REASONS AND FORMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESISTANCE TO CHANGE IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

© Nick CHANDLER
(University of Miskolc, Miskolc, Hungary)

Nicholas.chandler@pszfb.bgf.hu

Like any other organisation, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are subject to change due to a plethora of internal and external environmental factors. Over the past few decades universities and colleges have had to become more market-orientated and, like any other organisation, have had to adapt to modern technology, changing demographics and academic interests, not to mention new systems and processes such as the Bologna system. Through such changes, higher education needs are now aimed to a greater extent towards students in order to meet professional, vocational, continuing education and accrediting needs. This paper seeks to identify the reasons for resistance to change experienced in HEIs. The reasons for resistance are also uncovered by considering the link between HEI cultures and resistance to change. HEIs are found to have particular cultures different to many organisations in the private sector and resistance to change in HEIs appears to stem from a number of sources, some of which are related to organisational culture, including: the Faculty members, a sense of territory, time issues, resource issues, a strong sense of tradition, leadership, communication, unions and individual autonomy. The types of resistance to change in HEIs are considered within the context of documented case studies from the Higher Education sphere concerning HEIs undergoing significant transformation through mergers. It is found that the types are wide-ranging and vary from one HEI to another. Higher Education sphere It is concluded that although the reasons and types of resistance to change experienced by HEIs undergoing change through mergers are significant, HEIs have developed strategies to deal with this resistance. The final section of the paper presents a number of these strategies implemented by HEIs to reduce potential resistance to change, involving areas such as leadership, communication and the timing of change processes.

Keywords: Higher Education, organisational culture, change, resistance

The realm of Higher education (HE) is no exception to change as traditional boundaries are rolled back and Universities and Colleges adapt to modern

technology, changing demographics, funding and academic interests. Universities have been referred to as 'dinosaurs' and the staff as 'men in their ivory towers'. Willing or not many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have had change forced upon them and need to continue to change in order to survive. The success of these changes will be affected by resistance to change within the organisation, which will in turn affect Higher Education Institutions' ultimate survival. The aim of this study is to identify the reasons for resistance to change experienced in HEIs with a review of the literature and documented case studies and consider ways in which potential resistance to change in HEIs can be reduced.

Reasons for change in Higher Education

The change drivers in both public and private organisations are often cited as: globalization, economic rationalism and information technology (Burke and MacKenzie, 2002; Weber and Weber, 2001). According to Nair (2003), there are four key reasons for reform in higher education.

Technology-driven growth of information and communication

The information and communication revolution has hit every sector over the last decade and higher education is no exception to this. In HEIs changes in approaches to timetabling, course design and teaching approaches may increase efficiency by using new technology but also results in significant upheaval as staff are retrained and new systems set up. Technology has also resulted in the emergence of the virtual university and HEIs offering additional course options for students such as distance-learning and 'on-line courses'.

Globalization

With the growth of the global communications revolution, fierce competition is taking place in the world of intellectual capital. The brain drain, resulting in the loss of many intellectually-driven jobs from certain countries, is often seen as a direct by-product of the Internet era.

Another impact of globalization has been the introduction of pan-European or global standards and systems in Higher Education such as the Bologna system, which had an especially large impact on countries using a different system as in the case of the Germanic system employed in Hungarian HEIs. As state funding is reduced, many HEIs see international students as a good source of income although this then requires teachers to develop their language skills to a high level where they are able to teach a subject.

Competition

Underlying the trends of technological advancement and an acceleration of globalization is competition. The idea of increased competition is something the higher education systems of many countries have almost never had to contend with before. With the emergence of mass higher education and the greater need for self-sufficiency, many universities have come under

criticism for being out of touch with market needs or lacking adequate skills and knowledge in top management with primarily academic backgrounds.

In a global marketplace, education itself appears to be developing into a commodity and in a rapidly-changing world; the agility to define and redefine program offerings to match current market needs is important success factor. These two issues involve novel concepts for HEIs and require substantial change in the ways they operate. Some universities have brought upon themselves the description of 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Some research indicates universities should adapt to entrepreneurial activities, strengthen their institutional management, and their interaction with industry and rest of the society (Etzkowitz, 2003), involving a change of management, perspective and direction of HEIs.

Competition in higher education comes from local and foreign universities / colleges, private institutions and the relatively new "virtual universities", with a seemingly endless range of courses and curricula in many cases set to suit the student. All these factors combined with the greater dependence on private sources of funds (rather than governments) lead to an increasing urgency to keep abreast of competition locally and, if possible, globally.

HEIs such as smaller colleges may look to merge with larger universities or colleges as a means of growth and / or may develop as a research institution. In many countries mergers of HEIs was enforced by law (South Africa, New Zealand, Hungary etc.).

Accountability

Nowadays, there is a greater push for accountability from the public and from elected officials. Accountability refers to more than just a lack of adequate performance measures; it also refers to the lack of accountability of alienated local communities towards universities and colleges in terms of financial support.

By being more accountable, local community colleges have the uncommon edge over universities as they often receive greater local support through serving the immediate needs of the communities around them and thus maintain a sustainable level of government funds.

Change in Higher Education: the cultural web

According to Balogun and Hailey (2004:3), change is seen to occur in two forms: a punctuated equilibrium model and a continuous model of change. Higher Education is certainly not prone to changing and adapting to its changing environment. It has often been accused of being a dinosaur out of touch with its environment. The punctuated equilibrium model indicates that there are periods of adaptive and convergent change, broken by periods of revolutionary change. In education, revolutionary change may be required from time to time (e.g. the Bologna process) and as Balogun and Hailey (2004:4) point out: revolutionary change is likely to be reactive and forced. Many reasons for change in HEIs can be seen as external such as government policy or initiatives and therefore the change in HEIs may also be seen as reactive and forced.
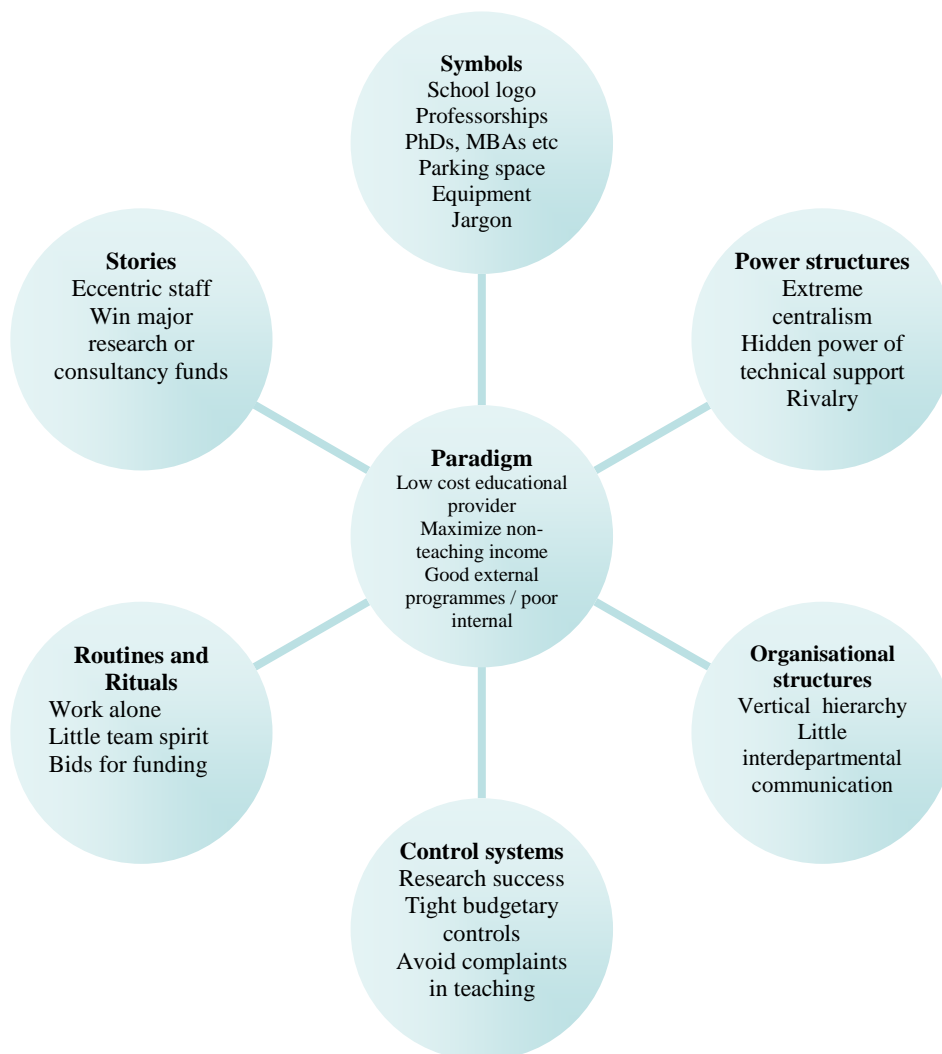
Change may also be in the form of convergent change where existing ways are adapted. Balogun and Hailey (2004:4) point out that with this type of change, there is likely to be significant resistance to change and a large degree of inertia. Changes in competitive conditions are less frequent in this

model and it is possible to remain competitive without making any significant organisational changes. Although there ma be aspects of this model that ring true in Higher Education Institutions, the continuous change model refers to ongoing consistent change which may be hard to picture in many HE institutions.

According to Dehler and Walsh (1994), the more profound the changes, the greater the resistance to change will be. However, there are potential levers that can facilitate the change, no matter how profound the change may be, and thereby reduce resistance. This depends a lot on whether or not this is managed suitably: a lever for change could conversely become an obstacle to change. Balogun and Hailey (2004:43) refer to these levers as the cultural web of the organisation, which involve: Technical subsystems (organisational structures, control systems); Political subsystems (formal and informal power structures) and; Cultural subsystems (symbols, stories, routines and rituals).

Based upon the work of Elliott, Swartz and Herbane (2009:126), a paradigm of a University is presented as an example of the cultural web in HEIs.

Figure 1. The cultural web of a Higher Education Institution

Symbols
School logo
Professorships
PhDs, MBAs etc
Parking space
Equipment
Jargon

Stories
Eccentric staff
Win major
research or
consultancy funds

Power structures
Extreme
centralism
Hidden power of
technical support
Rivalry

Paradigm
Low cost educational
provider
Maximize non-
teaching income
Good external
programmes / poor
internal

Routines and Rituals
Work alone
Little team spirit
Bids for funding

Organisational structures
Vertical hierarchy
Little
interdepartmental
communication

Control systems
Research success
Tight budgetary
controls
Avoid complaints
in teaching

According to Becher (1987), it is only "by understanding the parts and their particularity, one can better understand the whole". This is further emphasised by Kashner (1990:20): "readying an institution to reply to the conditions that call for change or to innovate on the institution's own initiative requires a clear understanding of its corporate culture and how to modify that culture in a desired direction". According to Farmer (1990:8),"failure to understand the way in which an organization's culture will interact with various contemplated change strategies thus may mean the failure of the strategies themselves". Kabanoff, Waldersee & Cohen (1995) found that the type of institutional culture, such as elite, meritocratic, leadership, or collegial helped to predict perceptions of change in the organization and through perceptions of change, employees attitudes (and therefore levels of resistance) to change could be weighed up. Thus, there seems to be agreement that due to the apparent link between culture and change, cultural factors require key consideration with a view to their impact on resistance to change within HEIs.

Culture in Higher Education

According to Clark (1987), HEI cultures are extremely fragmented into what Clark refers to as 'small worlds' meaning subcultures. There are many ways that subcultures can develop in HEIs such as according to department, faculty, location, discipline, profession, shared sense of tradition/values or perhaps through interaction.

Profession

Becher (1987) indicates the unitarist perspective when referring to the academic profession as a 'single homogenous profession', as it has many more similarities than differences and is based on the assumption that all faculty members share of common view of the world and scholarship. According to Kuh and Whitt (1988) the shared (and strongly held) values of this profession are:

- The main responsibility is to be learned and convey this learning (through teaching, inquiry and publication)
- Autonomy in the conduct of work
- Collegiality (e.g. mutual support)

Whilst the profession may have significant shared values, in society itself – or amongst other professions – it is in itself a subculture. Furthermore, this view is somewhat debated as Becher (1987) points out that the differences in the academic profession may be more significant than the similarities. Becher (1987:292) refers to subcultures within disciplines: "to affiliate with a particular specialism is to become, except in a few heavily populated areas, a member of a small and close-knit community", which indicates subcultures in HEIs with shared values rather than shared values for the entire profession. It could thus be said that in addition to some common and strongly held values of the academic profession, within each institution subcultures have been found to exist.

Traditions: strength of culture

According to Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1993), there are three elements to a strong / weak culture: the 'thickness' of the culture which refers to the number of shared beliefs, values and assumptions; the proportion of organizational members who share in the basic assumptions, which means the more shared assumptions, the stronger the culture) and finally; the clarity of the order of values and assumptions in terms of which are major and which are minor. A larger number of clear shared assumptions is more likely in organizations where members have been there for a considerable period of time, such as long-standing university professors. Whilst a strong culture might provide a strong sense of identity and clear behaviours and expectations, it is also more prone to resisting change. As Millet (1962:104) found that in higher education, the teacher or lecturer '*does not welcome innovation in instructional procedures, in instructional arrangements, or in the organization and operation of a college of university*'. Many HEIs are steeped in history and with unchanging traditions and members with long tenures, a strong culture is likely to prevail, indicating potentially high resistance to change.

Handy (1993) describes types of cultures in terms of influence and power and categorises the types as follows: Power culture, Role culture, Task Culture and Person Culture. Mullins (1999) argues that the person culture is prevalent among doctors, consultants and university professors. Individuals have almost complete autonomy and influence is usually on the basis of personal power. As such, individual traditions, along with identities are a real social force in higher education and often cited as a reason that HEIs have inertia to change.

Faculty cultures

Freedman et al. (1979) described faculty culture as "a set of shared ways and views designed to make their (faculty) ills bearable and to contain their anxieties and uncertainties". It is seen as the shared views of the staff of the various Faculties of an HEI containing various departments, disciplines and specializations. However, this does not necessarily mean that there is a dominant monolithic faculty culture as college or university faculty are often members of multiple cultures in HEIs and each in turn has their own set of norms and expectations (Tierney, 1991).

Sanford (1971) claimed that faulty cultures encourage a focus on specialization within a given discipline and through this, subcultures are created. The borders between the disciplines and specializations are vehemently upheld to such an extent that in many cases only the administrative staff and librarians are allowed to be interdisciplinary (Bergquist, 1992). These borders also create feeling of ownership concerning symbolic territories (spheres of ownership) and there present a significant potential for resistance to change, especially when a proposed change may threaten these perceived territories (Kashner, 1990).

Disciplinary cultures

Disciplinary cultures were first examined by Becher (1989) who classified them into four categories: hard, pure, soft and applied knowledge. Disciplinary cultures are important in HEIs as they indicate the ranking of staff, or 'pecking order'. According to Becher (1989:57) the theoreticians are ranked highest with staff involved in practical, soft and applied disciplines ranked lower.

Higher education: reasons for resistance to change

In Higher Education, as in any sector, it is difficult to generalize as to which specific types and reasons apply solely to higher education. In addition to the issues mention thus far in this paper, the following reasons for resistance to change were found after reviewing available literature.

Faculty members

Faculty members are well-known for their resistance to change and this may in part be due to substantial (if not complete) professional autonomy, determining what happens in the classroom, course content, procedures and standards or expectations of the students. However, there are other factors to be considered and these can perhaps be best summed up using the quotations of a number of prominent writers on this topic:

> "*The scholar wants to be left alone in the conduct of the academic enterprise. He does not welcome innovation in instructional procedures, in instructional arrangements, or in the organization and operation of a college or university. . . The scholar is a conservative in his attitude towards and appreciation of the academic process.*" Millett (1962; 104)

> "*We cannot help but be struck by the virtual right so many academics seem to possess to go their own way, simply assuming they can do largely as they please a good share of the time, all in the nature of rational behaviour.*" Clark (1987; 148).

> "*Resistance to new ideas is inborn among academic communities.*" Becher (1989;71)

Thompson (1993) undertook research at Earlham College in looking for an answer to the question: "*Why do certain faulty members resist bibliographic instruction?*" and the findings of this research provide considerable insight into the reasons for resistance to change in higher education:

> "*They are overworked. . . .They really do not have time to learn new things, especially when the proponents of 'new things' sound a bit like they are selling aluminium siding.*"(p. 103).

> "*They are obsessed with coverage and they have packed their courses with assignments. There is no room for additions or changes*" (p. 103).

"[They] do not want the sanctity of their classrooms violated. It is not paranoia that drives them to this attitude. There are all sorts of real people, from presidents to trustees to students to vigilante groups on the left and right, who cheerfully tell teachers what should be going on in their classrooms" (p. 103).

"Most college teachers are prima donnas. On most campuses, despite their real sufferings and sacrifices, faculty members enjoy an extraordinarily privileged status. They regard librarians as they regard secretaries and ground keepers, as their errand boys and girls, not as their colleagues" (p. 103).

"College professors are often not very self-critical. They may be good lecturers and writers, but they are not in the habit of subjecting their own behaviour to criticism. . . .We do not like our ignorance to be visible" (p. 103).

The fourth point listed above is worth elaborating on: Historically the greatest clash during change in HE has occurred between the administrators and the faculty (Kashner, 1990; Swenk, 1999). This is due to another aspect of HE culture: traditions. Faculty is often perceived as the 'gatekeepers' of culture and traditions on campus. Thus, when long held cultural beliefs are challenged by a proposed change, it is natural for faculty to perceive that change as threatening. Therefore, unless the cultural elements are addressed, there will be significant resistance from faculty to any change effort.

When considering the faculty member as an individual, according to Schoor (2003), the most common reasons for individuals resisting change in higher education are as follows: Self-interest (the change is harmful); Psychological impact (job security, social status etc); Tyranny of custom (caught up in the web of tradition); Redistributive factor (changes in work roles, responsibilities, tasks); Destabilisation effect (new staff / management); Culture incompatibility (clash between (sub-cultures) and; Political effect (power relationships).

According to Huczynski and Buchanan (1985:533) and Mullins (1999:824), a similar list could be compiled as follows: Selective perception; Habit; Inconvenience or loss of freedom; Economic implications; Security in the past; Fear of the unknown; Parochial self interest (protecting the status quo); Misunderstanding; Lack of trust; Contradictory assessments and; Low tolerance of change.

The time factor

One particular factor is mentioned across the board as the heaviest burden for staff, not only in Higher Education but in education at all levels: time pressures. According to Hardesty (1995) faculty are often pressured by time and as such they are likely to resist any change proposals that take up more of their time. Likewise, the teaching syllabus for many Faculty members is built up over many years of practice and members have spent a lot of time developing strategies that they consider to be effective and suit their personal style. This being the case, changes in a curriculum will be resisted on the basis of the amount of time and effort that has been spend putting the syllabus together and in some case, could be considered an individual's life work.

Resource Allocation

According to Diamond (2006) another reason for resistance to change in Higher Education is that of resource allocation. As mentioned earlier, individuals are committed to certain disciplinary or departmental cultures and, therefore, if any resources are shifted away from these areas and reallocated, then it is viewed as a loss to be avoided at all costs (Diamond, 2006:2). This is a significant potential for resistance to change as funds of universities and colleges are often limited and cost-effectiveness and budget allocation are just two of a number of reasons for reallocation of resources.

Leadership

Many leaders in universities and colleges are unprepared to lead change and as such staff may develop a lack of trust in management, an unclear vision, ambiguous aims and objectives and leave the staff feeling isolated and alienated (to name but a few). In fact academic management may lack the training simply because they come from an academic rather than a management or business background. A lack of skills or knowledge about change models may lead to severe resistance to change. According to Diamond (2006), most leadership and faculty position are filled with a view to selecting candidates likely to preserve the status quo rather than being an agent of change.

Within the scope of the leadership issue, it is worth also considering faculty governance. Faculty culture supports faculty governance by consensus. According to Hardesty (1995), if governance by consensus is combined with the value that faculty culture tends to put on scepticism and cynical analysis, then the resulting culture inevitably will resist change.

Communication

As mentioned in the cultural web of a university in this paper, communication systems are rather poor. This is often cited as a main cause of conflict and resistance to change in many organisations, not only in Higher Education. This however does not only refer to communication between departments or between faculty staff and administration but also between the institution staff and political leaders who make decisions which have an impact on the HEI, the community the HEIs serve, schools that prepare students for higher education and employers that will employ the newly graduated students. Such poor communication can cause a lack of vision or direction, insecurity of staff, lack of trust in the change process, to name but a few.

Power of Unions

The power of Faculty unions varies from one institution to another and from one country to another. Diamond (2006:3) cites these unions also as factors causing resistance to change as 'on a number of campuses faculty and administrators have found that the wording of their faculty contract actually limits their ability to explore new and innovative instructional design and formats'. In other words, the Unions have put into staff contracts some resistance to change.

Higher education: types of resistance to change

There are two main types of resistance to change: Active and Passive. When referring to active resistance to change, the sort of behaviour includes: Arguing, ridiculing, blaming, distorting, tracking, sabotaging, threatening, intimidating, blocking and rationalizing. Passive resistance to change entails such behaviour as ignoring, non-participation, procrastinating, not implementing, mishandling, withholding, pretending and avoiding (Ingbretsen, 2008).

According to Theron and Westhuizen (1996) it was found that in Higher Education there is resistance if there is change but also that there is resistance if there is no change. In other words, in higher education, it would seem that there is a natural tendency to resist, whether the change takes place or not.

Considering resistance to change in HE, research was initially undertaken to discover the key outcomes of significant transformation in HEIs. One of the most significant transformations that any organisation may undergo is that of a merger. This can be seen in the Proxy Statement of one of the most well-known merger cases – Daimler-Chrysler:

> '… the integration of two large companies…with different business cultures and compensation structures, presents significant management challenges. There can be no assurance that this integration, and the synergies expected to result from that integration, will be achieved rapidly or to the extent currently anticipated.' p.24 (Source: Banal-Estañol & Seldeslachts, 2004).

The above statement indicates wider issues such as conflicting cultures and structures and resistance to change, resulting in lowering expectations and doubts about the outcome of the merger process. Shreader and Self (2003:511) refer to culture as 'the make or break factor in the merger equation'.

Documented case studies were found for mergers of HEIs from around the world and the key factors indicated in them noted as a means of examining the degree of resistance to change experienced in a HEI merger. Six in-depth studies have been included here to highlight the common outcomes of transformation that were found in a majority of the cases.

Table 1a. The common outcomes of mergers in HEIs

Institution *Common outcomes*	**University of Canterbury (UCC) / Christchurch College of Education (CCE)**	**Bradford University (BU) / Bradford College (BC)**	**Hawkesbury Agricultural College (HAC), Nepean College of Advanced Education (NCAE), Macarthur Institute of Higher Education (MIHE)**
Date of merger	2006	2002 (proposed)	1989 Merge to become network university (semi-independent) 2001 Become a single multi-campus university
Country	New Zealand	UK	Australia
New name	University of Canterbury	N /A	University of Western Sydney
Forced / Voluntary merger	Forced – UC to become research-based	Voluntary – after years of working together	Forced – By legislation
Dominant / equals	UCC Dominant	BU Dominant	On roughly equal terms
Strength of culture	Strong / strong	Strong / strong	Strong / strong / strong
Location	One site – UCC	One site – BU	Multi-campus
Commu-nication	Top-down and bottom-up – working parties, forums, surveys	Top-down – all stakeholders involved at an early stage	Team-based approach. Top-down and bottom-up strategy. Motto: 'listen, link and lead'
Effect on staff	Lack of trust, job insecurity, exit behaviour, disillusionment, bereavement	Pay concerns, job safety, Unions involved	More than 100 staff made redundant
Leadership	Loss of role model – CCE leader seen as a puppet,	Leadership conflict – Use existing BU charter or create a new one.	Retention of role models – Each institution continued to have the same leader for some time
Accultu-ration	Assimilation	N / A	Integration
Resistance to change	High	High (at an early stage)	Low. Despite competing cultures Senior management seen as central to modelling desired behaviours of staff
Time to complete	Ongoing	Failure at pre-merger stage (2003) – cause cited as 'culture clash'	Ongoing. Has taken a number of years to see a more unified UWS culture emerge.

Table 1b. The common outcomes of mergers in HEIs

Institution *Common outcomes*	**Telemark College of Engineering, Telemark College of Nursing, Telemark College of teacher training, Telemark College of Higher Education**	**Thames Valley University (TVU), Reading College and School of Arts and Design (RC)**	**London Guildhall University (LGU) and the University of North London (UNL)**
Date of merger	1994	2004	2002
Country	Norway	UK	UK
New name	Telemark University College	Thames Valley University. (Reading Campus still called Reading College)	London Metropolitan University
Forced / Voluntary merger	Forced (state reforms)	Forced	Voluntary
Dominant / equals	Roughly equal terms	Dominant (TVU)	Roughly equal terms
Strength of culture	All strong	Strong (TVU) / weaker	Strong / strong
Location	Multi-campus (long distance: 20-180km)	Multi-campus	Two sites (close proximity)
Communi-cation	Top-down. Technology infrastructure set up.	Top-down	Top-down. Key strategy: speed with clear communication of new vision at early stage
Effect on staff	Little social integration and collaboration. High level of insecurity despite no restructuring	Concern by RC staff. Loss of identity Dual system was problematic: culture clash Lack of clarity of job roles	Despite flatter structure, most staff held onto jobs. Loyalty to old institution
Leadership	No change	Loss of role model (RC)	Retention of role models. New institution with two heads for an interim period.
Accultu-ration Mode	Separation (failure to assimilate). 'more economic autonomy'	Assimilation	Integration
Resistance to change	High (institutions and staff). No faith in the process. High tension and conflict	High. Both institutions had previous experience of mergers leading to very high resistance to change on both sides	Low
Time to complete	After 4 years, little progress.	Ongoing.	Merging of cultures: 5+ years. Financially: after 18 months, £3m surplus

As can be seen from the above tables, resistance to change is a common issue and although it is beyond the scope of this paper, there is an indication of the need for further research into the interrelation between these key outcomes.

A case study of resistance to change in HE:
The University of Canterbury and Christchurch College of Education (New Zealand)

To consider these key outcomes in greater detail a documented case of particular interest is that of a merger of a University and a College in New Zealand. In this merger, the University of Canterbury (UoC) is the dominant culture and Christchurch College (CCE) is the acquired institution. They have a history of cooperation in a range of academic programmes and both have a far-reaching historical background in New Zealand. The reasons for this merger are: to keep with the national trend of higher education mergers; for the College to be more research-focussed; to align with practices overseas; and to make up for cuts in government spending as the prospects of independence were untenable. With these reasons in mind, the merger was seen by both parties as inevitable.

According to Brown (2008), management anticipated a high potential for conflict and resistance to change and therefore used a number of tools in an attempt to reduce resistance to change: working parties (with mixed UoC and CCE staff); a merger website (where staff could ask questions); staff forums (where management presented information and invited questions); management committee meetings. where management received updated merger information and asked questions; staff department meetings; a survey (the CCE climate survey – undertaken in 2005 as a means for staff to appreciate the impact of the merger and to understand, through the survey, staff's perceptions and issues); and CCE Staff Consultation Policy (to support consultation, to show listening to others, consider responses and decide how to act).

Brown (2008) undertook further research into this case by interviewing staff and through this, the reasons and types of resistance to change were found. The types of resistance to change referred to in the case study are confirmed by Schoor (2003), when referring to the typical types of resistance to change in higher education. Shoor (2003) puts them into two categories. The first is conscious acts, such as retaining the status quo and filtering or withholding information. The second type is unconscious acts, such as projection and background conversations. All of these occurred in the case studies. The following is a sample of some of the comments made.

"Management did not act on feedback, leading to a lack of faith in consultation and staff feeling excluded and feeling powerless." From the comment it seems that this lack of response lead to other problems which could seriously damage the merger process, such as a loss of trust in the consultation process. There is also the issue here that staff feels powerless. Although this is referring solely to the consultation process in the merger, it is worth mentioning that according to Mullins (1999) all staff needs to have some power or at least know the limits, who will grant power and how power can be assigned or earned, without this resistance to change is more than likely. This losing of trust and feeling of powerlessness show a lack of basic managerial philosophies and resulted in exit behaviour as staff were disillusioned with the merger process and their place in the merged company, and felt far too many jobs had been lost, their future looked

uncertain and they felt undervalued. The exit behaviour as resistance to change took the form of disengagement, withholding effort, escapism and defiance.

"Management are only concerned with accomplishing the merger and not the staff." This is another example where management seems to have failed to maintain a relationship with staff. Again staff feels alienated and as such they are likely to resist change. The type of resistance to change in this case was staff leaving the organisation.

"Merger was seen to entail 'disestablishment' for the acquired institution." According to Brown (2008), staff said that the merger had a negative impact on their relationships, confidence, moods, and career. It also provoked self-assessment (Brown, 2008:81), which lead to trauma and stress. In fact this kind of stress is referred to by Berry (1980) as acculturative stress, referring 'to the psychological, somatic and social difficulties associated with the acculturation process'. This stress leads to defiance in the face of leadership and in more extreme cases, staff quitting their jobs.

"The College Principal became the UoC Vice Chancellor and was seen as a puppet for UoC." The College Principle was the figurehead of the college and initially seen as the figurehead of the merger from the College staff point of view (Brown, 2008:103). By changing position, he was no longer the role model. Staff also complained of a lack of presence of the UoC Vice Chancellor at change proposal meetings in the early stages (Brown, 2008:78). Staff lost trust and respect and this resulted in resistance in the form of defiance as seen in the staff comment: 'I wouldn't follow that leader anywhere, let alone into the public loos…' (Brown, 2008:111).

"Seeking solace in other colleagues." This seems to be a similar effect as that shown in the famous film, the Dirty Dozen: an Army Major has to get his uncooperative group to start acting like a unit and to achieve this they're forced to become allied against a common enemy – the American General Staff, in other words they unite solely because of shared dislike of the authorities. Similarly in this case, groups form and work together as a team only because they have a shared 'enemy' in the management and shared difficult circumstances. In this case, the staff felt management had no concern for staff and would not listen so they looked to one another for support. The fact that UoE and UC staff bonded and interacted may be seen as a good thing, were it not for the fact that it was as a comfort from the stress and trauma being caused by the merger process. Although this act of solace is not a form of resistance to change, it can be seen as a form of separation, although in this case not the separation of the cultures of the acquired and acquiring company but the separation of the staff from the management. It also indicates an unwillingness of staff to assimilate to the vision of a new culture held by management.

"Changes in workload." According to Mullins (1999), when a merger takes place, it can lead to role incompatibility where for example teachers are required to fulfil tasks that they feel unprepared or unqualified for, role ambiguity where staff doesn't have a clearly defined role in the new merged organization and role overload (or underload), with the former occurring if jobs are lost and others are expected to take on more work and the latter when, for example, managers are redundant in their role as a result of the merger. From the merger it seems that by restructuring, many departments were merged leading to different goals and internal environments within departments. This in turn led to resistance in the form of refusal to undertake tasks and conflict between staff in cases of role ambiguity.

"Language: The merger should have been described as a takeover from the start or an 'absorption' of UCC." (Brown, 2004) Language enables us to perceive things such as ideas and emotions, develop trust and influence others. According to Mullins (1999), perceptions are part of a person's reality and value judgements can be a source of potential conflict. In this case people perceived through the management that the merger would not be a big change and business would pretty much carry on as usual or at least on equal terms.

Language was seen as not only a cause of faulty perceptions but also as an expression of resistance to change, whether as an expression of resentment or defiance of leadership but also to express frustration and anger at the change process and the way it was being handled.

Conclusions

Higher Education is an unusual case when considering resistance to change. There is a far greater likelihood of resistance due to numerous aspects which are particular to the culture of Higher Education Institutions. Furthermore, some research indicates that HEIs and the Faculties / Departments therein are prone to resistance of some form or another, whether there is enforced change or not.

Although it is hard to image a strategy for getting through the numerous problems that were created as a result of the merger in the case, it could be seen that the only option is to introduce 'new blood' to the organisation. Often in the case of deculturation, a complete change of management of the acquired firm is recommended as no intention to adapt has been shown. In this case, perhaps not only the management of the acquired firm but members of the acquiring firm should be considered for replacement. Either way, role models and strong leadership are certainly required to regain the trust, commitment and dedication of staff in the HEI undergoing significant transformation due to a merger.

Finally, although it looks like HEIs facing change are facing an almost impossible task, methods have been discovered to manage resistance to change. According to the findings of Theron and Westhuizen (1996), the following could be considered as a means of reducing resistance to change in Higher Education:

- *Education and Communication.* This refers to educating and informing the staff involved in the change as early as possible about the necessity for and the logic of the change. Such a strategy could take the form of individual / group discussions, memoranda and reports.
- *Participation and Involvement.* By involving staff in the change as soon as possible, they are more likely to accept responsibility for it. There is less change of resistance to change when staff has shared in decision-making and responsibility.
- *Facilitation and Support.* The leader of the HE institution, as an agent of change, can use a number of techniques to reduce resistance such as: re-educational and emotional support programmes and providing the opportunity for those staff involved to talk while the leader listens attentively.
- *Negotiation and Agreement.* The leader offers something of value in exchange for a diminished resistance to change. This ties in with the issue of the power of unions mentioned earlier in this paper as a factor for resistance.

When considering the best strategic option for a higher education institution, the leader will need to bear in mind a number of variables: "The amount and type of resistance expected; the position of the leader compared to that of the teachers offering resistance (in terms of authority and trust); the locus of relevant data for planning the change, and the energy required to implement it; what is at stake (e.g. the presence or absence of a crisis, the results of resistance, and change that does not occur)" (Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979:112).

In the past, Educational institutions are often referred to as 'dinosaurs' behind the times and academic staff as the men in their ivory towers, out of touch with reality; it is concluded that there is a grain of truth in this due to the institutions particular culture and history. Resistance to change is certainly an important factor in contributing to this reputation. However, with a strategic and analytical approach to managing change even great transformations such as mergers between two large universities can and have been successful (e.g. London Metropolitan University) and become models for change for other institutions to follow as a means of minimising resistance to change.

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