



Understanding University Groupings
some findings...

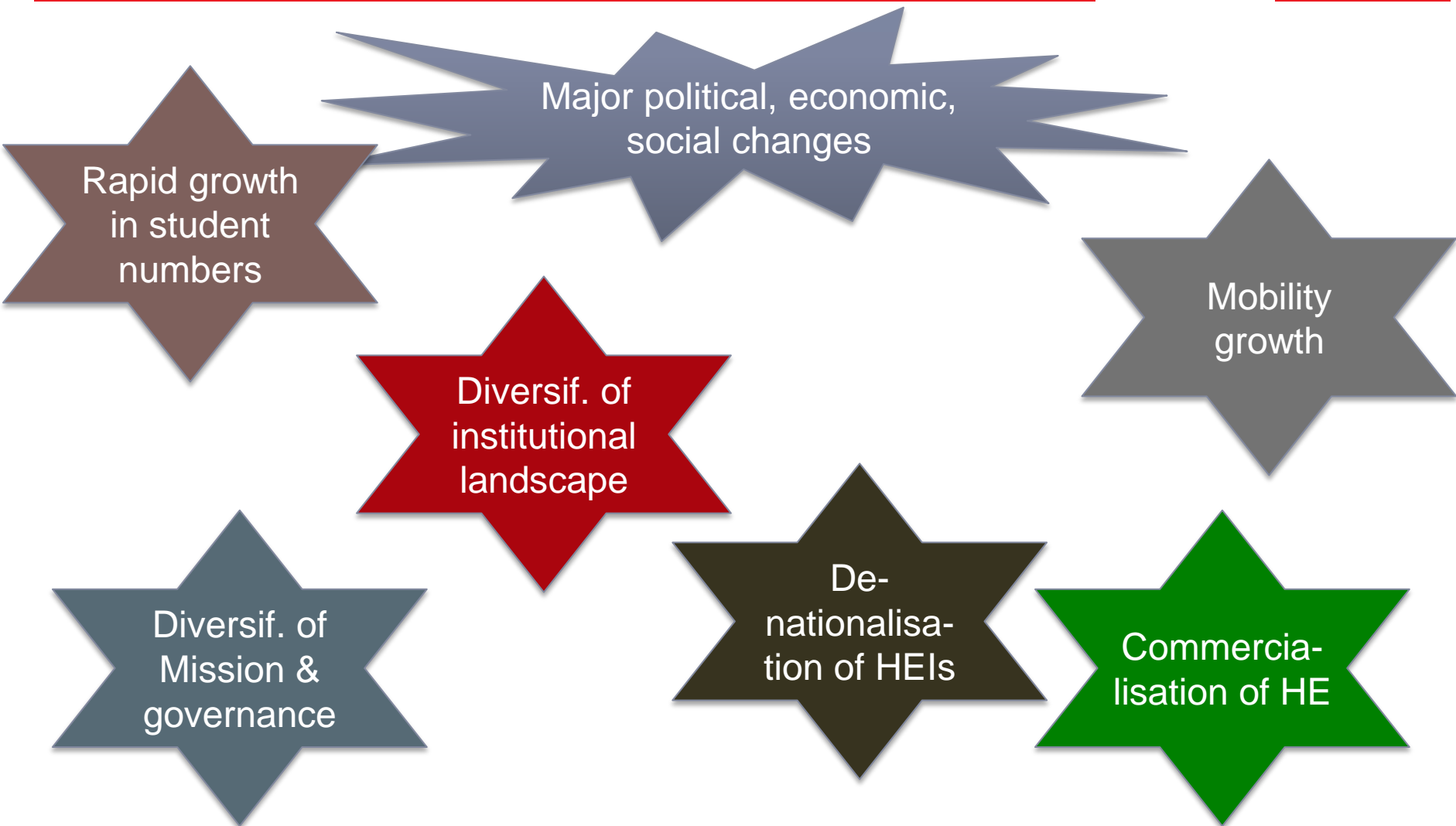
Uwe Brandenburg | CHE Consult GmbH October 2013

Background

Approach

Findings

The background: the past 3 decades



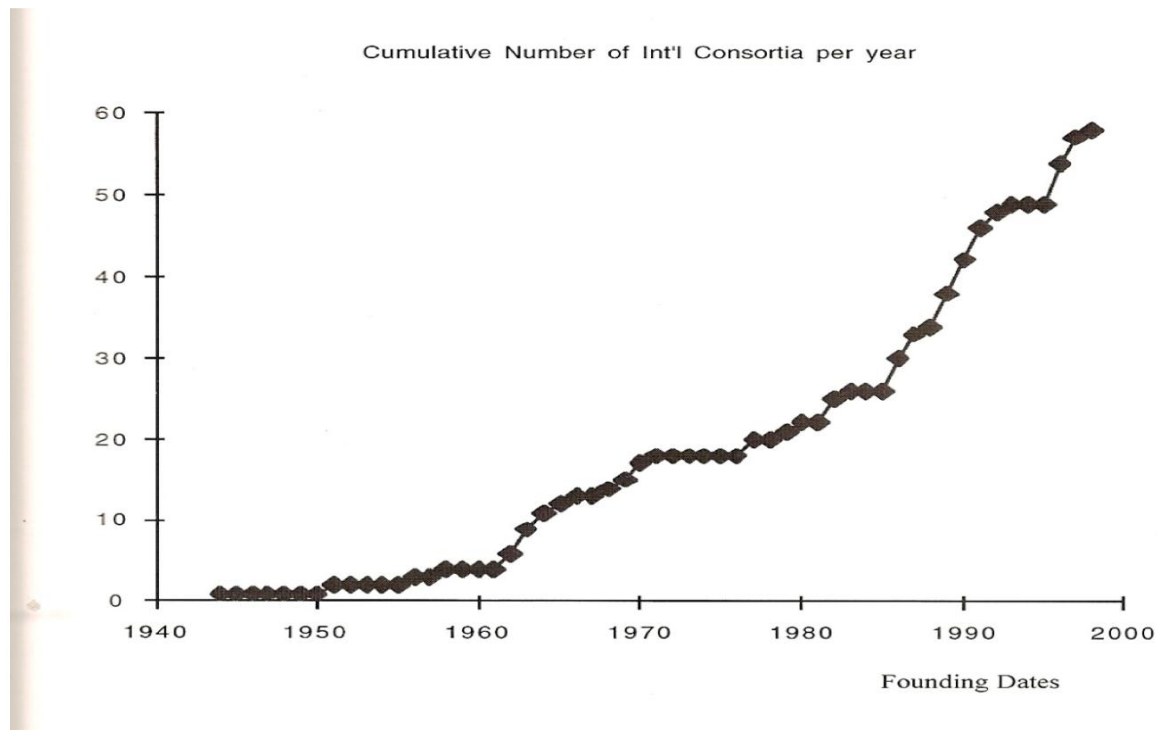
Effects on HEIs

- More competition
- More stratification
- More interconnectedness
- More inter-dependence
- More differentiation of HEI types

HEI groupings are a strong instrument to cope with these changes:

- Joined forces of argument
- Reputation gained through its members & capacity to position grouping in political arena
- Opened doors for cooperation
- Increased access to funding opportunities
- Support in local/regional struggles (e.g. with authorities)

Cumulative Number of International Consortia



Source: (Denman 2001, 52)

The approach ... The WHY

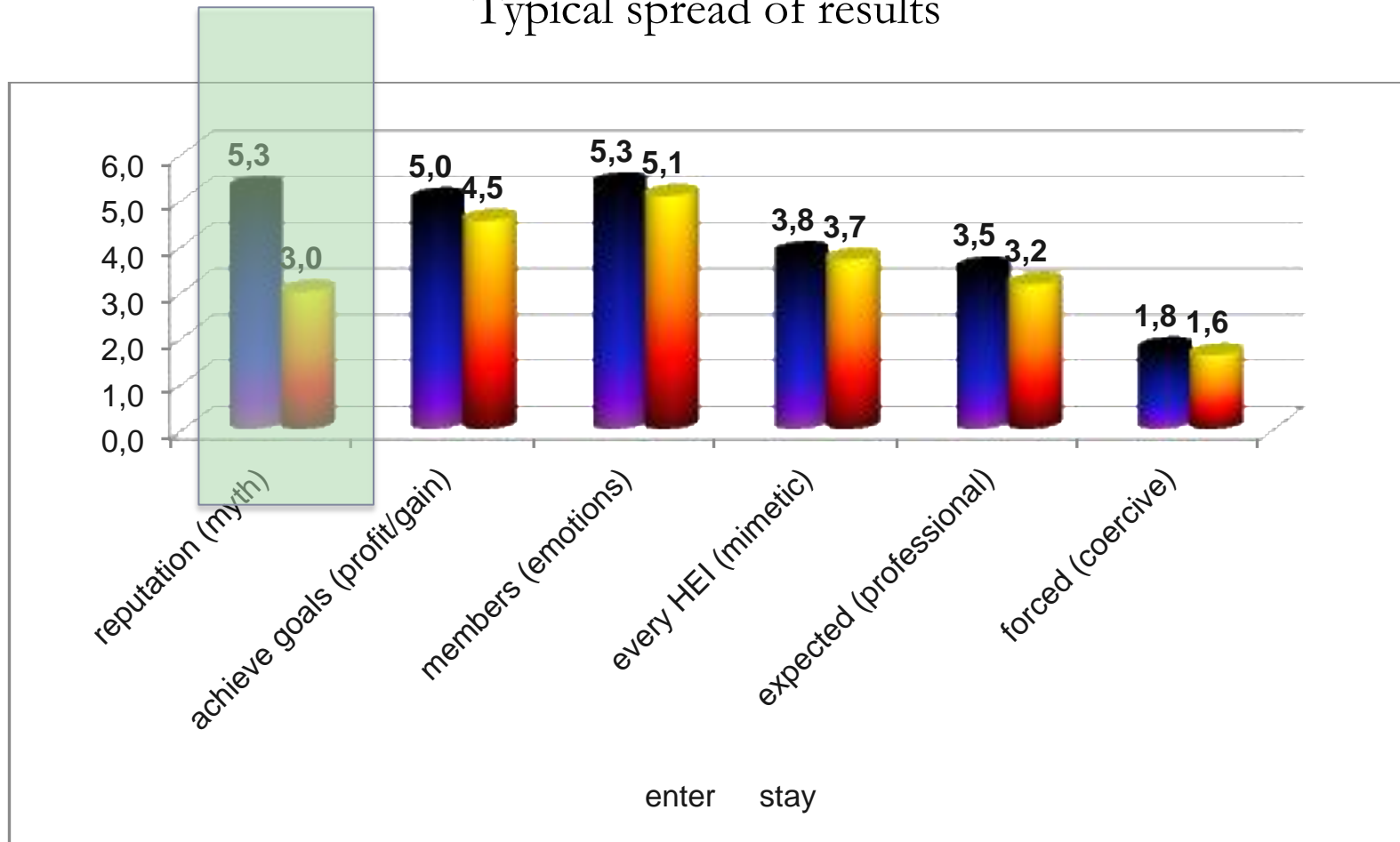
- HEI groupings growing factor in HE, both in numbers and relevance -> their survival or failure is of systematic relevance;
- based on investment of HEIs (staff, time, finances) -> their success or failure vital for management of a grouping and its members;
- placed in a situation of constant change (external conditions, preferences of members, etc.) -> harder to manage;
- growth in numbers and relevance creates increasing competition -> in limited market only limited number of groupings can exist.

The approach ... Theoretical Setting

- Little research on HEI groupings in general
- Most of that institutionalist, some rational choice (RC)
- Biggest disadvantage of both: they cannot explain change
- Gioia's Organisational Identity (OI) approach is not known in field of internationalisation (but was used in HE)
- Theory of Voluntary Clubs (TVC) has not been used in internationalisation so far but seems very well set to explain change in HEI groupings
- Combining OI and TVC does the trick
 - TVC: private benefits, social externalities, branding, standards, swords/sanctions
 - OI: centrality, distinctiveness, ambiguity of fluidity & stability
 - Contextual: temporality, sociality, spatiality

The finding: reasons to enter and stay

Typical spread of results



The findings

	RR	FR	CER	RGSD	Coherence			TVC criteria	OI criteria
					temporality	spatiality	sociality		
CG	94,0%	7,3%	0,0%	0,0%					
CGU	86,2%	38,7%	63,0%	-11,7%					
UN	100,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%					
UNICA	98,5%	14,9%	42,9%	4,9%					

Retention rate (RR): average member stay in grouping; actual years of stay per member divided by longest possible time of membership to the year 2010 (the year of the survey) as a basis for calculation

Fluctuation rate (FR): dropout numbers divided by overall number of members over all years

Contemporary exit rate (CER): dropouts 2005-2010 set against all dropouts

Recent grouping size development (RGSD): development of the grouping size (2005 -2010), only decrease considered negative

Implication 1: Advocacy

advocacy relevant factor, should be part of grouping's strategy & core activities of secretariat

for European groupings, headquarters in Brussels advisable

Implication 2: Temporality

employ slow growth policy combined with size ceiling

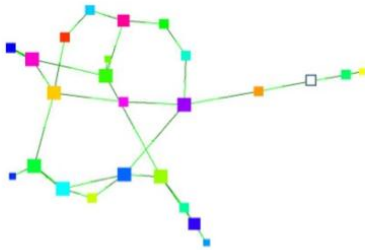
growth of 1-2 members p.a. recommendable

continuous increase of percentage of members in its core activity, reduces risk of fragmentation and also counter-balances the risk of free-riding.

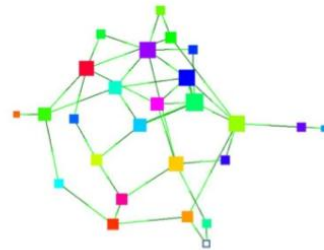
Implications: Temporality dimension



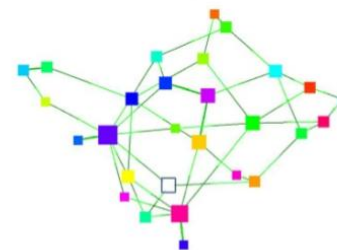
UN: Student mobility (in and out) 2002/03



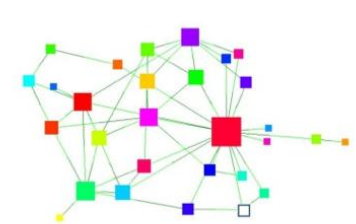
UN: Student mobility (in and out) 2004/05



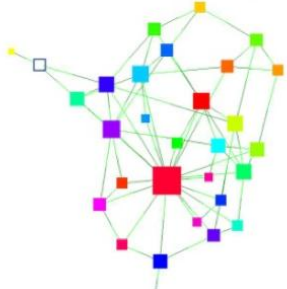
UN: Student mobility (in and out) 2003/04



UN: Student mobility (in and out) 2005/06



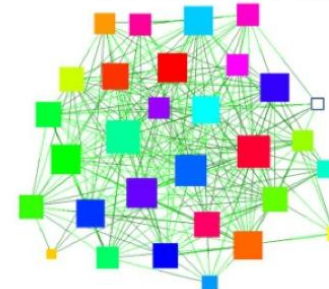
UN: Student mobility (in and out) 2006/07



UN: Student mobility (in and out) 2007/08



UN: Student mobility (in and out) 2008/09



Implication 3: Spatiality

spatial coherence not as relevant as other dimensions

combine larger spread of countries with comparable number of member HEIs per country

avoid over-representation of one or few country/ies (not more than 2 members per country)

Implication 4: Sociality

integrate highest possible percentage of its members in core activities

keep need felt for additional in-group connections and links at minimum

Implications:

Implication 5: Social Externalities & private benefits

address institutional needs of its member HEIs and personal needs of individuals involved

monitor through some core variables (satisfaction rates on both institutional and individual levels of more than 4 on 6-point scale)

Implication 6: Centrality & Distinctiveness

provide core values that are known, understood, and shared by most members

these values as reference point of identity and to help members to derive the rational reasons to stay

define clear USPs that differentiate it from other groupings and make them central to the grouping's identity.

Implications: Appearance of stability and fluidity

Implication 7: Appearance of stability and fluidity

provide an impression of ambiguity of stability and fluidity

constant reminder of the central aspects of the grouping's identity to the outside and inside important

constant monitoring of the members' needs essential, not as a procedure to ensure legitimation but as honest aim to improve services

biggest risk: the secretariat developing its own idea of a grouping's identity and pursuing it assuming that it is shared by member HEIs

Implication 8: Networking

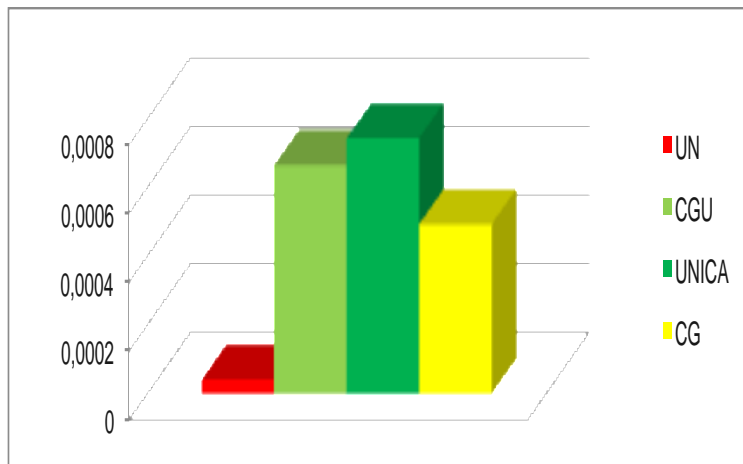
networking with other groupings essential asset

choice of partner groupings should be selective and link up with strategy

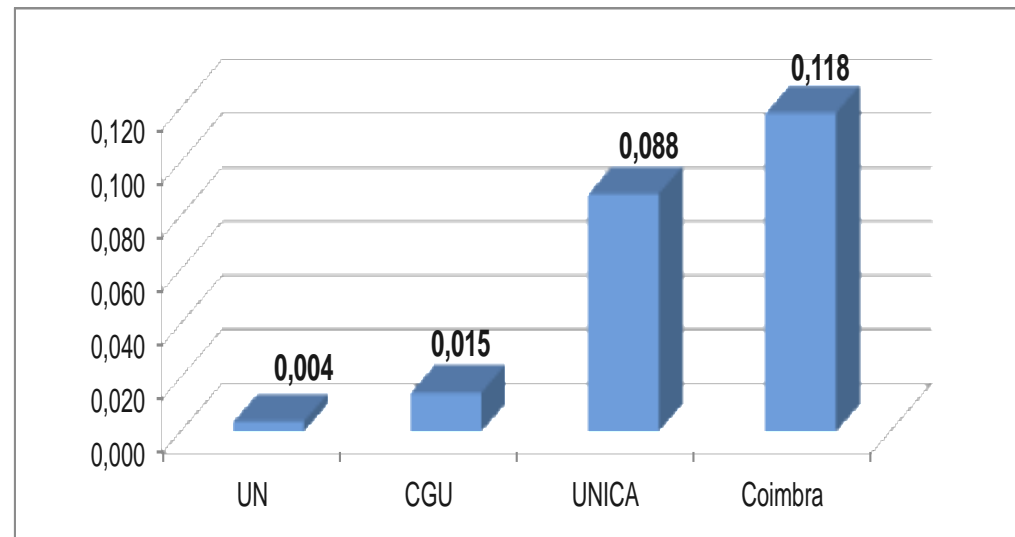
select groupings with complementary rather than comparative strategies

Implications: Management & Structure

Staff per Euro



Staff available per grouping member



Implication 9: Management & Structure

substantial fee possibly beyond 3,000 € combined with substantial staff investment of at least approximately 0.1 FTE per member HEI advisable

on qualitative side, recommended to provide substantial services not restricting the secretariat to a mere facilitator

Recommendation 10: Monitoring

establish monitoring system which controls a set of fixed indicators

identify core actors and high-monitors in its grouping and use them as focus group to re-orientate itself on a regular, probably annual basis

Implication 11: Membership Policy

follow recruitment policy in line with strategy and statutes

size of 30-40 HEIs seems recommendable if combined with substantial managerial support

larger groupings need substantially more support and most likely creation of sub-groups to satisfy different needs

Is there a best buy?



would oppose idea of distinctiveness

Only centrality “openness”: CGU showed attached difficulties



coherence on temporality and sociality

TVC criteria of social externalities/private benefits

OI criteria of centrality, distinctiveness and appearance of stability and fluidity