



Fragmented Understanding of Priorities
Driving a University Alliance and
the Role of Senior-Leadership as a Catalyst

Monica I. Camacho, Ph.D.

Introduction

- Global links among academic institutions
(Altbach & Forest, 2006).
- Internationalization at the institutional level
(Knight, 2004).
- Rationales of international education and academic cooperation
(Childress, 2009; de Wit, 2002; Knight, 2005; Ollikainen, 1996).

Purpose and RQ

➤ Purpose of the study

- Explore the motivations (e.g., rationales) shaping university cooperation.
- Gain in-depth understanding rather than generalization.

➤ Research question

At the institutional level, what rationales shaped the relationship between two universities?

Rationales

- “motivations for integrating an international dimension into higher education” (de Wit, 2002, p. 84). They guide the process of internationalization that a government, a sector, an organization, or a higher education institution engages in (Knight, 2004).

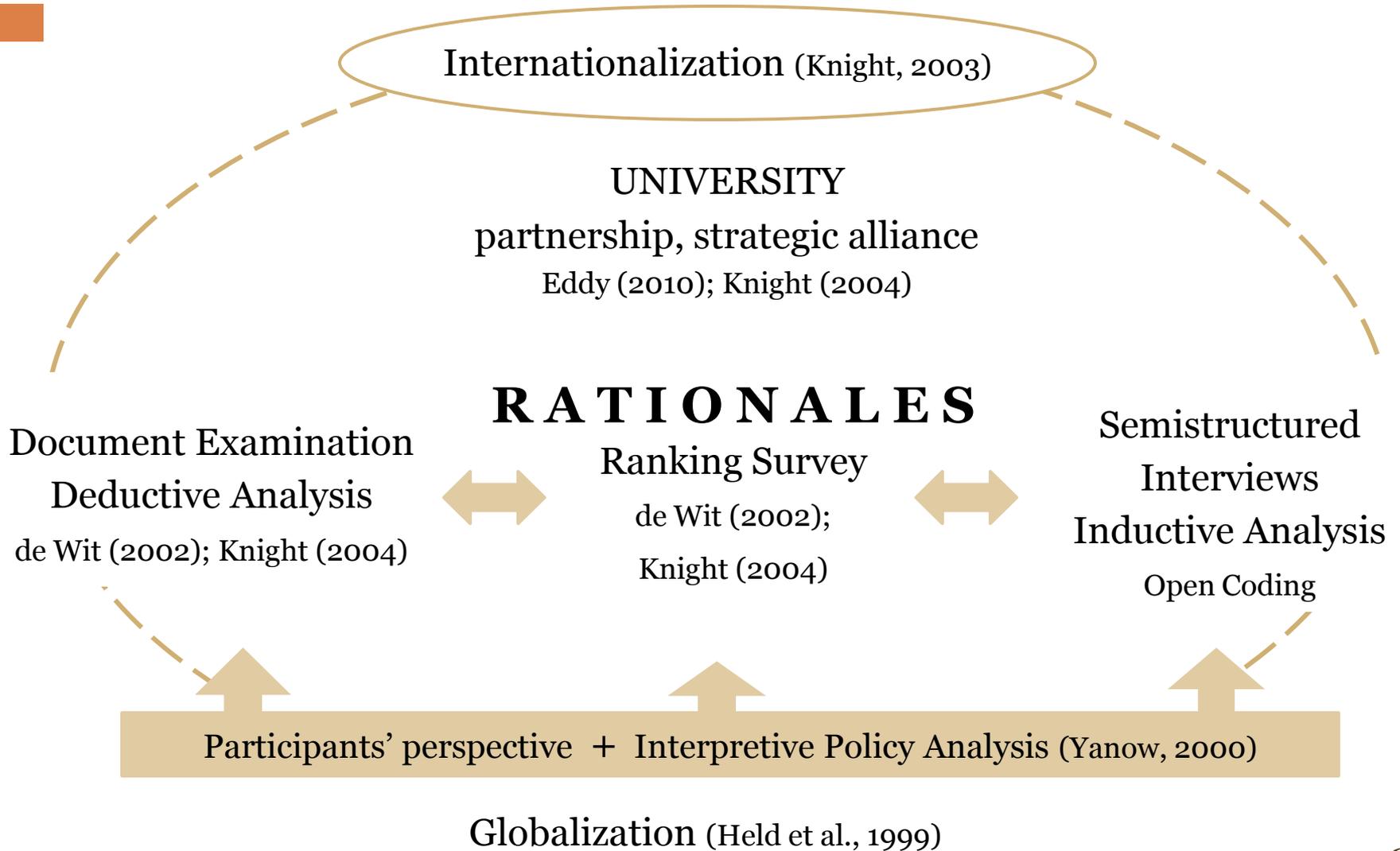
➤ Typology

Academic, economic, socio-cultural, and political

Conceptual Framework

- Globalization (Held et al. 1999)
- Internationalization (Knight, 2003)
- Strategic alliance (Knight, 2004); strategic partnership (Eddy, 2010)
- Rationales (de Wit, 2002; Knight, 2004)

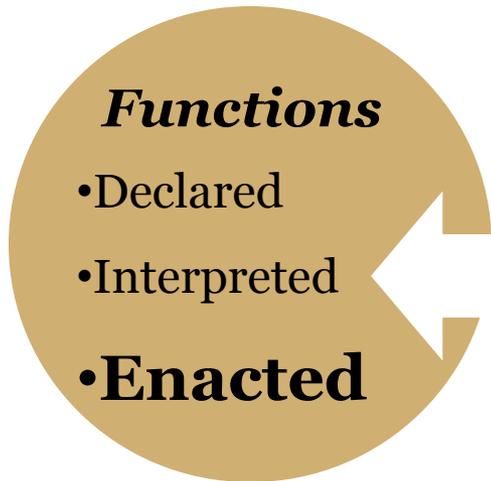
Methodology



Methodology

- Additional data collected and analyzed
 - Institutional documents and publicly available information.
 - Participant Information Form to craft a participant's profile.
- Other analytic techniques
 - Personal memos; tools of data display: cross-tables and meta-matrices.
- Validity
 - Plausibility of claims and verification of conclusions; triangulation; and member check.

Findings



Rationales





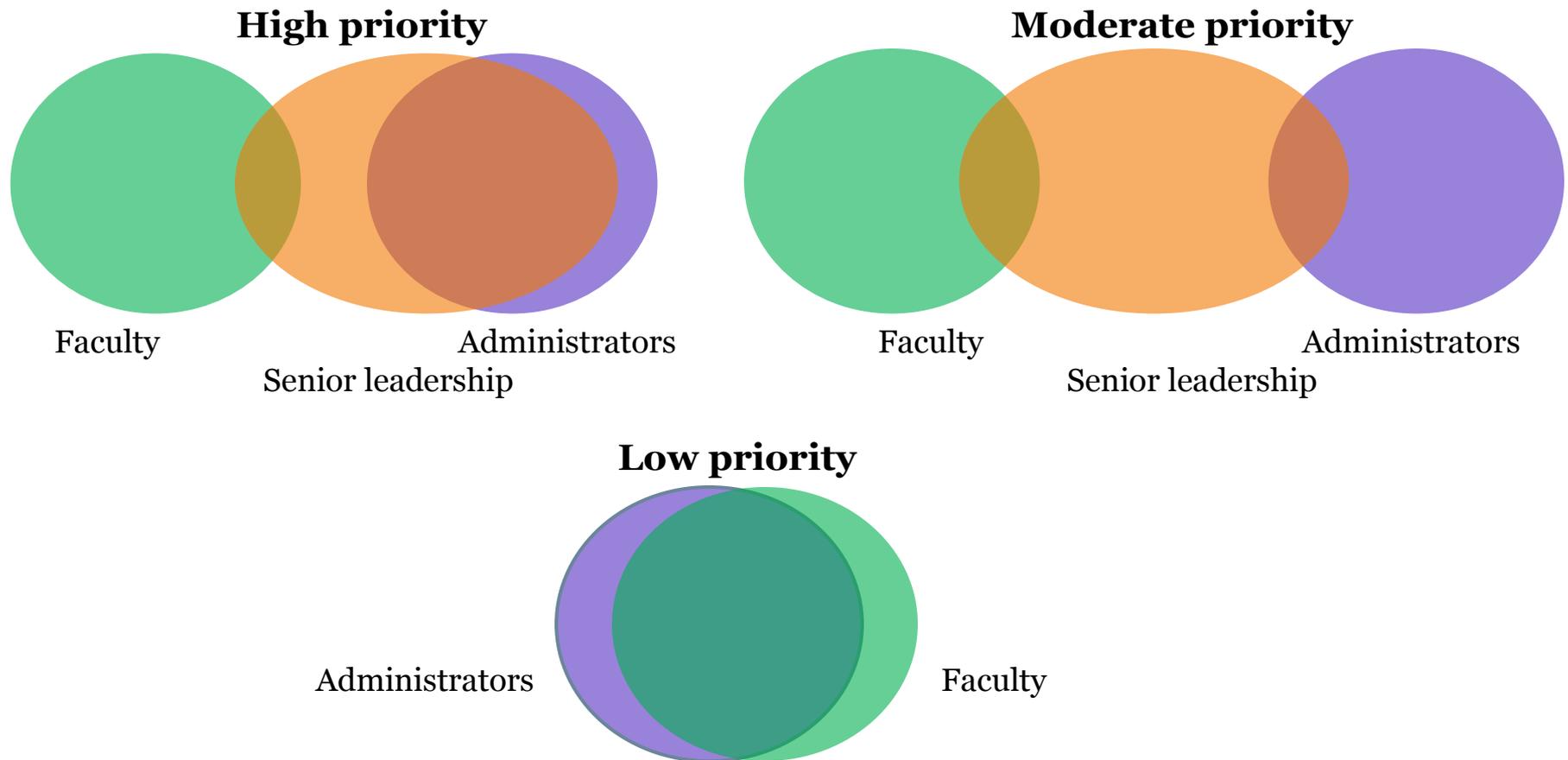
- Bi-national relationship, a strategic alliance
 - shaped by a set of rationales
 - functions and meanings attached; participants' sense making processes
 - Declared rationales: direction and purpose; outline strategies and structures shaping actions and interactions.
 - Interpreted rationales: indicate participants' sense making and meanings attached.
 - Enacted rationales: motivations the participants act upon.



- Meanings: scope, type, and priority
 - Scope: university alliance overall or to specific projects within.
 - Type: values, interests and needs, and expected benefits.
 - Selected typologies: academic (e.g., high priority) but closely followed by economic ones (e.g., moderate priority); oriented more to resource efficiency than to profit making.
- Strategic alliance, strategic partnership
 - Atypical characteristics of formation (e.g., because of the presidents), approaches (e.g., bottom-up, decentralized, applied solutions), and range (e.g., long term, multidimensional).

Findings

➤ Semistructured interviews: Enacted rationales





- Fragmented understanding of rationales' priorities:
 - Implications for implementation, monitoring and reward system
 - Economic motivations
- Long-term sustainability
- Contextual factors:
 - Geo-political, economic, historical, and socio-cultural factors (e.g., macro-context), and
 - Organizational characteristics and structural differences of universities (e.g., of the mezzo-context).

Recommendations

- Practice recommendations to university senior leadership
 - 1) “Glue-factor”. Implications of a fragmented understanding of rationales.
 - 2) “Translate and reinforce”. Assisting interpretation and enactment of the rationales.
 - 3) “Equalizer factor”. Balance models; integrate a participatory approach.

Questions?

Thank you!

micamach@asu.edu

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