staff should be linked to programs, which can be phased out or redesigned if the need arises rather than linked to professional chairs typical for Balkan universities, which are much more rigid structures. Besides, it looks like that many employees of the Balkan universities feel little responsibility for the success, or failure of their institutions, because traditional management patterns force employees to be dependant on superiors, without encouragement of independent initiative.

¹⁰ Based on proposals from respective department, or faculty.

Odd perception of institutional leadership

One of the main problems of university leadership in the Balkans is that it is usually wrongly comprehended in emblematic, and a rather formal way. Reframing an organization, or simply implementing change, requires leadership at the top, but also at all levels down the institutional ladder (De Woot 1996). Strategy and structure are of course a precondition for success, but they are not enough. If people are not motivated to become actively involved in a process of change, nothing will happen. Therefore, in order to facilitate participation of people, motivation, energizing and educating devices are essential, which in turn, necessitates empowerment of people and leadership at every level (*Ibid.*).

However, those who run Balkan universities (deans and rectors) seem to have a rather odd understanding of their position. Traditionally, being in a leading position within a typical Balkan university is, in most cases, perceived in a symbolic fashion as a “throne” and/or “honor”. Hence, it is hardly comprehended that being in a leading position in an institution of higher education, one has merely an imperative “duty”, and a very demanding “job” of steering the institution towards a sustainable development. Because of this out of the ordinary perception of leadership, managers of Balkan universities resist democracy and participation, as they fear they will lose prerogatives they currently enjoy and believe to be essential for success. As Bolman & Deal (1997, p. 149) argue: “when managers feel vulnerable, they revert to self-protection. They skirt issues or attack others and escalate games of camouflage and deception. Feeling inadequate they camouflage their inadequacy”. This increases uncertainty and ambiguity and makes it further impossible to perceive errors.

Leadership, whether shared or individual, plays an important role in university’s effectiveness and satisfaction of its members. In situation of the “crumbled” Balkan universities, which were heavily controlled by the State, it was indeed hard to develop a true institutional leadership. Thus, conservative and traditional academias of the Balkans hardly fit within Bolman & Deal’s (1997) human resource frame. However, as it is demonstrated in the empirical part of this study, there are some examples of good practice related to the emphasized human resource perspective.

2.1.3 Power relations

Because of the fact that politics and political decisions very much affect the destiny of higher education, largely in transitional Balkan societies, the reform processes are usually politically driven. One of the common myths found in the literature about higher education refers to the university as a space free of politics and power relations (Felt 2004). This is sort of constantly referred to in the debates about higher education reform. Regretfully, quite often it becomes obvious how deep politics and power relations have penetrated the university structures (*Ibid.*). Bolman & Deal (1997) argue that it is disturbing to see political forces corrupt decision-making. As a consequence, things are changing at slow pace and progress shall be noted only when the reform process becomes professionally, rather than politically inspired.

Taking their sign from the Soviet Union, the East European communists used education as an instrument for legitimizing their control on ideological grounds. For instance, studying Russian became compulsory for all students, and dialectical materialism became the basis for all social sciences (Bucur & Elkof 2003). Central control of education has proven essential not only to make certain that the right moral lessons are taught, but also to regulate the affairs with the West, which was perceived as a threat to social and political stability (Mc Lean 1995). When the society is in crisis – the universities, as the highest scientific and educational institutions are not spared, not merely because political power by its nature has a tendency to control every segment of society. Strong political influences on universities in the region are not only actual and informal. They are also usually strictly formalized and legalized, because the law often gives power to the political structures to directly influence forming and content of the university's managing bodies.

According to Bolman & Deal (1997, p. 163), political frame views organizations as alive and loud political arenas that host a complex networks of individual and group interests. The following five characteristics summarize the political perspective:

- 1) Organizations are *coalitions* of various individuals and interest groups;
- 2) There are *enduring differences* among coalition members in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perception of reality;
- 3) Most important decisions involve the allocation of *scarce resources* – who gets what;

-
- 4) Scarce resources and enduring differences give *conflict* a central role in organizational dynamics and make *power* the most important resource;
 - 5) Goals and decisions emerge from *bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position* among different stakeholders.

If we take into account that universities in the Balkans are weak *coalitions* of highly autonomous faculties among which there are *enduring differences* in basic values and interests, the *scarce resources* are also evidently present. When poverty is being shared, it usually leads to *conflict* and *power relations* facilitated through constant *bargaining* and *negotiations*. In view of the above-mentioned, it appears the traditional academies of the Balkans are, in the present stage of their development, best fit into Bolman & Deal's (1997) political frame.

Adding up to the political drama of the universities in the Balkans, the student uprising that had major political impact in democracy upbringing throughout the region is noteworthy. In that sense, the student movements (in the Balkans) were usually associated with the context in which the university became the site of social movement activity where such movements actually represented a demonstration against totalitarian regimes (Morrow & Torres 2003).

The political frame emphasizes that in the times of lasting differences and limited resources, disagreement is inevitable, and the power is a key resource (Bolman & Deal 1997). Scarce resources force trade-offs, and coalitions form as a tool for negotiating with more odds at prevailing. In terms of another key issue of political perspective – the power, its distribution and exercise, it is noteworthy that the most controversial issue related to the Balkan universities is ‘the ultimate fight for power’ of sovereignty, because deans of independent faculties are the real centers of power, and not the Rectorate. It appears they are not willing to give up their power so easily, and that is the main cause why ‘the spears are breaking’ over the issues of the higher education reform in the Balkans, especially in relation to the possibility and intensity of institutional integration mechanisms.

Moreover, in situation where there are independent decentralized nodes of decision-making, hierarchical conflict occurs featuring the possibility that lower levels ignore or subvert upper management directives (*Ibid.*). In the case of fragmented Balkan universities, the usual discourse of university-faculty relations is characterized by the notion of “us” and “them”, whereas the sense of belonging to an institution is hindered, and there are no “we” as the horizontal conflict occurs in interfaces between independent departments, or faculties.

2.1.4 Academic symbolism

Since the first universities were founded in Europe in thirteenth century, the word ‘university’ that originated from the Latin language actually meant unity in diversity (*universitas*). Since their foundation, the universities are the most significant academic institution of our time (Zonta 2002). By starting to hold lectures and debates in the city squares and streets, in homes of masters, or in churches, the universities went on renting premises, publishing curricula and textbooks, endowing themselves with statutes, matriculation registers, and symbols of authority (i.e. seals, coat of arms, scepters, etc.). Symbols illustrate and express an organization’s culture – the intertwined pattern of beliefs, values, practices and artifacts that define for members who they are, and how they are to behave (Bolman & Deal 1997). Bolman & Deal, further, assert that symbols contribute to finding the meaning and clarity, especially when used in chaos and confusion. From the point of their foundation, many ‘new’ European universities sought to adopt, or imitate, the traditions and customs of ancient universities in relation to their ceremonial practices, academic dress, etc. (Boylan 2002). Therefore, when the universities are at stake, surely their character is revealed and communicated through their symbols.

The universities in the Balkans are also very prone to academic symbolism, as Rectors often wear togas during graduation ceremonies and other celebrations. There are, as well, historical moments and glorious stories of the universities that represent the equilibrium of their presence and past. Rituals give meaning to daily life, and in that sense, traditional one-way teaching can be described as a kind of ritual where the teacher is elevated in the eyes of those who listen and learn. However, in the era when the essence of universities’ existence gravitates from *magistri* (teachers) to *discipuli* (students)¹¹, traditional and ritualistic teacher-oriented teaching cannot withstand.

Related to this ritualistic perception of teaching, it would be interesting to note here how some traditional academies of the Balkans perceive the notion academic quality. For instance, at one institution they claim to foster quality assurance since the university was founded and this is documented by the fact that former students of that university tend to be very successful on the market. To illustrate the whole issue about that university’s position

¹¹ In Latin language;

in relation to quality, it is notable that, in one of the university's policy documents, it was referred to a sounding slogan *Gloria discipuli Gloria magistri est*¹². However, this rather glorious perception is far from contemporary denotation of quality assurance, which is in European terms, comprehended as a way of systematic approach to assuring quality in higher education.

On the other hand, decision-making process, especially in the fashion of collective decision-making, seems to be more a ritual than rational. Thus, university council meetings may not resolve problems, though they often lead to more meetings. It is needless to say that teaching council sessions often resemble meaningless rituals of raising hands in a desired manner. However, tradition of collective decision-making is reviewed in more detail later in this thesis (see Section 9.3.1).

In sum, Balkan universities over time developed a context specific symbolism that differs from the Bolman and Deal's (1997) description of the symbolic frame, and thus traditional academic symbolism of European universities.

2.2 Summary

This chapter aimed to illuminate four differing perspectives of organizations in order to enable better understanding of their internal patterns, strengths and limitations, by describing central organizational concepts of the Four-frame Model, and its application to the universities in the Balkans.

The structural frame underlies structural limitations of universities and dilemmas emerging from that aspect of institutions. The human resource frame focuses on the human factor and its effect on institutions, whereas the political frame emphasizes university environment as a sensitive political ecosystem. Finally, the symbolic frame spells out fundamental symbolic elements within universities while defining organizational culture and its role with regard to institutional performance.

¹² Latin proverb from Epistle 194 of Benedict Gerberius, a Benedictine monk who became the first French pope, Sylvester II, who reigned from 999-1003 AD – Translation in English: The glory of students is the glory of professors.

3. The context of changes

When compared with universities of the Western European countries, particularly those of the EU member states, the universities of South Eastern Europe (the Balkans) are clearly faced with both context specific and global challenges. Among these challenges is surely the notion of Europeanization of higher education inspired by the values of the Bologna Process; political, economic and social transition; as well as re-establishment of cooperation at regional level across the (recently created) borders (Vlasceanu & Purser 2002). In the turmoil of today's fast-paced era, the coherence between institutional resilience intensity, management and governance correlation, and the given developmental context, determines the competitiveness of universities in the main areas of their activity, i.e. teaching, learning and research. However, the universities, especially in the Balkans, are faced with many internal and contextual pressures to which they find it intricate to react.

As argued by Gornitzka (1999), universities may be seen as being in a state of pathological dilemma suffering from 'institutional scleroses'. However, there are some primary characteristics of the higher education institutions that influence their capacity for change. First, as we have seen above, there is some structural distinctiveness that affects capacity for institution wide action. Second, there are certain cultural identities and features of universities, which are important factors in assessing their capacity for change (*Ibid.*). The first trait concerns the governance structure and the distribution of authority within universities. Thus, in Humboldtian tradition with great emphasis on academic freedom, the potency of collective action at institutional level is low and the diffusion of power in decision-making process is strong. "This leaves a weak role for institutional leadership" (*Ibid.*, p. 12). A related structural characteristic articulated in severely high degree of differentiation, results in the notion that "each department is a world in itself" (*Ibid.*). On the other hand, the notion of culture has been associated with studies focusing on symbolic side of higher education (Sanz & Bergan 2002). Hence, the culture and social structure define universities as to whom they are, what is their purpose, and their role in the society.

3.1 Changes in public steering and management

At the turn of the twentieth century, under the pressure of the second wave of Globalisation aggravated by an immense technological development, the role of the nation state in Europe is weakening (Turajlic 2005). At the same time, universities gradually lose their special status in society, which introduced the need to redefine their role in Europe.

Adapting governance arrangements is presumed to influence on a type of social behavior within universities that governments in democratic societies would like to alter. Public steering model is supposed to guard universities from changing political regimes, shifts in coalitions, and short-term interests of different interest groups. Public steering largely depends on government policy, which can be defined as “a public statement of an objective, and the kind of instrument that will be used to achieve it” (Gornitzka 1999, p. 14). However, the governments, particularly in post communist societies, often rule out objectives and policies without delineating a line of action how these goals will be achieved. It is claimed in theory that there is a relationship between the state steering models and innovative behavior of the higher education institutions. Thus, if the basic objective is to stimulate innovativeness within universities, the state controlled model is less successful than the state supervised model (Van Vught 1994). As a consequence, the efficiency and quality of the higher education systems in the Balkans may well increase as the system becomes less regulated and controlled by the government.

The Government-University relations in the Balkans have intensified the crisis at the turn of the twentieth century. The internal efficiency of the system is quite low, whereas the costs per graduate and dropout rates are high. The percentages of students finishing their studies in time are extremely low. For instance, in Serbia, the first comprehensive analyses of the higher education system showed a devastating fact that out of the total number of students enrolled¹³, as much as the two thirds of them never finish their studies. On the other hand, those who manage to graduate, take averagely double the time than it is intended to complete the studies (Turajlic 2004). In order to annul the damage that has been accumulating over decades, due to ideologically driven higher education policy, the universities are startled waiting for the government’s top-down legislative decision that will enable considerable

¹³ Each year about 28 thousand of high school graduates enters the higher education system in Serbia (Djuricic 2003).

changes of the system. This might be possible only by setting in a rather liberating legal framework, which will encourage and support change within universities.

In much respect, it is difficult to envision the future without realistic approaches to education management (Cuckovic 2005a). As Tjeldvoll argues, “a new understanding among important stakeholders of the university as an organization is manifested in changed principles for university management. The ideas of ‘new public management’ have also reached the ‘ivory towers’” (Tjeldvoll 2004b, p. 6). Moreover, it is supposed that from the New Public Management point of view, the ultimate aim of shift in governance is to affect the behavior of institutions. With regard to change in higher education management, such influence can address the performance of academic staff, which in turn also may stimulate the change of government’s behavior (Maassen 2003). As argued by Tjeldvoll (2001), in times of profound and far-reaching change, there is an essential need for competences regarding university management, especially if the universities ought to equilibrate the needed market orientation and traditional values of academic autonomy. In his research on *Service Universities* Tjeldvoll, furthermore, asserts that creation of competent management core is not less important for universities, than for any other multifaceted organization.

With the traditional autonomous research university as a point of departure, in which tenured staff in practice has all the power to decide over principal resources, one can now sight out a gradual trend towards the other end of the continuum, where control over resources is relegated to the administrative leadership of the university as a whole (Tjeldvoll 2000, p. 21).

Essentially, it can be asserted that there is a need for more effective and constructive management capacity at the central level of the university. However, the units and departments need to also be professionally strengthened, which will make the institutions relevant for public and private users.

3.2 Changes in research and teaching

As already emphasized, the universities are surrounded by the whirlpool of change forces. In the era when “knowledge management and information processing are essential to the performance of organizations operating in the informational global economy” (Castells 2000, p. 165), universities are also positioned from national to global arenas. Accordingly, universities need to also comprehend that they are no longer the remote sources of invention

and creativity, and thus, if they continue to play their 19th century role in research, they run the risk of becoming marginalized (Van Vught 1999). Having in mind that basic research, as the ultimate source of knowledge, is largely located within research universities, as well as within public research system around the world, this means that basic research is open and accessible (Castells 2000). Castells further argues that research system is becoming global as it relies on persistent communication between the scholars around the world, since the scientific community has always been to a large extent international, if not global. Moreover, science is organized in specific fields of research, concentrated around the networks of researchers who interact through publications, conferences, seminars, and academic associations meaning that contemporary science is characterized by permanent on-line communication. For that reason, an advanced academic research and good educational systems are necessary but not sufficient conditions for countries, organizations and individuals to enter informational paradigm (*Ibid.*).

Shifting from the global to the local, and back to our universities in the Balkans, it is noteworthy that, given a rather long period of international isolation and decayed education systems that were seriously affected by the poor state of national economies, the current level of investment in research in the Balkans is very low. This results in reduced research capacity at the universities, and weakened, or non-existing research strategies (EUA 2002a). In terms of teaching, a regrettable general image resulting from the academic isolation of the 1990s is manifested through existence of outdated, highly repetitive curricula, which are thought using largely outdated and internationally non-relevant literature and materials. As well, teaching methodologies in use are seriously out of date (*Ibid.*). Moreover, courses and programmes are burdened with too many teaching hours, leaving not enough time for students' individual learning. As well, there is a little use made of alternatives to traditional ex-cathedra teaching, such as group work, problem oriented learning and the like. Thus, having in mind the effect of teaching practices to student achievements, there is an urgent move to shift towards a philosophy of student-centered learning, instead of teacher-centered teaching.

3.3 Feasibility of innovation within universities

As I have emphasized in preceding chapters of this thesis, the ability to introduce innovation makes the universities more leveled for changes, and thus, more flexible. As pointed out by Tjeldvoll and Welle-Strand (2004, p. 11) “one of the largest challenges in today’s global competitive environment is to create innovations and changes for organizations to stay ahead in the competition, or to be able to cope with new demands from their stakeholders”. Thus, in a changing context, the aptitude to innovate is essential tool for university’s survival. Clark (1998), as cited in Van Vught (1999) and Tjeldvoll (2001), developed five basic characteristics of innovative, i.e. *entrepreneurial universities*. According to his study, the universities that want to change need to feature the following:

- 1) *A strengthened steering core*: which means that universities cannot longer depend on weak central management, as they need to become more responsive, and quick acting in reaction to their environment;
- 2) *A development periphery*: identifies the need to establish mechanisms to relate to the outside world, by reaching across the traditional boundaries. In order to accomplish that, the universities need to establish a special unit;
- 3) *A diversified funding base*: emphasizes the need to find alternative sources of funding (i.e. self-earned income), in order to become less dependent on the State;
- 4) *A strong academic heartland*: can be exemplified by the necessity to have strengthened academic units, that are stimulated to accept entrepreneurial culture;
- 5) *An integrated entrepreneurial culture*: lastly, the universities that want to change need a culture that embraces change; a work ethic and a set of beliefs that are common to all faucets of the university and that become essential to its identity.

Furthermore, the universities that want to change need to foster creativity, which is essential part of innovation. Creativity here refers not only to teaching, learning, and research, but also to governance and management practices. Ridderstråle and Nordström (2002) have argued that creativity actually means breakup with traditional structures and frames. They further assert that in the world where the Board meetings kill creativity, old structures have the main word. Thus, creativity and innovation are prerequisites for introduction of the new

structures. However, innovation requires experimenting, and experiments are risky. For that reason, an innovative environment has to be highly tolerant towards mistakes (*Ibid.*). This is especially important in managing change within universities.

3.4 Managing change within universities

In a changing context, the change management becomes an important issue. The universities are, as Castells (1994, p. 38) affirms, “the crossroad of new international order.” With the massive change in the world economy towards an information-based system, universities would appear to become even more vital to economic growth and transformation in developing countries (Carnoy 1994). The implications of accelerating change on education are inevitable and numerous. According to Carnoy (1999), changes in the world economy provoked three kinds of responses in the education sector. Among these are: (a) substantial reforms determined by the demand for skills on the global market; (b) reforms driven by the notion of public cost cuts in education; and (c) reforms motivated by the call for improvement of the important political role of education “as a source of social mobility and social equalization” (Carnoy 1999, p. 37). It is now clear how change in education is a precondition for a nation’s survival under new circumstances because knowledge growth becomes the most important energy for social progress (Hernes 2001). Additionally, more knowledge is needed and embodied in today’s products and services. Thus, an information and communication technology, namely “the Internet, is at the heart of the second wave in the information revolution” (*Ibid.*, 2001, p. 24). For that reason, change management strategies are of utmost importance in adapting to changes in higher education.

In his research on change management entitled *Change Matters: Making a Difference in Higher Education*, Geoff Scott (2004) argues that higher education is expected to play a central role in social and economic transformation in some countries, whereas in others, it is seen as being a key export. This last observation is related to the phenomenon of ‘brain drain’ that is a common negative occurrence in the Balkans, especially during the last decade of the twentieth century. However, in the era of intensification of social migration process across the national borders, as well as in the era of mobility preached by the followers of Bologna process, the phenomenon of ‘brain drain’ in Europe is mutating into what can be defined as ‘brain circulation’. To remain viable the universities must be able to react timely

and wisely to the combination of change forces that penetrate them. They need to learn the nine key lessons of change (Scott 2004, p. 5):

Lesson N^o 1 – *You cannot address every relevant change idea that comes along, but the priorities must be set and process of change must be based on evidence, robust tracking of data on satisfaction and impact. It must be, therefore, ensured that what is to be pursued is consistent with university’s core values, mission and overall direction of development.*

Lesson N^o 2 – *Change is a learning process not an event, and the motivation of key players to engage in, and stick with it is crucial to the successful implementation.* Change in higher education is essentially about the staff that is to put each development into practice by learning how to do something new. If staff does not have to do something new, there is no change, only a ‘window dressing’. The phenomenon that drives the learning process is motivation. Hence, staff will not engage in changing process, if they are unable to personally see that doing so is relevant, realistic, clear, and most importantly feasible.

Lesson N^o 3 – *A university’s culture is a powerful influence on motivation.* Key influences on motivation are the peer groups and collegial networks that university staff engages in. These groups develop a particular culture (‘the way we do things around here’), whilst the universities develop an overall culture. However, this overall culture is composed of wide range of subcultures, which feed the micro-political process that can help, or hinder change. As Scott asserts, it is also known that change in university culture takes a lot of time (unlike change in climate, which can be quite rapid).

Lesson N^o 4 – *Change in one area of university activity typically triggers a need for change in other areas.* For instance, if there is a plan to develop distance-learning system, consequently this raise a need to assure that university’s IT infrastructure is robust enough to deliver the support for implementation of the plan. One of the dilemmas may be how to surmount a lack of alignment between upgrading projects in their core activities of teaching, research and community engagement on the one hand, and on the other, developments in their support, infrastructure, budgeting, administration and the like.

Lesson N^o 5 – *Successful change is a team effort, not a solo one.* Great amount of care needs to be given in selecting the team members who ought to work on a particular change project. The team leader must not only be an expert in the area upon which change is focused, but he

or she must also have an emotional intelligence and a capacity to optimize contribution of each member of the team.

Lesson N^o 6 – *It is necessary to focus simultaneously on the present and the future.* Strategic change and continuous quality improvement are the two sides of the same coin. The former is about how to best strategically locate a university to make certain it stays in alignment with a swiftly changing external environment. The latter is about how to best ensure that existing practice operates as well as possible and continues to deliver the benefits intended.

Lesson N^o 7 – *Change is cyclical not linear process.* The process of developing, realizing, monitoring, refining and leveling up a change operates in a cyclical, not a linear fashion. Hence, no significant change ever works in practice exactly as it was anticipated.

Lesson N^o 8 – *Need to look not just inside, but also outside for effective change solutions.* Effective solutions to key change problems may lie hidden in pockets within a university. Equally, however, they can exist in similar institutions elsewhere in the environment.

Lesson N^o 9 – *Change does not just happen it must be led.* There is growing evidence on what comprises an effective approach to change leadership in education. In that respect, high level of knowledge and skills may be necessary but they are not the only prerequisites for efficient leadership. Good leaders understand that they have to listen than lead. Thus, understanding that the change is an emotional, as well as rational process is crucial.

It is clear that the key lessons for change management in higher education must be learned. Nonetheless, it is also important to communicate the eight change management myths (Scott 2004, p. 10), presented in the table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Change management myths in higher education

MYTH	ILLUSTRATION
<u>The consensual myth:</u>	Look we've all agreed that putting our lecture notes on the web is a good idea so that's what we're going to do!
<u>The change event myth:</u>	Well the hard work's done; we've got the new university structure approved; now all we have got to do is implement it.
<u>The silver bullet myth:</u>	Just follow this 5-step method to successful change, and all will be well.

<u>The brute logic myth:</u>	I've told them three times now and they still can't see that using practice-based learning in their course will make it much more exciting. <i>Reforms have the misplaced notion that change is achieved by brute logic (George Bernard Shaw).</i>
<u>The linear myth:</u>	It's easy: we'll get the new transdisciplinary course approved, get the infrastructure in place, run a staff workshop on it, and it'll be working by next semester.
<u>The knight on the white charger myth:</u>	Now we've got a better Dean, this Faculty will really take off!
<u>The either or myth:</u>	There's nothing I can do – I'm a victim of forces beyond my control.
<u>The structural myth:</u>	Now we've restructured, this university will be a success!

Source: Adapted from Scott (2004).

3.5 Summary

Change in the context of higher education has been theoretically modeled by the means of social science theories. This chapter aimed at stressing the significance of change that surrounds universities, particularly in the domain of public steering, i.e. governance, and institutional management. Change not only affects steering mechanisms and managing the universities, but it also affects other important aspects related to the essence of university's purpose and that is research, teaching and learning.

In order to change, universities must be encouraged to innovate. As this encouragement must come from the outside (governance), it also needs to come from within institutions (leadership). Finally, managing change in higher education requires understanding of the need for change, and sharing the culture that embraces changes across the universities. For more effective change management in higher education, the nine key lessons for a successful change need to be learned, but those who manage change projects must be cautious of the delineated key change management myths.

4. Leadership of change

In a context of changes leadership becomes essentially important. According to Bolman & Deal (1997, p. 296), leadership can be defined as “a subtle process of mutual influence fusing thought, feeling and action to produce cooperative effort in the service of purposes and values of both the leader and the led”. They further argue that leadership is different from management, albeit these two terms are usually confused. The leadership is qualitatively distinct from management, as it is defined as a change-oriented process of visioning, networking, and building relationships (*Ibid.*). Leaders emphasize vision and renewal, and have the necessary political skills to cope with the challenges.

Related to the odd perception of institutional leadership (see section 2.1.2) some clarifications need to be emphasized. Middlehurst (1999) points out that understanding of leadership is threefold: Firstly, leadership needs to be understood as a role that is carried out formally by particular position holders (e.g. rectors, vice rectors and deans, or heads of departments). Secondly, leadership is a function that can be – and ought to be – performed at different levels within institution, in both formal and informal contexts. Finally, leadership needs to be comprehended as a process of social influence that guides individuals and groups towards specific goals (organizational, professional, social, and the like).

Middlehurst further asserts that leadership and governance are concerned with the overall course and strategy within a regulatory framework on the one hand, and purpose, values, culture, history and mission on the other. As opposite to the concept of leadership, management and administration entail process of implementation and coordination with particular focus on resource frameworks and structures: human, financial, technological, material and time (*Ibid.*). In that sense, management is related to administering of resources and processes, whereas the leadership can be defined as governing people (De Woot 1996).

Additionally, when looking at the universities in the Balkans, it is important to note that context influences both what leaders must do, and yet what they can. Consequently, leadership varies with a situation, but it is, however, crucial to the agenda of nature of the changes in higher education, rethinking of the concepts, structures and practices aimed at renewal.

4.1 Origin of university leadership in a given steering model

South East Europe has been overwhelmingly preoccupied by the communist ideology, with exception of traditional Greek democracy. However, elsewhere in the Balkans the national higher education policy was always treated as a privilege of the ruling political elites and it was used and misused in accordance with the current political aims. In such state of affairs, the State has traditionally had an immense deal of power over the higher education. It has controlled finance, programs and election of professors who could be described as civil servants. In such circumstances, university autonomy was non-existent, or it has been severely limited (Mora 2001). In conditions of heavy state control, it was hard for university leaders to develop the needed leadership skills. Additionally, as we have seen in preceding chapters of this thesis, the Balkan universities have been further downgraded by the severe splintering to highly sovereign faculties, which was done in accordance with the classical slogan 'divide and rule'. Central control by the state is one of the main characteristics of *collectivism*, while more genuine expression of it symbolizes *state monopoly* where educational institutions are state organs and educators are state officials with strong obligation of loyalty (McLean 1995). The extreme form of state, or rather political monopoly would be the *monism* that is typical for totalitarian regimes, which can also be adhered to the higher education systems of the former communist countries.

On the other hand, under Anglo-Saxon higher education system, power resides largely within universities themselves. This practically means, once established the university is free to independently develop its own strategies, adopt its own policies, and elect own governing bodies. The role of government is restricted to providing finances and setting general criteria as a part of the higher education policy. The universities themselves decide on their own academic and financial policies, largely, because in the developed democratic societies where the clear-cut division of power exists, the interference in university business is not typical. According to Mora (2001), leadership traditionally comes from such state-supervised systems. Such systems also facilitate greater institutional autonomy, as most European governments have applied policies aimed at deregulation of higher education. This is also the case, however only recently, in some Balkan countries, which have adopted the new reformative higher education laws. These positive new developments will be reviewed later on.

4.2 People and Leadership

Empowerment is the only way to enhance the capacity of people to pose questions on themselves. By being empowered, the people are more likely to respond to external challenges and to attempt to transform their organizations (De Woot 1996). It is often implied that the only leaders of change are the senior top executives of a university. This assumption is wrong, as every university employee is a leader of change in his or her own area of expertise. Moreover, Bolman & Deal (1997) claim that leadership at every level is necessary to motivate and energize the main actors of the system. This aspect of leadership relates well to the human resource frame.

A risk that troubles all organizations in the process of change is certainly the appointment of mediocre by mediocre, of like by like. “The problem of finding leaders capable of governing a changing organization is as old as the world” (De Woot 1996, p.24). Having in mind already mentioned constrains of the universities in the Balkans, which are result of their inappropriate structure, mediocrity rise is noted as one of the risks for institutional development (see Section 2.1.1). Furthermore, the emotional intelligence emphasized by Scott (2004) may not be teachable, but it is certainly learnable. The key lessons of change outlined in the Section 3.4, do not constitute a formula. This is because successful change management is in effect about managing paradox (*Ibid.*). However, few leaders, and particularly in the Balkans, are yet aware of the research on leadership in higher education.

The leader leads a group, he or she inspires, motivates and encourages. As the most qualitative aspect of management, leadership is, thus, difficult to define. Definitions of leadership vary to a great extent, which only justifies the richness and indefinability of its quality. However, one of the very interesting definitions of leadership is spelled out below:

Leadership is a natural, unforced ability to inspire people. The influence which emanates from a good leader is unspecifiable, but cannot be effective without the following combined qualities being present: natural drive; a fundamental respect for, as well as genuine interest in people (De Woot 1996, p. 24).

The leadership is a two-way relationship in which trustworthiness plays a crucial role. The leader knows how to create a relationship and persuade colleagues of the reasons for cooperative effort, and the rationale behind objectives and strategies the leader wishes to pursue. This implies that leaders need to have authority as the capacity to convince, which

ought to be perceived differently from the power, which, on the other hand, underlies a capacity to constrain (*Ibid.*). As Ridderstråle and Nordström (2002) affirm, true leaders lay down challenges in front of their people they do not control them.

The key characteristics of good leaders, as outlined by De Woot (1996) are shown in the table 4.1 (below), in combination with the key strategies of successful leaders, as defined by Scott (2004).

Table 4.1 the key characteristics and strategies of good leaders

Characteristics	Strategies
A tangible vision	Using top down and bottom up strategies
Communication	Listening and leading
Dedication	Emphasis on stability of change
Competence	Concentrating on the core and the support components of change
Values and virtues	Focusing on improving current practice and setting out new directions

Sources: De Woot (1996) and Scott (2004)

In view of the above five key characteristic of good leaders, personality thus, seem to be the most important ingredient of leadership. However, this can pose a danger since it can shatter internal cooperation that is vital if an organization ought to operate successfully. If someone attaches too much importance to his or her own talent, temper and personal vitality, there is a risk that those less gifted who also have to take a part to play in a change effort, may feel pushed aside, or even worse, envious and frustrated with their own limitations (De Woot 1996). This is especially dangerous in a situation when *excellent* is becoming uncommon whilst *mediocre* becomes a benchmark, because mediocrity with application reaches further than excellence without. However, individual talent is not enough, nor is the competence only. To successfully run an organization such as university, the professionalism is needed, as well as participatory methods of management (Bolman & Deal 1997). The most successful managers are those who manage to create equilibrium between personal talent and professional managerial methods.

The professional excellence of educational manager is seen as a vital element in the “education value chain” (Tjeldvoll & Welle-Strand 2004, p. 4). However, professionalizing is associated more with method, than with talent. This runs a risk of declining into bureaucracy, because in the present whirlpool of changes, method is a support, an aid, and it can never be a substitute for individual qualities (De Woot 1996). Universities seem to also teach more methods, rather than personal behavior or development of talents.

4.3 Ambiguity and Leadership

The image of leadership outlined in the previous section corresponds well with Max Weber’s (1947) charismatic approach to leadership, later followed by Cogner (1999), who focuses on traits of personal characteristics and behavior of leaders (cited in: Bess & Goldman 2001). In higher education, at the department level in particular, charismatic leadership is uncommon, and not necessarily effective when present (*Ibid.*). Professors seem to be generally not friendly towards leaders with charisma. Faculty members are often skeptical, and proud of their independence whilst being persistent in overprotecting their eccentricity and autonomy.

As already mentioned, Balkan universities are presently positioned in transitional societies. In such state of affairs, the main source of uncertainty comes from contextual divergence. As Tiplic (2003) claims, when uncertainty is labeled as ‘environmental’ it normally implies that it is related to the organization’s external environment. The ambiguity and uncertainty of transition generate confusion and complications for most university leaders, which further may lead to dysfunctional institutional behavior. As asserted by Bess & Goldman (2001), university professors benefit from the safety of a tenure system that provides resulting job security and serves as a shield that allows them actively or passively to resist many appeals or even demands from superiors. This adds up to the uncertainty of leadership process, as the conflict of roles is likely to enhance the ambiguity. Yet another crucial problem is related to the lack of professional competences of university leaders, particularly in the Balkans. For instance, following the years of study within a respective discipline, and receipt of PhD, the department chair follows the route of accomplishment and credit through research and publication, nearly never having time to seek training in administration and management (*Ibid.*). Lack of competent education managers is certainly adding up to leaders’ ambiguity.

4.4 From maestro to manager

Ambiguity and uncertainty, as outlined above, relate to Bolman and Deal's (1997) political frame. With aims to reduce ambiguity in the atmosphere of scarce resources and related conflicts of various coalitions, professional leaders would have to be able to set the agenda, map the political terrain, and engage in networking to form the winning coalitions. Additionally, effective leaders create an agenda for change with two major components: 1) a vision balancing the long-term interests of parties involved, and 2) a strategy for achieving the vision (*Ibid.*). In terms of mapping the political terrain, Bolman & Deal, further developed four steps for creating a political map. For better overview, these four steps are presented in table 4.2 (below), along with four basic steps for creating political influence.

Table 4.2 Four basic steps for developing a political map and creating political influence

Developing a political map	Creating a political influence
Determine the channels of informal communication;	Identify relevant relationships (figure out who needs to be led);
Identify the principal agents of political influence;	Assess who might resist, why, and how strongly (figure out the leadership challenges);
Analyze the possibilities for both internal and external mobilization;	Develop relationships with potential opponents to facilitate communication, or negotiation;
Anticipate the strategies;	When step three fails, carefully select and implement either more subtle, or more persuasive method;

Source: Adapted from Bolman & Deal (1997)

Whether one likes it or not, political dynamics are unavoidable under conditions most managers face on a regular basis, and those are the conditions of ambiguity, diversity and scarcity (*Ibid.*). These useful tactics might be quite beneficial to those in the leading positions in higher education reality across the Balkans. In order to facilitate the necessary adaptation of their institutions, the leaders ought to be able to orient themselves in the face of internal, as well as contextual political pressures.

In summing up, dedication of leadership reveals importance and provides resources in the process of adaptation and reframing (Sporn 2001). In addition, a vision communicated by leadership increases motivation and identification with new response strategies, even in uncertain environment.

4.5 Summary

Though leadership is far and wide accepted as a cure for organizational troubles, it is also widely misinterpreted. However, it is largely agreed in theory that leadership is inextricably linked to change, and that change requires leadership to align institutional strategy and goals.

This chapter aspired to investigate the origin of university leadership, and the scope of it, in relation to the existing models of governance. In that sense, it has been noted that leadership originated from the state-supervised model of higher education steering, whilst it was largely diminished and limited in a state-controlled model.

Additionally, leadership as one of the central concepts of this study is scrutinized from its most qualitative aspect embodied in personality, empowerment and human quality. However, it was asserted that focusing only on individual qualities runs certain risks, and is not sufficient for successful change, though it is a necessary component of leadership. Aside from innate talents, leaders also need professionalism, and the level of skills to overcome ambiguity and uncertainty associated with transition.

PART TWO: Methodological considerations

The second part of this thesis is comprised of one chapter that deals solely with practical issues related to the methodological considerations. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to justify the choice of a qualitative research strategy as “holistic, in the sense that it attempts to provide a contextual understanding of the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behavior” (Brock-Utne 1996, p. 609).

5. Research strategy: a qualitative study

The research strategy echoes a series of key decisions made in an effort to determine the best approach to the research questions posed in the conceptual part of this thesis. As Marshall & Rossman claim, “Research strategy is a road map, an overall plan for engaging the phenomenon of interest in a systematic enquiry” (1989, p. 76). The present chapter epitomizes the possible ways of empirical exploration of the conceptual framework outlined in introductory part of this thesis.

As I have emphasized in the introduction to the methodological approach (see Section 1.3), this study is carried out in the context of a qualitative research strategy, as the qualitative approach to research requires flexibility in the overall research design (*Ibid.*). This approach entails that the research questions are addressed in a rather developmental modus by relying on discussions of related literature and theory to help in framing and refining the specific topic. Moreover, the potency of qualitative strategy is demonstrated for research that is exploratory or descriptive, and that stresses the importance of context, setting and subjects’ frame of reference (*Ibid.*). Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002) argue that social constructionist research is often qualitative, interpretative and concerned with meaning. On the one hand, human behavior is considerably affected by the surroundings in which it occurs, whilst on the other hand, it influences the setting by shaping the social reality. Therefore, related to the already-mentioned ontological position of constructionism that fosters social reality as a continually changing emergent property of humans, a qualitative research strategy is highly justified with regard to this study.

Having in mind the exploratory character of qualitative research, as well as its flexibility, some authors claim that it also encourages innovativeness (Silverman 2000) by evading statistical techniques typical for more traditional research methods, such as surveys and experiments, which are unlikely to give an accurate portrayal of the social realities (Brock-Utne 1996). In what follows, a case study approach as the primary research design for this study is elaborated in more detail.

5.1 Research design: a case study approach

A research design can be defined as a framework for data collection and data analysis, and it ought to be distinguished from research method that simply represents a technique for data collection. For instance, a case study can use a number of techniques to elicit the desired information (Marshall & Rossman 1989). As a framework for data collection, this study emphasizes a case study design firstly because it aims to establish a relationship between the empirical data (collected at the particular case university), and the theory contained in the existing body of literature. Secondly, given the context specific situation in the Balkans, the emphasis is put on intensive investigation of the milieu of Balkan higher education in an attempt to elucidate the unique features of the selected university. Thirdly, having in mind a rather underdeveloped education management as a subject area or a field of study and research within the region, this exploratory study is expected to preliminary investigate this relatively new phenomenon on the exemplifying case.

5.1.1 Selection of a case

The case institution of higher education is chosen among the Serbian state universities, given the fact that Serbia is one of the archetypal countries of the Balkans. Having in mind quite feasible and ongoing access to the required data, the selection of a case is purposive. Silverman (2000) suggests that data in qualitative studies are frequently derived from one or more cases, and it is normally implausible that the cases are selected on a random basis. In terms of this particular study, the selected university signifies a rather compact and homogenous institution of higher education, primarily because of the relatively small number of constituent faculties¹⁴, which makes it easier to manage, especially in the context of traditionally fragmented structure of the Balkan universities. The fragmented structure of the universities largely hinders the development of central university management, and thus, a university of a smaller size is assumed to better address the main research problem. In addition, the selected university is a unique institution that provides arts education (the University of Arts in Belgrade), meaning that majority of teaching staff is renowned artists, who are frequently found in managerial positions within the university. This opens an extra

¹⁴ The selected university comprises only four constituent faculties as opposed to, for instance, University of Belgrade, the oldest and largest university in the country that comprises a total of 30 faculties.

dimension to understanding university management and its most qualitative aspect, the leadership.

5.1.2 Researcher's role and ethical issues

Research design needs to mirror attention given to the ethical issues embodied in a research project. The vital rationale of ethical research planning is to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants (Durrheim 2002). In qualitative studies researchers need to develop roles in order to ease entry, facilitate receptiveness of the environment in such a way that neither the setting, nor the people in it are harmed (Marshal & Rossman 1989). As Bryman (2004) asserts, in a case study design the researcher is frequently a participant or a member of an organization under scrutiny for a certain extended period of time (months or years), which is also the case in this study. In such cases a research design may embody elements of ethnographic research where the researcher tends to encompass one of the following roles: (1) *Complete participant*: a fully functioning member of the social setting, and his or hers true identity is not known to other members; (2) *Participant-as-observer*: where the role of the researcher is the same as above, since the researcher is engaged in regular interaction with people and participates in their daily lives, but members of the social setting are aware of the researcher's status as a researcher; (3) *Observer-as-participant*: in this role the researcher is mainly an interviewer, where there is some observation but very little of it involves any kind of participation; (4) *Complete observer*: where the researcher does not interact with people.

The researcher as an "insider"

Related to this particular study, my role as a researcher is characterized by *participant-as-observer* status because of my extended affiliation to the selected case university¹⁵, which underscored the principles of consent, confidentiality and competence as the main ethical principles. As an *insider* with regard to this study, my aim was to elicit cooperation, trust, openness and acceptance by the environment. Therefore, regardless of the fact that qualitative study may intrude into the settings (Marshal & Rossman 1989), there was no any particular need that research participants adjust to my presence and my role as a researcher.

¹⁵ I have been employed at the Rectorate of the University of Arts in Belgrade since September 2001.

On the contrary, such a role boosted the receptiveness of the setting, as I was able to collect more authentic data. For that reason, my presence didn't influence on a behavior of the research participants, as they considered me as one of their own, the one they were accustomed to even before the research took place. This gave a boost to the trust I was given by the research participants. However, my "insider" role may have affected my objectivity, being that, within such a role, it was quite hard for me to get a bird's-eye view of the selected case institution.

5.2 Reliability and validity

A principle of validity according to which the quantitative research is estimated belongs to a positivist paradigm¹⁶. Guba and Lincoln (1994) assign a special denotation to the concept of reliability and validity in qualitative research. According to their viewpoint, those who take the position of constructionism would favor the concept of 'dependability'. Dependability is the key element of trustworthiness in qualitative research, which also relates to what Hammersley asserts (1990, p. 57), "By validity, I mean the truth: interpreted at the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers". Silverman (2000) claims that comparison of different kinds of data collected, and research methods used ought to verify if they correspond well with one another to enable validity. This relates quite well with Bryman's (2004) notion of *respondent validation*, which means that the research findings should be made available to research participants to enable verification of the findings. Accordingly, the research findings that have emerged out of this particular study are being submitted to the research participants who ought to confirm if the social reality within selected case university was correctly understood and interpreted. Aside from that, during data collection phase, I submitted interview transcripts to the informants asking them to give their feedback and comments on the main topics discussed. However, I got feedback from only four informants, which felt the need to provide further clarifications. Other informants did not reply, which led me to an assumption that they have agreed to the interview transcripts and have no comments to add.

¹⁶ Positivism is an epistemological position according to which the methods of natural sciences can also be applied to the study of social reality and beyond (Bryman 2004).

Furthermore, Aunger (1995) asserts that reliability can be defined as a measure of how probable it is that similar conditions will give rise to the same observations. In that respect, replication of the study is a criterion, which is difficult to meet in qualitative research, mainly because it is impossible to 'freeze' the social setting and conditions of the study to make it easily replicable (Bryman 2004). In terms of this particular study it is notable that higher education in the Balkans is going through the period of transition facing many challenges. This is a rather long period giving the opportunity to top-level management of the universities to build up competences and assess strategies for institutional change, which may result in quite opposite findings by another researcher who would conduct a similar study in different circumstances. Therefore, a postulation of a static social world that belongs to the positivist paradigm is in direct disparity with a qualitative (interpretative) viewpoint that the social world is always shifting, and thus, the concept of replication is problematic.

5.2.1 External validity

The notion of external validity refers to the extent to which the findings of the study can be generalized to other environments that are similar to the environment where the research is carried out (Brock-Utne 1996). Because qualitative research usually entails the intensive study of a small group, or single cases (Bryman 2004), a qualitative study's transferability and generalizability to other settings may be problematic (Marshall & Rossman 1989). However, the question is not whether the single case can be representative enough to yield findings that are applicable more generally to other cases, since the case study is not merely a sample of one. Instead, qualitative research emphasizes information-rich description of the context in which the case resides, which accounts for a specific kind of database that is aimed at making estimations for possible transferability of findings to other similar cases within the context. The problem of generalizability, which is seen as one of the main limitations of this study, has been already discussed in introduction to the methodological approach (see Section 1.3.1).

However, in this study, a comparative method is used in order to provide information-rich description of the context of Balkan higher education, as it is believed that this particular method can generously contribute to the generalizability of the research findings. According to Goedegebuure and Van Vught (1994), a comparative method in social science research

entails the analysis of properties of various kinds of spatial units: countries, societies, organizations, with aim to investigate the *genus* and *differentia specifica* of a social system. The universities in the Balkans, as we have seen, have certain context specific and cultural similarities, albeit there are certain regional differences. Scott (2002) argues that all universities are alike, both in terms of their historical outset, and the socio-economic and cultural pressures to which they are exposed. On the other hand, the universities are different because their organization, funding regimes and academic processes are determined within national environments.

Having in mind that higher education systems in the region, like the regional societies at large, are going through a period of transition, there are certain common constraining accounts characterized by the modus of development of the higher education in the post-communist era. In the subsequent chapter on the milieu of higher education in the Balkans, these common regional characteristics are emphasized in information-rich fashion with aim to establish the above-mentioned database for making judgments about the plausible generalizability of the findings of this particular research to other universities in the region.

5.3 Data collection

The main purpose of data collection techniques used by qualitative researchers is to provide a 'deeper' understanding of the social phenomena under scrutiny. It is believed that traditional techniques of data collection associated with purely quantitative measurement, simply cannot supply a view of how individuals (research participants) make sense of the world around them, which is deemed important for understanding the context specific distinctiveness.

5.3.1 Primary data collection techniques

Empirical data required for this study were collected through qualitative interviewing as the primary data collection technique. Accordingly, mainly focused semi-structured interviews were conducted with managerial staff (rectors and deans), meaning that predominantly open questions about specific relevant issues and situations were asked. Focused interviews were also planned for university employees, both administrative and academic staff. Related to the

experiences associated with the former managerial team, an oral history interviews were conducted with university administrative staff to enable the respondents to recall events from the past and to reflect on them. In order to investigate the academic staffs' reflections on quality and relevance of university leadership, an online interviewing was planned by distributing focused open-ended interview guide to the selected sample of professors. The sample of professors selected for this round of data collection is purposive. According to Bryman (2004), purposive sampling is strategic and underpins an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling. Having in mind that this study focuses on top-level management of the selected case university, the professors and associates who teach at the interdisciplinary graduate studies (organized at the central university level) are the main target group for this study, since this group of staff is the most heterogeneous, as it is comprised of professors coming from all constituent faculties of the selected case university.

5.3.2 Supplemental data collection techniques

Besides the above outlined primary technique of data collection, this study entails some supplementary techniques of gathering information. A comparative method was already mentioned in Section 5.2.1, and it is based on the information collected from national policy documents, research reports, legislative accounts, official statistics, etc. This research method is particularly associated with off-site data collection, underlying comparative analysis of national higher education systems of West Balkan countries, aimed to provide a broader understanding of the regional context.

5.3.3 Rounds of data collection

Gathering relevant information with regard to this study was conducted in several rounds. The first round of data collection is concerning the comparative method and policy documents analysis associated with the milieu of higher education in the region of West Balkans, or to an off-site collection of data. On the other hand, qualitative interviewing is related to on-site gathering of relevant information.

For better overview, the pattern of data collection this study builds upon is presented in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Data collection rounds and techniques

Data collection round	Data collection techniques	
	Primary	Supplementary
1 (off-site)		Initial mapping of the field and the context of higher education in the region (national policy documents)
2		Information-rich description of the selected case university (institutional policy documents)
3	Semi-structured interviewing with university and faculty top-level management (focused open-ended interviews)	
4	Semi-structured interviewing of the university administrative staff (focused open-ended interviews) + unstructured interviews (aide mémoire)	
5	Semi-structured Online interviews with academic staff	

As it can be seen from table 5.1, semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews are chosen as a primary data collection technique. The reason for choosing university and faculty management is rather straightforward. The emphasis here is on the top-level university leadership (the present, and the former) and perceptions of the leadership process from the viewpoint of the respective post holders (rectors and deans). Regarding interviewing of the deans, one of the deans (out of the four constituent faculties) was interviewed, since his mandate has been extended for another electoral period, so he had a chance to be in a position of middle manager during the mandate of the former rector, as well as during the mandate of the present rector of the university.

With regard to university administrative staff, only the central administration employees were interviewed to reflect upon their views and feelings in relation to their direct superior (the university rector). Therefore, semi-structured focused interviews were planned in relation to the present leadership, whereas aide mémoire unstructured interviews were aimed

to elicit administrative employees' thinking upon the former leadership. Justification of online interviews with the academic staff was given (see Section 5.3.1). In terms of all identified respondents for this study, it is important to note that they are chosen rather intentionally, as they are deemed relevant to the specific research questions, which makes the sampling rather purposive. For the exact plan of conducting qualitative interviewing see table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Interviewing plan

Sample criteria	N° of persons	Type of interview	Length of interview
University rectors	2 (present and former)	Semi-structured focused interview	1 – 1.5 hrs
Faculty deans	1	Semi-structured focused interview	1 – 1.5 hrs
Central administration staff	4	Semi-structured focused interview + aide mémoire	1 hrs + 1 hrs
Academic staff	8	Online personal interviews	Approx 30 minutes to reply

5.4 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of assigning order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected information. The so-called *raw* data have no intrinsic meaning, and an interpretative act is what illuminates the sense out of data by displaying it for the reader through the written report (Marshall & Rossman 1995). “In an interpretative study there is no clear point when data collection stops and analysis begins” (Terre Blanche & Kelly 2002, p. 139). Hence, it is quite usual in qualitative research that data analysis starts right after some of the data have been collected, and the results of that analysis then profile the next steps in data collection process (Bryman 2004). That is the purpose of defining rounds of data collection process as outlined in the Section 5.3.3.

The empirical data related to this study are collected between the beginning of November 2005 and the end of February 2006. Right after initial mapping of the field of higher education in the Balkans data analysis of an off-site collected data begun, followed by positioning the selected case university into the given broad context of regional higher

education through analysis of institutional policy documents. This was later followed by conducting qualitative interviews, as well as by an interpretative analysis of collected information. During the process of data analysis I have aspired to relate to data and to try to interpret it from the position of empathic understanding. Related to this, Aunger claims “data analysis must allow for the fact that the data elicitation process itself, as well as circumstantial aspects of the data collection situation, can influence what informants say or do (1995, p. 99). Aside from interpreting data from the perspective of the research participant, my main objective was to review data in the light of the main research questions.

5.5 Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations of the study in general terms have been discussed in the introduction to methodological approach (see Section 1.3.1). However, here I will only focus on advantages and limitations of using the chosen methods of data collection.

One of the mentioned general limitations was the lack of resources to conduct an empirical study of a larger scale by using multiple case study design (possibly selecting another, or two other universities in the West Balkans). However, the choice of a case is purposive as the selected case institution represents an apt context for investigating the main research problem – the university leadership. In that sense, for investigation of the role of governance (university-government nexus) the size of the university is not as important, as it is essential for investigation of the role of leadership, which is seen as more internal concept (university-faculty nexus). That is why the university of a smaller size is assumed to better address the main research problem. This is further explained in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

In terms of the chosen techniques of data collection, another limitation might be related to relatively small number of informants (15) who had been given a chance to express their views upon the role and relevance of university leadership in a changing context. In general, the informants gave lengthy and very enlightening interviews clearly demonstrating their deep understanding of the leadership process. Thus, the content and the quality of interviews seemed more important than the actual number of interviewees. However, the interviews could hardly serve as sufficient source of information to conclude this study. For that reason, other sources of information such as national and institutional policy documents, archival

materials, laws and regulations, statistical material, etc. had to be considered in order to make the final concluding remarks.

Advantages of choosing comparative method, especially related to an off-site collected data, in order to provide an information-rich account on the context of Balkan higher education where already discussed in Section 5.2.1. However, it is worthy of recap that this method is considered important in contributing to greater generalizability of the research results, as it is aimed at establishing a specific kind of database on the context of higher education in the region. This may possibly serve as a springboard for later studies on Balkan higher education.

Finally, there is an additional methodological limitation linked with the problem of translation, since the developed research instruments (i.e. interview guide) had to be translated by adapting terminology to the local language. Aside from that, the interview transcripts had to be later translated to English language in order to be used in the process of data presentation and analysis.

5.6 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to portray the methodological thinking behind the empirical investigation of the studied phenomenon, as well as to provide practical explanations related to the methodological aspects of this study.

In that sense, it is hoped that preceding sections clarified the chosen research strategy and a research design, the issues of reliability and validity, as well as data collection techniques and modes of data analysis. Finally, it is worthy of concern that all respondents in this study are chosen rather intentionally, as this strategy of selecting research participants is assumed to deliver penetrable research results.

PART THREE: Data presentation and analysis

The third part of this thesis commences with a meticulous account of the milieu of higher education in the Balkans by stressing the relevance of the designation, as well as cultural, historic and geographical distinctiveness of the region. Thereafter, an information-rich description of the selected case university is displayed in order to enable better understanding of the empirical data that are later presented and analyzed by reflecting on the various topics displayed in conceptual part of this thesis. Lastly, the discussion and results presented in Chapter 10 ought to serve as a platform for extracting conclusions and recommendations for further research.

But before I venture into deeper exploration of the empirical level of the leadership phenomenon in the context of Balkan higher education, the following should be noted: “The Balkans have a powerful ontology that deserves serious and complex study, and it is an ontology of constant and profound change” (Todorova 1997, p. 184).

6. Stereotype of the Balkans

This section begins with an attempt to explain the stereotype that labeled all that is Balkan, or that originates from this particular historic and socio-cultural sphere. According to Todorova (1997, p. 184) “The Balkans are usually reported to the outside world only in the time of terror and trouble; the rest of the time they are scornfully ignored”. In her work *Imagining the Balkans* Todorova explores the ontology of the Balkans from eighteenth century till today, in which the region inextricably linked to Europe is culturally defined as “the other”. The negativeness of the Balkans has in many ways, served as the basis upon which the classical positive and self-congratulating image of the “European” was built. The meaning of the Balkans today represents what have emerged from the blameless geographic appellation, and what have been transformed into one of the most potent and widespread pejorative designations in the modern history.

To understand the Balkans, one has to recognize what was the cultural and historic agent that shaped the peninsula, and what legacies were crucial to what the Balkan is today. Todorova (1997) distinguishes two crucial legacies: One represents the millennium of Byzantium with its profound political, cultural, and religious impact. The other is the half millennium of the Ottoman rule that not only named the peninsula, but it rather labeled it to what it represents today¹⁷. However, I would dare to add one more legacy that shaped the Balkans in terms of a contemporary understanding of its distinctiveness, and that is more than half of the century of communist rule throughout the region. This rather political and ideological influence of the communists is what determines today’s transition of the Balkan societies into market oriented economies and liberal democracy.

Due to the legacies outlined above, the Balkan Peninsula is frequently perceived as the land of contradictions. “This in-betweenness of the Balkans, their transitional character, could have made them simply an incomplete other; instead they are constructed not as other, but as incomplete self” (*Ibid*, p. 18).

¹⁷ After the longest period of political unity (under the Turks) that ever existed region wide.

6.1 Balkanization

The most significant concept deriving from the Balkans is “balkanization”, which refers to the Balkans comprehended within political connotation, rather than merely in geographical sense, to designate the states that had emerged out of the Ottoman Empire¹⁸ (Todorova 1997). According to Dakovic (2001) the term “balkanization” suitably sums up the nature of the falling apart of the unified multinational state, into smaller nation states caught up in the process of civil war¹⁹. Consequently, it can be asserted that “balkanization” is most often understood as the process of nationalistic fragmentation of former geographic and political units into new and mutually hostile small states, which is accompanied with further political instability. The term Balkanization entered the glossary of journalists and politicians at the end of the World War I when the breakdown of the Hapsburg and Romanov Empires into proliferation of small states, resembled secession of the Balkan countries from the Ottoman polity (Todorova 1997). Moreover, the origin of Balkanization as political term, and its predominant adherence to the Balkans, has been historically justified in the face of the Balkan wars. The history repeated itself once more in the 1990s when the former Yugoslavia wrecked in bloodshed.

Yugoslavia, as once prominent socialist state, had rejected its belongingness to the Balkans. Despite today’s apparent emphasis on division along Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim lines, the perception of the Yugoslavs was that they were different from “them” – the Balkans. Conversely, the Yugoslavs had favored to be seen as Danubian or Adriatic presence, or yet better in non-geographical terms, as “the elite of the nonaligned world” (*Ibid*, p. 53). However, in the dawning of the latest Balkan war, the utopia of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia was finally downgraded to the Balkan paradigm, where it belonged from the very beginning. Dakovic (2001, p. 77) explains this phenomenon by the fact that the core conflicts of the World War II were never really resolved within Yugoslavia, but they were rather suppressed and concealed by the “political witchcraft” embodied in the ideals of Brotherhood and Unity, Socialism and Self-Management. As Dakovic claims (*Ibid.*), the falsely healed wounds bled again resulting in the war of the 1990s, revealing Tito’s time as an epoch of frustrating ideology that repressed national identity. Furthermore,

¹⁸ Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania and Bulgaria

¹⁹ Dakovic here refers to the war that ended former Yugoslavia.

the notion of pejorative perception of the Balkans is not only linked to Balkanization, but it owes much to the popular discourse of “Balkan mentality” according to which there are certain anthropological, social and psychological arguments in favor of the existence of shared Balkan mentality (Todorova 1997).

In the political terminology of the contemporary world, undoubtedly nation, national identity and nationalism, are a few of the most often used words. Unluckily, they recur in referring to the state of affairs in the Balkans rather more frequently than any of us would like (Dakovic 2001). In terms of how the education in the Balkans was modeled, it is noteworthy that it is the nationalism in the Balkans in the nineteenth century that was constructed above all around linguistic and religious identities. All national and cultural leaders perceived the language as the most powerful agent of unification. As Todorova (1997) alleges, the tendencies of the new states focused on creation of secularized, centralized and uniform educational systems as the most powerful agents of nationalism, alongside the army.

6.2 Higher education: diversity or commonality?

Nowadays, nearly all of the Central and Eastern European countries find themselves in a process of transition and have initialized reforms of many aspects of their social, economic, and political life. The reform processes unfolding slowly and subtly are primarily aimed at creation of democratic institutions of the system and a civil society. Yet, in the Balkans, substantial strategies rapidly leading from centralized industrial society towards liberal society of communication and cooperation are still missing. The situation in the region is furthermore complicated, as the number of limiting conditions persists. Therefore, the constraining factors articulated through economic recession, recent erosion of societal values and norms caused by the war in the region, long period of isolation, and the numerous ‘traditions’ inherited from the previous educational and political systems, still largely hinder the development of higher education (Cuckovic 2005b). Hence, struggling economies, outdated academic cultural traditions, and obsolete organizational structures are among the problems facing higher education in the Balkans today (Morgan 2004). In addition to these more general constraints, there are also a number of regional differences, which affect the universities in various ways.

According to Scott (2002), higher education in the region, analogous to society at large, has been going through the period of transition, as opposed to transformation. The favored terminology reveals the intensity and pace of the reforms, as *transition* suggests less radical process than *transformation*. Scott (*Ibid.*) further outlines two common constraining accounts of the development of higher education in the region in its first post-communist decade. The first suggests that higher education has been released from authoritarian time-wrap, and is consequently engaged in the process of catching up with the West. The second suggests that higher education in the region had been forced to flirt with privatization and other radical experimentation, while at the same time coping with the collapse of values associated with communist rule, which have been resisted by higher education in the West.

6.2.1 Historical context

Even though the communist rule throughout the region had a tendency to restrain and even lower national differences, these were not eliminated entirely (Scott 2002). Especially since 1989, economic differences region wide re-emerged, as the certain countries had been more or less successful in managing transition to market economies. Given the domination of the communists the political differences were reduced, as well as ethnic differences, by the imposed uniformity of communist rule (*Ibid.*). However, former Yugoslavia represented an important exception as multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state. Scott further argues that amid the twentieth century, there were three broad models of higher education in Europe. First, *the Humboldtian*, which placed the knowledge at the axis of the mission of the university; second, *the Napoleonic*, which placed larger emphasis on professional formation (embodied in the *grandes écoles* of France); and third *Anglo-Saxon*, which emphasized liberal education (although impart through traditional academic forms). The dominant model in Central and Eastern Europe was the Humboldtian one, albeit Napoleonic influences were also present, notably in Romania (*Ibid.*) and in former Yugoslavia. However, there is a certain uniqueness of the experience of higher education in Central and Eastern Europe (including the Balkans), which should not be underestimated.

Before 1945, the universities across the region were not so much alike. First universities in this part of Europe were established at the end of eighteenth and the beginning of nineteenth

century²⁰. In nearly all of the cases, the links with nation building were unambiguous. Firstly, as already emphasized, higher education in the region was subjected to nearly half a century of communist rule, which was inspired by the same ideology (with some local peculiarities). Certain peculiarity of the former Yugoslavia was the Titoist principle of socialist self-management that was also applied to higher education. Second, during the 1945-1989 period all European systems of higher education exhibited comparable trends such as increase in enrollment and massification, and also subordination to socio-economic requirements and greater accountability to political interests (Scott 2002). In Central and Southeast Europe, “even after communism ceased to exist, it continued to promote homogeneity” (*Ibid*, p. 143). Therefore, it appears that the end of communism detached the first imperative for commonality, but arguably only to introduce another, the common dilemmas created by the transition to post-communist society across the region.

6.2.2 Brain drain

Aside from the communist heritage and the present challenges of transition, majority of the countries region wide face the consequences of a rather massive brain drain phenomenon that is robbing the countries of their future. “The Brain Drain is about quality people departing and taking their skills and abilities elsewhere” (Slinn 2003, p. 19). The post-war wave of immigration, particularly in Bosnia, was largely among the population of urban middle class. Yet another factor impinging immigration in Bosnia is continuing presence of discrimination and ethnic tensions (Henry 2003). The brain drain is especially harmful to the universities and higher education systems. Major conflicts and the break-up of the Yugoslavian state in 1991 caused a tremendous movement of scientists and intellectuals (Weeks 2003). Associated to the tensions of the war, the extortion of scholars from the war-thorn region was equal to the ‘academic cleansing’.

According to the Albanian Human Development Report (UNDP 2000), in the period from 1990-99 about 40 % of the university scholars and researchers at the institutes have emigrated. Furthermore, as much as the 67 % of the scientists who obtained PhD in the West emigrated from Albania, whereas 51% of those who emigrate are under 40 years old. In

²⁰ For instance, the first university in Romania was established in 1860, whereas the first university in Bulgaria was established in 1904, and in Serbia 1905 (Scott 2002).

addition, survey showed that as much as the 63 % of young Albanians plan to leave the country upon graduation. Taking into account these quite striking data, it is evident that the countries throughout the Balkans lose their most talented and brightest young people who could contribute to the nations' economic progress, and perhaps stimulate the social reforms (Dumanova 2003). However, there is no 'drain', as Dowty (1988) points out, if the young intellectuals leave, since they are restrained from contributing anything if they remain.

The common features of the Balkan higher education in pre-communist, communist, and post-communist period are outlined in table 6.1 (below).

Table 6.1 Three models of higher education in Central and Eastern Europe

	PRE-COMMUNIST Implicit and self-regulatory	COMMUNIST Centrally-regulated	POST-COMMUNIST Explicit and self-regulatory
<i>Main traits</i>	Confidence in values of particular academic freedom	Aims, tasks, and resources in teaching and research defined by the Communist party, and allocated by the State	Competition for students, funding; importance of institutional/ programme, academic standing; multiple forms of self-representation, adherence to academic freedom
<i>System-wide regulation</i>	Minimal	Compulsory and detailed party / state regulations	Preferably within a broad state regulatory role
<i>System planning approach</i>	None or very limited	Comprehensive: an instrument of political control	Particularly important at institutional level
<i>Accountability</i>	Limited mainly to own constituency	Shared / Mainly to political authorities	Accountability towards multiple constituencies (stakeholders, society, students)
<i>Autonomy</i>	Yes, but its parameters were differently defined than today	Hardly any – or at the discretion of political authorities	Determined by the degree of accountability to specific constituencies
<i>Financing and budgeting</i>	Heavily tuition fee dependent/ input oriented line-item budgeting	Totally State-dependant but relatively "worry-free"; rigid line-item budgeting	Multiple sources of financing (state, tuition fee, fundraising, projects)
<i>Relation to labor market</i>	Minimal and only indirect	Close coordination with state-set manpower planning	Significant but indirect / A result of the interaction of multiple constituencies
<i>Internal governance and structure</i>	Federation of relatively independent sub-units	Extremely determined and politically controlled	Concentration of administrative power / diversity of structure
<i>Strategic Planning</i>	Occasionally at sub-unit level / not essential for governance	Almost none at institutional and sub-unit level	Essential for survival and /or well-being of the institution; important approach in governance

Source: Adapted from Scott (2002).

6.3 Reflection on the reforms

When compared with universities in the Western Europe, the universities in South Eastern Europe, namely the Balkans, are faced with both context specific and global challenges (Tjeldvoll *et al.* 2005). Some of these challenges were already mentioned. However, each of the challenges is quite serious “provoking the need to seriously reform the higher education systems of the Balkans, now standing on the edge of seeing a widening gap between the modern European universities and traditional academies of the Balkans” (*Ibid*, p. 12). In terms of the reforms, some of the universities have been more successful than others at becoming accustomed to the new atmosphere of political pluralism and market economy, in some cases because their national governments have embraced change with more enthusiasm and success. According to Scott (2002), the process of higher education reform throughout the region has two stages. The first stage is related to the ambition to disengage the academic system from the very close linkage with, and subordination to, the economic system that had prevailed during the communist period. The second one represents an attempt to liberalize academic structures as part of a wider liberalization and democratization of political structures, with the former being largely contingent effect of the latter.

Related to the above outlined stages of the reform process, it could be asserted that the first stage is depending on government’s policy and strategy to break up with traditional setup of higher education within socialist economic and political system. The second stage ought to be shared between the government and the institutions of higher education. As already mentioned in conceptual part of this thesis, the majority of universities in the region of West Balkans are trapped in the so-called traditional fragmented structure that offers no opportunity for rapid and successful change (Tjeldvoll *et al.* 2005). “The universities are the responsible parties in the Bologna Process, and if they have no influence over their faculties, they are lacking the necessary power to make profound changes” (*Ibid*, p. 12). Problems arising out of inadequate structure of universities in the Balkans have already been tackled in the introductory part of this thesis. The following account represents an attempt to elaborate on the state of affairs related to university governance, management and leadership issues throughout the region of West Balkans.

6.4 Governance, management and leadership

One challenge for Balkan countries that have, more or less enthusiastically, embraced the Bologna Process is that they, like other nations aspiring EU membership, confront circumstances different from those facing the EU member states (Morgan 2004). Therefore, most of the countries must deal with old pre-Bologna challenges and with the new agenda posed by the Bologna Process. Among old challenges are unequal access to universities, inadequate resources for competitive research, archaic teaching materials and methods, and strict governmental controls (*Ibid.*). Additionally, some academic programs have little significance to the emerging economies of the region. Besides, insufficient government funding for operations and facilities often hinders the quality of teaching and research.

Furthermore, in the situation where there is a strong focus on political agenda (nearly everything being politicized), a lack of leadership and scarcity of managerial and administrative staff at universities, seriously affect the governance and management of higher education (Vlasceanu & Purser 2002). Related to the widespread debate on university reform in the Balkans, it is argued that without bringing about appropriate changes in the government and management structures of higher education, all transformations in the areas of research, teaching, learning and student assessment will have less of a chance of being successfully realized (*Ibid.*). In terms of University-Faculty relations, it has been pointed out that university central management is weak and insufficiently strong to provide policy leadership and quality control over sub-units. Morgan (2004) argues that under communist regimes rectors were political appointees, and the strong faculties held protected them from political influence. Thus, at present, many faculties still harbor misgivings about a stronger role of rectors, fearing that past political threats to academic freedom may return.

6.4.1 Legal framework

Nowadays, many of the West Balkan countries under scrutiny have approached the necessary changes in legislation to facilitate considerable transformation of the higher education system. The most recently adopted reformative law on higher education was the new Serbian Law (MESS 2005), passed in August 2005. Even though this law looks quite elaborating on certain aspects of higher education, it is worthy of concern that there is still a lot of room for self-regulation by the institutional statutes. The new higher education

legislation in the Republic of Montenegro was adopted nearly two years earlier than in Serbia, i.e. in October 2003. The Montenegrin Law is, thus far, the most reformative legal act, which fully incorporates the basic principles of Bologna Declaration²¹. Other, milder versions of new legislation throughout the region feature no, or less radical institutional integration mechanisms²² (e.g. functional integration) where the faculties still remain largely independent but there are certain crucial tasks entrusted to the university central management with aim to strengthen it²³. The latest higher education law in Albania was adopted in 1999. However, in order to bring the country's higher education system closer to the Bologna objectives, innovations in higher education governance are introduced by the system of governmental decrees (MESA1 2005). Thus far, Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only regional country where the new reformative higher education legislation hasn't been adopted yet, due in part to fragmented nature of education in post-Dayton Bosnia, as well as to the local constraints of political nature.

In European terms, new regulatory regimes bring about new governance structures. This means that the emphasis is put on deregulation of the higher education systems. Therefore, most legal frameworks across Europe are defined in broad terms only, whereas the individual institutions are expected to develop the internal regulations, which are corresponding to the specific institutional needs (Felt 2005). However, in the Balkans, the process of deregulation is only in its initial stages.

6.4.2 Managerial structures (ministries, universities, faculties)

Albania

Higher education in Albania follows a unitary two-tier model, where there are two kinds of higher education institutions (8 universities, and 2 academies) (Vlasceanu & Purser 2002). In terms of structure, Albanian universities are constructed as old-fashioned fragmented institutions with very autonomous faculties, however, without full financial autonomy (Cela *et al.* 2005). The structure of governance and management of the universities is very centralized, as the government top-down centralist model of institutional management is still

²¹ This law features full integration of the university, where the faculties lose their legal subjectivity.

²² Such as the case in Macedonia, where the new law was passed in 2000;

²³ The new Serbian legal solution envisages the so-called functional integration of the universities.

in place (Hagelund 2001). This practically means that all sub-units of the university are accountable directly to the Albanian Ministry of Education and Science that still retains its over-controlling role from the communist dictatorship period (Cela *et al.* 2005). Being that the former centralist top-down model is still firmly in place, and the higher authorities hold on to power, it is difficult for the subordinate bodies to take initiative and exploit possibilities of autonomy. The role of university rector is fairly weak towards constituent faculties; however, there is a certain weight in rector's relation to the Ministry.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Higher education system in Bosnia is characterized by severe fragmentation, which is a result of the Dayton Peace Agreement²⁴. According to this agreement, education is governed at the entity level, while at the Federation of BiH it is further decentralized to the 10 cantonal governments (Tjeldvoll *et al.* 2005b). This implies that each of the 10 cantons has the right to entirely govern all levels of education, as well as to propose and pass the laws. Besides the 10 cantons, which comprise Federation, there is Republic of Srpska, an entity inhabited largely by Serbian population where the education is somewhat more centralized²⁵. On the other hand, the Bosnian State practically has no jurisdiction in the area of education whatsoever, first and foremost because there is no ministry of education at the level of the State (Cavaljuga *et al.* 2005).

Organization and structure of the universities in post-Dayton Bosnia retained its essential characteristics from the former Yugoslavian legacy. This means that at present, the universities are rather loose coalitions of highly independent schools. Furthermore, the role of the Rector is weak and mainly ceremonial, whilst the deans are real centers of power retaining their mainly executive role (Tjeldvoll *et al.* 2005b). However, given the sole authority of cantonal governments in educational issues, there is one exception from this rule personified in the Government of the Tuzla Canton, which adopted the new, and absolutely reformative Law on University of Tuzla²⁶ in 2000. According to this Law, the University of Tuzla is fully integrated institution of higher education structured on the principles of Bologna Declaration featuring faculties as organizational units without independent legal

²⁴ Signed in Dayton, Ohio in 1995 with aims to end the war in Bosnia.

²⁵ In the Republic of Srpska there is one central Ministry of Education.

²⁶ The University of Tuzla is the only university in Tuzla Canton, and thus far, the only fully transformed university in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

subjectivity, strengthened central university management, and thus, improved strategic position of university Rector (Tiplic *et al.* 2005). As it can be seen from this example, the existence of political will within the government is an important precondition in facilitation of the higher education reforms.

Macedonia

In Macedonia, as elsewhere in the Balkans the fragmentation of higher education prevents any serious strategic reforms taking place (OECD 2001a). In terms of the number of institutions, there are two state universities in Macedonia, and one private. However, this statement can be seriously questioned, as each faculty that is a part of any Macedonian university considers itself as a separate higher education institution. Thus, the fragmentation lies at the heart of higher education reform not only in Macedonia but also in Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Ibid.*). Accordingly, the existing universities in Macedonia are constructed as old-fashioned universities with largely established hierarchies where a full professor has all the power, and he or she can literary do nothing in terms of research or innovative teaching until retirement, and their position will remain secure (Stojanov *et al.* 2005). “As they hold also the key management positions (e.g. University Senate), this status quo situation is not likely to change soon” (*Ibid.* p. 47). Moreover, it is evident that the autonomy of faculties has affected the curriculum and patterns of interaction among academic staff. “As a result, faculties have become “silos” in which students and staff interact academically only with their counterparts in the same faculty” (Morgan 2004, p. 3). Such situation is typical for other universities region wide.

Montenegro

The system of tertiary education in Montenegro is small, with only one state university (comprised of 15 faculties) located in the nation’s capital Podgorica (OECD 2001b). There are no private universities, and for some disciplines²⁷ Montenegrin students have to attend university outside Montenegro, mainly in neighboring Serbia. At the University of Montenegro, like the majority of conventional universities in the Balkans, the management and governance structures were characterized by the tradition of collective decision-making

²⁷ Especially for doctoral programmes;

procedures (Meniku *et al.* 2005). However, the new Montenegrin law on higher education that was passed in October 2003 now talks primarily about the university as the main, consistent and strengthened institution, whereas the institutes, and most importantly the faculties, are only the organizational units of a university without independent legal subjectivity (*Ibid.*). In that respect, the new Montenegrin law on higher education introduced quite radical institutional integration mechanisms featuring full university integration. For the time being, this is a sole case throughout the region, with exception of BiH where the full integration is accomplished only at one of the universities. In terms of University-Government relations, yet another distinctiveness is noteworthy. Besides enormous political will to endorse the Bologna Process within Montenegro, the Government looked out for support within academic community itself by allowing the University of Montenegro to draft the new law (OECD 2001b). Therefore, it could be asserted that without existence of political will among the government and important stakeholders, the University of Montenegro would still remain excluded from the European Higher Education Area.

Serbia

As within other regional countries under scrutiny, in Serbia as well, the state controlled model of higher education governance was prevalent. Presently in Serbia there are six state universities and four fully accredited private universities. Serbia is the only country in the region with the greatest number of private higher education institutions established from the 1990s. Moreover, the number of private higher education institutions is rising, as the privately owned and operated universities tend to outnumber the public institutions. No differently from their counterparts in the region, the Serbian universities are also fragmented. “Such inappropriate disintegrated structure of Serbian universities dates back to 1954 Law on University, which also managed to ‘Balkanize’ the universities by establishing the faculties as sovereign institutions of higher education with independent legal subjectivity” (Cuckovic 2005a, p. 23). According to their fragmented structure, the faculties are accountable directly to the Ministry of Education, and not to the university central management. Therefore, it seems that Serbian universities are dwelled in much the same problems as other universities in the Balkans. Given that the case university in this study is selected among the Serbian state Universities, extra attention ought to be paid to the issues of governance, management and leadership within Serbian higher education in the subsequent chapter of this thesis.

6.5 Summary

This chapter aimed to provide an information-rich account of the Balkans not only as geographical appellation but also as the historical stereotype, which is important for later understanding of the experience, as well as distinctiveness of the higher education systems in the region. It was also important to explain “Balkanization” as political term, which is here applied to the universities as well. As we have seen, the traditional Balkan universities are ‘Balkanized’ by being splintered into sovereign faculties as independent institutions of higher education, and this is further identified as the core problem of the higher education reform in the Balkans.

Not only due to this apparent commonality, the higher education in the Balkans is homogenized by its communist heritage, and thus, numerous “traditions” inherited from the previous political and educational system. Yet another common feature is the state of transition into market economy and liberal democratic society, followed by aspirations for EU integration. As it was exemplified, both global, and context specific challenges face the higher education in the Balkans. Among the global challenges is the notion of Europeanisation of higher education, whereas one of the local challenges is the infamous Brain drain phenomenon. All of these challenges inhibit the intensity and velocity of the present reform processes.

In terms of governance and management structures, as well as leadership issues, the present obsolete structure of the universities is the main obstacle for transformation within this aspect of the higher education, and consequently within other important aspects such as teaching, learning and research. In that sense, the first important step in aligning the strategy of reform process is articulated by the need to introduce the necessary changes in legislation. However, few of the countries have yet adopted fully reformative higher education laws (featuring full integration of the universities), whereby majority of the countries have opted for less radical legal solutions. The next, even more important step is to face the challenges of implementation of the new laws within the national higher education systems.

7. Presentation of the case: the University of Arts in Belgrade

The primary empirical data gathered during the field research are utilized within the case study design enabling analysis of a chosen university that is considered relevant for this particular study. The chosen University is distinctive in size (only four faculties), and the main educational tradition (specialized art education). For the means of comparison with other comprehensive universities in the country, an overall size of the Serbian State universities in terms of the numbers of constituent faculties, the number of staff and students is provided in table 7.1 (below).

Table 7.1. The overall size of public universities in Serbia

University	Faculties	Students	Teaching staff
University of Belgrade	30	69014	5295
University of Kragujevac	10	10904	740
University of Niš	12	26657	1410
University of Novi Sad	13	36266	3102
University of Arts in Belgrade	4	2205	456
Total	69	145046	11003

Source: Djuricic (2003).

Aside from quite feasible and ongoing access to the required data, the selected institution signifies a rather compact and homogenous university, which makes it easier to manage, especially in the framework of conventionally fragmented universities in the Balkans. As it was emphasized in the preceding chapters of this thesis, fragmented structure of the universities largely hinders the development of central university management, and thus, a university of a smaller size will better address the main research problem. This is largely because it seems easier to empirically observe the main research concepts by “keeping an eye” on a university as a whole, which is quite manageable within smaller institution. Therefore, a systematic enquiry of the main research problem outlined by the main research questions is further explored by retrieving a deeper insight into daily life of the selected university, its mission, vision and strategic goals, as well as main leadership challenges in a given organizational structure and the current legal framework.

7.1 About the University

The University of Arts in Belgrade was established in 1957 as an Academy of Art, which comprised four artistic schools (academies). It has been officially recognized as a unity of four faculties²⁸ and proclaimed as a University of Arts in 1973, when the new Law on University in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was endorsed. The change in name was not merely formal in its nature, as the schools advanced their curricula by introducing theoretical education, as well as master and doctoral programs. Aside from establishing new departments of theory, the research units were also initiated²⁹. The constant separation from the University of Belgrade³⁰ underscored the need for recognition of the specific nature of art universities in former Yugoslavia (UART 2002). As a consequence, the University of Arts represented the only specialized university in artistic education, as well as in the field of culture and theory of arts and media. Since its establishment, the University educates wide range of artists, and other professionals in the domains of music, fine arts, applied arts and design, as well as in the domain of dramatic arts, film, radio and television.

As a small and rather flexible institution, at the University of Arts in Belgrade there is a strong determination to see the university achieve its full potential as an institution of high international standing (*Ibid.*). According to its resolute mission that was revised in the summer 2002³¹,

The University of Arts in Belgrade is the only specialized university for artistic education in Serbia, attracting the best students and professors from Serbia and Montenegro, and South-eastern European region. The University offers large scope of courses covering all art disciplines, as well as courses aimed at professionals in culture and media scene. The University strives to promote creativity and diversity as the most important needs in seeking to assist the community in global cultural development and prosperity. The University of Arts is open to society and its demands, through specific projects and actions contributing to a general and specific reform processes within the society, aiming at the communities it is situated in. As the university's strategic priority is Europe, but also the Balkans, the most activities are aimed at renewing the University's place as a regional educational art centre of the Balkans (*Ibid*, p. 3).

²⁸ Faculty of Music, founded in 1937; Faculty of Fine Arts, founded in 1937; Faculty of Applied Arts, founded in 1948; Faculty of Dramatic Arts – theatre, film, radio and television, founded in 1948.

²⁹ I.e. Institute for theatre, film, radio and television within the Faculty of Drama;

³⁰ Founded in 1905, the largest and the oldest public University in Former Yugoslavia;

³¹ In the framework of EUA Institutional Evaluation of the universities in Serbia

During the process of external institutional evaluation carried out in spring 2002 under the framework of the European University Association's Institutional Evaluation Program, the University of Arts in Belgrade was urged "to take a leading role amongst Serbian universities in driving the challenges that lie ahead in the process of overall reform of higher education" (EUA 2002b, p. 22).

7.2 Institutional identity

In the context of odd perception of university leadership (see section 2.1.2), it could be asserted that long withstanding, and rather glorious self-image of the University of Arts, contributed largely to such emblematic view of leadership at this institution. This is largely because the University enjoyed an immense reputation and a status of exclusivity, not only in the realm of higher education in the Republic of Serbia, but also in totality of the former Yugoslavia.

The value of a school can be measured by success of its professors, by success of its students, or both. Writing about the famous New York art school "Julliard" one American author says that list of its professors and students can be read as "who is who in America". The same can be said for the University of Arts in Belgrade. More often than elsewhere, the professors of this University are also renowned artists. For majority, actually the artistic achievements are precondition for tenure. Thus, the individuals associated with this institution are the artistic elite of the country [...]. In these hard times, the University of Arts and its faculties have managed to preserve the feeling of unity and belongingness to those chosen ones, and those dedicated. In a true sense of the words, they remained genuinely elitist (UART 1997, p. 29)³²

Aside from this self-congratulating image of the University, the fact is, the activities of its professors and students have had a great impact on the development of culture and arts in the region of former Yugoslavia. Moreover, even in these hard times of transition from authoritarian ghetto towards an open and free democratic society, the influence of the University continues to further shape national arts and cultural scene in Serbia and Mongenegro. Having in mind the University's contribution to preservation of national culture, it can be asserted that the University comprehended its mission as a part of active relationship towards the local community. As opposite to other universities in Serbia, the

³² Author's translation;

University of Arts was much more integrated in the country's cultural life by direct involvement of its professors and students.

The above-mentioned sense of belonging to the University community was a direct result of the elitist self-image, as well as homogeneity of the University, as a rather small and manageable institution. Nevertheless, in a true sense of the words, the University is structurally fragmented, and thus, inconsistent as other of its counterparts in the country and region wide. In terms of physical homogeneity even though the university is small, its buildings and offices are rather dispersed throughout the city of Belgrade.

Adding up to the elitist identity preservation, the notion of a new university campus that ought to be built on the designated location in New Belgrade, is worth mentioning. Actually, during 1960s the State officials granted the University with a property in New Belgrade, which was intended for building of a new University campus on one location. In 1968, at the expense of the wealthy socialist state, the construction of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts begun, resulting in opening of the new faculty premises in 1974. However, due to the lack of finances, the construction of other three schools, and the Rectorate was postponed for the later time (UART 1997). What actually remained was the hope, and a dream of "the University City of Arts", as nearly each University rector (with less and less odds to become reality) continued to pursue this dream.

The newest developments related to this futuristic project are quite striking. Since the property haven't been fully brought to its purpose (after several decades), the City of Belgrade, as well as some other local tycoons, are "keeping an eye" on the property with aspirations to take it over from the University. Thus, the City made a regulatory plan to build a new ballet school on a part of that location. The finances have been set a side, and the construction ought to commence. However, being that the University is still an official beneficiary of that property, the University's approval is necessary, but this is only formal in its nature. However, the present University management is ready for a compromise by agreeing on the project of the new ballet school, but asking something in return. That is a commencement of the construction of the new building of the Faculty of Applied Arts³³ (UART 2005). Additionally, the new management team envisaged the project called "the

³³ The Faculty of Applied Arts is presently working in the most difficult conditions in terms of adequate space.

University City of Arts”, which foresee all four schools and a Rectorate built in one campus (alongside the new ballet school), comprising common areas and facilities such as galleries, theatre, projection hall, studios, library etc. This project, apparently the main preoccupation of the current university management, is aimed at establishment of arts and cultural centre of the New Belgrade, and as such is quite interesting to the City authorities. What’s more, the ballet school is seen as growing into institution of higher education³⁴ in the near future, and thus, it is seen as becoming a new member of the University of Arts in Belgrade. However, the fact is that resources in State budget are scarce, and there are many other priorities. Since the University itself is poor and largely dependant on the State financing, the dream appears to be still far from reality.

7.3 Leadership tradition

In terms of leadership, and particularly its figurative perception, the University of Arts Monography issued on the occasion of 40th celebration of the University (UART 1997, p. 25) states: “the University is lead and represented by rector as an elected executive. Rector is nominated among the full professors of the faculties of art, for the period of two years³⁵. He is publicly regarded as distinguished individual, renown in his profession, who unifies artistic and pedagogical qualities”³⁶. As it can be observed from the cited statement, the dominant discourse entails prevailing custom of appointment of male rectors, as well as special consideration given to their artistic achievements and public fame. However, from the 1990s the University of Arts leadership has seen even three female rectors. Furthermore, besides the rector, there are three vice-rectors³⁷ who come from other three faculties³⁷ who are assisting rector in managing the University (*Ibid.*). The rector and the three vice-rectors are regarded as top-level management team. As from the 1977, the top-level management team is enhanced with a student vice-rector. However, the students are yet symbolically represented in university management, since their influence is insignificant when compared to the authority of rector and vice-rectors.

³⁴ At present the ballet art is studied on secondary level, meaning that there is no institution of higher education in Serbia for ballet artists.

³⁵ The mandate of a rector can be extended for one more electoral period, according to the law.

³⁶ Author’s translation;

³⁷ Vice-rectors are nominated from the faculties, other then the faculty from which the rector is nominated.

In relation to the main leadership tradition within the University, it is also worth mentioning that there was an unwritten rule, or the so-called “gentleman agreement” according to which the schools are exchanged in appointment of rector every electoral period. So, after one faculty had its professor appointed for rector, it was the turn for the next school, and so on. The exchange of schools in appointment of rectors was based on the order of foundation. Therefore, the oldest school was first to appoint the rector (the Faculty of Music), then the next school (the Faculty of Fine Arts), and so on. However, this rule was banished during the 1990s when the University had a rector who had an extended mandate for even four electoral periods. This custom was also stalled after 1998 Law on university, according to which the government appointed the rectors of all state universities.

Managing bodies of a university are prescribed in details by the law. Until adoption of the new Law on Higher Education (MESS 2005), the law represented an instrument of control over universities, leaving quite modest space for innovativeness and development of true institutional leadership. Frequently, as it was emphasized above, rectors were appointed directly by the Government. Even though the new university discourse regards rectors and vice-rectors as top-level management, in the spirit of a crumbled university and a weakened role of rector, the actual managing of the university is still largely separated from rector.

The University Managing board is the alleged managerial body, whereas the University teaching Council is an expert body dealing mainly with teaching, learning and advancement of profession³⁸. According to the present situation, the rector and vice-rectors, are only *ex officio* present at the Managing board meetings, but they don't have the right to participate in decision-making. The situation was even worst during 1998 Law on University, when the rector and vice-rectors also didn't have voting rights within University teaching Council (an expert body). However, this situation changed with 2002 Law on University.

During the process of external institutional evaluation of the University of Arts in Belgrade, which took part in academic year of 2001/2002, EUA review team that visited the University of Arts in Belgrade came to the following conclusion:

³⁸ The new Law on Higher Education (MESS 2005) introduces the new terminology according to which the managing board is called the University Council, and the present University Teaching Council is called the Senate.

At present, as we understand the situation, the faculties [of the University of Arts] have full educational, scientific and artistic autonomy. They decide on their own statutes. They select and appoint professors and other academic staff. They decide on curricula and courses. They register students and maintain student records. They are funded directly by the government. [In such circumstances], the Rector would appear to have no formal power, and can only influence events by a patient persuasion (EUA 2002b, p. 10).

Moreover, the review team had misgivings about governing structure that appears to reduce the role of the Rector to that of a sideline supporter and a cheerleader. However, they have expressed their belief that the University leadership, especially the Rectorate, is crucial to the task of mobilizing the academic community for the great work of implementing the plans outlined in the University Follow-up Report (*Ibid.*). “It seems to us that there is a real need to rethink the issue of autonomy within the University and to move the centre of gravity a little closer to the Rectorate” (*Ibid.*, p. 10). This is principally true in light of the fact that modern trends in academic development often lie between the traditional disciplines so that modernization requires an overall strategy in research, study programs, curricula and staff selection that ought to be under the auspices of the rector/Rectorate.

Before elaborating on the current position of the University towards the higher education reform, it is notable that EUA institutional evaluation took part during the former management team of the University. With this in mind, it wouldn't be unfair to emphasize that positive observation of EUA review team, according to which the University ought to take the leading role among Serbian universities in driving the challenges that lie ahead (see section 7.1), can be regarded as an accomplishment of the former University management. This is because in the overall modest evaluation of the Serbian universities (EUA 2002a), the University of Arts appeared to get somewhat advanced standing, especially due to the positive processes and developments after October 5th 2000, and until the end of 2003.

7.4 Contribution to the reform process

The university is actually a type of institution in which the majority of employees assume that the university's mission and vision are defined at the moment of its foundation, and all they have to strive for is preservation of the present identity. However, inclusion of any institution in the process of changes and reforms requires substantial change of institutional logic (Dragicevic-Sesic 2005). The reform process in the domain of higher education, as

well as other reform processes within the society in Serbia commenced after the democratic change in the country. Thus, after October 5th 2000, the new democratic Government appointed new rectors at all public universities³⁹. The new rectors were largely democratically oriented, and were opponents of the previous regime, as all supporters and allies of that regime apparently stepped down the power. By inauguration of the new rector of the University of Arts, after October 5th 2000, the spirit of entrepreneurship reached the gates of the so-called “Forbidden city”⁴⁰.

7.4.1 New developments

In order to institutionalize the positive new developments, as cited in University’s mission statement (see section 7.1), the University felt responsibility to take an active part in preparation of personnel for work in state administration, institutions of culture, as well as for work in the »art market« and in the public, NGO and private sector. Accordingly, one of the University’s objectives was development of the life long learning. To achieve that objective, in summer of 2001, the University established its Center for Professional Development and Consulting in Arts, Culture and Media, which was exactly what Tjeldvoll (2001) defined as an organizational unit, and sort of separate department for market research and teaching services sale. Since its establishment, the Center had organized several short-term *tailor made* courses for professionals in arts, culture and media. These courses are highly demanded on today’s art and culture market, as the institutions and organizations of culture also require capacity building through continuous education and in-service training. The Ministry of Education accredited a certain number of those courses, meaning that the new democratic Government’s policy was constructive at that time towards the so-called ‘first movers’ on the way to the Service University. In addition, the University’s Center developed various partnerships with different research and training institutions nationally, as well as across the borders, such as the Institute for Cultural Development, BalkanKult, ELIA⁴¹, and ENCATC⁴².

³⁹ The appointment of rectors after October 5th 2000, was done in accordance with the 1998 Law on University, given the fact that the new law, although it was needed, wasn’t yet prepared.

⁴⁰ According to some older employees, who were witness to the past and present state of affairs within the University, the Rectorate was often regarded as “forbidden city”, especially during the mandate of socialist pro-government supporters.

⁴¹ European League of Institutes of Arts

⁴² European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centers

In autumn 2001, the University established the Interdisciplinary graduate studies, which foster cross-disciplinarity as the necessary approach towards market oriented knowledge in the field of multimedia and digital arts, scene design, theory of arts and media, and in cultural management and cultural policy in the Balkans. Some of the study programs are organized as joint ventures with foreign (mostly European) universities, and in cooperation with other cultural organizations, institutions and networks⁴³. During 2002, within the Interdisciplinary studies department, the University commenced specialized studies in the field of Musical theatre and Advertising in cooperation with Faculty of political science (University of Belgrade), and Oslo University College. As of the academic period of 2003/04, for the first time in Serbia, the Interdisciplinary doctoral studies have been established in the field of theory and science of arts and media⁴⁴. Some courses and complete study programmes are taught in English language, which shows a true dedication of the former management towards Internationalization policy. As well, a large number of visiting professors from the region of Balkans and wider (Europe, United States, etc.) were coming to teach at the University's Interdisciplinary studies (UART 2002). It is needless to say that number of foreign students increased, especially from the neighboring countries (Romania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Croatia, BiH, Albania, etc.), but also from the wider region of Europe (Slovenia, Austria, Poland, France, etc.). Increase in the number of international students further contributed to regional student mobility and regional cooperation.

Furthermore, in terms of promotion of its activities, the University relied on its modest resources and their proper utilization, as well as on media sponsorship, partnership with the local economy, and the marketing strategies of its newly established PR department initiated during the former management of the University. Finally, along with the need for transparency in educational process, it was important to provide a caring environment for implementation of the University's aims in the area of teaching and learning. Therefore, the commitment of the University to the students, as its most important customers, was evident not only in the improved attention that each candidate entering the university received, but

⁴³ The Institute for International Relations, Croatia; ECUMEST, Romania; Euro-Skills, Greece, CEI (Central European Initiative), UNESCO, HRK (German Rectors Conference)

⁴⁴ It is important to note that doctoral studies are organized in the format of genuine teaching, lectures, workshops and seminars, as before this was only a theoretical possibility envisaged by the 2002 Law, albeit never really implemented. As well, prior to establishment of the third cycle studies, doctorates were mainly the results of independent and approved research.

also through guidance and info service established at the university level⁴⁵, which aimed to provide the students with all necessary information they need in the course of their study.

Having in mind the above stated, it is easy to imagine that participation of the University in the process of external institutional evaluation in the framework of EUA was comprehended as a challenge by the previous top-level management team. According to the former rector of the University, this process facilitated greater awareness of the university community for the need of change (Dragicevic-Sesic 2005). The new challenges required the new and improved capacity of the staff, as the former rector noted “all that was achieved wouldn’t be possible without capacity building of the University management in its totality, which was realized with constant strive for professionalizing of the administrative staff” (*Ibid*, p. 148). So, during 2001 and 2002, several key university administrators attended seminars, conferences and short-term courses in the domain of fundraising, management of education and learning and project management. Aside from introduction of the new functions (PR, executive coordinators, etc.) the new methods of work were also introduced, along with the new methods of communication. The initiative was welcomed and encouraged. Thus, it appeared that “forbidden city” suddenly became a market place of new ideas, exciting projects and innovations.

7.4.2 Drawbacks on the way of institutional change

During the year of 2003 to 2004, the reform processes within society have been brought to a halt⁴⁶. The period of stagnation lasted nearly two years, which resulted in substantial loss of time for implementation of the reform at the universities. The two management teams of the University of Arts shifted in October 2004. The expressed determination of the new management team was to preserve the achievements of the previous team, at least in the sense of keeping the minimum of the new processes running (UART 2005). In that sense, the Interdisciplinary studies department continued to enroll new students, although the crisis could be felt in lowered interest for the study programs. The Center for professional development and consulting in arts, culture and media also had its crisis, as it was shut off

⁴⁵ This service was established as an embryo of joint administrative service at the central level, also during former management team.

⁴⁶ On March 12th 2003, the Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic was assassinated, which resulted not only in halt of all reform processes in Serbia, but also in regression in nearly all public spheres.

for nearly a year. However, Center's activities have been renewed only recently, as the new director was appointed, and the following period ought to demonstrate how effective and justified its existence in the light of the new circumstances is.

7.5 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present the University of Arts in Belgrade as a selected case institution of higher education for this study. Based on the above-presented data, which were retrieved from institutional policy documents, it is noticeable that organizational structure of the University, even though it is conventionally fragmented, differs to a certain extent since the University is rather small institution, with specific educational tradition. As emphasized in conceptual part of this thesis (see section 2.1.4), the universities, as predominantly tradition bound organizations, are prone to academic symbolism. Hence, there is a remarkable distinction between the case institution, and other universities, in terms of institutional identity. The alleged high elitism of the University of Arts opens an extra dimension to understanding of the university leadership as the main concept of this study. Furthermore, the possibility of innovation within the university was documented in the view of the positive new developments that marked the period right after the democratic change in the country.

In the subsequent chapter, empirical data collected during qualitative interviewing are presented by revealing the views of the informants in relation to the main research problem outlined within the conceptual part of this thesis.

8. Empirical data: presentation and analysis

Besides positioning leadership in theory, national, as well as institutional policy documents, the leadership paradigm in the Balkans wouldn't be complete without the empirical grounds embodied in perception of university leadership in the eyes of those who are under its direct influence. According to Bolman and Deal (1997, p. 101), human resource frame “regards people’s skills, attitudes, energy, and commitment as vital resources capable of either making or breaking an enterprise”. For that reason, the empirical data of this thesis are also built upon 15 qualitative interviews of the professors and administrators employed at the University of Arts in Belgrade. Therefore, in the subsequent chapters of the thesis, I focus on the qualitative interviews and how the outcomes of the interviews may provide the new information necessary to answer the main research questions that were posed in the Section 1.1.1. Moreover, the findings ought to supply as the source for drawing the final conclusions, as well as the recommendations for further research. As already mentioned, a modest number of interviewees (15) had been given the opportunity to express how they respond to the increasing focus on university leadership in the context of institutional change. But before I interpret their attitudes and viewpoints, some additional information on criteria for selection of respondents, as well as on conducting and guidance of the qualitative interviewing ought to be provided.

8.1 Selection of respondents

The target group of respondents has been chosen among professors and administrators who are, more or less directly, associated with the University of Arts Rectorate as they were considered to be in a better position to evaluate practices of the top-level management, which is under scrutiny in this study. For that reason, the professors who teach at the University’s Interdisciplinary studies Department⁴⁷ were selected, even though my intention was to make sure that they were coming from all constituent faculties of the University of Arts. In terms of university administrative staff, only the central administration employees were interviewed as they are under direct supervision of the central management, and thus,

⁴⁷ Interdisciplinary studies are organized at the University level, but the teaching staff comes from all constituent faculties.

are directly involved in implementation of the top-level management's decisions and policies. Furthermore, the criteria for selection of administrative staff were threefold. First, the staff with specific responsibilities (in terms of complexity of their position and the level of accountability) was selected. Second, the selected administrators are well-educated individuals holding a university degree in respective fields, and third, they were able to develop critical thinking of the relevant issues discussed during the interviews. In terms of managerial staff, the former and the present University Rector were interviewed, as well as one Dean of the Faculty of Music who, by a chance, is on that position since the second part of the mandate of the former Rector, as well as during the first part of the mandate of the present Rector.

In most cases I have tried to establish the first contact with the respondents by e-mail, a method that turned out to be very successful as most scheduled interviews with the academic staff were done by e-mail. However, certain number of staff preferred to have a face-to-face interview (three out of eight professors), which was also one of the alternatives. Besides, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the managerial staff, the university rectors (the former and the present), as well as with the faculty Dean. The university administrative staff turned out to be the most approachable and cooperative, and they have shown great dedication and interest in responding to my enquiry.

The following account represents an interpretation of empirical data collected during the interviews. Related to the process of interpretation, it is noteworthy that the aim was to stress the relevance of the respondent's point of view concerning the topic of this study. In that respect, in case the respondents are cited or referred to in this thesis, I have found it appropriate to provide each respondent with some sort of identification. Thus, in connection with the possibility of quoting respondents' statements in the subsequent sections of the thesis, each respondent is referred to by means of the following identification exemplified in table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Identification of respondents

Respondents	Identification
Full professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts	FA ₁
Associate professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts	FA ₂
Associate professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts	AA ₁
Full professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts	AA ₂
Associate professor at the Faculty of Music	MA ₁
Associate professor at the Faculty of Music	MA ₂
Full professor at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts	DA ₁
Associate professor at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts	DA ₂
Central University administration employee	AD ₁
Central University administration employee	AD ₂
Central University administration employee	AD ₃
Central University administration employee	AD ₄
Dean of the Faculty of Music (full professor)	Dean
Former Rector (full professor at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts)	Former Rector
Present Rector (full professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts)	Present Rector

8.2 Conducting and guidance of the qualitative interviews

The empirical data of this thesis that have emerged out of qualitative interviewing were collected between primo January and ultimo February 2006. Averagely, every interview lasted about 60 minutes. Prior to the interview, all interviewees received some initial information about the study and the purpose of the research (see Appendix).

In order to guide qualitative interviewing, different questionnaires were designed for each category of the staff, although certain questions were the same for all. All interview guides were developed within a specific topic area, and therefore, they were composed to give special attention to questions of relevance concerning leadership practice and its impact on institutional behavior and development. In all cases, the interview guides were followed all the way throughout the interviews. Thus, given the specific nature of the questions, very few clarifications needed to be made. Altogether 15 persons were interviewed: eight of the interviewees were representatives of academic staff (50%), whereas three respondents (nearly 25%) were managerial staff. Out of the total number of respondents, four of them

were the members of university central administration (25%). Ideally, each respondent should receive approximately the same level of attention when it comes to quoting of their statements and viewpoints in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. However, some of them will be referred to more often than others depending on their knowledge about the topic and how he or she has been able to respond to the specific questions.

8.3 Framing in action

One of the ideas of the interviews was to elicit respondents' understanding of the university as an organization perceived in one of the Bolman & Deal's (1997) four frames (see Table 2.1). "Choosing a frame, or understanding others' perspectives involves a combination of analysis, intuition and artistry" (*Ibid*, p. 270). This task was quite challenging to nearly all of the respondents as their ability to frame, or even to express multi-frame thinking without much hesitation was quite surprising. The following table summarizes the results of this enquiry:

Table 8.2 Summary of the results of organizational frame

<i>Metaphor</i>	<i>Factory Machine</i>	<i>Family Community</i>	<i>Jungle Arena</i>	<i>Temple Theatre</i>
Academic staff		1→	6→	←1
Administrative staff			4→	
Managerial staff		←1		2
<i>Frame</i>	<i>Structural</i>	<i>Human</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Symbolic</i>

In some cases the respondents⁴⁸ were indecisive about choosing a proper frame as they have expressed an opinion that several organizational concept related to the various frames are also applicable to their institution. However, during the process of thinking and rethinking a proper frame, they have chosen one of the metaphors for the type of organization, but pointing out to the direction of their indecisiveness. Arrows in the table 8.2 point to the other

⁴⁸ One in category of managerial staff, two in category of academic staff, and one in category of administrative staff.

frame the respondents were indicating to. As it can be seen from the above table, majority of the respondents perceive the university in the political perspective (74%). One of the reluctant respondents from the group of academic staff expressed his doubtfulness in the following way:

There is innate system at our university, which exists since the university was founded. Having in mind the ideal of a university, it should largely resemble a temple or a theatre, especially our University of Arts. However, previously established system becomes inappropriate at the present moment, as we enter the stage of turbulent changes that are challenging traditional frame our university resides upon. Consequently, the ancient symbols start to lose their meaning as the university stands on the crossroad of chaos, confusion, and all that looks like a jungle (FA₁)

The other respondent that was also reluctant stated, “Since I cooperate well with my colleagues at the faculty, as well as with the students, I feel we are like one big family (AA₂). However, the accent here is on “the faculty” indicating that respondent didn’t managed to comprehend the university as a whole. When probed to be more specific and to try to envision the university as a whole, the respondent replied that she don’t know, and is not aware of the state of affairs at other faculties.

As it can be observed from the above table, the university leaders perceive the four frames differently. The present Rector sees the university in a symbolic frame, which coincides well with his definition of university leadership (see Section 9.1). On the other hand, the former Rector expressed multi-frame thinking while choosing a frame as she clarified that during her mandate she perceived the university in the human resource perspective while explaining her view in the following way:

During my mandate I have tried to build a new internal architecture by means of the existing human resources. More specifically, my intention was to empower my associates to make an effort towards establishing the new and innovative university organization by challenging the existing university structure through forming of the new departments and centers, and through fostering new technology of work.

This statement can be safely interpreted in the sense that the former Rector clearly aspired to alter the university structure by emphasizing the human resource approach.

8.3.1 Possibility of reframing

Besides the present-day challenges, the universities in the region also burdened with legacies from the past. In explaining his perception of the university in a political perspective, one of

the respondents said, “The University resembles jungle first and foremost because of its communist legacy and because of the mentality of academic community. This mentality remained yet unchanged as it is extremely hard to introduce the new system of values after communism” (AA₁). One of the university administrators pointed out that faculties express resistance to the expected changes through the two kinds of strategies: “first, a strong, or active resistance; and second, passive resistance that means the absence of every activity with clearly expressed attitude ‘when there will be a change of government, the things will go back to normal’” (AD₂). Furthermore, another administrator pointed out that “in the present constellation of power when the state, by its steering mechanisms, directs the development of university education, it is important to what extent the attitudes and principles of the university management are corresponding with the attitudes and principles of the current political elite” (AD₃). Furthermore, one the respondents explained the problem of underdeveloped university leadership in the following way:

On the one hand, I believe it is a consequence of the negative selection within institutions that was applied over the decades, which culminated during Milosevic’s regime. On the other hand, it is a problem of incapacity and incompetence of the present State leadership, which, under the veil of democracy and protection of legality, continues to systematically destroy all institutions of the system, including the university (AD₁).

Related to the emphasized political perspective, it is notable that on several occasions during the interview process, majority of the respondents referred quite frequently to the direct link between the state of affairs at the university and the state of affairs in the government.

8.4 The university structure

One of the main research questions of this study was: how rigid, responsive or resilient are the universities in the Balkans? The basic assumption related to this question was that universities are rigid to a great extent because they are tradition dominated institutions of higher education with inherited fragmented structure that is inadequate to facilitate their transformation into more strengthened providers of educational programs. This assumption was largely confirmed during the interviews as majority of the respondents evaluated the university structure as primarily rigid and inadequate. The results of this enquiry are summarized in the following table.

Table 8.3 Summary of the results of university structure

Structure	Rigid	Responsive	Resilient
Academic staff	5	2	1
Administrative staff	4		
Managerial staff	1	1	1

It is notable that majority of the staff (10 respondents) evaluates the structure of the university as rigid. However, it is also notable that the leaders are divided in evaluating the university structure. The faculty Dean evaluates the structure as resilient and this may be due to the fact that at present, the faculty that he represents is regarded as the most cooperative and successful in implementing the first stage of the reform process (i.e. curricular change). The present Rector thinks of the present university structure as responsive “considering the fact that the university reacts to the new circumstances”. Of course, as he pointed out “there is a dose of rigidity within our institution; but in essence, the university reacts to changes in its environment”. On the other hand, the former Rector evaluates the university structure as rigid. She further explains that it depends on the university leadership to what extent it will manage to overcome the rigidity of the structure.

It also depends on the charisma of a university leader will the rigid structure at certain point be concurred. In our case I believe that we managed to overcome the rigidity of structure by forming the Centre for professional development in arts, culture and media, as well as by establishing the interdisciplinary studies department. Regardless of that the primary structure of the university remained unchanged as it continued to be rigid for all new initiatives. However, it was temporarily concurred during the previous leadership.

At this point, it would be necessary to also underscore why the academics and administrators perceive the university structure as rigid and inadequate to enable adaptation of the university to the new circumstances and changes in the environment. Firstly, one of the respondents evaluated the university structure as flexible, but again, the accent was on “the faculty” perspective without an attempt to comprehend the university in its totality. For that reason, indication of the university structural barrier can be observed in the fact that the respondent was not able to “picture” the institution in its entirety. Second, some of the respondents expressed their belief that the structure is shifting, and thus, it is becoming more resilient than rigid. In that sense, one of the respondents stated, “I think the existing structure

is responsive and I wish that this is true because this is simply a necessity, as the university has to adjust to the new circumstances. By this I mean all faculties, which may be more or less rigid, need to follow this line of action” (FA₁). Third, the university administrators are unified in their evaluation of the university structure as rigid. This may be due to the fact that they are positioned at the university central administration building (the Rectorate), and thus, outside of the constituent faculties, which enables better comprehension of the university as whole. In that sense, they have expressed no doubts in explaining why they see the university structure as rigid.

The existing structure of the university is several decades old and it was sustained in different political system that has collapsed by the end of 1980s. If you add to that more than a decade of international isolation, you get a clear picture of the university that has serious problems in adapting to the trends and developments of the contemporary world (AD₁).

One of the respondents even stated that the university structure is inadaptable and closed to changes to that extent, that the questionnaire could easily contain one more structural characteristic – “frozen”. Furthermore, the same respondent stated: “of course it is impossible to avoid the changes completely but every, even the slightest, change in such organizational system is being accomplished in hard labor” (AD₄).

8.4.1 Possibility of integration

Related to the structural problems, the possibility of integration and transformation largely depends on the degree of university cohesion and homogeneity. If we take into account that faculties are independent and sovereign in their affairs as they are rather loosely connected with the Rectorate, the dilemma that concerns introducing institutional integration mechanisms is becoming significant. Related to that, the majority of academics believe that the present level of autonomy of the faculties is satisfactory. The Dean of the faculty also believes so. However, some of the staff expressed concerns related to the autonomy issue by pointing out that, on the one hand, the present level of the faculty autonomy is good, but on the other hand, it is not as good as it hinders communication and cooperation between the faculties. In some cases the lack of cooperation is further complicated with increasing competition, and even animosity that exists between the faculties. In such circumstances it is quite difficult to create the common strategies and goals. “The existing cooperation projects are based on individual, and not on institutional initiative, which makes the present level of

the faculty autonomy more negative than positive” (AA₁). Furthermore, it has been expressed that “high degree of the faculty autonomy results in autistic feeling of self-sufficiency” (FA₂). This hinders potency of interuniversity cooperation and institution wide action.

Aside from the apparent disharmony between the faculties, which make up the university, the further peculiarity rests in vast differences within the faculties. Thus, one of the professors said, “Sometimes, at our faculty, we say that we have nine different entities⁴⁹ that are separated from one another in every sense. This is because we have huge differences in teaching methods and practice in, say, industrial design and ceramics, that within the faculty itself we are not integrated enough” (AA₂). Besides, another respondent states, “the faculty that I work at doesn’t even have a minimum of professional and social cohesion, which would enable better working conditions and welfare for the employees and students” (MA₁). Related to this issue, the former Rector states, “The structure of the university is rigid also because of high level of autonomy of every organizational unit, from the faculty through departments, and chairs. Everyone acts for oneself and there is no any coordination between the units”. Besides other factors, this is also the consequence of the socialist self-management principle that was applied to the universities during the communist rule.

On the other hand, some opinions have been expressed related to the symbolic side of university cohesion. Thus, the Dean of the faculty states, “I think that our University is unified enough and, in our case, integration is a lesser problem than at other universities. This is because our university is small and because we are oriented towards the same basic idea – the arts education, and contribution to preservation of national culture”. In terms of possibility of introducing institutional integration mechanisms, respondent’s opinions vary. Some of them expressed the need to introduce such mechanisms and their ideas were quite interesting. For instance, one of the respondents stated:

It would be important to note that our University was founded after the independent schools, or academies decided to join together. Regardless of that, our university is formally united, firstly from that symbolic side. Thus, we have annual celebration “Days of the University of Arts”, and other similar ceremonies where the teachers and students from all faculties meet. Those are rather traditional modes of cooperation. However, I think that we should develop more intensified integration mechanisms that

⁴⁹ The respondent here refers to the departments.

would rationalize our resources, because at present, due to a kind of inertia we have duplication in university administration and services (student service, finances and the like). Those activities could be integrated at the level of central administration (FA₁).

Other respondents who were opposed to introducing institutional integration mechanisms expressed their concern that such mechanisms, especially if introduced “from above” would be perceived as a threat to the faculty autonomy, and as such wouldn’t be very popular. They have also stated that present organizational structure is the product of some physical and objective circumstances, and that “any centralization of work that would lead to synthesis of the faculties would actually represent a kind of virtual construction, because it is not possible to comprehend the various needs of all segments of the faculties from one place” (AA₂). It was further explained that the faculties are very different in their nature and it would be extremely difficult to envision one center that would be able to coordinate them all. This center, as an isolated and superior body, would have to be outside the structure of the faculty, the respondent indicated. On the other hand, another interviewee stated that no any kind of institutional integration mechanisms could help in any way but the “physical integration by building the new university campus” (MA₂). In concluding this section a luminous statement of one of the respondents deserves to be entirely quoted:

Unified may not be the right word as the university is largely obsessed with the idea of unity and universality. This is pretty much an archaic idea that the university should be free of. Instead, the university should recognize and find its place in the network of production and distribution of knowledge and skills, which don’t belong exclusively to the universities any more. In that sense, it is necessary that the university reprogram itself, and that it accepts the new and flexible modes of cooperation with various extra-university identities with which it could cooperate in the field of education. This means the university should be formed of versatile and changeable identities that don’t owe anything to the idea of university, especially not the loyalty (FA₂).

This statement corresponds well with the notion of differentiated structure of the universities, which according to some authors, ought to make it much easier for them to react to diverse environmental demands (Sporn 2001). This is becoming increasingly evident, particularly in the new stage of the universities’ development.

8.5 Changes and innovation

As we have seen from the conceptual part of the thesis, the universities that want to change need to foster creativity, which is essential part of innovation. Creativity here refers not only to teaching, learning, and research, but also to administration and management practices.

Ridderstråle and Nordström (2002) have argued that creativity actually means breakup with traditional structures and frames. They further claim that creativity and innovation are prerequisites for introduction of the new structures. Moreover, innovation requires experimenting, and experiments are risky. For that reason, an innovative environment has to be highly tolerant towards mistakes (*Ibid.*). As already emphasized, this is especially important in managing change within universities.

8.5.1 Innovation in teaching and learning

The possibility of innovation at the selected case university was already documented by means of the analysis of institutional policy documents (see Section 7.4). This was also confirmed during the interviews; though, it is noteworthy that this possibility shifts from time to time depending on the various subjective and objective circumstances. Subjective circumstances are related to the human factor, whereas objective circumstances are related to the time frame, spatial, technical and economic conditions.

The academic staff shares an opinion that possibility of innovation, primarily in the domain of teaching and learning exists. However, it depends entirely on personal initiative. In that sense, one of the respondents said, “The problem is, that innovation is not encouraged at the institutional level” (AA₁), which means that due to the stiffness of the university structure, the professors and associates are often forced to go around the system. On the other hand, not everything is depending on the system barriers, but the innovation in teaching and learning also depends on motivation of the staff to accept the changes and propose innovative projects. Generally, academic staff largely agrees that not everyone is involved in the process of change. Explanations of this problem vary from the fact that the staff is not well informed about the goals of the higher education reform, to unwillingness and even fear of changes. “Approximately half of the staff is afraid of everything that’s new and unknown. They are even afraid of computers” (AA₁). Another respondent stated, “I evaluate the possibilities for innovation as very open, but due to traditional conservativeness of our institution, there is no enough motivation for introducing innovations” (DA₂). All of this indicates that even if it is evident that possibilities for innovation exist in the domain of teaching and learning, they are also severely limited.

8.5.2 Innovation in university administration

On the other hand, the possibility for innovation is lesser in the area administration and management as this domain is changing much slower. One of the respondents stated, “Innovations in university administration and management depend on the readiness of university administration to accept the changes. This also depends on the willingness and policy of university or faculty management, and how they treat university administration” (FA₁). The university administrative staff is, again, united in evaluating the possibility of innovation. Thus, one of the respondents stated, “These possibilities are severely limited. In general atmosphere of chaos, confusion and resistance to change, I could hardly expect that any of my innovative propositions would be accepted” (AD₁). One of the administrators stated that even if the possibilities for innovations would exist they would not be fostered, as the staff is largely unmotivated to innovate.

It appears that at present it is impossible to implement any kind of innovative projects in terms of reorganization of work, methodology and strategic planning. This is due to such institutional policies, which are deployed that don't favor innovativeness, openness and transparency of work of young experts. Because of that, I am forced to often do my job though the direct work with students and professors, avoiding the university and faculty administration procedures. If I wouldn't do so, the results of my work would be minimized (AD₂).

The above statement reveals the fact that even the university administration employees are forced to go around the system, which is a kind of a paradox since, first and foremost, they are those who make up the system.

8.5.3 What do leaders think of innovation?

Regarding the possibility of innovation in university administration and management it is notable that some results have been achieved in the period right after the democratic change, and during the former top-level management. In that period the human resource structure of the university central administration was revitalized. The former rector defined this as “capacity building” of the university administrative infrastructure, which was mostly depersonalized and based on classical institutional hierarchies in the previous period. Hence, instead of classical bureaucratic positions in university administration, the revitalized university administration is comprised of persons with authority and skills for the activities they are in charge of.

By giving the autonomy and freedom to the people in university administration, we have improved the quality of our work and achieved significant results. Besides, during our mandate we thought of them, the administrators, as programmatic leaders, not only as segments of administrative apparatus (the former Rector).

The university administrators were largely satisfied with the new developments and conditions of work in that period. Furthermore, the Dean of the faculty also believes that possibilities for innovation exist, but the question is to what extent the people are ready to confront their inherent habits. Moreover, the Dean pointed out that his faculty achieved some noteworthy results in that domain, as he asserted, “We have already adopted certain changes in faculty administration as we have employed young and educated persons that deal with management and international relations”. However, the segments of the previous system are still coexisting in the new circumstances and that hinders the process of change, the Dean explained. In terms of possibility of innovation in general, the present Rector states:

There is something called institutional inertia, which is especially present at our university. This is understandable because our university was the only university for art education for many years. We had a monopolistic position as we didn't have any competition. With an increasing competition the awareness for change is growing.

The present Rector, further, states, “Innovation is in the essence of arts education. The artist has to innovate, and thus, the artist mustn't be satisfied with the present state of affairs as innovation is in the spirit of our institution”. On the other hand, the former Rector expresses an opinion that “even though the possibilities for innovation are vast in both directions, they are not used enough due to the weak leadership without vision and ideas”.

8.6 Summary

The aim of this Chapter was to elicit the empirical data gathered during qualitative interviewing, which are concerning the university's organizational structure, the possibility of reframing, integration and innovation in teaching and learning, as well as in university administration and management. The following chapter focuses on university leadership in the context of change, as well as on its influence on institutional behavior and development.

9. Leadership in reality

Related to the widespread debate on university reform in the Balkans, it is argued that without bringing about appropriate changes in governance and management structures of higher education, all transformations in the areas of research, teaching, learning and student assessment will have less of a chance of being successfully realized (Vlasceanu & Purser 2002). Hence, the most essential change strategy should be to improve organizational management and leadership (Bolman & Deal 1997). This strategy should also be applied to higher education. Both managers and leaders need high level of personal artistry to respond to challenges, ambiguity and paradox. The main leadership paradox is how to maintain integrity and mission without making their organization rigid and intractable (Bolman & Deal 1997). The main leadership challenge in higher education in the Balkans would be how to surmount the system's barriers and steer the institutions towards the sustainable development.

9.1 Defining university leadership

Related to symbolic perception of university leadership in the Balkans (see section 2.1.2), it would be interesting to see what the research participants think of university leadership and how they define it. Before elaborating on how the members of university community define the university leadership, it would also be interesting to elicit the insight of the respective post holder (rectors and deans) in relation to defining leadership. The Dean of the faculty clearly sees leadership in a formal way as he claims, "The leaders of the university are rector, vice-rectors, and deans, but also members of the Managing board and the University teaching council. Their role is to implement what is determined by the law and university Statute, as well as to preserve what is traditionally good at the university". This is a rather static and formalistic view of leadership and as such, belongs to the normative realm and structural frame as the emphasis is clearly put on formal positions and roles. On the other hand the present Rector⁵⁰ views leadership in the following way:

⁵⁰ It would be important to note that both professors are renowned artists.

I view the university leadership from a very specific side. The art in its essence is one specific domain of human activity. In light of that, the leader would be the one who has understanding and the ability to encompass various artistic disciplines, as well as who would be able to comprehend the role of those disciplines in creation of societal values. Of course, the leader needs to be someone who can affirm the art and art education in public as values which are not only related to the university, but to the society in general.

This view of leadership is symbolic as the emphasis is put on creation of meaning and beauty, as well as honorific goals for advancement of art education. Besides, such view of leadership corresponds well with the leadership perceived in a figurative and traditional way, as an honor. Nevertheless, this perception is far from reality as the university leaders in the Balkans face rather down-to-earth problems, which are far from only advancement of their profession. The present Rector is quite aware of this as he further asserts:

It is important that the leader is a person of public reputation. This is something that our university is recognized for. So, the public recognition of a leader is important, but on the other hand it doesn't necessarily mean that this person is right for that position. Management is one specific job and in that sense the professional support is important. More specifically, the problem is that leadership position at our institution was, thus far, one merit and honorable function. Today, the circumstances have changed and this impinges on a more profound engagement of the leader.

Related to the emblematic view of leadership one of the academic staff respondents said, "We have to keep in mind the history of leadership at our University according to which the leading position had this honorable aura. However, the leaders of the past didn't have the worries of today's leaders" (MA₂). On the contrary, the former Rector views leadership in more realistic terms as she distinguishes between formal and informal leadership.

The formal leadership is related to the official function at the institution, and informal leadership is linked to people of integrity and authority, among which are some former vice-rectors who presently don't hold any formal position but they have an immense influence in university leadership as their word has a certain weight. Ideally, the best situation is when the formal leadership is matched with the leaders' charisma, and that is when a charismatic person is found at the formal leadership position. This is practically the case when the rector has both, the personal authority and the authority of a function. This is the true university leadership and the only possible. In all other cases there are various forms of tension between the formal leadership and those who have an informal influence.

From this statement, it is apparent that the formal leadership is very important in the Balkans, as without it, informal leadership remains largely incomplete since it is not quite valued among the members of the academic community. In that sense, the former Rector stated:

When I was a rector I had an influence in mobilization of our academic community to engage in the process of change. Many of the achieved results testify about that. For example we had a positive evaluation of the international experts, establishment of cooperation with foreign universities and so on. In the period after my mandate I restrained myself from the mobilizing role, as I believed that it is not right to continue to lead the university without the formal function.

In terms of other important elements of the university leader, the former Rector further explains that the authority of personality or personal integrity as a concept is based on knowledge, credibility and the ability to communicate. She also indicates that personal qualities of a leader are the most important. “Personally I believe the human qualities of a leader are essential, because other qualities like professional conduct can be learned”. This line of reasoning is coinciding with a human resource perspective where emphasis is put on human qualities and on aligning organizational and human needs.

As we have seen in Section 7.3, the tradition of the University of Arts leadership points out to predominant practice of appointment of male professors and renowned artists to the leading positions. However, it is notable that the University got its status of a university⁵¹ after curricular change and introduction of theoretical education and masters and doctoral programs. As a consequence, not only the artists are professors at the University of Arts but also theoreticians and scientists. However, nearly three decades have passed since the University of Arts got its full-fledged university status, and the first non-artist professor has been appointed to the position of University rector. The dean of the faculty explains this unprecedented situation in the following way:

It is not important that the leader is only an excellent artist of huge public reputation. It is also important that the university leader is cooperative and communicative person, which performs its duties in a professional manner. The circumstances form before have changed when the accent was on the public fame and credibility. Now a certain organizational and managerial capabilities are necessary. As a matter of fact, in the previous mandate we had an excellent rector who was not an artist.

9.2 Impact on institutional behavior

All other respondents defined university leadership as extremely important for instructional change. They also regard as important that the university leaders are persons of integrity and

⁵¹ Before 1973 it used to be an Academy of arts comprising for art schools – academies.

credibility and their personal and human qualities are crucial. One of the respondents stated, “It is important that leader is the person of integrity, highly ethical person that incorporates individual and professional qualities. However, did we really have such persons in the leading positions within our university; can be a matter of discussion” (FA₁). Another respondent expressed an opinion that aside from personal qualities “the leaders must be those who are capable of organizing something, which means that professionalizing of this function is important even though I get the impression that this element is somehow missing” (AA₁). Related to the issue of the former and the present university management, the same respondent states:

The former university management was much stronger, and I am afraid that this will not happen again. The real leadership happened in that period and I believe it was a coincidence and not customary at our university. However, the central university management is presently slightly better than the faculty management. The leader that this University deserves should have the qualities as the former rector, which means communication, authority, personal integrity and knowledge.

The evaluation of how the central university management affects the institutional behavior is diverse. Some respondents state that they don't have the real insight into that aspect, whereas others believe this influence can be felt at the faculties to a lesser or greater extent. Furthermore, some of the respondents relate the problem of university leadership with the problem of negative selection, and to the problem of proliferation of mediocrity at universities. In that sense, one of the respondents stated:

In Serbia the people who are successful in their profession are usually ignored and marginalized. The term “negative selection” is very present in our society, and as a consequence we have a negative of all that could be defined as normal social behavior. Therefore, on the leading positions, for instance in companies, are those who are the most incompetent in their professions. They are in a position to be closely linked with the political elite of the country because they too are elected based on the key “the worse the better” (MA₁).

Linked to this observation is a viewpoint of one of the university administrators who explains that there must come to a break-up with the practice of “inherited rights”, which serves as a cover up for incompetence, unprofessionalism and lethargy by fostering negative selection and nepotism (AD₁). Associated to the problem of negative selection, one of the respondents from the group of academic staff stated, “The problem is that nobody from the credible professors wants to be the dean. The person, who accepts to become a dean usually, has certain personal, financial or political interests. In other words, better people don't want to take the responsibility of that position, because the other majority is overwhelming (AA₁).

In support of this observation is the statement of another respondent from the group of academic staff who noticed that person who is capable of recognizing the change of ideological matrix is often found in the leading position. Besides, those who are frequently the formal post holders at the universities are capable of recognizing the circumstances and resources that can be used to satisfy various interests of personal nature. In other words “direction and positioning of an institution such as university is manifested through internal compromises, conflicts and struggle for prevalence of various ideological positions that influence on creation of various and frequently confronted forms of leadership inside the same institution” (FA₂). This is understandable, as the universities in the Balkans are largely perceived in a political perspective.

Regardless of the problems of university leadership, the research respondents defined its role and influence in the following way. First, the role of the central university leadership is to protect the uniqueness of art education in relation to the State and other comprehensive universities. As one of the respondents stated, “the central university leadership is the protector of this tendency of the existence of a special university for art education” (FA₁). Second, the role of central university leadership is to integrate, which means it must act as a cohesive factor to foster cooperation between the faculties. Third, the role of central university leadership is to solve the problems and propose solution. However, the way of proposing solutions is noteworthy as one of the respondents stated, “The central university management must solve the problems and impose the solutions. We lose a lot of time by persuasion because the solutions have to be forced on subordinates. This is our nation’s legacy” (AA₁). Some other respondents were also in favor of command-oriented management as they claim, “unfortunately, in our culture of obstruction nothing else works better than the top-down command” (MA₁).

On the other hand, the leaders evaluate the influence of central university leadership on institutional behavior in the following way. The Dean of the faculty believes that such influence exists. However, the Dean is aware of the fact that this influence largely depends on “who is in the position of a rector, as well as who is the dean”. This also depends on mutual communication and cooperation between the dean and the rector. Creation of common strategies and goals depends on this factor as well. The former Rector states, “in relation to the present governance model, the university leadership influences the behavior and performance of the university as a whole in a small percent”. Hence, according to the

former Rector this influence is rather weak, “as the Rectorate usually doesn’t interfere in what is going on at the faculties”. It appears that the present Rector also shares the opinion of the former Rector regarding this issue, as he asserts:

The university leadership can influence on behavior and performance of the institution as a whole, but it is not certain to what extent. This is due to the structure of the university where we have strong faculties and the central leadership doesn’t have all the power. Consequently, you have a natural opposition from independent units, which have their particular interests that they want to protect.

The relationship between the university and the faculty leadership is differently perceived. The Dean evaluates this relationship as constructive and good. The former Rector also evaluated this relationship as good and constructive during her mandate. “When I was a Rector, the relationship between the change-oriented deans was excellent as we tried to function as a team that had the common task”. The accent here is on the “change-oriented” deans and on the first two years of her mandate since everyone thought of that moment⁵² as “revolutionary” as she pointed out. It appears that the former Rector knew quite well how to map the political terrain and how to negotiate a winning coalition (see Section 4.4). On the other hand, the present Rector evaluates his relationship with the faculty deans in the following way:

My relationship with the deans, regardless of everything, is actually a relationship of division of power. I get the impression that the deans perceive our interactions as limitation of their authority, and that is not good. However, this is understandable with regard to previous character of the institution, and with regard to vast sovereignty of the faculties and ceremonial role of the university. The deans follow their particular interests, and therefore, we may come to a conflict.

The present Rector further explains that with an increasing role of the university, by the means of legislative changes, the tensions in relations between the faculties and the university also increase. Other respondents evaluate the communication between the university and faculty management as mostly formal and traditional, and thus, as inefficient. Furthermore, they have concluded that communication and cooperation exist but “this is primarily in the domain of solving current problems and not in the domain of proactive behavior towards the stakeholders” (DA₁).

⁵² The moment that former Rector is referring to is the moment right after the democratic change in the country, and appointment of the new rectors and deans by the new democratic government after October 5th 2000.

9.3 Effect on institutional strategies and policies

One of the main research questions of this study was: How does university leadership affect creation of institutional strategies with particular emphasis on tradition of collective decision-making. Related to this question, a positive assumption was given in the Section 1.1.1, which refers to the existence of good practice examples. This means that there is a possibility that university leadership can have a significant influence in this domain regardless of the fact that due to the existing structural and organizational problems, rectors and deans are usually perceived as not more than those who carry university emblems, sign the university council's decisions, give the statements for the press, and the like (Turajlic 2005). However, in these times of changes where nothing is solid and everything is shifting, it is tempting to follow familiar paths and to use the same old solutions; regardless of how much the problems have changed (Bolman & Deal 1997). Before exemplifying practical implications of the university leaders' influence in the context of collective decision-making, it would be necessary to give a brief overview of this tradition.

9.3.1 Tradition of collective decision-making

Since the introduction of the socialist self-management principle in former Yugoslavia, the university and faculty teaching councils played the main managing role within universities. To best describe the essence of collective decision-making, as Turajlic (2004) puts it, it should be mentioned that teaching council (comprised of all teaching staff), is the main body that adopts the key decisions. Consequently, the teaching council is responsible for all activities at the faculty, from election of deans and vice deans, throughout curriculum revisions, and up to the approval of doctoral and master theses. Even though, procedurally, the managing board appoints the new dean, the final result always reflects the will of the teaching council. This is considered as the main achievement of institutional autonomy.

However, in essence of the idea of collective (socialist self-management) decision-making is the assumption that employees of an institution can, better than others, comprehend the situation and decide what should be done in terms of further development. The problem, however, occurs when it is expected from the employees to bring the decisions by voting. No matter how good these decisions may be for institution, they are usually unfavorable for the individual. The practice actually shows that in the tradition of collective decision-

making, personal interests always win over the common interests (Turajlic 2005). In that way, the atmosphere of compromise is created, which serves to satisfy the needs of majority. Furthermore, if we emphasize that collective decision-making implies collective responsibility, it is clear that there is actually nobody who is, even nominally, accountable for the decisions made, especially if we know that rectors and deans are regarded by the academic community as merely “the first among the equals” (*Ibid*, p. 291). In that sense, one of the respondents from the group of academic staff stated, “I see the relationship with my direct superior as more collegial relationship than just a relationship of subordination. Thus, the dean is only a colleague who is currently on that position, and, as you know, leading positions are matter of election and re-election”(FA₁). From this statement it is clear that the leaders are rather perceived as the first among the equals, as opposed to those who carry the responsibility for development of institutions even though the respondents sometimes formally indicate this.

In order to illustrate the key socialist principles associated with the tradition of collective decision-making process it would be interesting to see how the curriculum is revised at any of the faculties. Turajlic (2005) describes this in the following graphic way:

The basic premise of each professor is “I have to teach my subject and if I am prevented from that in any way, I will not vote for changes”. (Here, the adjective “my” stands for the discipline that I like to teach, and I do that for many years). As a result of such attitudes it is necessary to make compromise, which leads to proliferation of incredibly large number of various subjects that are often unrelated to the market and societal needs, while, at the same time, elsewhere in the world the learning outcomes and professional competences are valued in the process of adoption and revisions of curricula (*Ibid*, p. 291)⁵³

Having in mind that it is not in the nature of humans to vote against their own interests, it is difficult to imagine that any teaching council will ever vote for the study program in which the majority of the staff doesn't have their own subject. Therefore, the serious higher education reform requires a break-up with the relicts of socialist self-management tradition (*Ibid.*). In addition, giving more authority to the actual institutional management will necessarily lead to increase in individual accountability.

⁵³ Author's translation;

9.3.2 Leadership strategies for change

In terms of the role of the central university leadership, the former Rector explained that before 2000, the University of Arts Rectorate had only a representational role. Since 2000, the role of the Rectorate is changed to a significant degree, as the Rectorate tended to be an initiator of the new programs and projects. By an intention to integrate the activities of the constituent faculties, the former University leadership had switched from institutional to project logic. However, having in mind the vast independence of the faculties, the former Rector stated, “We have initiated many new developments from the Rectorate, and then we were very happy if this was passed on to the faculties”. In evaluating the role of the central university leadership, one of the respondents stated, “Since 2000, the central University leadership opened new possibilities for professional development in terms of establishment of the life long learning and interdisciplinary master and doctoral studies. This is the level that was missing during previous periods. With this in mind, I think, the university Rectorate now doesn’t have only the formal administrative role it used to have before, but it rather has an educational and integrative role” (AA₂).

The former Rector, further, indicated that previous leadership intended to develop new forms of institutional activity, which are proactive towards the environment. These new forms were active in the domains of culture, arts, media policy and education. Besides, one of the intentions of the former leadership was to develop profitable forms of education by forming the Centre for professional development in culture, arts and media, as well as by establishing Interdisciplinary studies department. These developments resulted in diversification of funding sources as the university became more capable of attracting own resources by projects, donations, through sponsorships and charging tuition fees⁵⁴. In terms of the strategies, the former Rector indicated that the strategies of the former university leadership were twofold. The first strategy was related to establishment of the special centers, departments and sub-units, whereas the other strategy was exemplified through fostering creation of young and proactive teams that were usually informal in their nature. The former Rector is aware that some of those teams didn’t manage to achieve full efficiency due to the various reasons. One of the reasons lies in the fact that, perhaps, those teams haven’t been

⁵⁴ However, it is notable that at those times the new law on higher education wasn’t yet adopted to facilitate and boost all those new developments.

institutionalized completely as their full institutionalization would require a change of the University Statute, which is a very complex procedure.

9.3.3 Influence on creation of institutional policies

According to the former Rector, the influence of the central university leadership was far greater in the beginning of the process of change. Explicitly, at the beginning of 2001 the central university leadership had an immense influence on enrolment policy and the number of students to be enrolled (the quota), as well as on the transparency of enrolment process at the faculties. As already mentioned, the university noted an increase in international students in that period. Therefore, the influence on internationalization policy was also great. In that sense, the former Rector stated, “we initiated the new interdisciplinary joint degree program in cooperation with two recognized French universities. This program was entirely thought in French and English language, which contributed to greater regional mobility of professors and students”. However, the human resource policy largely remained in the sole jurisdiction of the faculties, and thus, influence of the central university leadership was minimal in this domain. The present Rector shares these impressions with the former Rector as he claims that in the domain of international cooperation central university management has a bigger role than in creation of other significant institutional policies. However, in terms of the current leadership strategies, the present Rector states:

Unfortunately, in the present state of affairs, I am afraid that we cannot talk about the strategies, but rather about tactics. This is because we are faced with ambiguity, and in such circumstances we adopt certain tactics. Of course, there is a basic strategic idea where the university wants to go, but this idea is realized through several small tactical steps.

This statement can be interpreted in the way that present university leadership doesn't seem to have a clear strategy of institutional development. The lack of strategy is also apparent from the statements of some of the respondents from the group of university administrators who don't seem to know what are the strategies and priorities of the present leadership. The respondents viewpoints associated to this issue are interesting. To be exact, one of the respondents' stated, “It would be hard for me to define the strategies of the present leadership. I feel that they are confusedly ranging from the need to preserve certain good projects from the previous period, towards flirting with conservative and rigid ideas that nothing new and contemporary should be developed (AD₁)”. Yet another respondent largely

shares the opinion of the previous colleague by stating, “The strategies of the present leadership are likely based on some metaphysical thinking in which the logic doesn’t seem to have any significant role. When there is no aim, there is no strategy either” (AD₄). The observation of another respondent is also interesting in this respect.

There is almost no any cooperation between the Rectorate and the faculties as in the previous period. Such cooperation should be one of the first steps towards the integrated university. Because the basic developmental goals are undefined, there is no any clearly defined strategy. The absence of institutional planning is usually justified, within the narrow managerial circles, as a very large burden of implementing the reforms (AD₂).

In terms of the strategies of the previous university leadership, the administrators were largely positive. Thus, one of the respondents stated that former leadership had developmental strategies that incorporated a clear vision of the university in the future based on contemporary concepts of European higher education. In that respect, the university administrators evaluated the former Rector as “the leader who had the awareness of the importance of her relationship with the associates, clear strategy of institutional development and communication abilities that were inspirational for achievements of better results” (AD₂). Aside from the positive evaluation of the former leadership strategies, such as introduction of new and innovative forms of communication and work ethics, new ideas and fast changes, the overall critique of a rather chaotic and, frequently, confused decision-making was also expressed. For instance, one of the interviewees stated, “in the overall atmosphere of optimism, enthusiasm and chaos, the strategies of the former university leadership were usually *ad hoc*” (AD₃). As it was emphasized in conceptual part of this thesis, when there are strategies missing, the decision-making is always reactive and crisis oriented. However, in order to facilitate the new university leadership initiatives after 2000, certain institutional decisions had to be made. Related to that, the former Rector explains how the decision-making process was influenced during her mandate:

The main body responsible for decision-making is the University teaching Council. We have intended to influence on a decision-making process, firstly by good preparation of the Council sessions, by good timing and contextualization, and also by indicating the needs why a certain decision must be made. Besides, we had an intention to always provide the good arguments for the necessary decisions, and regardless of the tradition of collective decision-making, we always wanted to express that we take the full responsibility for the decisions that were adopted, as well as for the possible consequences. Therefore, I have always clearly indicated who is responsible. I have never felt neutral in this process in the sense that the Council members decide, and I hide behind the collective will.

As it can be observed from the above statement, if the leadership team shares a clear position towards the needs, the aims and responsibility, the decision-making process, regardless of being collective, can actually be used to facilitate the strategies of the top-level management. The present Rector regards this artistry of the former Rector as prudence, as he asserted:

I influence partially on the decision-making process, more like the one who proposes certain solutions. Of course, the wise leaders can influence on the decision-making process in various ways. However, it is not the matter of being wise, but it is the matter of a fact that others decide, and they are the members of the University council [...] Thorough the decision-making process within some collective bodies it is easier to accept the responsibility.

This implies that the present Rectors favors shared responsibility over the individual. This is especially justified in the present turbulent moment of the University development. However, the present Rector is aware that evaluation of the decisions is a weaker side, which also refers to the lack of accountability. Regularly, when the certain decision has significant negative consequences, it is usually justified by the fact that no one is personally responsible because, after all, this is the decision of the University Council.

9.4 Relationship between the university and the state: autonomy issue

In the conceptual part of this thesis it has been already referred to the problem of an odd type of institutional autonomy where the rather weak autonomy of the university derivates from almost unlimited autonomy of the faculties. Such state of affairs ensues the weak authority of the university leadership, as opposed to the strong faculty management. The practical implications of the present degree of the faculty autonomy have already been already discussed. However, there is the need to elicit the view of the university leaders (rectors and deans) upon the university's relationship with the State and the autonomy issue.

The former Rector stated that universities are autonomous in the sense that there is no strong control by the state, which was typical for the previous period. This means that the system is becoming largely liberalized, and this is certainly regarded as a positive development towards deregulation tendency and change in higher education governance. On the other hand, the University is actually subdued by the vast autonomy of its organizational units – the faculties, and this is something that needs to be tackled in the next phase of its

development. To clarify the autonomy issue, the present Rector's statement is interesting as an illustration.

When we talk about the university autonomy we often think of the autonomy of academic education, and in such case the university as a concept becomes a synonym for academic education. The university is certainly a handy word to incorporate this meaning. On the other hand, when we talk about the university, as an organization, the question is to what extent such organization is really autonomous.

The present Rector further explains that current situation is a transitional phase in terms of the new Law on higher education. According to this law, the normative tendency is to strengthen the role and the autonomy of the university by bringing it to the higher level, which should represent an equivalent of the university's responsibility towards the society. Furthermore, in terms of the university's relationship with the State, the faculty Dean's observation is also quite interesting. The Dean expressed a concern that it appears that the State intends to even destroy the universities by its inconsiderate policy. The Dean primarily indicates on the problem of financing, which is inadequate to support further development of the universities. Moreover, the Dean believes it is paradox that institutions of higher education in this country are expected to implement the reforms literally "for free", when it is well known that reforms are highly costly. The present Rector seems to share the Deans opinion since he indicates, "Our habit to rely on the support from the State raises the question does the State really need us. Who needs the university that has to be similar to the private enterprise?" Besides, the present Rector believes when the university becomes capable to take care of itself, in economic terms, it would become truly autonomous. However, "the intensity of transformation towards such state of affairs is too rapid for traditional institution such as university, and I think the majority of state universities are yet unready to depart to such adventure", stated the present Rector.

In terms of what can the State do to help the universities in adaptation to the new circumstances and changes in the environment, the present Rector believes that "the State aspires to take of the burden of its shoulders". Besides, it appears the State wants the universities to become more responsible for their own development, however, by neglecting the fact the State is also largely responsible for the present state of affairs within the universities. This raises certain questions, as the present Rector claims, "Our University is an elite institution, and as such, does the State really need us? Elitism of the school is not the sharpest intention of the Bologna Process, and for that reason, there is a certain

misunderstanding between the State and the University, especially between the State and the University of Arts”.

In terms of what the State can do to facilitate the universities transformation into more integrated institutions of higher education capable of taking full responsibility for own development towards the society, the present Rector proposed that the State could ease the financial regulatory framework, which would enable universities to develop commercial activities. According to the present regulatory framework, this is rather difficult. Besides, the State could act as a propagator of the idea of innovative university, which is presently not so apparent.

On the other hand, the former Rector believes that the State can do much by changing its financing policy by stimulating, and even requesting certain organizational development. The present modus of State financing is rather input oriented and based on the numbers of students and professors, as well as on physical space of the universities. Such financing model is not based on realistic strategic needs of the universities, which makes it impossible to create the policy of development of institutions. This practically means, the State has to establish certain funds for development, or the so-called developmental budget, and these resources need to be entrusted to the university to use it freely and in accord with its strategies and stated priorities. Of course, the accountability of proper use of such resources needs to be made clear. In that respect, the former Rector stated, “The State never evaluated the university in a true sense of that word. Instead, the State had only administrative control over the universities by checking whether the proper procedural requirements have been met. This implies that the system of accreditation of institutions at the national level has to be established”. However, as long as the economy is stagnating, it is difficult to expect any actual improvement with regard to such state of affairs. As Turajlic (2003) argues, as long as the economic situation in the country does not improve, question as to whether or not the higher education is a public good will simply remain an academic issue.

In concluding this section it would be important to note that autonomy of academic education is the value that should be preserved in the following stage of the university development. However, the present university autonomy is set as an upside-down autonomy as it is executed as the sum of the autonomies of independent the faculties (Novak 2005). Instead, it should be the other way around, as the autonomy of the faculties needs to be

secured through the university autonomy. Because of the present inverted state of affairs with regard to institutional autonomy, in certain aspects, this autonomy is actually on the boundary with anarchy because it is unrelated to the university's obligations towards the 21st Century, and that is improvement of quality of the higher education (*Ibid.*). Beyond doubt, once they were founded, the higher education institutions in the Balkans have never been a subject to a serious quality assurance procedure of their activities and achieved results. Hopefully, this shortcoming in State higher education policy will be overcome in the near future.

9.5 Critique of university leadership

Having in mind that university leadership in the Balkans is largely perceived in a symbolic fashion the empirical data point out that critique of the dominant leadership tradition is related to the unfit between the leaders' behavior and the nature of the problems of contemporary world. With regard to that, Bolman & Deal emphasize the following:

The symbolic leaders embody their vision in a story – a story about “us” and about “our” past, present, and future. “Us” could be the Sorbonne, the Chrysler Corporation, the people of Thailand, or any other audience the leader hopes to reach. The past is usually a golden one, a time of noble purposes, and of great deeds, of heroes and heroines. The present is a time of trouble, challenge, or crisis: a critical moment when we have to make fateful choices. The future is the dream: a vision of hope and greatness often linked directly to greatness of the past (1997, p. 316).

Related to this observation a dream of the “University City of Arts” (see Section 7.2) seems to be well corresponding with the predominant occupation of the present university leadership, as it is clear that rather futuristic project of building the new university campus is firmly linked with the university's elitist self-image, and the glorious prestige from the past times. However, the case university is faced with far more down-to-earth problems like majority of the universities region wide. According to the respondents' statements, the present leadership seems quite unready to tackle these rather down-to-earth issues.

University leader is very important as a support to those active members of an organization, and therefore, he or she must be able to motivate the associates towards the more efficient work in difficult circumstances. If the leader is not capable to solve the problems on a daily basis in a fast and determined way, but instead the problems are being widened and spread around the segments of the institution, the leader loses

the authority. Such “crack” in the system spreads very fast and weakens the institution as a whole (AD₂).

It is further argued by the same respondent that the present leadership doesn't undertake any actions, which would enable the university to function “outside the framework of supported institution”. In such conditions, the existing human resources feel alienated and frustrated resulting in the lack of motivation for any innovative action. In that sense, one of the respondents stated, “The University cannot afford to have the management that disempowers the employees, and is incapable to communicate and bring the decisions in a fast and efficient way” (AD₃). Besides, the respondents' critique of the leadership tradition is also related to the “obsolete ways of selection and forming of the university leadership bodies” (MA₂). Accordingly, how the university leaders in the Balkans are chosen seems to be a matter of merit and whose turn it is in the queue, rather than who is competent and capable of being in such position. An observation of one of the university administrators is interesting in this respect, “At present, the leaders of our university are aware that change is near and that they cannot go back. However, it appears that they would like to keep the status quo as long as it is possible” (AD₄).

The critique of the present university leadership is also related to hierarchical nature of the relationship towards associates. The university administrators largely agree that this hinders the teamwork and efficiency of communication and exchange of information. However, in the contemporary world the traditional institutional hierarchies are the relict form the past. In such hierarchical approach, the leader feels superior and powerful. On the other hand, information technology enables complete transparency of institutional affairs as those who have access to the relevant information start to criticize and oppose every expression of power. As Ridderstråle and Nordström (2002) have argued, the digital world took off the emperor's clothes. They further state that classical hierarchically structured organization wouldn't represent the problem in the 21st Century since such organization wouldn't exist.

Aside from the largely positive evaluation of the former university leadership, the respondents were also rather critical in terms that “the former leadership wasn't quite resolute in breaking-up with the remains of the previous regime” (AA₁). The university administrators also share the opinion of academic staff in this respect. One of the respondents referred to the negative impression related to the previous top-level management, which regrettably expressed “the lack of determination, and perhaps, the lack

of legal instruments to get rid of the incompetent and unprofessional human resources” (AD₁). Moreover, another respondent stated, “My negative impression of the previous university leadership is concerning their relationship towards those retrograde elements of the old system which had been allowed to remain at the university and obstruct all positive processes” (AD₂). In addition, another respondent came to a conclusion that remains of the previous system had been rather calm during the former leadership, however, since the chance has been missed to “morally and professionally purify the institution, the negative selection is taking its toll again during the present leadership” (AD₃). Furthermore, the remains of the previous regime accumulated through the process of negative selection, which had been fostered within institutions over the decades reaching its apex during the Milosevic’s regime, were actually the toughest opponents of the process of change. The former Rector has an interesting observation related to this problem:

It was impossible that resisters towards change become enthusiastic about our innovative ideas, as they were our political opponents. This is because of the fact that our society is ideologically divided. For instance, it is impossible that you win over the nationalist who is an openly declared opponent towards the policy of internationalization.

The former Rector further explained that previous university leadership had the two kinds of opponents. The first kind was embodied in representatives of nationalistic intelligence, which perceived implementation of Bologna Process objectives as next to a death of national culture and tradition. The second kind personified the remains of the previous regime that gained certain positions within institutional hierarchy based on political and ideological grounds. However, they didn’t have the professional competences for the functions and positions they had. In the new system established after the democratic change, these elements of the former regime continued coexist, however, marginalized. Some of them allegedly expressed their willingness to take part in new processes, but the new management was quite aware of their incompetence and lack of knowledge and skills. For that reason, “We didn’t fill them with enthusiasm, as they couldn’t be the bearers of change”, explained the former Rector.

However, it appears that remains of the old system “relived their moment of glory during the present university leadership” (AA₁). The former Rector seems to be quite aware of this; however, realizing that such state of affairs is a direct result of ideological division of the Serbian society. Having in mind that after democratic change, the process of transition

towards liberal society of communication and cooperation only started, such drastic measures like dismissal of employees that were cadre of the previous regime, were quite unpopular.

9.6 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to investigate the university leadership in practice through evaluation of its effect on institutional performance and behavior. Besides, the effect of university leadership on creation of common institutional strategies and policies was also scrutinized, particularly in light of the tradition of collective decision-making, and the present level of autonomy of the universities. Moreover, the relationship between the universities and the State, as viewed by the research respondents, was exemplified by emphasizing what the State can do to help the universities in adapting to the new circumstances and changes in the environment. Lastly, the critique of the dominant leadership tradition and practice was also epitomized.

10. Discussion and results

In this chapter an effort is made to structure the discussion around the main research concepts presented in theoretical part of this thesis.

The fact that universities in the Balkans are largely perceived in political perspective with rigid and inadequate structure, points out to the problems that are closely linked with their contextual divergence. As it was already emphasized, the context in which they reside is burdened with ambiguity of transition, which further complicates the situation in higher education, especially associated to the framework of changes. The empirical results that have emerged out of this particular study largely confirmed clearly expressed positioning of the Balkan universities in the Bolman and Deal's (1997) political perspective (see Section 2.1.3). Additionally, the context specific academic symbolism in the Balkans, especially related to emblematic view of university leadership, added up to ambiguity of transition in the overall immaturity of the universities to face the profound and far-reaching change.

10.1 Structural problems

An imperative structural dispute is holding an organization together without holding it back. When structure is too loose, people go their own way or get lost (Bolman & Deal 1997). On the other hand "structures that are too tight stifle flexibility and cause people to spend much of their time trying to get around the system (*Ibid*, p. 61). Some informants have also noted this problem while discussing obstacles to innovation and institutional change. As it has been emphasized in conceptual part of this thesis (see Section 2.1.1), the fragmented structure of the Balkan universities is currently inappropriate to facilitate considerable changes of the higher education system that would be in accord with the Bologna Process objectives. Additionally, according to their present inadequate structure, the Balkan universities are weak associations of highly autonomous faculties, which makes the universities largely rigid with more or less responsiveness in some cases. In such state of affairs, the role of central university leadership is not sufficiently strong to provide policy leadership and quality control over the independent sub-units.

To overcome the structural barriers Sporn (2001) argues that universities need to think about new organizational forms, for instance, by introducing some form of institution-wide integration mechanism to overcome the structural barriers. According to Sporn, existing university structures throughout their bureaucratic and collegial character often hamper collaboration, adaptation and entrepreneurial behavior (*Ibid.*). Disintegrated structure of the universities, according author's metaphorical view, is presented in the following figure.

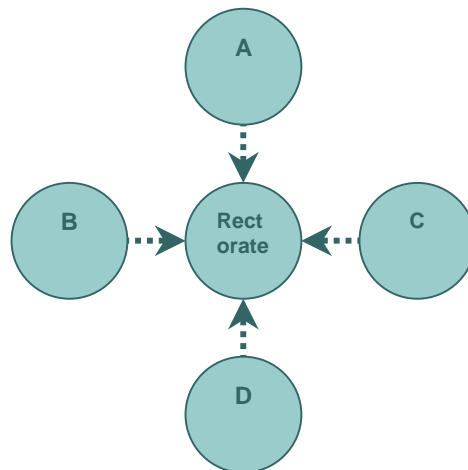


Figure 10.1 Disintegrated structure of the universities

The above figure portrays how the independent schools (i.e. A, B, C & D) are loosely connected with the university Rectorate, however not being linked among themselves. On the other hand, the view of an integrated university that features strengthened top-level management, as well as diversification of structure is displayed in the following figure.

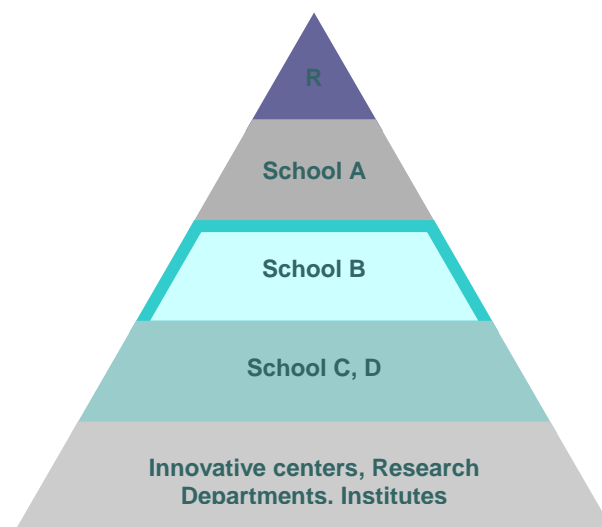


Figure 10.2 Integrated University with diversified structure

As presented in Section 6.4.2, the structural problems are at the heart of the higher education reform throughout the region, since all of the countries under scrutiny face these problems in leveling up for change. However, certain results have been achieved in this domain in the Republic of Montenegro, as well as within one canton of BiH federation where the two universities⁵⁵ have recently restructured featuring intensified institutional integration mechanisms. For that reason, these universities represent, thus far, the only fully integrated universities in the Balkans. However, having in mind that the mentioned universities have restructured only recently⁵⁶, they are still considered to be in a transitory stage of institutional development in the new circumstances. Therefore, in the next stage of their development the results of restructuring process are expected to be much more visible to their counterparts region wide.

On the other hand, some countries have opted for less radical solution than the full integration of the universities, such as the case in Serbia, where the so-called functional integration, or the emphasized “integrative function” of the university, is envisaged. Some authors claim that the idea of “functional integration” is actually an attempt to rather keep the status quo, than to truly structurally reform the university (Turajlic 2005). In any case, a definite recommendation that emerges out of this study is that universities in the Balkans need to restructure in the new phase of their development. But before they fully restructure, they need to attempt to overcome the existing structural barriers. As we have seen from the empirical data, the university leadership may be the key actor in concurring the present rigid structure of the universities.

10.2 Changes in institutional behavior

In a changing context the Balkan universities are exposed to a much greater pressure than their counterparts in the Western European countries. This is because of the evident clash of the global and local forces that these universities face. In addition, having in mind weakening of the nation state in Europe the role of universities is changing, as it is now expected from them to become more responsible for own development, as well as to be

⁵⁵ The University of Tuzla in BiH, and the University of Montenegro;

⁵⁶ The University of Tuzla has restructured in 2000, and the University of Montenegro in 2003;

capable of innovation in the overall institutional performance. As a result, all of a sudden, the universities are being called on to “play” in the market, which necessitates the new approach to traditional academic leadership. In both, the theoretical and empirical part of this thesis, it has been confirmed that leadership is inextricably linked to the agenda of changes in higher education. As we have seen from the presented case study, the central university leadership can have significant influence on institutional behavior. However, given the above-mentioned structural and contextual problems, the role of central university leadership is not yet sufficiently strong to provide policy leadership and quality control over the independent sub-units. In such circumstances, the cases of inventive and integrative university leadership are quite uncommon.

Due in part to structural problems, but also due to odd perception of leadership position and obsolete ways of choosing university leaders, university leadership can also be held responsible for rigid behavior of the universities. This is becoming unacceptable especially in the moment when the overall institutional flexibility is considered to be of utmost importance.

10.3 The role of leadership in relation to governance

In a changing context, the role of university leadership is crucial to win the support and motivate all actors of the system to become fully engaged in a process of change. However, to what extent the university leadership is able to influence on a behavior of institutions of higher education also depends on the predetermined legal framework according to which the institutions are governed. Given the prevalence of the state controlled model of university governance in the Balkans, the development of institutional leadership was largely diminished. However, lately, some positive developments are noted within national legislative frameworks across the Balkans, which point out to apparent shift towards the policy of deregulation, and thus, the state supervised model of higher education governance.

A state supervised model of higher education governance does not imply that governments have no role to play. On the contrary, government has to offer a fair amount of autonomy to the universities, but this amount of autonomy should be equal to accountability of the universities towards the society (Van Vught 1994). Therefore, the right combination of autonomy and accountability is crucial in a state supervised model of higher education

governance. Accordingly, strengthened autonomy of the university, as opposed to the present vast autonomy of the faculties, ought to also strengthen the university leadership by making it more accountable at the same time. Therefore, one may come to a conclusion that instead of the present “faculty controlled” model of institutional governance in the Balkans, there is an urgent need to shift towards “university supervised” model.

10.4 Improving leadership practice: the available options

The empirical evidence of this study has indicated that, when the goals are clear, technology of work is well understood and behaviors are plausibly predictable, the structural and human resource frame are likely to apply. As ambiguity increases, the political and symbolic frame became more relevant (Bolman & Deal 1997). However, in the world where the power resides in people, the leaders must become the *humane managers* (Ridderstråle and Nordström 2002). As Bolman and Deal (1997) argue, human resource theorists often promote openness, listening, coaching, participation and empowerment. They perceive the leader as catalyst and facilitator who motivates and encourages subordinates (*Ibid.*). The leader’s power comes from talent, sensitivity and service rather than from position or force.

The empirical data also indicated that human resource leaders are passionate about productivity through people. They are open for communication and cooperation and they refer to their subordinates as “partners”, or “associates” rather than mere executors of the top-level management directives. They acknowledge the employees contribution in the institution’s success, which was already exemplified. Thus, the former Rector of the selected university can be regarded as the human resource leader, whereby, the present Rector is, by and large, perceived as a symbolic leader. However, both leaders have the certain characteristics of political leadership to a lesser, or greater extent. According to Bolman and Deal (1997) political leaders have the following common distinctions: (a) political leaders clarify what they want and what they can get; (b) political leaders assess the distribution of power and interests; thus, they are able to map the political terrain by thinking carefully about the players, their interests and power; (c) political leaders build linkages to key stakeholders as they focus their attention to building relationships and networks; (d) political leaders persuade first, negotiate second, and use coercion only when necessary;

Reframing leadership offers a way to get beyond narrow and simplistic views of the leadership phenomenon. Each of the frames offers a distinctive image of the leadership process. The possible images of leadership according to Bolman and Deal (1997) are summarized in the table 9.1, however, with the slight adaptation to the existing images of the university leadership in the Balkans.

Table 9.1. The image of the university leadership in the Balkans

	<i>Effective Leadership</i>		<i>Ineffective leadership</i>	
	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Leadership process</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Leadership process</i>
Structural	Analyst, architect	Analysis, design	Petty tyrant	Management by detail
Human Resource	Catalyst, motivator	Support, participation, empowerment	First among the equals	Abdication, compromise
Political	Activist, negotiator	Advocacy, coalition building	Power, throne bearer	Manipulation, tactics
Symbolic	Prophet, poet	Inspiration, framing, experience	Fantasiist, unreal	Illusions, camouflage and echoes

Source: Adapted from Bolman & Deal (1997)

From the above table it is evident that image of the university leadership in the Balkans, whether effective or ineffective, is largely positioned in political perspective with slightest shifts and drawbacks towards a human resource perspective, or a symbolic perception. The eventual shifts and drawbacks are related to the universities' contextual divergence and the current level of ambiguity. The level of ambiguity was high after collapse of the former regime, whilst it was somewhat reduced after restoration of democracy. However, given the unstable nature of the restored democracy, the level of ambiguity also shifts and affects what leaders do, and yet, what they can do. In that sense, the higher education leadership in the Balkans varies with the situation and affects on a type of behavior within institutions that is considered desired by the main political elite. With this in mind, the possibility of reframing the universities in the Balkans in terms of what is going on, and what options are available is given in the table 9.2.

Table 9.2. Reframing the universities in the Balkans

<i>Frame</i>	<i>What is Going On?</i>	<i>What Options are Available?</i>
Structural	Fragmentation due to obsolete matrix structure – goals, roles, responsibilities and linkages undefined; weak authority of the core; hindered institutional change	Responsibility charting; task force to look at structure; diversification of structure by forming of the innovative centers and sub-units
Human resource	Basic needs not met, unvalued contribution of employees, lack of motivation; ineffective conflict management, the problems of negative selection and nepotism	Revitalizing the human resource structure; training and the development and encouragement of participative methods; break-up with the remains of old system
Political	Scarce resources; strong departments/ units that compete and protect their vested interests; power as the key resource	Mapping of the political terrain and creating political influence; argumentation, contextualization and linking with the stakeholders
Symbolic	Identity crisis in the new circumstances; the loss of meaning and faith in previous symbols and values; legacies from the past	Develop new institutional image; break-up with inherited traditions; create entrepreneurial culture that embraces change

10.5 Summary

This chapter aimed at providing an insight into current trends and developments of Balkan higher education in relation to the main research concepts displayed in introductory part of this thesis and the research results that have emerged out of this study. Thus, the above discussion reflected upon the issues of contextual divergence illuminating a clear picture of the Balkan universities positioned in a political perspective. Additionally, the structural problems in relation to possibility of institutional change were emphasized. In terms of underscored importance of university leadership, the possibility of improving the existing leadership practice was assessed in terms of what is currently going on, and what options are available.

PART FOUR: Concluding remarks

The aim of the final part of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, the intention is to present the concluding remarks that have emerged out of the empirical data, and secondly, to give propositions for further research.

In aspiration to find the link between institutional behavior and the role of university leadership and governance in a changing context, it is hoped that this thesis will not only be of help to the university leaders in the Balkans, but that it will inspire both inventive management and wise leadership in the next stage of the universities' development.

11. Concluding remarks

In a changing context the efficient management is not the only prerequisite for a successful change; there is also a need to inspire people to become actively involved in the process of change. Therefore, to revitalize the higher education in the Balkans, besides the efficient institutional management and changed governance model, it seems to be of utmost importance to strengthen the university leadership. In order to give a boost to university leadership and its evolution from traditional academic style to more entrepreneurial leadership, certain challenges that universities in the Balkans face need to be tackled.

Firstly, the universities ought to overcome the rigidity of their structure, which means it would be important to attempt to alter the current solutions of the system. The empirical data largely confirmed the assumption of structural rigidity of the Balkan academe. According to theoretical claims, as well as the research results, the structure of Balkan universities has been long withstanding in socially and politically unstable situation hindering institutional change. The empirical data had also uncovered that process of restructuring could be initiated through the top-down legislative decision, which was the case in the Republic of Montenegro, as well as in Tuzla canton of BiH federation. Therefore, to facilitate restructuring of the universities there should be a call for essentially different approach to organization of the universities. Such new organizational solutions would, eventually, facilitate a differentiation of university structure.

Secondly, the governments should attempt to change approach to university governance by shifting from the *state controlled model* of higher education governance towards the *state supervised model*, which might be the right way to stimulate the types of innovation within institutions that may be necessary to cope with rapidly changing circumstances. Such shift is becoming apparent within higher education legislation in some countries, which adopted the new reformative laws on higher education. By changing approaches to higher education governance, the governments tend to influence on behavior of the universities by nurturing true university leadership and fostering innovative behavior.

Thirdly, given the underscored importance of university leadership in a changing context, the empirical data also revealed that leadership can significantly affect overall instructional performance by making the institutions more resilient, or oppositely, more rigid. When the

leader is the “catalyst” and “motivator”, proactive towards internal and external elements of the system, the institutions are more leveled for change and more dynamic in their environment. As such, they are being more visible to the exterior, and strengthened as equal partners to their counterparts and the State.

However, one of the main problems of university leadership in the Balkans is that it is usually wrongly perceived in a symbolic fashion as a “throne” and an “honor” rather than as a “duty” and a very demanding “job” of steering the institutions towards the sustainable development. This is becoming unacceptable, as the nature of the problems that today’s university leaders in the Balkans face have significantly changed.

Related to emblematic view of university leadership, the formal function of the leader appears to be very important in the Balkans. This implies the fact that leadership is frequently perceived in a formal way as merely a role that is carried out formally by particular position holders (e.g. rectors, vice rectors and deans). However, it has been argued in theory that leadership can be – and ought to be – performed at different levels within institutions in both formal and informal context. Thus, every university employee should be a leader of change in his or her own area of expertise (Middlehurst 1999). However, this aspect of leadership seems to be somehow missing in the Balkans. Furthermore, if such informal leadership is eventually present, it is largely underestimated and marginalized. If we assume that, in most cases, formal university leadership is mainly chosen based on the principle of *negative selection*, than it is quite understandable why the informal leadership is so unpopular. Aside from the problem of negative selection, which is taking its toll on human resource infrastructure and continues to boost the brain drain in the Balkans, the relicts of communist and socialist values and remains of the old systems yet coexist, and survive in the new circumstances apparently hindering the processes of change.

By and large, a rather weak role of the university leadership in the Balkans is not only due to wrong perception of leadership by the formal post holders, but it is also a result of structural problems and inadequate systems’ solutions. Consequently, there are actually two dimensions of the problem of university leadership in the Balkans. The first is, therefore, subjective, and related to the dominant leadership tradition and individual perception of such position, whereas the second is objective, and thus, related to the systems’ barriers.

To overcome the first dilemma there is a need for professionalizing of the leadership function, for training and development of university leaders in the Balkans, but also for further research on the topic of university leadership. Therefore, an action research on university leadership training in the Balkans may possibly be a tool to improve the leadership practice in this part of the world. To overcome the second dilemma, as already emphasizes, the new solutions of the system are necessary and these require new approaches to higher education governance. In that respect, further research on structural problems, feasibility of introducing institutional integration mechanisms, and the possible governance solutions appears to be also necessary.

Finally, in terms of government-university relations, opponents of the higher education reform claim that idea of creation of the European Higher Education Area came from the governments of the European countries and not from the universities. The argument that governments change and the universities remain is frequently mentioned in almost every debate about higher education reform (Turajlic 2005).

It appears that such and similar attitudes have actually inspired the organizers of the Conference of all European ministers of higher education, held in Berlin 2003, to arrange the first dinner in the aula of a natural museum where the central space was dominated by the huge skeleton of a dinosaur. By sitting at the tables arranged around that skeleton, all participants have received a very clear message “dinosaurs were mighty animals; however, it appears they didn’t notice that conditions of survival change” (*Ibid*, p. 292)⁵⁷.

Last but not least, the governments’ share in the overall responsibility for the destiny of higher education in the Balkans should be to continue to provide the support and set the framework for the universities’ further development. Yet, substantial alteration of the national higher education systems seems to be depending on the existence of political will within the governments. Therefore, some members of the academic community claim that governments’ responsibility is crucial. Especially if it is known that university professors are frequently found in the positions of government officials throughout the Balkans. With this in mind, one may come to a conclusion that, if the academic will for change is present among the members of academic communities, the political will should necessarily come to the fore.

⁵⁷ Author’s translation;

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Appendix

Introductory letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are kindly asked to participate in research that scrutinizes the role of leadership and governance in changing institutional behavior. The research topic is explored within the context of higher education in the Balkans. This research is a part of a Master of philosophy in Comparative and International Education (specialization area: Educational Policies and Planning), at the Institute for Educational Research /University of Oslo.

The underlying theme implicitly asks if the shift in traditional university leadership, and perhaps a changed governance model can instigate the universities in the Balkans towards greater responsibility for own development, less dependence on the State and more innovation in overall institutional development.

The existing body of literature on the topic of leadership in higher education suggests that leadership is inextricably linked to institutional change, and change in higher education in the Balkans is presently regarded as crucial to implementation of system wide reforms that entail alterations not only in teaching, learning, and research, but also in public steering and institutional management.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. Therefore, all data that you provide are anonymized, and analysis is conducted at aggregate level.

Thank you for your time and willingness to contribute to the research results.

Sincerely,

*Biljana Cuckovic, MPhil in CIE student
Institute for Educational Research / University of Oslo*

Interview guide academic staff

1. Organizations are frames of human activity and they direct social landscape. The universities are also organizations, which represent a specific kind of reality constructions where the organized form of learning is taking place.

How do you, as a member of university staff, perceive your university?

Circle one of the following metaphors, according to the corresponding central concepts that are best applicable to your institution in a given state of affairs.

<i>Metaphor</i>	Factory Machine	Family Community	Jungle Arena	Temple Theatre
<i>Central concepts</i>	Rules, roles, goals, policies, strategies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships, Abilities, feelings	Power, conflict, different interests, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, ritual, ceremony, Symbols, stories, heroes

2. Is the current organizational structure of a university adequate to enable adaptation of your institution to new circumstances and changes in the environment? Circle one of the following structural characteristics that correspond best with your institution, and explain your opinion.

Rigid

Responsive

Resilient

3. How do you define university leadership? Who is the leader, or who are the leaders at your institution, and what is their role?
4. How important is it for the destiny of a university/faculty, which is on a leading position? And are the personal qualities important, or is it the professionalism?
5. Given that your direct superior is the dean of the faculty where you are tenured, what is your opinion about the central university management – how does it affect the institutional performance?
6. How do you evaluate the relationship between the dean of your faculty, and university top-level management (rector and vice-rectors) in terms of communication and cooperation?
7. How autonomous is your faculty in relation to the university, and is the present degree of autonomy adequate for creation of shared strategy and goals?
8. How unified is your university? What do you think about possibility of institutional integration mechanisms?
9. What is your impression, is everyone in your institution motivated and involved in the process of change in accordance with the principles of Bologna Process?
10. In your opinion, what can motivate the staff to become fully engaged in a process of change, and what is (or should be), the role of leaders in mobilization of academic community at your university to become involved in this process?

11. Do you feel encouraged to take the initiative, to propose solutions to the problems that your institution faces in a given developmental context?
12. What is the possibility of innovation at your institution in the context of the existing traditions? Not only in the sense of teaching and learning, but also in the sense of management and administration.
13. What is your relationship with your superiors, and do you feel that your work is appreciated and accepted?

Interview guide administrative staff

Interview guide – present leadership practice

1. Organizations are frames of human activity and they direct social landscape. The universities are also organizations, which represent a specific kind of reality constructions where the organized form of learning is taking place.
How do you, as an employee, perceive the institution where you work?
Circle one of the following **metaphors**, according to the corresponding central concepts that are best applicable to your institution in a given state of affairs.

<i>Metaphor</i>	Factory Machine	Family Community	Jungle Arena	Temple Theatre
<i>Central concepts</i>	Rules, roles, goals, policies, strategies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships, Abilities, feelings	Power, conflict, different interests, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, ritual, ceremony, Symbols, stories, heroes

2. Is the current organizational structure of a university adequate to enable adaptation of your institution to the new circumstances and changes in the environment? Circle one of the following structural characteristics that correspond best with your institution, and explain your opinion.

Rigid	Responsive	Resilient
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3. How important is it for the destiny of a university, who is on a leading position, and are the personal qualities important, or is it the professionalism?
4. What do you think are the priorities of university leadership in terms of processes and actions that are currently running?
5. Do you think that leaders at your institution develop strategies to implement their ideas and goals?
6. What is your impression, is everyone at your institution motivated and involved in the process of change in accordance with the overall reform of higher education system?

7. In your opinion, what can motivate the staff to become fully engaged in a process of change, and what is (or should be), the role of leaders in mobilization of academic community at your university to become involved in this process?
8. Do you feel encouraged to take the initiative, to propose solutions to the problems that your institution faces in a given developmental context?
9. Is your leader available to you, and approachable, and how do you evaluate the overall communication between the management and employees?
10. What do you think, how the management treats your colleagues?
11. Are you independent in your work, and do you feel responsible for the quality of your work, and for the daily decisions you make in order to facilitate your work?
12. What is the possibility of innovation at your institution in the context of the existing traditions? Do you feel you can propose and introduce innovations?
13. What is your relationship with your superiors, and do you feel that your work is appreciated and accepted?

Aide mémoire - former leadership experience

As you know, there has been a shift in central university management in October 2004, as the two managerial teams replaced their position. In this part of the interview, try to reflect on the previous period in terms of your general impressions about processes that were initiated during former leadership, as well as main leadership practices. Especially, try to reflect on the following themes:

New processes – where there any, and what do you think of them?

Leadership strategies – what they were, and how do you evaluate them?

Communication patterns, exchange of information and ideas;

Overall atmosphere;

Possibility of innovation;

Personal initiative – was it encouraged, and to what extent?

Appreciation of the staff – evaluation of their work;

Responsibility of staff for the quality of their work;

Relationships with the superiors;

Availability of leaders;

Efficiency of work and decision making;

Your general impressions;

Interview guide deans

1. Organizations are frames of human activity and they direct social landscape. The universities are also organizations, which represent a specific kind of reality constructions where the organized form of learning is taking place.

How do you, as a Dean, perceive the university in a present moment?

Circle one of the following **metaphors**, according to the corresponding central concepts that are best applicable to your institution in a given state of affairs.

<i>Metaphor</i>	Factory	Family	Jungle	Temple
	Machine	Community	Arena	Theatre
<i>Central concepts</i>	Rules, roles, goals, policies, strategies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships, Abilities, feelings	Power, conflict, different interests, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, ritual, ceremony, Symbols, stories, heroes

2. Is the current organizational structure of the university adequate to enable adaptation of your institution to new circumstances and changes in the environment? Circle one of the following structural characteristics that correspond best with your institution, and explain your opinion.

Rigid

Responsive

Resilient

3. How do you define leadership? Who is the leader, or who are the leaders at your institution, and what is their role?
4. How does the central university leadership affect the institutional performance, in a given governance model, and how significant is this influence, especially in relation to the faculties?
5. How important is it for the destiny of a university, who is on a leading position, and are the personal qualities important, or is it the professionalism?
6. What is your relationship to the university central management (the Rectorate), and how do you evaluate mutual communication and cooperation?
7. How autonomous is your faculty in relation to the university, and is the present degree of autonomy adequate for creation of shared strategy and goals?
8. How unified is the university as a whole, and what do you think about possibility of institutional integration mechanisms?
9. What is your impression, is everyone in your institution motivated and involved in the process of change in accordance with the principles of Bologna Process?
10. In your opinion, what can motivate the staff to become fully engaged in a process of change, and what is (or should be), your role (as a dean) in mobilization of academic community at your university to become involved in this process?
11. What is the possibility of innovation at your institution in the context of the existing traditions? Not only in the sense of teaching and learning, but also in the sense of management and administration.

12. What can the State do to help the university to become adaptive, and more responsible towards society for own development?

Interview guide rectors

1. Organizations are frames of human activity and they direct social landscape. The universities are also organizations, which represent a specific kind of reality constructions where the organized form of learning is taking place.
How do you, as a Rector, perceive the university you represent/ed?
Circle one of the following metaphors, according to the corresponding image of leadership and basic leadership challenge that suits you.

Metaphor	Factory Machine	Family	Jungle Arena	Temple Theatre
Image of leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy	Inspiration
Basic leadership challenge	Attune structure to task, technology environment	Align organizational and human needs	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning

2. Is the current organizational structure of your university adequate to enable adaptation of your institution to new circumstances and changes in the environment?
Circle one of the following structural characteristics that correspond best with your institution, and explain your opinion.

Rigid Responsive Resilient

3. How do you define university leadership? Who is the leader, or who are the leaders at your institution, and what is their role?
4. How can the university leadership affect the institutional performance, in a given governance model, and how significant is this influence?
5. How important is it for the destiny of a university, who is on a leading position? And are the personal qualities more important, or the professionalism?
6. What you, as a leader, do/did, and yet what you can/could do to steer your institution towards sustainable development? Have you developed a strategy to implement your ideas, visions and plans?
7. Do/did you have any influence on creation of institutional policies, and to what extent (e.g. enrolment policy, human resource policy, internationalization policy, etc.), especially in the context of tradition of collective decision-making process?
8. How do/did you affect the decision-making process at your institution? Who is/was the main decision maker, and who is/was accountable for the decisions made and consequences they may produce?
9. Is everyone in your institution motivated and involved in the process of change in accordance with the principles of Bologna Process?

10. In your opinion, what can motivate the staff to become fully engaged in a process of change, and do/did you have any influence on mobilization of academic community at your university to become involved in this process?
11. What is/was the possibility of innovation at your institution in the context of the existing traditions? Not only in the sense of teaching and learning, but also in the sense of management and administration.
12. What is/was your relationship with the deans of the faculties, and how do/did you evaluate mutual communication and cooperation?
13. How autonomous is the university in its totality, and what possibilities exist for university leadership in the context of university autonomy? Especially if we have in mind that university is weak coalition of highly autonomous faculties.
14. What can the State do to help the university to become adaptive, and more responsible towards society for own development?
15. What is/was your relationship with subordinates, and how do/did you help them to listen and accept your ideas (for instance, how do/did you persuade resisters to become enthusiastic about your vision and goals)?