

# University Curriculum Policy Processes in Chile: A Case Study

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## I. INTRODUCTION

**Abstract**—Located within the context of accelerating globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century knowledge society, this paper focuses on one selected university in Chile at which radical curriculum policy changes have been taking place, diverging from the traditional curriculum in Chile at the undergraduate level as a section of a larger investigation. Using a ‘policy trajectory’ framework, and guided by the interpretivist approach to research, interview transcripts and institutional documents were analyzed in relation to the meso (university administration) and the micro (academics) level. Inside the case study, participants from the university administration and academic levels were selected both via snow-ball technique and purposive selection, thus they had different levels of seniority, with some participating actively in the curriculum reform processes. Guided by an interpretivist approach to research, documents and interview transcripts were analyzed to reveal major themes emerging from the data. A further ‘bigger picture’ analysis guided by critical theory was then undertaken, involving interrogation of underlying ideologies and how political and economic interests influence the cultural production of policy. The case-study university was selected because it represents a traditional and old case of university setting in the country, undergoing curriculum changes based on international trends such as the competency model and the liberal arts. Also, it is representative of a particular socioeconomic sector of the country. Access to the university was gained through email contact. Qualitative research methods were used, namely interviews and analysis of institutional documents. In all, 18 people were interviewed. The number was defined by when the saturation criterion was met. Semi-structured interview schedules were based on the four research questions about influences, policy texts, policy enactment and longer-term outcomes. Triangulation of information was used for the analysis. While there was no intention to generalize the specific findings of the case study, the results of the research were used as a focus for engagement with broader themes, often evident in global higher education policy developments. The research results were organized around major themes in three of the four contexts of the ‘policy trajectory’. Regarding the context of influences and the context of policy text production, themes relate to hegemony exercised by first world countries’ universities in the higher education field, its associated neoliberal ideology, with accountability and the discourse of continuous improvement, the local responses to those pressures, and the value of interdisciplinarity. Finally, regarding the context of policy practices and effects (enactment), themes emerged around the impacts of the curriculum changes on university staff, students, and resistance amongst academics. The research concluded with a few recommendations that potentially provide ‘food for thought’ beyond the localized settings of this study, as well as possibilities for further research.

**Keywords**—Curriculum, policy, higher education, global-local dynamics.

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THIS paper contains a results section of a larger study whose objective was to analyze contemporary curricular policies and practices in Chilean universities that have undergone changes. These transformations were analyzed in the major research using a "political trajectory approach" [1], [2]. The specific focus of this work is in one of the three case-study universities in the larger study. To further explore this, secondary data from in-depth interviews and document analysis were integrated to understand the perspective of actors within ‘Conquista University’ (pseudonym) about curriculum policy changes taking place there.

Internationally, the last decades have been characterized by rapid changes in higher education (HE), especially influenced by economic aspects [3]. An example of globalized politics in HE is the Bologna Agreement, whose adherence means that many times students have to be in university for longer and must spend more money than before on their education [4]. These changes are framed within a global competitive HE market, which affects the development of university policies [5]. Globalization, understood as the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values and ideas beyond borders has also contributed enormously to these transformations, accompanied by a neoliberal ideology [6], which highlights the values of individualism and rational choice, fostering a domain of economic paradigms in HE governance. This ideology has defined an agenda for economic and social transformation under the sign of "free market" [7]. In Latin America, including Chile, neoliberal changes in HE have predominated in the last decades [8]. There has also being international trends in HE curriculum such as competency-based model, liberal arts and interdisciplinarity.

## II. BACKGROUND

The university studied (‘Conquista University’) (CU) is one of the oldest universities in Chile. It was founded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its curriculum change implemented in 2009 has been entitled the ‘college’ reform, corresponding to the notion in the United States (US) where undergraduate studies are often taken in the ‘college’ sector of a university. Currently, the ‘college’ program has over 1,300 students. Not all students, however, are enrolled under this system, as some are still under the old curriculum program. At the same time, people enrolled under the older curriculum can choose to transfer to the new one, and some have done so.

In the University’s publicity material, the offerings have been defined as being an innovative range of undergraduate

university education options, which are based on successful international models. According to the material in question, this allows students to gain a broad understanding of the various disciplines that make up an area of knowledge, leading to a solid comprehensive education, deepening into an area of knowledge in a stimulating and flexible environment. According to this latter statement, the transformation can be seen as a response to international trends in HE. The new undergraduate program is taught over four semesters entitled 'formatives' (I-IV), four semesters entitled 'deepening' (V-VIII) and two semesters entitled 'degree' (IX-X). The postgraduate program is undertaken over two semesters (XI-XII) and it leads to the master degree, which then opens the door to PhD studies if the student achieves at a high enough level.

### III. METHOD

The HE curriculum transformation in 'CU' was analyzed using a 'policy trajectory' framework which draws on both critical and post-structural theoretical foundations [1], [2], for empirical application in times of increasingly globalized HE policy processes. The 'policy trajectory' approach adopted here envisages policy processes as four interrelated contexts of influences, policy text production, policy practices and effects (enactment) and longer-term outcomes. The following four research questions were generated in relation to each of these contexts: What are the key influences from global, national and local levels on curriculum policy transformations at the case-study universities in Chile?; What are the key characteristics of the new curriculum policy texts and how are they produced?; How are the new curriculum policies enacted?; and What are the potential longer-term outcomes and implications of these new curriculum policies for the case-study university as well as for changing HE policy-scapes, in Chile and globally? While early applications of the 'policy trajectory' framework mainly occurred in English-speaking countries, in recent years, policy trajectory research has been applied in a wider range of contexts, including Asia [9], the Middle East [10] and Latin America [11], [12].

It is important to emphasize that the research reported here took a single snapshot of curriculum policy reform at a particular time (2016) at one case-study university in Chile. This point is made because of the importance attached to identifying both temporal (time) and geographical (place) dimensions of policy processes. Qualitative research methods were used, namely analysis of institutional documents and individual in-depth interviews. Both purposive and snowballing samplings were employed [13]. The documents analyzed were strategic plans, education project models, institutional development plans, grant projects funding curriculum changes and resolutions. Interview participants were selected from both the university administration (referred to as the 'meso' level of the policy trajectory) and academic teachers (referred to as the 'micro' level of the policy trajectory). The review of literature provided the broader international HE policy agendas conceived as the 'macro' level of the policy trajectories under examination.

The case-study Chilean university was selected for their different approaches to curriculum policy reform and it is representative of different socioeconomic sectors in the country. Access to the university was gained through email contact. In all, eight people were interviewed at 'CU', four from the meso and four located at the micro level. The number of interviews was determined by saturation criteria. Consent forms were used and ethical guidelines were followed. Semi-structured schedules guided the interviews, based on the four research questions about influences, policy text production, policy enactment and longer-term outcomes of the reforms. A cross-level analysis including the meso and the micro level allowed the emergence of themes from data. While there was no intention to generalize the specific findings from the case study, the findings of the research were used as a vehicle for engagement with broader themes in global HE policy developments. This 'bigger picture' analysis of patterns of curriculum reforms, presented in the Discussion section, was guided by critical theory which involved interrogation of underlying ideologies and how political and economic interests influence the cultural production of policy [14].

### IV. FINDINGS

This section reviews the results organized around three of the policy trajectory contexts, namely influences, policy text production and policy practices (enactment).

#### A. Context of Influences

Influences are international, national and local in nature within 'CU'. Internationally, the influence of other universities from first world countries are identified by personnel working at the studied institution as a main source influencing curriculum policy change, including the University of Melbourne in Australia, and Columbia University, Harvard University and the University of Virginia in the US. One participant expressed this view as follows: "I was one of those who participated in the commission that worked with Australian teachers, from Melbourne and from other places, in the creation of the college. What we did in this faculty is essentially produce a college. We looked at the rest of the world. We looked and saw that The University of Virginia was going in the same direction that Europe was moving" (CU3). On this, another academic stated: "the University of Melbourne was modelled for the college case. The main influences were the American universities and Melbourne" (CU1).

Regarding the influence of international universities, one academic at the micro level stated: "I believe that more than an international trend is that the university has always been looking and comparing and looking for international models" (CU5). Others also suggest that the University frames its curriculum moves as part of an internationalization strategy: "Because we cannot be looking at our navel, we always have to be and we are always looking at what is done outside, especially in the universities that we consider to be better" (CU6).

Only those located at the meso level (administration)

recognize national influences such as the influence of government and historical influences in Chile over the new curriculum policy. On this, one participant identified the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in Chile as being influential when stating: "In the first place it resulted from an external pressure, namely, the Ministry of Education" (CU1). Related to this was the mention to the Law Number 20.882 for the Provision of Gratuity (2015) which benefits students from the bottom 60% of income brackets in Chile. Such disadvantaged students do not pay fees during their course. Some also take the longer historical view, seeing curriculum policy change as having had its origin in 1965 when an academic exchange agreement between Chile and the University of California was signed. Commenting on this, one stated: "During the 1960s, Chile signed an agreement for academic exchange with the US, and with California more specifically, during the time of President Eduardo Frei Montalva. In that agreement, our university led the way, establishing a very radical transformation of curriculum structure and academic career structure. Particularly that experience led to an expansion of the whole university also and this encouraged to other Chilean universities to follow" (CU4). Others also suggest that universities in Chile have been making efforts to engage in internationalization for more than four decades.

Some at the micro level also identify institutional influences on the curriculum reforms at 'CU'. They say they have come to recognize that the previous curriculum meant to provide a general education was not working and the University authorities decided to change it. Commenting on this, one academic stated: "I think it was an internal thing to just see that there were courses especially for general training which were not working too well" (CU5). This indicates that for some participants at the micro level the curriculum policy changes have merely resulted from an internal process at the university and this took place without any external influences being brought to bear.

Changes in students' demographic and the influence of employers are also deemed significant influencing curriculum policy change at CU. Commenting on this, one authority stated: "What has changed is the student demographic profile. If you incorporate into your student body through adopting greater inclusion and diverse political logic, the University's schools also changed" (CU2).

At both meso and micro levels, local influences are acknowledged. These are the history of 'CU', the experience of their academics, and development of an improvement program within the university. Those located at the meso (university administration) level at the studied university highlight that changes have been made to curriculum policy over the last few decades. Some add that in previous years a 'general education program' was implemented at the university. According to them, such early developments influenced the new curriculum policy: "The Conquista University has a long history of moving towards a program like this. If one looks, back on the situation even 40 years ago, there were elements then that indicated that the university was

trying to do what it is currently doing. An example of this was the creation of the baccalaureate program. That generated a lot of interest. In fact, the MINEDUC promotes the creation of programs like this. In this university in the past also there was the creation of an innovative program called the General Education Program" (CU1). Others working at this level add that what existed in the recent past had deficiencies that triggered the establishment of the new college policy

### *B. Context of Policy Text Production*

Regarding the context of policy text production, participants recognize that in terms of structure there are two important ideologies. First, for those working at the meso level at 'CU' one area that comes in for special consideration is interdisciplinary, as one puts it: "The main organizational value behind this was interdisciplinary considerations. That is a key objective to achieve. Traditionally our work in the University has taken place in certain disciplinary silos and to look for connections with other disciplines was not an issue. We are now focused on it, however, as we realize it is being achieved by only a few universities in the world and therefore could make us stand out" (CU3). Such comments also suggest that in order to arrive at a multidisciplinary approach at the University, a paradigm change is required. Referring to this, the participant stated: "Our desire to be interdisciplinary is not simply to follow a fashion. It is because the most unexplored knowledge spaces are in those areas where disciplines meet. For example, few wondered about how the social sciences meet with engineering? Many new topics are starting to appear in the field that cannot be addressed without having knowledge from a wide range of disciplines" (CU3).

Individuals at the university also hold that the policy and its programs are a reflection of a 'seal' that 'CU' wants to leave on its graduates. Some argue that the policy explicitly seeks to widen students' vision beyond their studying of a single discipline, thus getting them to realize the value of multidisciplinary alliances. They also suggest that the wider vision that the new multidisciplinary curriculum policy provides has translated into a wide range of opportunities being available for students and graduates. Along with this, a neoliberal ideology expressed in such discourses as 'continuous improvement' and more 'accountability' for the university than previously is also deemed important. On this, individuals working at the meso level at the university argue that accountability to different stakeholders in relation to the curriculum policy changes is required. This relates to the idea of universities being responsible for the good of their social environment. Others also suggest that there has been an internal initiative undertaken in the University and articulated from the time of policy text production to improve equity in HE in Chile as part of its social accountability agenda.

Another form of accountability identified is international accreditation. This is recognized by those located at the meso level as a matter that has received great attention: "The 2009 curriculum had a focus on competency, understood as one being able to achieve certain skills and abilities. It was easy to write it down on paper. It is very difficult to measure. We

have an exam and everything, but the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology told us that this was not enough. They wanted other evidence of students achieving these competencies. It involved us interviewing graduates and those who hired them, to tell us if the graduates have or have not the competencies” (CU3). The suggestion here is that the competency-based model was also introduced as part of the new curriculum policy at this university in its efforts to attain international accountability and accreditation.

Those working at the micro level at ‘CU’ also argue that a desire for permanent enhancement is a core belief that lies behind the studied curriculum policy at the university. One academic stated a view on this as follows: “The curriculum changes are part of continuous improvement” (CU5). Another commented stating: “When changes have to be made, when there is a need for renewal, it is part of these processes of continuous improvement as well” (CU6). The suggestion here is that a logic of engaging in continuous improvement is both an inspiration and an outcome of the new policy as part of social accountability.

Regarding policy process, participants identify medium to high resistance levels to the new curriculum policy. Those located at the meso level (university administration) claim that there has not been much resistance to the new curriculum policy: “Did it have any critics? Just a few. It had at first. It was the typical thing of some people saying “but why this? And why that?” But mostly, I do not know, maybe I'm being conservative, but 90% of this school understood it very well and understood the direction in which matters have to move” (CU4). Further commenting on this, another stated: “There are always going to be people who are against it, who raise their hand and tell you ‘I’m still not sure’. But I would say the vast majority are clearly in favor” (CU3). Furthermore, there is some consensus about the mind-set of resisters: “As academics, some always do not help because they are concerned only about what happens in their department. What matters to them is their little circle. That is a mistake and is the most common and most serious error of academics in general, where the only thing that matters is surroundings, conditions, salary. In that sense there is a lack of vision on the institution, on the country, because you are so involved in your specific subject, research, your courses and your things, that you forget the rest and the importance of others” (CU3). This suggests that the general view is that detractors are influenced by perceived threats to their individual interests and that these can act against the collective welfare. Others, however, have come to recognize particular critics of the new policy: “It had critics at several levels. Some said it was an initiative that is unnecessary. ‘If this university has excellence’ they said, what is the problem? Other claimed that negative consequences would be a tremendous surcharge on courses, hiring low level teachers and lowering standards” (CU2). Others add they fear the necessary resources to make the change happen will not be forthcoming.

Regarding the context of policy text production, individuals working at the micro level, unlike participants located at the meso level, consider that there have been high levels of

resistance to the new policy, especially from the faculties. Some critics, it is held, consider that the new courses are of poor quality. Others, it is said also argue that the new curriculum policy has not led to improvement at the University. They appear to be particularly opposed to having a modular curriculum system as opposed to one composed of year length courses.

### *C. Context of Policy Practices (Enactment)*

When asked about the context of policy practices (enactment) both participants working at the meso and micro level recognize as impact on them changes in their role. Personnel working at the meso level at ‘CU’ state that the policy practices have led to change in their roles and functions: “My role changed completely with this curriculum change. It commenced in 2011 and we finished it in 2013 but bringing about a change of this magnitude was difficult. For me as a dean it has meant re-structuring the school completely” (CU3). In like manner, another added: “All these changes in the university and in relation to curriculum content affected all hired professors. In fact, it had an effect on everyone” (CU4). Suggestions like this indicate that there has been a reinvention of practices at the faculty level.

Related to that is the fact that new staff has been employed as part of policy enactment. The introduction of the new curriculum policy at ‘CU’ is perceived to have led to a transformation in the role of the employer. One academic stated: “I can clearly recall changes in my work practices. In the end, I had to organize and manage our new curriculum. I had to follow up on what students were doing. I had to do everything, from overseeing the hiring of new staff to managing everything to do with our new academic certificates, and to figure how to allocate funding in relation to the course units we teach” (CU6). This, however, is not a complaint. Rather, individuals state that the new roles and functions are attractive. According to them, policy practices have also translated in students having new academic expectations. There is a very strong view amongst personnel located at the meso level that the curriculum policy changes taking place at ‘CU’ have had a major impact on students. Specifically, according to them, the transformation has extended the number of academic options available to students: “It has generated great opportunities for students who now have 22 majors from which they can choose during their first four years. They can choose any path and after finishing the four years of their bachelor’s degree they can jump to any specialization” (CU3).

It is also proposed that the new structure allows students to perform better in teamwork and to work in a multidisciplinary fashion. Within one particular school, some also consider that the curriculum policy changes have been designed to motivate students through promoting science, technology, and entrepreneurial research: “The mindset of the students changed in the direction of science and technology enterprise. This is the result of a great effort and a change of culture, which implies that changes are multidimensional. We can tell students that the option of being employed is not the only one

they have. You have other options, you can do research, which was a different focus. I think in 10 to 15 years' time we will see more technological enterprise, more involvement with what the country needs in order to further develops" (CU3). Comments like this suggest that individuals located at the meso level see that changes in the University culture and students' preferences are expected policy outcomes.

Individuals working at the meso level also hold that expectations regarding students amongst academics have changed: "There is clearly a different expectation, because the University expects that graduates can better handle contemporary reality, to involve interdisciplinary working groups and to have a more global perspective on the problems and issues they face. Students are expected to have greater autonomy, greater self-management, greater management skills, and a comprehension of different languages and disciplines. All of this differentiates them from other universities, which is very important" (CU4). Relatedly, the importance placed by 'CU' on preparing their students for the labor force is also highlighted.

According to some working at the meso level also, an expectation is that students' enquiry capacity will be promoted: "Our students are meant to have very positive traits: studious, a clear relationship with knowledge, restless, questioning. The expectation is that we will educate a restless person with a strong theoretical training. Including some students who are immature in groups with students who are interested greatly in their subject is a good thing. Many immature students change as a result of what they experience" (CU1). The view is that the new generations of students should have different characteristics to those of their predecessors at the university. Additionally, the notion of entrepreneurship comes in for special consideration amongst some working at the meso level: "We want them to be entrepreneurs on a personal level and at the social level. We have a whole area of social entrepreneurship education that we have pushed hard and about which students are very enthusiastic. This has come about almost as something natural" (CU3). An expectation that students will be empowered to make an impact in terms of promoting social justice as a result of engaging in the new curriculum is at the core of such thinking.

Personnel working at the micro level identify a major impact of the policy in students' expectations. Specifically, some of them consider that students are expected to be more active in their studies than previously and to hold more responsibilities than they used to. They also indicate that students have more academic options than previously due to the radical changes in the curriculum.

Overall, authorities, administrative staff and academics at 'CU' view the policy change as a positive transformation. There is recognition by some working at the meso (university administration) level that one of the strengths of the new curriculum policy is that it prepares students and academics for future political changes in HE in Chile. "At the institutional level", one said, "the University is ready for the future if the government decides to undertake a process like

that of Bologna" (CU2). Overall, the indication is that those at this level had studied political debates on HE in Chile at the time. The indication also is that they responded to them by engaging in the practices advocated by the new curriculum policy. A positive perspective on the changes that the new policy has brought is evident: "I can compare being a graduate of this university and what I see today. We are giving so much to the current students. I think it is very positive. They have a unique opportunity and they should take advantage of the whole range of courses that the university offers" (CU5).

Another stated that a further strength of the policy is that "students now have more networks than their predecessors had because they know more people from other degrees". The comment refers to the idea of students being able to enroll in units from different courses and degrees and sharing with students from other faculties to extend their social capital.

## V. DISCUSSION

The findings of the research in the case-study university in Chile, which has been reforming its curriculum over the recent decade, present potential investigation points for university curriculum policy developments in other jurisdictions. However, it must be emphasized that there is no intention to generalize from the case presented here. This discussion is now organized into the four main themes which emerged from the policy trajectory analysis of this curriculum reform in Chilean HE.

### A. First World Universities Leading the Way

Amongst the identified influences, there was consensus around the predominant importance of influences from first world universities and HE institutions in such countries, particularly the US and Australia. Evidence in this respect has argued that top-ranking universities in these jurisdictions exercise hegemonic power over universities in other contexts, especially because of their dominance of international league tables or rankings [15]. In particular, the Chilean case study university was strongly influenced by the Australian University of Melbourne and Columbia University, Harvard University and the University of Virginia in the US. However, such global influences interacted with national influences. In this case, the Chilean government through the Ministry of Education and local influences on curriculum reforms related to the history of 'CU' and the history of HE in Chile, are part of this interaction. This collaboration of influences is not unique as there is evidence of this in other Latin American countries like Mexico [12].

Other academics [16] have described the dominant influence of the first world on other nations in terms of global and cultural hegemony [17], or what Bourdieu and Wacquant [18] named as US 'cultural imperialism' which can minimize the influence of local and national realities, such as changes in students' demographics within this university. This case in Chile is interestingly behaving differently to other Latin American universities which are resisting this pressure [19]. In Chile, research [20] has pointed that this ignorance can have negative effects on the relevance of national and local context

in policy developments. Thus, developments at the case-study university gave insufficient attention to those creating an imbalance of local and global dynamics through being 'context-generative' and through resisting globalization from above [21].

### *B. New Paradigms in HE and Hybrid Policy*

The findings presented here acknowledged different principles informing policy text production. First, participants working at 'CU' perceived that an interdisciplinary approach informed policy text production and decisions about its structure. On this there is evidence from around the world in last decades about experiences in HE with an interdisciplinary curriculum in such diverse fields as business and economy [22], arts and design [23], [24], ecology and sustainability [25], [26], mathematics, chemistry and sciences [27], [28], engineering [29], [30], amongst others. There are different definitions for interdisciplinary. Klein [31] offered a widely definition of interdisciplinary studies as "a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline or profession... [It] draws on disciplinary perspectives and integrates their insights through construction of a more comprehensive perspective." (pp.393-4). In other words, it can be conceived as the combined use of disciplines which can promote intensive collaboration between them to solve problems [32]. This trend is one of the most contested topics in HE with detractors and supporters [33], [34], and it is still less fostered by HE institutions specially in the US [33]. Results in this university indicate that both expectations that students have and the expectation on them have changed due to the inclusion of an interdisciplinary approach. Evidence on this [35] has pointed that interdisciplinary research still seems more risky and likely to have less impact. Moreover, some [36] suggest that for its appropriated development, the use of a constructivist approach along with an interdisciplinary curriculum must be included. Also, research highlights a need of more literacy on philosophical, cultural and sociological aspects for students to acquire the necessary competencies to work interdisciplinary [37]. Thus, the appropriate implementation of such model includes securing equity to ensure that all types of students can succeed in their education path.

### *C. Hybrid Ideologies Structuring Curriculum Policy*

Accountability as part of neoliberalism, and associated discourses such as 'continuous improvement' are also observed as other values informing policy text production. First, accountability refers to the university being responsible for the good of their social environment, related to equity in HE. This reflects a neoliberal ideology mixed with other principles, producing the emergence of a 'hybrid' curriculum policy, which represents a combination of approaches from different areas [38] within a single HE institution. This concern for equity is related to the approval of Law Number 20.882 for the Provision of Gratuity (2015). This legislation exemplifies one of the two equity definitions recognized by

the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD (2008) that is a focus on equality of inputs where all members of society are afforded equal resources and supports to access a university. In contrast, a second definition of equity focuses on outcomes, which practically means allocating different levels of resources and supports to students on a needs basis to improve equity of outcomes. Thus, the fact that at 'CU', a hybrid policy has emerged discloses that the hegemony of global, neoliberal discourses is not complete as policy texts at the studied university have a diversity of influences, including some local idiosyncrasies. This reflects a degree of institutional agency [39]. Moreover, at the studied university there was resistance from some academics to curriculum policy changes proposed by university administrations. The fact that people located at the meso level perceived resistance as low while academics defined it as high, indicates that there are power struggles within the university. Using Marginson and Rhoades' [39] 'glo-na-cal agency heuristic' term, and focusing on the Chilean case-study university, global forces have been dominant in curriculum policy change, although there has also been significant evidence of the localized power of academics to contribute to curriculum policy construction. This global-local power relationships in 'CU' curriculum policy transformation can also be described in terms of a combination of 'policy borrowing', that is uncritical wholesale adoption of policies from other jurisdictions and 'policy learning' [40], characterized by active agency of policy actors in negotiating policies. Moreover, international accountability was mentioned as an important value underlying the policy. This form of accountability corresponds to 'outward accountability' [41], one of the two forms of accountability more developed in the last decades, along with upward accountability [42]. Vidovich and Slee identified a typology of accountability mechanisms according to the direction of the accountability relationship [43]. These are 'upward', 'outward', 'inward', and 'downward' accountabilities. At the same time, they acknowledge that there is often a hybridization of these, rendering accountability relationships increasingly complex in a global knowledge society. Some commentary in the literature on education in Latin America broadly [44] has pointed to positive effects of increasing managerial and market accountability in HE. The introduction of management approaches from the business world, however, with an underpinning neoliberal ideology, still needs to be carefully examined in relation to universities and their functions in society.

Permanent enhancement was also considered as a value underlying the new curriculum policy at 'CU'. This value relates to accountability, as a strategy to secure its success. This discourse has been identified as an effect of the hegemony of a neoliberal ideology in HE in developed countries like Australia [45]. In other words, the pressure for continuous enhancement emerged from an academic capitalism logic ruling HE [46] as a consequence of globalization and internationalization of HE [47]. New forms of power and governance have been established for their

organization, influenced mainly by managerial styles of administration. In this setting, academics have lost power. However, as in 'CU' they fight it through resistance. Regarding the concept of 'teaching excellence' in HE research has suggested the relevance of an inclusive interpretation of such value including academics perspectives [48]. This should be urgently considered by authorities when defying policy.

#### D. A Transformation Supported

Regarding policy enactment changes in role, employment of new staff and a view about the change being overall positive are highlighted by personnel working at both meso and micro levels at 'CU'. Even though participants deemed that it might be a bit early for them to be assessing the enactment of the curriculum reforms they largely tended to support and trust the new policy. Recognition of their university internationally was stated as evidence of positive enactment, as was improvement on such indicators as student retention rates and graduation rates. On this matter, Roberts [49], speaking regarding international trends, held that professional staff within universities can contribute positively to the experience of students by providing a 'quality service' and understanding students as 'customers'. Echoes of this at the university pointed to the existence of organizational commitment to reform reported by various participants. Others however saw such an approach as anathema to what universities should be about.

According to Roberts [49] and Jing and Zhang [50], organizational commitment is essential for positive engagement in institutional performance assessment in HE. Other researchers [51] have also asserted that a collectively shared guiding vision of the curriculum provides a strong foundation for a comprehensive curriculum review process and for embracing curriculum development as a shared responsibility amongst academic faculty members and administration staff. Such assumptions come from organizational theories. However, from a more critical perspective they can be understood as discourses of monopolization and neo-hegemony [52]. Specifically, in relation to the university studied in Chile, a 'logic of productivity' [53] prevailed in the positive attitude towards the policy. There is no contestation of the predominant consumerist epistemology of education underlying the policy. Thus, this absence of critics could respond to the fact that students were not considered.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This paper provided an analysis of curriculum policy change in one case-study university in Chile. The analysis was organized using a policy trajectory conceptual framework. Findings in the case study were presented in the form of four major themes. First, the hegemony of first world universities over local and national influences was highlighted. Also, regarding policy text production, policy structure reflects hybridity of such ideologies as neoliberalism, its values related to accountability and continuous improvement, part of a managerial logic invading universities around the world and a

concern for equity. Also, new paradigms in HE such as interdisciplinarity are value underpinning policy change which is today one of the most contested topics in HE. Finally, the overall support to the policy change by participants at both meso and micro levels, which can be understood form a logic to improve productivity was identified as an important element in the policy enactment.

The research presented here has limitations such as being a case-study. Similar research in other Chilean universities should be conducted to obtain a better understanding of the situation of HE curriculum policy in the country. Such studies will provide a better understanding of the global-local dynamics impacting in policy development there. Moreover, research about the role of students in HE policy must be urgently consider as the country possess an actively student movement. Research about equity in HE should also be conducted to inform decision making in this field.

As a way of conclusion, it can be said that being Chile an emerging economy there are many challenges for its HE system but clearly more involvement of different actors in policy decisions is important as the current global setting craves for more democratic systems.

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