



Informal institutions and their role in public policy development. Case study: University autonomy and the implementation of the accreditation and quality assessment mechanisms in the Bolivian university system

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Disclaimer:

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ACRONYMS

ANUP	National Association of Private Universities
APEASU	Plurinational Agency for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Bolivian University System
APU	Autonomous Public Universities
ARCU-SUR	System of Regional Accreditation of University Careers of MERCOSUR
CEUB	Executive Committee of the Bolivian University
CNACU	National Commission of Academic Programs Accreditation
ISAAP	International specialized agencies in accreditation processes
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
NEI	New Economic Institutionalism
NPM	New Public Management
SSUF	Bolivian University System

DEDICATORY

For my family, especially my Parents (Popo -Pastor Rafael and Caramela -Maria del Carmen), my brothers Julio and Gustavo, and specially for my sisters Buba (Cecilia) and Pilar, and my nephews JJ and Montse, and my pets Azteca BB⁺, Pequebola Jhonson⁺, and Puffy Terapia, for all the support, care and tender love, and who are hereby exempted from the usual familial obligation to pretend to have read Alvaro's latest thesis.

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Mátalos a todos

Cuanto tiempo corazón
Te agradezco por el vino
Yo dejo los 23
Pero sigo siendo un niño
Sigo pensando que el amor más serio que he tenido
Es el de mi madre
Mis hermanos
Mis amigos
Una salud por la mujer que fue buena conmigo
Que a pesar de lo que soy seguimos siendo amigos
Que me dijo con ternura, pero siempre de algún modo
Mátalos a todos
No tiene sentido
Dejar a nadie vivo

Mata a todos pero empieza por los que no tienen ganas
Los que esperan que el presente se lo pasen pa mañana
Los que me dicen que no puedo porque no pudieron nada
Mata a todos los que piensan que el futuro es una trampa
Los que no gritan lo que piensan tienen miedo y se calla
A los que creen en la suerte y no en lo que trabajan
Mata a todos los que opinen que rendirse es lo correcto
Los que piensan que ser pobre determina tu intelecto
A los que ruegan el amor a esos mátalos primero
Mata a todos los que crean que la vida es una edad
Mata a todo hijo de puta que postula pa robar
A esos tortúralos primero y no les tengas piedad
Cuanto tiempo corazones agradezco por el vino
Yo dejo los 32 pero sigo siendo un niño

(Edison No Recomendable)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-U2T2kIE7Ik>

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I hope this work, would serve my country Bolivia, and my Region Latin America to look to social phenomena in a different way, highlighting the importance of informal institutions for the Formulation, Implementation and success of any Public Policy.

Any mistake or weakness of the research is my entire responsibility.

The Hague, November 22th 6:06 AM

Abstract

The current Law of Education of Bolivia creates the Plurinational Agency for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Bolivian University System (APEASU), with the aim to guarantee the quality of education in the Bolivian University System (SSUF) (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010). However, after nine years, this organization has not become operational. This research aims to find the reasons of it, proposing that the factors that have inhibited the implementation of this organization could be found in the informal institution of the –so named- university autonomy.

This study uses the cultural perspectives proposed by New Public Management (NPM) and New Economic Institutionalism (NEI) theories. At the same time, the research refers to the concepts of myths, consociational democracy, conceptual stretching, and associational governance to unravel its argument.

The investigation also argues that the presence of the concept of university autonomy had (and will) inhibit the development and implementation of any Government's initiative that would propose an accreditation mechanism which does not acquire an autonomous character, and where the role of Autonomous Public Universities (APU) is not being central and prominent.

The consequences that the lack of understanding of this concept have had for the SSUF in terms of internal division, elite capture and distortion of the accreditation mechanism are also revised in detail. In the last part of the document, the research proposes some policy recommendations that might allow the implementation of APEASU, to enhance and transform the quality of university education in Bolivia.

Keywords: university autonomy, mechanisms of accreditation, informal institutions, quality in university education, consociational democracy, associational governance, Bolivian university system

Relevance of the education for development studies

Education, together with health and social protection, are the main areas in any social policy of a Government. While the main concern of the Millennium Development Goals, in the area of Education, was to increase its coverage rates, especially in primary education (UN, 2019), Sustainable Development Goals recognize that this growth is insufficient, if it is not reflected in access to quality education, including tertiary education (UN, 2019), especially in those countries that have already reached high rates of education provisioning and coverage as Bolivia¹ (UNDP, 2016) does. In this sense, **accreditation** is a mechanism developed by NPM theory to tackle this issue in university education.

Several studies show that there exists a positive correlation between education and the degree of development and growth rates that a country can attain: having higher levels of education (and within it, of university education), not only offers better opportunities to individuals, but also enhances the capabilities of a country to reduce its poverty rates, since it influences the employability of its population. Therefore, in any country, the education sector is set as a Government's priority.

It becomes important for scholars devoted to development studies to know how to implement accreditation mechanisms, and, at the same time, to understand how to manage those factors that inhibit and distort its correct functioning, especially if they perform (or try to perform) actions for the implementation of public policies related to university education.

¹ Bolivia has shown high literacy rates which are consistently superior to 90%, especially in the metropolitan areas where 70% of the population of the country is concentrated (UNDP, 2016, p. 136).

1. INTRODUCTION

“The study of myths is a way to reach the depths of life, the costumes and of the Philosophic and teleological conceptions of humankind. Every organized society, no matter its antiquity, has created its myths. Most of the times, these myths take different forms, surviving in the deepest of popular conscience, to bloom later with more strength. Myths amaze for its depth, for its typical conceptions and for all the virtues and vices that endorse to its protagonists. Thus, they constitute a rich source for research and for the following revaluation of the myths of our times” (Francovich, 1980, p. n.p.).

1.1. Background

This study proposes that the autonomous public universities (APU) have consistently opposed the implementation of a state-controlled accreditation mechanism, based on its prevalent institutional culture whose central value is to defend university autonomy. This institution not only constitutes the soul that gathers all public universities together, but also acts as a contention factor to control and overcome any internal tensions that might arise between the APU and the Government.

The meaning given to the concept of **university autonomy**, especially by APU’s elites, is specific to this type of universities and sometimes transcends the constitutional and normative definition managed by the State. As a result, the different meaning given to this concept by these organisations is the *leitmotiv* that explains the constant clashes that characterise the turbulent relationship between these two major actors of the Bolivian political and educational context.

University autonomy has its origins in Bolivia as the results of a referendum held in 1931, when the Government approved the necessity to confer public universities (which at that time were six²) the right to an autonomous management. The purpose behind this decision was to use this 'university right' as a mechanism to keep the APU out of reach of the government, and, thus, guarantee their freedom of teaching.

While the informal roots of this practice might have its origin long before this episode, and could be traced even to the colonial times, this investigation will take this referendum as its starting point since its occurrence is what has conferred university autonomy its actual form. This study will consider university autonomy as a type of institution, defined as *“durable systems of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions”* (Hodgson, 2006, p. 13).

The research will consider that this institution became, later, part of what Francovich (1980) denominates as *“the deeply rooted Bolivian myths”*, which are defined as *“expressions of vital attitudes, feelings and experiences that manifest as convictions whose certainty is such, that they come to be considered as sacred, as self-evident, standing in this sense, in a dimension that makes them impervious to any attempt of rational criticism”* (p. 5), making difficult its transformation and comprehension.

While the objective of Francovich’s investigation was to propose a general framework to study the origin, development, contents and consequences of what he considered as the *“main national myths”*, in terms of its relevance for Bolivia’s development. This research

² Public Universities were located in the cities of Sucre, La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Potosí and Oruro.

will make use of this category, trying to prove that university autonomy has reached such a level of internalisation and embeddedness among Bolivian society that it has transcended the organisational limits of APU to be part of Bolivian myths. This research aims to study the effects of university autonomy on the failure of implementation of a unified accreditation mechanism, and its consequences in shaping the Bolivian University System (SSUF). This system is currently divided in **two blocks** - constitutionally recognized-, each one with its respective rules

The scheme to perform a university accreditation was implemented in Bolivia, for the first time in the mid-1990s, as part of a broader process of state reformation. This was pursued by the government with the aim of “modernizing *the management of public sector*” (Daza, 2003). This process, which is part of what is colloquially known in Bolivia as **second-generation reforms**, was influenced by the NPM theory.

NPM emerged in the 1980’s in UK and US as a stream of thought in public management sciences, and proposed that to improve the efficiency of public sector management, Governments should be more “*business like*”, borrowing ideas and models developed for the private sector, emphasizing the centrality of the notion of ‘*citizens as customers*’ who receive services from the State.

The implementation of NPM techniques was expected to increase Government’s efficiency and responsiveness to challenges raised by the growth of issues under state control and the consequent increase in the number of public servants and its corresponding machinery that would be demanded (Sartori, 1970). These phenomena, which occurred in different parts of the world in dissimilar times, was a consequence of the Industrial Revolution and the related urbanization growth that it implied.

This research sets as its timeframe between 1994 and 2019. The study will be specifically focused in analysing, understanding and uncovering the milestones that occurred due to the power struggles between the government and the APU, which inhibited the implementation of unified accreditation mechanisms in the SSUF. These struggles occurred because of the constant attempts to create a state-controlled mechanism of accreditation, at least in three specific points in time: 1994, 2005, and 2016.

1.2.Objective

This investigation aims to understand (and show) how university autonomy practice has operated throughout the defined timeframe to:

- Allow the creation, development and implementation of the APU controlled accreditation mechanism, in spite of it had an adverse constitutional formal judgment.
- Inhibit the implementation of an independent accreditation mechanism of university education, despite being established by law.
- Explain why the APU are still pursuing accreditation processes and mechanisms though they are not mandatory.
- Propose some policy recommendations to unify the accreditation mechanisms currently used in the SSUF.

1.3. Research questions

1.3.1. Main question

Why did the APEASU fail to become operational despite being created through a law?

1.3.2. Sub questions

- What is the structure of Bolivia's education system?
- How is quality of university education assessed in the SSUF, with special emphasis on the APU?
- What interests are at stake in the accreditation process of the APU?
- What had been the consequences of power struggles between the APU and the Government in issues referred to the structuring of the SSUF?
- Why the APUs are still pursuing accreditation despite not being mandatory?

1.4. Structure of the study: seven parts, one purpose

The proposed research is divided in six chapters, besides the introduction. The second chapter presents the theoretical, analytical and conceptual framework that guides this study. This comprises ideas that belong to two main streams of thought: NPM and NEI.

Given that accreditation mechanisms constitute a specific adaptation of NPM to assess, control and supervise university education, the paper will present an in-depth analysis of this stream of thought. For this purpose, it will use, mainly but not only, the contributions and debates (concepts, notions, scope, facilitating factors, limitations) developed by Lee Harvey, Jethro Newton and Bjørn Stensaker, most of which were published in the *Quality in Higher Education Journal* between 1995 and 2010.

A concise review of the origin and development of NEI's stream of thought will be studied using the contributions of Geoffrey M. Hodgson. He highlights the importance of conceptualization (and differentiation) of terms like institutions, organizations, rules, roles and habits. To supplement Hodgson's ideas, Georgina Gomez and Holly Ritchie, introduced new concepts, framed as the **cultural perspective of institutions**, which will also become an integral part of this study.

In the methodology chapter, there is shown why was chosen the **holistic simple case study** method. The case study type, techniques to collect and analyse evidence and tactics used to ensure quality of the research are discussed using case study discussions developed by John Gerring (2007) and Robert Yin (2014). To make clearer the selection of the single case study method, will also be analysed the concept of **consociational democracy** developed by Arend Lijphart (1969).

The next two chapters –4 and 5- will present a holistic image of the structure and composition of Bolivia's educational system, giving special attention to public universities. Also had been discussed who the SSUF's main actors are, its characteristics, differences, and type of relationships with the Government. The conceptualisation of the institution of **university autonomy**, and how it varies between different stakeholders, especially the APU and the Government, is discussed in these chapters. It is also shown how this institution had being influential to inhibit the consolidation of a unified accreditation mechanism for the SSUF and the implementation of the APEASU.

The characteristics of the two main accreditation mechanisms currently in use in Bolivia, are analysed in detail, highlighting the role that the university autonomy has played on it.

The reasons why public universities still pursue accreditation, despite not being mandatory according to current Bolivian law, will also be presented.

The study will conclude showing a series of observations about how the accreditation mechanism developed by APUs works, and proposing some policy recommendations, that will allow actors of the SSUF to reach an agreement for the implementation of the APEASU as an autonomous organization. Finally, a strategy to increase the quality of university education in Bolivia will be presented with an understanding and recognition the role that the institution of university autonomy would have to play in it.

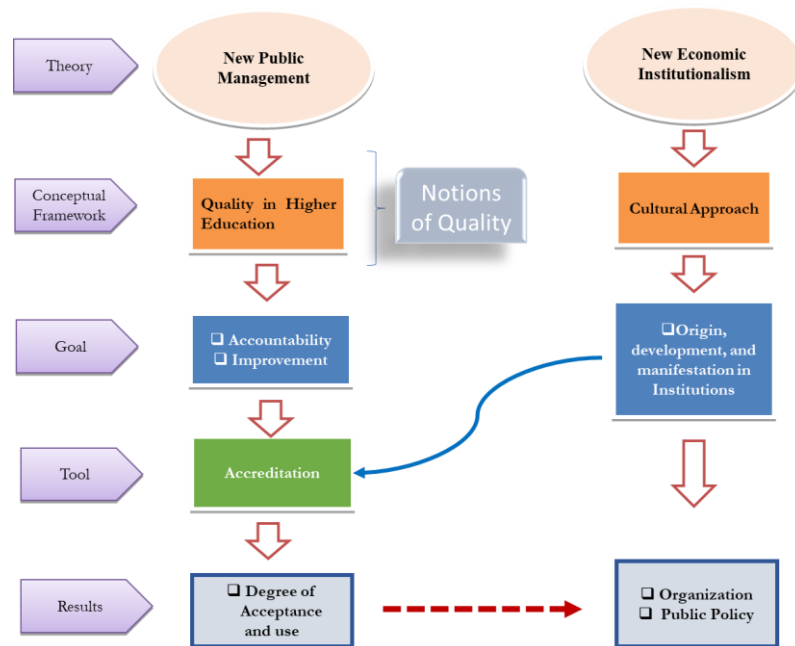
2. THEORETICAL, ANALYTICAL, AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.Introduction

New Public Management (NPM) and Neo Economic Institutionalism (NEI) constitute the main theories that guide this research. In both cases, the study will concentrate on reviewing NPM's and NEI's **cultural approach** and will take it as its analytical framework.

The interconnection among these two theories is shown in the following figure:

Figure 1: Relations between theoretical, analytical and conceptual framework



Source: Author's own elaboration

NPM and NEI theories appear almost at the same period between 1970s and 1980s. NPM was thought as an alternative to the bureaucratic model of public management, whose procedures became too heavy to deal with, and were not compatible with the increasing responsibilities of the modern state. These ideas were implemented, since the first half of the 20th century, in most public administrations both in the northern and in the southern hemispheres.

The specific tool developed by NPM to improve the quality of university education was named **accreditation**. However, it has been proven that this external tool for monitoring university's activities is more related with accountability, and not necessarily with quality improvement. This is because accreditation mechanisms have become prey of a process that can be described as university's elite capture, which has caused distortion or incomplete implementation, both in Bolivia as in the MERCOSUR region.

At the same time, the rejection by public universities of the implementation of a state-controlled accreditation mechanism has its origin in the lack of central Government's understanding of the nature and scope of university autonomy. It is this unclear understanding, which influences the degree of acceptance and use of accreditation mechanisms in Bolivia. The main problem is that these mechanisms, to become operative,

require that the concept of autonomy used by the organizations that would be able to implement them, must have specific traits.

The remaining of this chapter will be devoted to reviewing the main conceptual and analytical categories of the above-mentioned theories, making a special emphasis in those aspects related to the cultural perspective.

2.2.New Public Management: applying a rationale generated for the private sector to the education area

The last two centuries have been characterized by huge advances in science and technology. To take advantage of these developments, the State needed to guarantee that labor force increased its knowledge and skills. Universities that were once reserved only for the rich people, giving them status and exclusiveness, began to expand its activities to educate an even increasing amount of people with the aim to pursue economic success (Green, 1994). It was then that university education became a public good (Barnett, 1994). This fact raised some fears among the academic community since “**more**” was equated with “**worse**”. What would be the effect of expanding the number of attending students on the standards of these organizations? To what extent will universities be able to respond to this challenge?

The expansion of universities’ activities took place in an environment of growing budget constraints, a tendency that became more and more evident as the economic crisis of the late 1970s made the financing of welfare programs more difficult. This situation could be characterized as a demand of the State to get more for less. Then became a potential brake and a challenge for the universities which had to demonstrate gains in efficiency and economy to cope with the new context. These demands allowed the use of practices related to NPM in university education (Green, 1994). In this sense, funding university education was increasingly assumed by the State as an investment that contributes to the country’s prosperity. Therefore, university education was regarded as a sector to which the Government will devote special attention to ensure its quality and to produce the expected results in terms of knowledge and research (Yorke, 2000).

In Bolivia, *“this trend started to appear between 1940s and 1960s and accelerated in the 1990s. Since then, enrollment rates in the public universities increased four times, with the consequence of declining quality of these organizations”* (Interview with Luis Vargas, 2019).

Accountability, auditing and measurement of performance, competition, benchmarks, and financial control were part of the vocabulary of this discourse and became important tools to consider in the design of public sector organizations. Terms like “value for money” were also part of this movement.

While education will never be, strictly, a free market activity, the use of NPM tools in search of efficiency became an ideology which brought a set of values that occupied a hegemonic space in the debate of university education. Personal and professional accountabilities that characterized it, declined in favor of supervision and control of external forces, such as the market and Government’s actions. The latter ones required, increasingly, the effective use of the assigned resources (Yingqiang & Yongjian, 2016).

This fact demanded the development of a technology, composed of a series of methods and techniques, to carry out quality control. These instruments aimed to measure the input and output of educational spending and resources use. As a result, quality started to be seen as something that existed objectively and could be measured and be subject to Government intervention. Differences were created, or strengthened, with the aim to

supervise, measure and control the quality of the services provided by universities (Yingqiang & Yongjian, 2016).

The development and implementation of accreditation mechanisms implied that the power to assess the quality of activities of the universities was increasingly transferred to external stakeholders. This was detrimental to scholars which were increasingly sidelined. The result was that the opinion of markets and external environment became more important than the autonomy and professional authority of academics, introducing a disbalance in the power relation among the different participants in the university education.

Within this stream of thought, Barrow (1999, p. 21) observed that “*quality management can be considered as an instrument of governmentality developed to ensure surveillance of the work of academic staff in educational institutions*” (p. 21) where authority is exercised in defining “*what*” must be in place but not “*how*”. At the same time, the institutions developed for this purpose started creating a group of individuals whom, for the sake of quality, voluntarily assumed the behaviors desired by Government. Barnett (1994) points out that while quality in university education presents itself using a discourse of empowerment, its real objective is to allow an external control, by which the Government can know better what is happening within the universities. It is suggested that to find out where power lies, it is necessary to uncover the interests at stake within the rhetoric of quality.

2.3.The tension between individual and organizational autonomy and accreditation

Middlehurst and Woodhouse (1995) point out that those accreditation mechanisms have two different types of rationalities: **accountability** and **improvement**. While the first concept –**accountability**– could be defined as any form of ‘*rendering an account*’, **improvement** depends on answering the question, ‘*on behalf of whom is university education being provided*’.

There are different types of actors -i.e. academics and administrative university staff- for whom accreditation matters. Therefore, unless their perspective will play a pivotal role in the implementation of accreditation mechanisms, they will react against external assessment requirements through the establishment of a culture of mere compliance. Usually these requirements deal with quality assessment and come from the Government, the employers, the industry or the commerce. Middlehurst and Woodhouse (1995) argue that this tension happens as the “*inevitable consequence of a continued jockeying for power and ownership of national arrangements as well as inadequate attempts to reconcile conflicting interests* (1995, p. 259).

Newton (2000, p. 153) argues that, if **improvement** and **accountability** are not reconciled, “*quality monitoring is liable to be invested with a beast-like presence requiring to be fed with ritualistic practices by academics seeking to meet accountability requirements*” (p. 153). He points out to organizational context, work environment, and actors’ subjectivities as the situational factors which prevent this reconciliation and it should be taken into account, because “*academics are by no means passive recipients of quality policy, or mere victims in the policy process*” (Newton, 2000, p. 154) (p. 154):

they react to it by exerting agency³. This fact can be observed in the implementation of the policy where resistance is expressed.

The implementation of quality assessment tools in university education takes part of the autonomy that belongs to the organization, as well as from individuals. On one hand, this fact causes a tension between accreditation systems and academics and on the other hand, also causes tension between the accreditation systems and the universities, and within universities themselves. Therefore, if the academic staff does not feel that the **power balance** has been restored, they will exert agency and resist the implementation of the accreditation systems becoming policy makers.

2.4. Quality in the university education: an elusive and multifaceted concept

There are different ideas about how to understand the term **quality** when referring to university education. Harvey and Green (1993), in their seminal article '*Defining Quality*', group the different meanings of this word in five broad notions:

1. The **exceptional** notion takes quality as something special. According to this view, quality is associated with a sense of exclusiveness unattainable to most people. It can also be linked to the idea of excellence, whose components are of such high standards that are rarely reachable, or can be attached to standards' checks, set on a base of achievable criteria that specify the pass/fail conditions. In both cases, standards and quality can be raised and adjusted according evaluators' criteria.
2. Quality is also seen in terms of **consistency**, i.e. has to meet specifications set beforehand. This view changes the focus from inputs/outputs to processes and from control to prevention. If it is used this meaning, organizations aim to develop a quality culture at every stage of the goods or services production process.
3. Quality can also be judged in terms of the extent to which the product or the service **fits its purpose**. That is, either meeting the specifications or expectations of customers (despite recognizing that these can be influenced by external forces) or by fulfilling institutions own stated objectives or mission.
4. When using the **value for money** notion, quality is regarded as the allocation of financial resources according to the perceived value provided. The objective of this allocation is to incentivize the fit between university education provision, to what could be expected for the money paid. This notion is related with the trend of management science of allowing customers to make informed decisions.
5. Quality as **transformation** stresses the relevance of the production function, with the aim to measure the change that is produced in terms of value added to students' knowledge, abilities and skills, from its involvement in the educational process.

Barnett (1994) points out that university education carries particular cultural and social expectations and values that are deeply embedded in the psyche of society. University education could, then, be conceptualized as an arena of competing expectations. These opposite beliefs derive from the different roles that are attributed to university education by different individuals and groups in society. Therefore, accreditation mechanisms are constructed in base of rival imaginaries of what university education should be.

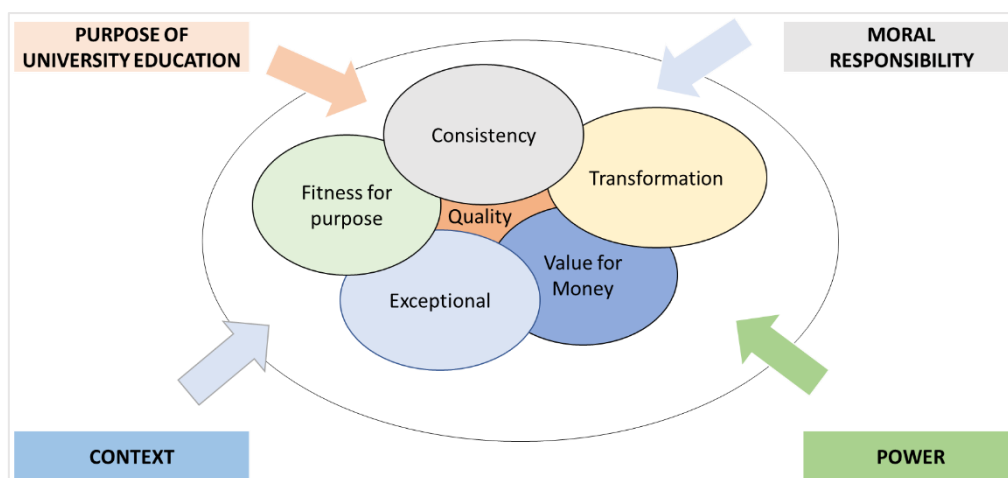
³ Gómez & Ritchie, (2016, p. 25), referring to Hodgson (2004), describe agency "as the capacity of agents to 'reflect and deliberate upon the context, options, purpose and possible outcomes of action'".

Harvey and Stensaker (2007) observe that, despite all the advances in cultural studies, management literature still tends to see the quality culture as a potentially identifiable manipulative factor that can be designed, imposed or transferred to an organization to boost its performance. This view presumes that best practices are identifiable and transferable from one context to another and explains the attempts to create a culture as if it was a laboratory setting.

These authors also argue that culture consists of a set of shared values, beliefs, customs and behaviors which are learned and that do not depend on individuals but transcend them. Therefore, culture of quality can't be regarded as a codified system produced by specialists to be adopted by other organizations. This culture is not irrespective of the context in which it is located and can't be disengaged from a wider reality. Using this perspective, quality is oriented to answer the question **who we are** and not **who we want to be**.

The ideas presented above are summarized in the next figure. It shows that quality is a multifaceted concept whose definition varies according to the context and the stakeholder. The same person may adopt diverse conceptualizations in different periods of time or might be referring to distinct or overlapping understandings of the concepts. All at once. At the same time, its definition is influenced by factors such as the purposes attached to university education, principles and values embedded in society, and the sense of moral responsibility of educators and organizations.

Figure 2: Notions and factors that influence the conceptualization of quality in university education



Source: Author's own elaboration based from Harvey and Green (1993)

Harvey and Green (1993), and Green (1994) suggest that more effort and time should be invested in explaining *'the criteria employed when judging quality, than in looking for an umbrella concept'*; i.e. *"quality should no longer be regarded as a question of "what it is", but as "how is it conceptualized and measured"* (Yingqiang & Yongjian, 2016, pág. 12). Understanding that different actors have different notions of what quality in university education means, and the fact that none of them is essentially wrong, might lead to the adoption of a pragmatic approach. This one consists of the determination of a set of criteria that reflect aspects of common sense about what is quality, and then seek suitable measures for its quantification (Harvey & Green, 1993). This approach, along with the growing number of private universities in Bolivian context, has enabled the general acceptance of evaluation and accreditation mechanisms in university education since the 1990s.

2.5.Measuring quality in university education: a chain of related steps

Accreditation mechanisms may be conducted through a specialized government body, specialized units of universities, or by university education quality assurance agencies (QAA). Typically, more than one of these actors is actively involved in a quality assessment evaluation (Kis, 2005). For example, Government might require the cooperation of the university to gather and prepare the necessary information to conduct an external evaluation.

There exist at least two types of accreditation mechanisms: **organizational** and **academic programs** ones. Following Kis (2005), the **first** approach allows a general evaluation where just some people in managerial positions of the organization are involved. The **second** approach, although more time consuming and more expensive, allows a more detailed examination of a specific academic program. It includes people not only in managerial positions, but also people from the grassroots i.e. students, professors, and graduates.

Accreditation process is performed in two stages: it starts with an internal evaluation and concludes with an external one. The internal evaluation is an exercise of self-reflection which enhances internal engagement and is essential information gathering which is needed to conduct the second one.

However, since people might tend to exaggerate or hide information during the self-evaluation, it is necessary to verify its authenticity, by means of external evaluators. For this purpose, universities had developed and accepted a *peer review* method, which consists of the validation of the information contained in the self-review report by external peers. This external review is usually performed by academics within the similar field of knowledge. While this type of evaluation is accepted by universities as a more legitimate process, given that evaluators are familiar with academic issues, there has been a tendency in the last few years to include non-academic members as part of the review panels to avoid biases (Kis, 2005).

2.6.Institutional economic theory: a brief review of its origin, development, main concepts and current debates

Systematic ideas of this economic stream of thought started to appear after WW I in the USA, as an attempt to research the factors that determine (or influence) human behavior, through the study of their habits, and how these are consolidated in concrete institutions. Its main debates aimed to explain how economically possible options are culturally determined. In this sense, institutional theory proposed the need to consider economy as a socio-political and cultural entity whose decisions are limited, precisely because of its cultural nature. The popularity of economic institutionalism diminished after 1930s, since was considered that it failed in providing a sound systematic approach to the economic theory.

During the 1970s and 1980s, NEI was reborn as an institution's behavior theory which proposed that the success of an institution depends on the social and legal structures in which it was embedded. Its main objective is to explain what institutions are, how they appear, what role do context play in institution development, how do they change in time, and how to influence them. Also, NEI supposes, like neo classical economy does, that preferences of individuals are given and known (Wolters Kluwer, 2019); however, unlike this stream of thought, NEI does not perceive individuals as perfectly rational agents of their choices.

Villarroel (2016), establishes that the relevance of the distinction between formal and informal institutions lies in the fact that the latter explains the possibilities of success or failure that the implementation of similarly designed institutions might have in different contexts. While informal institutions tend to last in time, they are not always chosen for the benefit of society but are used by elite groups with political power for its own benefit. When referring to the origin of institutions, based on the ideas of Acemoglu et al. (2001 and 2002), it is suggested that institutions are normally formed and developed within a society. In this sense, some institutions could be seen as endogenous, while others can also be imposed by external historical exogenous events.

Hodgson (2006) makes some important distinctions between institutions, organizations, formal and informal institutions, roles, rules, habits, and norms. While rules refer to a normative notion, socially transmitted rules refer to actions that depend more on a developed social culture. This distinction shows that there are some rules that are followed without any objective formulation and other ones, whose compliance derives from explicit agreements. Then, Hodgson points out that is necessary to differentiate between formal and informal rules and to compare the concepts of institution and organization.

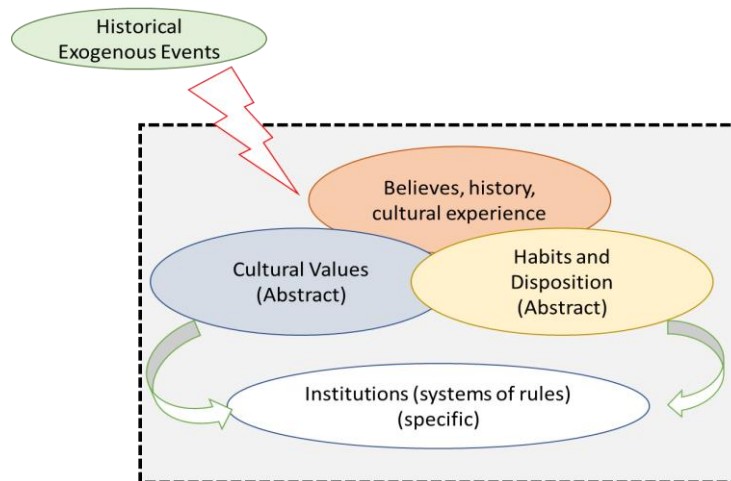
Hodgson (2006, p. 8) defines **organization** as a special type of institution that complies three conditions: “*a. criteria to establish their boundaries and to distinguish its members; b. principles concerning who is in charge; and, c. chains of command and responsibilities*”(p. 8). Also establishes the distinction between **formal** and **informal rules** according to the way it has been enacted. In this sense **formal rules** could be equated with externally enforced rules, while **informal rules** belong to the realm of the internally organic self-organizing rules. The fulfillment of the conditions of the first ones is related to the development of policing mechanisms to avoid transgression; the latter ones are largely self-enforced. In both cases, individuals can exert agency, that is, they can exert resistance to its compliance.

Institutions and rules are synonyms; “*much of human interaction and activity is structured in terms of overt or implicit rules*” (p. 4); legal or formal institutions that do not have strong informal supports are not followed by incumbents. Each individual act within a system of relationships, obligations and expectations (roles and rules), but at the end, they decide which action to take (or not)

Gómez and Ritchie (2016) introduced a series of complementary concepts to Hodgson’s (2006). The first one refers to the linking that exists between beliefs, values, habits and rules. According to them, “*beliefs, history and cultural experience constitute the general frame into which institutions exist. The complex interplay between rules of action and underlying values, belief systems, and their cultural heritage shape how agents interact with, and develop institutions*” (p. 24). In other words, **all institutions are organizations**, but **not all organization’s become institutions**. Unlike Hodgson (2006), Gómez and Ritchie, (2016) highlight the importance of social embeddedness as the main source of habits, which are the origin of institutions; this idea is referred as a cultural explanation of human economic behavior which Hodgson (2006) fails to discuss in his work. While this complementation coincides with Francovich’s (1980) myths framework, it still does not give enough emphasis to the role played by external historical exogenous events in the formation of institutions, as Villarroel (2016) does.

The next figure summarizes these ideas.

Figure 3: Linking beliefs, historical exogenous events, values, habits. rules



Source: Author's own adaptation of Gómez and Ritchie (2016, p. 24)

The second important complementation of Gómez and Ritchie (2016) refers to the double loop of institutional innovation and change. Within the institutionalist approach, Hodgson (1998) develops the concept of action-information loop, assuming institutions as “points of equilibrium” that agents generally follow. Gómez and Ritchie (2016), on the contrary, suggest that institutions are “points of **relative** equilibrium” which also follow a path of evolutionary change.

In this sense, Gómez and Ritchie (2016, p. 28) conceptualize the information–action loop as composed of two loops: **reproduction** loop, which refers to routine actions that are repeated mechanically; and **evolutionary** loop, which refers to reflexive action that individuals take using routine rules. This concept shows the evolutionary role of agency over institutions through reflexion and action. Institutions are social structures that organize human behavior, making it more predictable, assuming that it has traits of social embeddedness of a particular context (values, cultures, morality). On the other hand, institutions follow a path of evolutionary change that could be characterized as a dynamic equilibrium. However, some elements of the institutional past remain in the new institutions in a context of slow ongoing evolutionary process

Finally, Gómez and Ritchie (2016) highlight the important role that networks have as a source of habits and civic innovation. Networks defined as a “*regular set of contacts or similar social connections among groups or individuals*” (p. 27) are necessary to boost any type of change in society. In this sense, the evolutionary loop that enhances change is necessarily fed by collective action and is not the result of isolated individual actions.

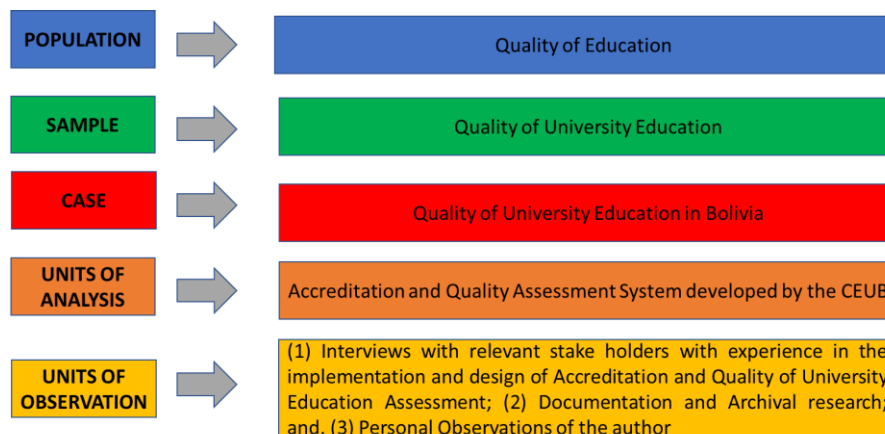
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Rationale for choosing case study method in this research⁴

This research aims to study the lack of implementation of a unified accreditation mechanism in the SSUF. To perform this task, a holistic single case study approach will be used. This chapter justifies the choice of this research method using the concept of **consociational democracy** (Lijphart, 1969). The techniques that will be used to collect and analyze evidence, and the tactics implemented for guaranteeing the quality of the study are presented.

The next figure summarizes graphically the content developed in this chapter, using author's own adaptation of the scheme developed by Gerring (2007, p. 23)

Figure 4: Case Study dataset summary



Source: Author's own elaboration from Gerring, (2007, p. 23)

3.2. Research method selection: why single case study?

According to Yin (2014, p. 4) "*a case study is a method, among several forms of social science research methods*", whose use is recommended when:

- "*Research questions seek to explain some present circumstance*" (i.e., **how** or **why** some social phenomena work) and,
- "*Research questions require an extensive and in-depth description of some social phenomena*". (p. 4)

When comparing other research methods (such as experiments, surveys, archival research, and history) with case study, Yin (2014) highlights that the latter is used when the following three conditions are fulfilled:

- How** and **Why** questions are more explanatory dealing with the task of finding operational links that need to be traced over time.
- When examining contemporary events, and
- When relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated.

At the same time, Yin (2014, pp. 53 - 56) establishes that the use of a "*single case study strategy selection is recommended*" (against a multiple case strategy selection) "*under*

⁴ 'Techniques of Case Study Research', Alvaro Deuer, MA Course work, ISS III 2019.

several circumstances" (p. 53-56) , which in the case of the proposed study are related to the following two rationales. When:

- a. *"The theory specifies a clear set of circumstances within which its propositions are believed to be true. In this case, the single case represents the critical test of the theory (critical rationale)"* (Yin, 2014).
- b. Studying the same single case at different points of time, allow the researcher to cover trends, following a developmental course of interest (**longitudinal rationale**) (Yin, 2014).

Yin (2014) makes an important remark when differentiating between holistic and embedded single case types. The former refers to a single case study type that is focused in examining only *"the global nature of an organization or of a program"* and its attention is not directed towards *"units or subunits"* of the programs (Yin, 2014, p. 58). Given that the current research topic fulfills all the conditions raised above, this investigation will take the form of a holistic single case study.

3.3. Research Techniques: collecting the evidence

The present case study will make use of the following techniques to collect its evidence (Yin, 2014):

- a. **Interviews** with relevant stakeholders with experience in the implementation and design of accreditation procedures or who hold (or have had held) important positions in the SSUF⁵. For this purpose, during September and October 2019, nine interviews were carried out. Selective transcriptions of them are part of the annexes section of this research.
- b. **Documentation and archival research** (secondary sources of information) carried out during June to October 2019, looking for books, articles and documents related to accreditation mechanisms used in university education. Special attention was devoted to documents provided by CEUB's academic staff.
- c. **Personal observations** of the author who was a student of both public and private universities- in the SSUF.

3.4. Typology of case study: a typical case of consociational democracy

Gerring (2007) proposed nine types of case studies. Out of them, this study will adopt what is called the **Typical Case One**. According to Gerring (p. 91), this typology is used when the case study *"aims to provide insights using a representative case of broader phenomenon, which exemplifies what is considered to be a typical set of values, given a general understanding of it"*.

To justify the selection of this typology, this study makes use of the concept of **consociational democracy**, developed by Arjen Lijphart (1969), which attempts to complement the 'Typology of Western Democracies' developed by Gabriel Almond in 1956.

According to Lijphart (1969), using the criteria of **role structure and political culture**, democracies can be classified in two broad categories: homogenous and stable

⁵ However, one of the interviews was held with a relevant stakeholder with experience in Spain's and European Union System of Accreditation. While this person's expertise is not directly related to the Bolivian context, his opinion was of great value for the development of this investigation.

democracies (“*centripetal*”), and fragmented democracies (“*centrifugal*”). However, in his opinion, the latter could acquire a character of stability or instability according to the behavior of political elites belonging to the main subcultures of a political system.

When political elites in fragmented democracies recognize that “*competitive behavior can aggravate political tensions and political instability*” (p. 212) to a point of leading a political system to breaking point, they decide to “*make deliberate efforts to counteract the immobilizing and stabilizing effects of cultural fragmentation*” (p. 212). This process is done through a formal or informal agreement where elites decide to reach a degree of cooperation that will allow the system to work, before (or as remedy) to its imminent collapse, besides its cultural heterogeneity. This rational decision to collaborate is what gives the fragmented system the possibility to work, and is seen by Lijphart as “*a remarkable self-conscious union of the opposition*” which gives rise to the phenomenon known as “*consociational democracy*”.

In this sense, Bolivia’s political system could be taken as typical example of *consociational democracy*, since most (if not all) political issues are mediated by unions or other types of civil society organizations, which in the absence (or due to the weakness) of the political party system, constitute the real, more legitimate, intermediaries between the government and the society in issues as varied as health, education, water provision, sanitation, etc. While the power of this special type of intermediaries might vary in time, according to the fluctuations of the political context, the truth is that they constitute an important source of governability in Bolivia. This fact, already recognized by Bolivian government, led to the continuous attempt to co-opt them and met with different degrees of success. In this sense, Lijphart (2019), when referring to The Netherlands, observed that “*cabinets are usually broadly-based coalitions, where not all major subcultures are permanently represented*” (p. 213).

The APU are not part of the (semi) formal structure that current Government has created to guarantee its governing capability and will not tend to be part of it. The main reason that explains this behavior, is to try to conserve, at least formally, its sense of autonomy. However, they still constitute a very powerful corporation which main (but not unique) sources of power are the number of affiliates that they represent⁶, the budget that they manage⁷, and the huge mobilization capacity of its affiliates. This association is willing to use these sources whenever they feel that the institution of university autonomy is threatened.

In this context, Bolivian governments have developed the culture to accommodate APUs as allies, even if not formally. The objective is to not have them as open adversaries. This fact has allowed a fragmented democracy like Bolivia’s to reach some stability, and has

⁶Data of the institutional page of CEUB (2019), shows that APU had in 2016 approximately 500.000 members between Professors, Students and Administrative Staff.

⁷Data of the institutional page of the Ministry of Economy and Public Finance of Bolivia (2019), shows that, in 2016, the budget transferred by the central State to the 11 APU, from different sources, reached Bs. 5,886,598,388 (€ 747.864.000).

On the other hand, when considering public transfers made by central State to fund all type of public universities in 2016 (Autonomous Public, Indigenous and Special Regime Universities), public spending represents 2,04% of Bolivian GDP (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2019).

inhibited the disruption of violent solutions, that the cleavages of their heterogeneous culture would have anticipated.

The role of the current president, and of most presidents (or authorities) throughout Bolivian history has been to negotiate (formally or informally) with this type of associations, as a deliberate action (or policy) to keep the system together and avoid the emergence of violent solutions. It should be noted that not just Bolivia but APUs are a specific example of a typical case of consociational democracy.

3.5. Building an explanation from collected evidence

To analyze case study evidence, this research will use a specific type of pattern matching, **process tracing**, whose concepts and ideas emerge from political science's literature.

According to Yin (2014), this technique “*aims to analyze case study data by building an explanation about the case*” (p. 147). This procedure is relevant “*mainly for exploratory case studies*” (p. 147). To explain a phenomenon is to stipulate a presumed set of causal links about it, or how or why something happened. Its use is more suitable when “*explanations reflect some theoretically significant propositions*” and, when “*explanation building occurs in narrative form*” (p. 147).

To guarantee the quality of the empirical research, this study will use the following test and tactics proposed by Yin (2014):

Table 1: Case Study tactics used by the researcher to guaranty quality of empirical research

TEST	CASE STUDY TACTIC	PHASE OF THE RESEARCH IN WHICH EACH TACTIC IS APPLIED
CONSTRUCT VALIDITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of multiple sources of evidence • Have key informants to review draft case study report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection • Composition
INTERNAL VALIDITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do explanation building • Address rival explanations • Use logic models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis
EXTERNAL VALIDITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use theory in single case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research design
RELIABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use case protocol • Case study data base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection

Source: Author's own elaboration from Yin (2014, p. 47)

3.6. Scope and limitations of the study

While the author recognizes the importance of all types of universities legally recognized by and members of the SSUF, the study will focus its attention in analyzing the APU, since it is within these that the effects of university autonomy can be seen with more clarity.

“The level of university education could be measured using the relation between professors and students within the teaching and learning process. However, it is also important to know that superior university education constitutes the filter between secondary and university education. Considering that universities have to transmit knowledge and skills to students, so that they can use them in their professional life, it is also important to point out professor’s limitations to achieve this mission. They have to work with students (inputs) that come with a determined level of knowledge and skills. In this sense, and according to the perceived level of education of incoming students, professors adjust their process of teaching [to help the student’s] learning. It is also important to acknowledge that students of public universities come mainly from the public schools, and that the education training that they received is different from those students that come from the private schools, being the latter ones better prepared than the former” (Interview with Diego Murillo, 2019).

Wherever possible and pertinent, the research will also discuss the effects of accreditation mechanism in private universities.

At the same time, while this study takes APUs, private universities, and other types of universities that operate within SSUF as homogeneous categories, it is true that there exists variation within them. For example, the institutional readiness within the APU is different, at least, according the following criteria:

- city and area (urban or rural) where they are established;
- number of students and access to financial resource;
- number of functioning years and image they have in the mind of the society
- networks of which they are part
- their elite’s caption capabilities.

In case of private universities, it is also important to add variables that describe the differences between them, the strength of their funding sources, and the market segment towards which their activities are directed.

This research recognizes that the categories it uses for its analysis are oversimplified and that they do not capture the richness of the above-mentioned differences. In this sense, it should be noted that if the study makes use of these broad categories is for analytical purposes only. The purpose to do that, is to simplify and limit the range of variations that might exist within the phenomenon being studied

Other additional variables that can be used in a more extensive study, are shown in the following interview: *“(In Spain) highly ranked universities are normally located in those regions with a higher GDP, since they have a stronger financial capacity. This is related with universities having better capabilities to hire more experienced professors and in greater number; offer a good studying and teaching environment in terms of facilities and services. Also, socio-economical level of the family and the degree of education of students’ parents are important. It has been proven in several studies that there is a strong correlation between these variables and the level/class of education that a student might achieve or expect. The result is that the presence or absence of these variables lead to better success rates in some places than in others, despite [all universities are] organized in the same way, for example in terms of structure and legislation” (Interview with Nestor Torres, 2019).*

Wherever is possible and pertinent, the research will also discuss the effects of accreditation mechanism in private universities.

At the same time, while this study takes the APU, private universities, and other types of universities that operate within SSUF as homogeneous categories, it is true that there exists variation within them. For example, the institutional readiness within APU'S is different, at least, according the following criteria:

- city and area (urban or rural) where they are established;
- number of students and access to financial resource;
- antiquity and tradition in society they have;
- networks of which they are part
- their elites' capabilities.

In the case of private universities, it is also important to add, as important variables that differentiate within them, the strength of their funding sources, and the market segment toward which their activities are directed.

This research recognizes that the categories that it uses for its analysis are oversimplified and that they do not capture the richness of the above-mentioned differences. In this sense, if it the study makes use of these broad and homogeneous categories is for analytical purposes only, with the purpose to simplify and limit the range of variations that might exist within the phenomena of study.

“(In Spain) highly ranked universities are normally located in those regions with a higher GDP, since they have a stronger financial capacity. This is related with universities having better capabilities to hire more experienced professors and in a greater number; offer a good studying and teaching environment in terms of facilities and services. Also, the socioeconomic level of the family and the degree of education of students' parents are important. There has been proved in several studies that there is a strong correlation between these variables and the level/class of education that a student might achieve or expect. The result is that the presence (or not) of these variables leads to better success rates in some places than in others, despite they are organized in the same way, for example in terms of structure and legislation” (Interview with Nestor Torres, 2019).

It is also important to note that categories are not homogenous, in **two senses** in what this study is concerned. **First**, differences between universities tend to be overlooked when grouping heterogeneous organizations in terms of institutional capabilities and facilitating factors in one broad category (i.e. the APU or the private universities). **Second**, stakeholder's opinion tends to reflect the positions of its elites and not necessarily of its members, especially in the case of marginal groups (Berner & Phillips, 2005).

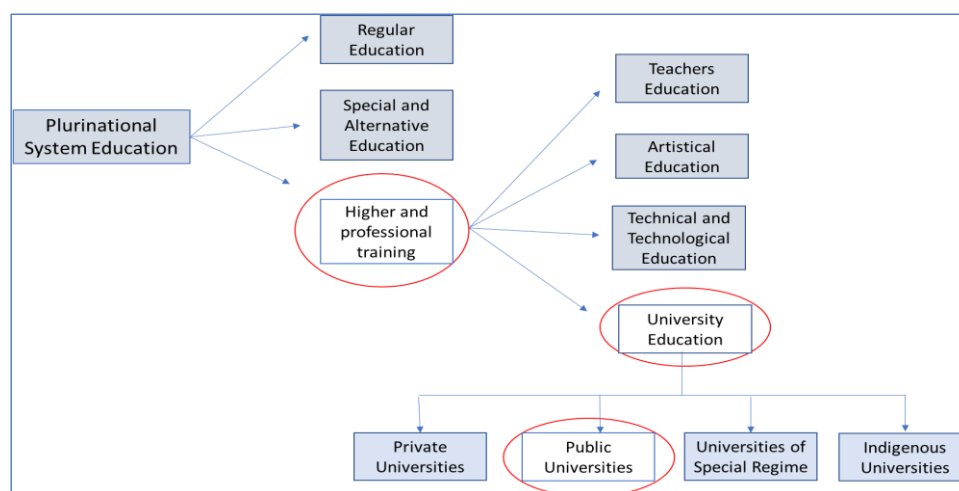
When doing public analysis, in societies with fragmented democracies, as Bolivia's case, it might be recommendable to take into consideration the necessity to do complementary analysis for the formulation and implementation of public policy's strategies, especially when elite capture of organizations is not only possible, but evident.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOLIVIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM ATTEMPTS TO IMPLEMENT A UNIFIED ACCREDITATION MECHANISM

4.1. An overview of the Bolivian education system

As shown in figure 6, the Bolivian system of education is composed of three sub-systems: regular, alternative and special, and higher and professional training. In turn, the last one is sub-divided in teacher's education, artistic education, technical and technological education and university education. Finally, SSUF recognizes four types of universities: private, public, indigenous, and of special regime (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010).

Figure 5: Bolivian System of Education



Source: Author's own elaboration

Education has been defined as a state priority with “*public education being free up to the university level*” (Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2009). Based on this constitutional framework, current education laws establishes as one of its objectives ‘*to guarantee the quality of education through the implementation of strategies of monitoring, measurement, evaluation and accreditation of the educational system, based on the development of a set of indicators and parameters according to the Bolivian reality*’ (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010).

Bolivia's Ministry of Education, has divided quality assessment of SSUF in two stages: **evaluation**, defined as the collection and analysis of information to make an informed judgment about the quality of university education, and **accreditation**, understood as the certification granted whenever the results of the evaluation process are favorable (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010); therefore, it can be seen that while **accreditation** is the goal, **evaluation** is the process that leads toward that goal.

In the Bolivian case, APEASU is the entity responsible for conducting evaluation and accreditation of the SSUF. This organization was created by current Education laws (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010). Nevertheless, since its creation, the APEASU has failed to become operational.

4.2. Accreditation processes currently in use in Bolivia

Universities in Bolivia perform their accreditation mechanism in the following manners:

- a) **Private universities** conduct its process of accreditation using two approaches:

1) **Indirectly**, through the National Commission of Academic Programs Accreditation (**CNACU**), an entity within the Ministry of Education which acts as the official agency of accreditation recognized by ARCU-SUR⁸.

2) **Directly**, by paying fees to international agencies specialized in accreditation processes (ISAAP).

- b) **APU** conduct their accreditation processes mainly through the National Secretary of Evaluation and through the accreditation mechanisms created by the Executive Committee of Bolivian University (CEUB). This institution has developed its own set of procedures with the aims to “*promote the efficient use of financial resources assigned by the government for public universities to project institutional programs internationally; to protect and maintain the confidence and credibility of the society in universities, and to ensure that graduates are prepared for the practice of their profession*” (CEUB, 2014).

At the same time, APU’s academic programs, also apply to ARCU-SUR accreditation mechanism, normally after having received CEUB’s accreditation.

- c) **Universities of special regime** are associated with CEUB. They also make use of this accreditation mechanism.
- d) Bolivian Catholic University (UCB) constitutes a special case in the SSUF since even though it has been created as a public university, it is also authorized to charge tuition fees. Therefore, in this research, UCB will be categorized as a **non-autonomous public university (NAPU)**. This university is associated with CEUB, and therefore it participates in its accreditation schemes. However, it also makes use of other types of accreditation mechanisms.

The next table shows the types of universities that exist in Bolivia, including the special case referred above, organized according to the type of accreditation mechanisms in which they participate⁹.

Table 2: Categorization of Bolivian Universities according to the use of accreditation systems

ACREDITATION SYSTEM	PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES	APU	UNIVERSITIES OF SPECIAL REGIME	NAPU
CEUB	NO	YES	YES	YES
ARCU-SUR	YES	YES	NO	YES
ISAAP	YES	NO	NO	YES

Source: Author’s own elaboration based on data of (ARCU-SUR, 2019) (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010) (CEUB, 2014)

“One characteristic of the APU accreditation mechanism is that it is directed mainly towards the evaluation of academic programs, while the accreditation mechanisms

⁸ ARCU-SUR is the permanent Regional Accreditation mechanism of MERCOSUR. Up to date, it performs Accreditation Process of Academic Programs related to the fields of Agronomy, Architecture, Veterinary, Pharmacy, Nursery, Engineering, Medicine, Dentistry, Geology and Economics through a National Networks of Accreditation Agencies, for all types of legally recognized Universities in an a Associated or Member Country of MERCOSUR (ARCU-SUR, 2019).

⁹Since there is not register that any Academic Program of Indigenous Universities has participated in any type of accreditation mechanism currently in use in Bolivia, this research does not discuss this type of universities for this categorization.

implemented by the private universities are directed towards organizational accreditation” (Interview with Antonio Carvalho, 2019).

Since most universities in Bolivia belong to the private or APU categories, the rest of this chapter will be devoted to only these two types of universities, with the special case included within the latter typology, and giving special attention to the accreditation mechanism developed by CEUB.

4.3.Implementation of the accreditation and quality assessment mechanisms in Bolivia: use of the New Public Management approach and some unexpected challenges

4.3.1. Evaluating quality in university education in Bolivia: first attempt

The first effort to evaluate university education in Bolivia was undertaken at the end of the 1980s when Cochabamba’s public university conducted an organizational diagnostic evaluation. At a normative level, the Law of Educational Reform, issued in 1994, was the first legal instrument that introduced quality terminology, creating the National System of Accreditation and Measurement of Quality (Daza, 2003). This mechanism was intended to operate as an *‘autonomous and specialized entity’* (Congreso Nacional de Bolivia, 1994).

While this norm did not specify the organizational dependency of this mechanism of accreditation nor its funding sources (Congreso Nacional de Bolivia, 1994), CEUB assumed that it was going to be part of the Ministry of Education. This aspect was considered contrary to university autonomy, and thus, became the *leitmotiv* that originated resistance to its implementation.

“Unlike what happened, and happens in other Latin American countries, although accreditation agencies are financed by the local government, legislation includes mechanisms to guarantee that its management remains autonomous of the government to avoid the interference of the partisan politics in organizational and academic program issues” (Interview with Marcelo Loayza, 2019).

In this sense, CEUB demanded the constitutionality of the articles of the education laws that referred to this accreditation mechanism. At the same time, their authorities made public statements defending their position, and showing that not only did they have the technical and academic capacity, but, more important, they also have the will to undertake accreditation and evaluation of APU through the establishment of a self-generated **‘Autonomous System of Evaluation and Accreditation’**, which will show *‘the quality of their academic programs to the Government and Society’* (Daza, 2003).

The unconstitutionality lawsuit was filed in 1994 and, after seven years, the Supreme Court of Justice issued its ruling favoring to the State. However, this issue was unnoticed by the people. Some years ago, in 1999, and based on the constitutional precept of university autonomy, CEUB decided to implement their own accreditation mechanism through the creation of the National Secretary of Evaluation and Accreditation which began to operate with its respective procedures and instruments at the beginning of 2000s (Interview with Marcelo Loayza, 2019).

4.3.2. Evaluating quality in university education in Bolivia: second attempt

In 2005, after many attempts of political negotiations between relevant stakeholders within SSUF, the National Council of Superior Accreditation (NCSA) was created by law. Its mandate aimed to encompass all types of universities that operate within the SSUF. Even though in its creation law was specified that the Council was going to

operate “*independently of National Government and universities*, one of its main funding sources was defined as “*1% of the total fee paid yearly by each student registered in any private university*” (Congreso Nacional de Bolivia, 2005).

Private universities interpreted this article as a possible double taxation mechanism with the argument that they were already contributing to the Government through the payment of the ‘corporate income tax’. For that reason, they resorted the constitutionality of NCSA creation. When the Supreme Court of Justice issued its judgment, its decision was favorable for the private universities.

“(…) [In] (2006), the new Government, recognizing its financial weakness, [and having other political priorities] proposed to [the members of] SSUF to defer the implementation of this accreditation mechanism, until (…) [having] a new Law of Education. [The proposal] seemed reasonable” (Interview with Marcelo Loayza, 2019).

While the text of the new Constitution was discussed between 2006 and 2008, the accreditation mechanism of CEUB started to be more institutionalized and gained legitimacy within the APUs. The same happened with the ARCU-SUR’s which in 2006 ceased to be an experimental mechanism and became to be the official system of academic program accreditation of MERCOSUR (ARCU-SUR, 2019). At the same time in 2008, the government created the National Commission of Academic Programs Accreditation (CNACU), entity that operated within the Ministry of Education, as the temporary national agency. The agency was authorized to conduct accreditation processes within ARCU-SUR.

4.3.3. Evaluating quality in university education in Bolivia: third attempt and current times

After a national referendum, the new Bolivia’s political constitution was enacted in 2009. According to it, “*the monitoring, measurement, evaluation, and accreditation of quality of all education system will be the responsibility of a specialized technical public institution, independent of the Ministry [of Education]*” (Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2009).

However, education law, which was approved in 2010 created the APEASU as a “*decentralized organization*”, and established that, “*during the process of implementation of this agency, CNACU will fulfill its roles*” (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010).

This fact was regarded by the CEUB as a contradiction, and as an attempt by the Government to have the accreditation agency under its control. This decision was considered that was contrary to university autonomy which, again, became the *leitmotiv* that originated resistance to its implementation. After two years of negotiations and without any agreement with APUs, in 2017 the government, through the Ministry of Education, established CNACU as the official “*academic-administrative mechanism, responsible of undertaking the process of accreditation and quality evaluation of the SSUF*” (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2017).

“*The main divergence had to do more with a historical tradition of Bolivian education (...) that had always been in constant fight and power struggles against the Government. [This is understandable because most of Bolivia's] recent history, has [developed under] authoritarian regimes In this regard, the APU had become a tradition, a culture, against any attempt of restricting its ‘autonomy or trying to establish a relationship with any government policy that might (or they felt it*

could) threaten it. In my opinion, and that is because I was responsible for negotiating the implementation of the APEASU, this was the main reason why no agreement could be reached for its implementation.” (Interview with Jiovanny Samanamud, 2019).

As has been shown, political interests and distrust had steadily inhibited the implementation of any formal government controlled accreditation mechanism with the aim to assess the quality of university education in Bolivia since the 1990s. Ortega y Gasset Institute (1998), as cited by Daza (2003, p. 10), considers this as “*one more example of how an strategic policy is distorted or diluted in the murky waters of the conflicts between universities and the government or within the internal disputes of the system of Bolivian universities.*”

Among the major consequences that political struggles had had in Bolivia's education system, should be mentioned the current conformation of SSUF, the characteristics of accreditation mechanism adopted, and the quality culture of the APUs and private universities. The implementation of accreditation systems had, also, impacted in the improvement of the quality of the teaching and learning processes in the public and private universities.

The next chapter will analyze in detail the consequences and implications of this power struggles, highlighting the role played by the university autonomy on it, and how this explains why APUs still pursue accreditation despite it not being mandatory.

5. CONSEQUENCES OF POWER STRUGGLES BETWEEN THE STATE AND APU IN THE CONFIGURATION OF THE BOLIVIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM: RATIONALES FOR PURSUING ACCREDITATION IN BOLIVIA

5.1.Introduction

The fact that the government, APU, and private universities have not been yet able to reach an agreement to establish a unified accreditation mechanism has many consequences for the configuration of the SSUF in general, and for the measure of university education quality in particular.

First, it has caused a division of the SSUF in two blocks, both of which are constitutionally recognized and have its own accreditation mechanisms. Using a juridical analysis, the present chapter will show how this problem is reflected in current norms of education sector in Bolivia.

Next, this chapter will show how this division is manifested in the conceptualization of university autonomy which has dissimilar meaning for different SSUF stakeholders. The category of conceptual stretching, proposed by Giovanni Sartori in 1970, will be used for this purpose.

Then, the accreditation mechanism developed by CEUB and implemented by APU will be presented. This will allow the understanding of the rationale(s) for conducting accreditation processes in SSUF despite not being mandatory in current Bolivian normative.

Finally, it will be shown that most of these justifications are incentivized by the market and not by quality social goals *per se*. This has caused the current accreditation mechanisms implemented in Bolivia in particular, and in the MERCOSUR region in general, be static because they emphasize on more developing facilitating factors to teach and learn, that in measuring the value added or the results obtained through of university education in students.

5.2.The higher education system in Bolivia: a Leviathan with two heads

The current Bolivian Constitution establishes that “*state and society exert full supervision over the education system, which includes regular, alternative and special, and superior, technical and professional training*” (Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2009). This statement differs from the one contained in the former constitution in this respect, which established that “*education, at every level, is subject to states supervision exercised through the Ministry of the Area*” (Congreso Nacional de Bolivia, 1994).

There are two main differences in the writing of both constitutions. The former constitution establishes that the **state**, on behalf of the society, would exert full *supervision* over all levels of the education sector, through the Ministry of Education. That is, there is specific identification of the actor that would oversee the SSUF as representative of the government.

This identification is not only absent in the wording of the current constitution, but **society** is included as an actor with capabilities to exert control. While this could be seen as an advancement (or not) in terms of the democratization of political representation in Bolivia, it can also be a reflection of the consequences of power struggles where the APU

managed to express their juridical position in the Constituent Assembly (2006/2008) and in the wording of new Constitution¹⁰.

On the other hand, at an organizational level, the Ministry of Education is divided into four vice ministries. This organization coincides with the different sub systems in which the system of education is organized in Bolivia: Vice Ministry of Science and Technology, Vice Ministry of Regular Education, Vice Ministry of Alternative and Special Education, and Vice Ministry of Technical and Professional Training.

The Vice Ministry of Technical and Professional Training, through the Direction of Superior University Education, has, among others, the following duties (Ministerio de la Presidencia de Bolivia, 2009):

- a. **Co-ordinate** the implementation of actions related to superior university education with APU.
- b. Elaborate and implement regulations and instructions to regulate the operation, follow up, and evaluate academic quality on **private, public non-autonomous and indigenous universities**.

This could be read as a tacit understanding of the government that its role of full supervision of the education system in case of SSUF is constrained within the space of private, public, non-autonomous, and indigenous universities.

The current normative that organizes the functioning of Bolivia's executive power, based on a broad interpretation of what university autonomy means, has made the full supervision of APUs, flexible enough for this type of universities to function almost independently of any kind of external control¹¹. This has resulted in the creation of what can be seen as a Leviathan with two heads.

“The structure of Bolivian (superior) education has two heads, both recognized by the constitution, and as far as I know, there are few regions in Latin America that present this type of structure. On one hand, you have CEUB which represents APUs with thirteen universities under its responsibility, on the other hand, you have the system of university education which operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Both (systems) have (constitutional) recognition to exert control over their respective systems. Therefore, (the system of superior education in Bolivia) is divided among two big blocks of (different) organizations.” (Interview with Jiovanny Samanamud, 2019)

In summary, power struggles between APUs and the government for the control of accreditation mechanisms has led to the existence of two blocks within the SSUF, each with its own institutionality: on one hand, the CEUB and in the other one, the Ministry of Education. This fact is formally recognized by the government in the current normative. Sometimes these blocks overlap but not always.

¹⁰ At the same time, this fact constitutes an important juridical argument, besides the explicit constitutional recognition of the institution of university autonomy, that the APU can use in case of facing a new Constitutional trial as the one referred in chapter 4 of this study.

¹¹ This fact attracts attention, since the Government, constitutes the main funder of the APU providing almost 85% of their budget (Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas Públicas de Bolivia, 2019).

This decision could be interpreted as an implicit acknowledgment of the government of their lack of institutional capacity to oversee such a broad and conflicting sector¹². This recognition led the Ministry of Education to make the pragmatic and conscious decision to avoid political conflict with a strong association, and overall, to challenge the deeply embedded institution of university autonomy.

Through the strategy of conflict management, recognizing that university autonomy is a sensitive topic, and that the public universities can constitute a powerful association, the government decides, rationally, to don't agency itself to avoid any kind of problems with them" (Interview with Luis Vargas, 2019).

5.3. One concept, two conceptualisations

Cambridge English Dictionary defines *buzzword* as "*a word or expression from a particular subject area that has become fashionable because it has been used a lot*" (Cambridge University Press, 2013). In this sense, terms such as autonomy, competitiveness, productivity, development, quality, etc could be characterized within this type of words.

One characteristic of buzzwords is that they pretend to create an umbrella concept, i.e. broad definitions that try to capture different characteristics of a phenomena in one (all inclusive) category. This is not an easy task, especially when trying to describe holistically complex social phenomenon. Sartori, (1970) , clearly observed, that these umbrella concepts first have to reach a stage of conceptual stretching or conceptual straining: in its attempt of gaining width, comparative politics has lost depth, and is producing a series of vague concepts that conduct amorphous (or ambiguous) conceptualizations.

As a solution to this problem, Sartori proposes the concept of **ladder of abstraction** in which he leaves social researchers to make decision on the appropriate combination of extension (denotation) and intension (connotation) that any concept should have. The purpose is to avoid the problem of conceptual stretching, especially when attempting to do a comparative politics study.

In order to comply the objectives of the present research, it can be argued that the institution of university autonomy has been subject to a process of conceptual stretching. When referring to autonomy, the dictionary of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language (RAE) defines it as "*the capacity of local government(s), within a state, to govern themselves through its own rules and governing bodies* (Royal Academy of The Spanish Language, 2018). The Cambridge English Dictionary defines autonomy as "*the right of a group of people to govern itself or to organize its own activities*", emphasizing that not even complete autonomy means independence but refers to a sense of relative freedom (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Bolivia's current Political Constitution, recognises public universities autonomy in sense of RAE and Cambridge dictionaries. This means that the state recognises that "*the APU is right to make the following decisions without external (government) intervention: financial resource management; election/selection of authorities, designation of teaching*

¹² Taken into consideration that Ministry of Education attributions also include dealing with teachers of private on public schools, another very powerful corporation in the Bolivian context (Ministerio de la Presidencia de Bolivia, 2009).

and academic staff; development of internal statutes and study plans, and annual budget approval and elaboration” (Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2009).

As pointed out in Marcelo Loayza’s interview (2019), the constitutional recognition of the university autonomy refers to the right of the APU to perform autonomous management of the issues referred to its internal organisation and administration, and to guarantee that government won’t intervene, at least not directly, in its organisational politics

The APU’s understanding of the institution of university autonomy is broad: they argue that the term **full supervision** refers to a formal relation which frames (or limits) the actions that the state can exert. It also limits government’s responsibilities to a purely financial relationship that does not imply any type of control or supervision and is restricted to perform, at most, coordination tasks.

*“From CEUB’s view, the term **full supervision** does not refer to actions that imply control, following up, supervision or intervention in the APU. State is taken as an actor that the APU have to relate with, which does not mean that this one has to intervene. This is the reason why CEUB historically had had conflicts with the Ministry of Education” (Interview with Marcelo Loayza, 2019).*

In Europe, Political Constitutions of different countries also recognises management autonomy to universities in the same sense as the Bolivian Constitution does: a space of freedom, in organisational and academic terms - the one value that the university education system must preserve. At the same time, there is an implicit acknowledgement that since an important part of university’s education budget is financed by the government, this has the right to give its opinion and to supervise the use of these resources.

In this sense, universities have developed a tradition which is translated in the existence of a whole set of legislation, which while recognising and guaranteeing autonomy, puts in practice a series of consented restrictions to it. These constraints are seen as necessary to keep a track of the efficient use of public resources and, at the same time, as an important mechanism to control quality of university education.

“(In Spain) there is also a recognition of university autonomy. That autonomy implies a space for discretion and relative independence in university’s self-governance. However, there is also a continued (and fluid) relationship with (government’s) administration. After all, it is understood that universities are at the service of society, and governments, as the main funders of universities, have the possibility (obligation and interest) to express their opinion about which path they consider universities must follow” (Interview with Nestor Torres, 2019).

As it is going to be developed in next chapter, the system of university education in EEA also includes a series of checks and balances that enhance its controlling function, avoiding elite capture, and limiting the possible appearance of the agent/principal problem.

This phenomenon is not only characteristic, but also a direct consequence of the conceptual stretching of the institution named university autonomy. The CEUB’s broad understanding of the concept of autonomy management limits the control and responsibility that the government can exert and has originated the two headed system of university education in Bolivia.

5.4.Steps followed when undertaking an accreditation process

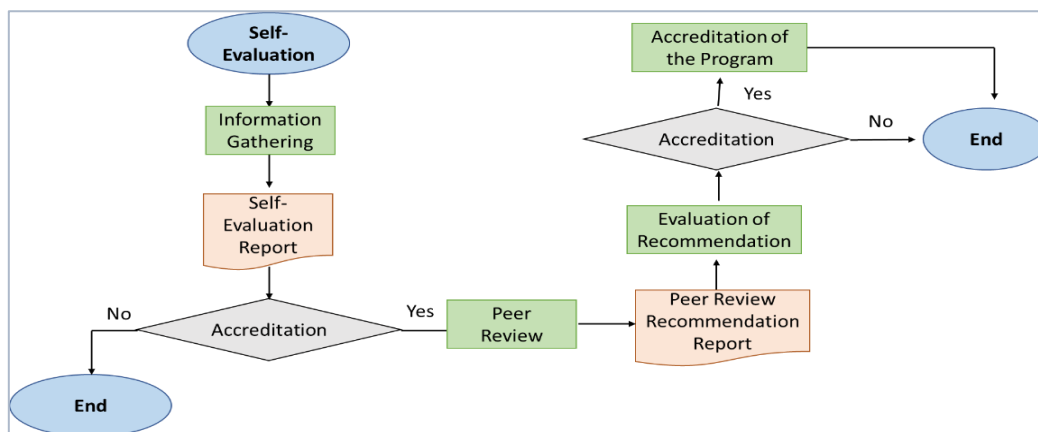
According to the current political constitution of Bolivia, health and education constitute the supreme functions and the first financial responsibilities of the state. However, this actor does not only have the mandate to guarantee these services, but also to ensure the quality of its delivery (Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2009).

As had been shown in this study, in the case of the SSUF, it has not been possible to reach a political consensus to implement the APEASU to assess the quality of university education. In case of the APUs, CEUB has continued performing this responsibility with the aim to guarantee the constitutional mandate of ensuring quality of university education¹³.

The main framework that CEUB uses for conducting accreditation related activities is the *General Regulation for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Academic Programs*. These guidelines, whose last version was approved in 2014, assumes evaluation as a comprehensive and integral process that includes **both**, the **substantive processes** (education, investigation and social interaction) and the **supporting areas** (normative, planning, management) of the APU activities¹⁴. CEUB's evaluation process starts with the collection, analysis, and interpretation of information about the performance of the institution or academic program. The result of this **mandatory** internal procedure is a self-assessment report that must be elaborated every four years (CEUB, 2014).

The decision to apply for accreditation is **voluntary**. If this decision is taken, the validity and veracity of internal reports must be assessed by external evaluators. They would send their recommendation to an accreditation committee established by the CEUB which decides on the solicitude of accreditation, based on an evaluation made on the consistency of the results submitted (CEUB, 2014). The next Figure summarizes these steps.

Figure 6: CEUB's process of quality assurance



Source: Autor's own elaboration based on CEUB (2014)

¹³ Private Universities accreditation mechanisms follow a similar procedure to the one described above. However, unlike the APU, the Accreditation is given by external organisms, and in the case of ARCU-SUR Accreditation Mechanism, this is also certified by the Ministry of Education.

¹⁴ That is, this way of evaluation is based in a comprehensive approach in the sense that it uses a single scheme to evaluate all the different functions performed in the teaching and learning processes. Therefore, "its objective is to assess the result of the Academic Program, without seeing students, professors or administrative staff as a particularity" (Interview with Luis Valdivia, 2019).

The CEUB's accreditation mechanism is a diagnostic tool aimed to ensure institutional readiness of public universities willing to be accredited. Its purpose is to ensure that the academic programs of the public universities will have the necessary means to undertake the teaching and learning processes. Rather than performing an evaluation of the quality of the outcomes that it produces, measured as the academic performance of the students, it is oriented to value the governance, regulation, curriculum design and management. In the Table 4 of the Annex, are shown the criteria used by CEUB's accreditation mechanism, divided in ten areas.

Harvey (2006) developed the concept of quality as a transformation process. According him, this concept it is composed of the following dimensions: academic, competence, service and organizational standards. The dimensions emphasized in the accreditation mechanism developed by the CEUB are the last two ones. That is, guaranteeing the existence of facilities that enable the process of student's teaching and learning and, to a lesser extent, in developing an organizational structure that encourages dialogue and trust. Dimensions related to acquisition of knowledge, and transformative skills are seen indirectly. This issue is shown in the next figure.

Figure 7: Dimensions of Harvey s notion of quality applied to CEUB's accreditation mechanism



Source: Author's own elaboration

While facilitating factors to *“produce an environment that helps to work and study better”*, and therefore, *“having it improve the teaching and learning process”* (Interview with Luis Valdivia, 2019), they do not necessarily produce transformation.

The rationale of CEUB's accreditation mechanism in particular, and the other accreditation mechanisms used in Bolivia and the region in general, is to ensure that students and professors, as the main actors of university education, have the means to perform their work. However, this is insufficient to boost the quality of education provided by the APU. Therefore, the areas and variables used by CEUB should be complemented, especially in the case of academic programs that already count institutional readiness.

While the main purpose of CEUB's accreditation mechanism is to *“promote the improvement of educational quality, research and social university interaction”* (CEUB, 2014), the application to the accreditation processes, both in APUs and private

universities, is voluntary. The inexistence of an impact study ¹⁵ that could establish a positive correlation between accreditation and student's transformation has allowed other rationales that are not necessarily related with quality take prominence as motivators to pursue accreditation.

"We understand that as [long as] the system (referring to SSUF) continue divided into two, it will be very difficult to encourage the universities to improve by themselves. Evidently, when control is absent, there is a tension between education and market, a pendulum which (most of the time) swings to the side of the market" (Interview with Jiovanny Samanamud, 2019)

The remaining of this chapter will focus on unravelling accreditation rationale's puzzle. At the end, they will be ordered in a Cartesian plane according to their degree of response to market influence or social interest to keep high quality standards in students' education.

There are at least three reasons why actors of the SSUF perform an accreditation process.

5.4.1. A passport for students' mobility

First, universities regard the accreditation process as a source that guarantees regional student mobility and a diploma acknowledgement process by peer academic institutions. In this way, universities can increase their market share and their credibility. Other purpose of CEUB's and ARCU-SUR's accreditation mechanisms is to ensure that university graduates will be able to practice their profession both within the country and in the geographical scope of regional agreements such as MERCOSUR (ARCU-SUR, 2019) (CEUB, 2014).

Since Bolivian universities know in advance that their chances of being chosen by students depend on the degree of validity of their study plans and the acknowledgement of their academic diplomas by peer universities in other countries, they are willing to go through all the necessary accreditation processes to get these recognitions.

This market demand is particularly important for two reasons: first, there are academic programs that have an important number of international students, most of whom may, gradually, seek to continue their studies in their countries of origin and, second, in certain programs –e.g. Medicine– their graduates require to pursue a series of specialization studies before practicing their profession. In that cases there is a high chance that these additional studies will take place in foreign countries.

The rationale in this case is that students will try to avoid the administrative paperwork, or additional workload, when student's mobility among countries is guaranteed. Therefore, if they have the possibility to choose, they would prefer an accredited program, over non accredited one. The increase in internationalization of education has encouraged universities and academic programs of the SSUF to participate in accreditation mechanisms, enhancing their social credibility.

5.4.2. A trampoline to project internal leaderships and win elected positions

While CEUB constitutes the governing body of the APU, the organic statute of the Bolivian universities is the norm that establishes the conditions and limits this role. In turn, this norm is based on two fundamental principles: autonomy, and joint co-

¹⁵ The referred Impact study has not been yet produced in Bolivia, neither in THE APU nor in Private Universities almost 20 years after the implementation of Accreditation mechanism (Interview with Antonio Carvalho, 2019) (Interview with Marcelo Loayza, 2019) (Interview with Luis Valdivia, 2019).

governance. Since the former has already been developed at the beginning of this chapter, the latter is presented next.

The election for all representative positions in the APU (i.e. Rector, Vice Rector, Dean, academic program Director) must be the result of democratic elections in which professors and students have equal participation and their right to vote is recognized (CEUB, 2014). Therefore, it is through the development of these internal democratic mechanisms that the principles of university autonomy, and joint co-governance are operationalized. Several elections are periodically organized and carried out within different units of the APU, *“with diverse degrees of participation and unrest, giving value to the institutions of university autonomy and internal democracy”* (Interview with Diego Murillo, 2019).

In these elections carried out in the APU, accreditation is always a subject to be presented as a proposal of the candidates to elective positions, either to show the quality of academic programs to the government and society, or to prove the contrary and then justify the necessity of an intervention and change. Accreditation is then a tool to disable or legitimize and boost or replace internal elites.

“Within the APU, no decision is only organizational, but a political one, since it can potentially either enhance or bury political aspirations” (Interview with William Mariaca, 2019).

To take part in an accreditation process and not running for an elective position, but becoming a member of its logistic staff, allows the incumbent to have a high level of knowledge of the internal operations of academic programs and enhances personal links with university elites. Accreditation mechanisms could also be used by this type of actors as a strategy to boost their professional career within the public university.

This reason, which could be located between society and market interest continuum, is more characteristic of APUs since most directive positions in private universities do not depend on professors or student elections. The phenomena of participation in accreditation process as a strategy to boost individual career is still present, with the difference that in this case the personal links of incumbents are enhanced with the universities' owners or with its elites.

5.4.3. Private Interest Governance: defining spaces of action and its boundaries

Associational governance is a concept that refers to the *“political impact of economic interest groups in (Western European type) capitalist societies”*. This concept implies an automatic reference to neo-corporatist interest's intermediation as it emerged in the 1970s.

According to Wagemann (2005, p. 2), *“Private interest governments (PIG) constitute the most extreme case of neo-corporatism”*, which is seen as *“a source of interest group's involvement in public policy making to enhance governance”* and is characterized *“not only by integrating private associations into public policy making but also by state's hands over its (monopolistic) political authority”*, reducing its role *“to the formal rubberstamping of decisions”* in certain sectors. While this type of private/public associations tend to enhance the governance of a state, it also weakens its authority and increases the possibilities of elite capture, mainly by producing the conditions for the emergence of the principal/agent problem. When PIG's are established as institutions, they tend to be deeply embedded in the psyche of citizens and its modification is only possible when external conditions change in such a way that its position is weakened.

However, even in this case, their role is still relevant for the implementation of new organisational arrangements.

As Wagemann (2005, p. 19) points out, the new institutional arrangements would necessarily combine “*elements of the past*” with the “*new achievements*”. Since “*deeply [mind] embedded structures cannot be easily changed, despite the occurrence of opportunities*”, (p. 19) the inherited elements will be the ones that lead to the revival or continuation of the path followed until the occurrence of this inflexion point. In this sense, the change should be depicted, with more precision, as evolution than as extinction.

Since CEUB’s accreditation mechanism has been implemented for the last 20 years, it was created and implemented as a consequence of strong political struggles with the government. These struggles reaffirmed APU’s identity, and as a related consequence helped the institution of university autonomy to become part of the so- called Bolivian myths.

It could be affirmed that this process of reinforcing myths was deepened through the Government’s development of interest associational governance and consociational democracy strategies, which in the long term resulted in fracturing the SSUF within two blocks of organizational influence with clear definition of limits and actors.

The main reason why the APUs still pursue accreditation despite not being mandatory is because CEUB does not want to give opportunities to the government to intervene in what their elites consider as their block of influence. The rationale of these stakeholders in relation to accreditation mechanisms are following:

CEUB’s accreditation mechanism enables the APU to show the quality of their academic programs to the state and the society. Therefore, public universities are willing to assume the costs of its implementation.

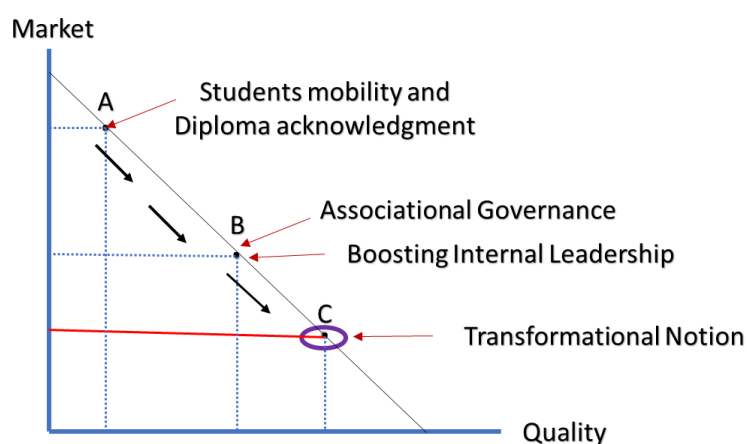
While it is recognized that APUs are not homogenous within CEUB, it is important to show and develop a sense of membership and belonging so that accreditation mechanisms of universities (and within it, its academic programs) with more institutional readiness could be used to keep the government out of their sphere of influence.

The dataset of results of accreditation processes, which is annually published and publicly available, shows the advances, in terms of number of accredited programs of university members of the CEUB (Interview with Luis Valdivia, 2019).

While this data allows the Government and the Society to have a general idea about the progress of accreditation mechanism implementation in the public universities, its way of presentation limits the specific follow up that this openness may generate, and only serves to create a sense of quality within society. This type of information is enough to (de)incentivize and dissuade any attempts of the government to claim for itself any share within CEUB’s university block.

The following figure presents a summary of the reasons that motivate APUs’ implementation of accreditation mechanisms and is organized according to its main motivator: market or quality.

Figure 8: APU' reasons for pursuing accreditation



Source: Author's own elaboration

As is shown in Figure 9, the three reasons used to justify the implementation of an accreditation mechanism in APUs are still far from the transformational notion of quality, and sometimes, as in the case of students' mobility and diploma's acknowledgement by peers, these are located in the opposite sides of the continuum, more related with the market than with quality enhancement.

It is necessary to move accreditation mechanisms from points A and B to point C of the graph, so that quality of university education in Bolivia could be boosted. This research proposes that to perform this task, it is necessary to endow the APEASU endowing it with an important degree of autonomy to avoid that the elite will capture it, distorting its objectives and results an resulting in the appearance of the agent/principal problem.

The implementation of a unified university accreditation mechanism requires not only a full understanding of the nature and scope of what university autonomy means, but also the introduction of a set of processes of checks and balances that guarantee its autonomous functioning. In the next chapter, along with the conclusions of this study, policy recommendations for the implementation of the APEASU will be developed.

6. STAKE HOLDER'S ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS: THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSIDERING INSTITUTIONS IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUPERIOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION PUBLIC POLICY

6.1. Reconciling accreditation mechanisms with autonomy: characteristics of strong organizational arrangements

In Bolivia, public entities can have different levels of 'autonomy'. The differences in the degrees of autonomy could be found in the following variables: type of organizational dependence in relation to the Ministry of the Area; capacity of organizations for becoming legal entities on their own, and, thus, to register their patrimony. separately for the one of the Ministry of the area; the formal recognition to have administrative, legal and financial 'management autonomy'; normative instrument of creation, and the type of Authority that rule them (Ministerio de la Presidencia de Bolivia, 2006).

Using these variables, it is possible to build a classification of public organizations in a range that goes from entities with small degree of autonomy, to those that have high degree of autonomy. In the next table public organizations are classified according to their type of autonomy in three broad categories.

Table 3: Characteristic of public entities according to their de degree of autonomy

Type of entity	Degree of autonomy	Norm of creation	Legal entity on its own	Ministry dependency	Patrimony of their own	Highest authority
A	Small	Decree	No	Yes	No	Minister
				(Direct and Functional)		
B	Medium	Decree	Yes	Yes	Yes	Director
				(Control)		
C	High	Law	Yes	Yes	Yes	Director
				(Supervision)		

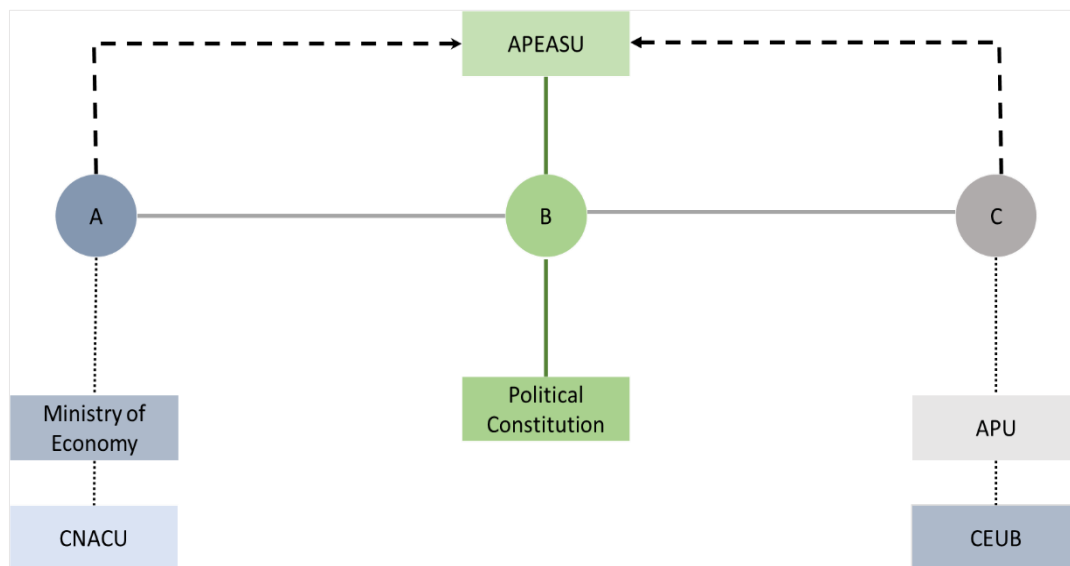
Source: Author's own Elaboration, based on Ministerio de la Presidencia de Bolivia (2006)

According to Bolivia's constitution, APEASU should be implemented as a 'Type C' public entity. That is, it should be "independent from the Ministry of the Area" (Ministerio de la Presidencia de Bolivia, 2009). However, Bolivian Law of Education establish it as 'Type A' public entity, by making it, dependent of the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2010). This tendency is later confirmed when Ministry of Education stablishes CNACU as the official accreditation agency of SSUF, converting it into *Academic-Administrative* entity under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2017).

Thus, it can be observed that Bolivia's constitution and Law of Education have opposite views about the degree of autonomy that APEASU should have. In this sense, while the position of the Ministry of Education is reflected by the Law of Education, the positions of APU is closer the constitution. Therefore, the possibilities of implementing a unified accreditation mechanism for the SSUF depend on two conditions. The first is related to the political capacity to move the relevant positions of those university education stakeholders, towards the centre of the continuum. The second, guarantee that the

proposed Accreditation Agency will operate with degrees of autonomy from medium to high. This is shown in the following figure.

Figure 9: Stakeholders Positions and Public Policy Proposed to implement APEASU



Source: Author s own elaboration

“Here (in Spain), in my opinion, the key element of the accreditation system, is that the quality assessment of the university education is done by external agencies which are independent, not just from the Government, but also from the same universities. Therefore, the difference with Bolivia’s accreditation mechanism could be found in the non-existence of external agencies of university quality assessment independent from the Government and universities. This has led to the situation (in the case of the APU) where universities evaluate themselves. What’s more, in Europe, for becoming member of the European Association of Accreditation, it is required that the statutes of the agencies themselves include and specific formal declaration of this independence. It is just when these conditions are fulfilled that the capacity of agencies to carry out independent evaluations is recognized” (Interview with Nestor Torres, 2019).

Any policy adopted to allow the implementation of the APEASU, as a strategy oriented to boost quality in university education in Bolivia must be agreed upon major stakeholders of the SSUF; in this case, the Ministry of Education, the APU, and also the private universities. Non zero-sum solution will be able to be implemented and stay in time.

If main actors of the SSUF do not perceive APEASU as win/win solution, it is highly probable that they would exert its agency and resist its implementation, as it has been the case of all state controlled mechanism proposed in the last 25 year in Bolivia (1994 and 2019).

How feasible is this? What strategies could be applied to move the positions of relevant actors. Next section would respond to this question, utilizing stakeholder analysis technique. In the end, it would be proposed that the necessity to keep the ‘division of power principle’ in the implementation of APEASU, not just as a guarantee to inhibit the appearance of distortions caused by ‘concentration of power’, but as a trait that strong institutions might have to conserve for its independence.

6.2. Stakeholder analysis

Crosby and Brinkerhoff (2001, p. 141) define stakeholder as *“an individual or group that makes a difference, or that can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives”* (p. 141). Since recognizing that stakeholders might play an important role *“in the determination of a policy, its implementation and outcome”* (p. 141), these authors highlight the importance of *“stakeholder analysis as a tool for policy managers”* (p. 141), since this is designed to assist them *“in identifying those interests that should be taken into account when making a decision”* (p. 141).

This tool focuses on analyzing two important types of stakeholders: groups or individual actors. These are analyzed in terms of *“the interests they have in a particular issue; and, the quantity and types of resources they can mobilize to affect outcomes regarding that issue”* (p. 142). Stakeholders analysis employs a simple matrix in which information for each group is organized according to the following four variables: group's interests, the type and level of resources possessed its capacity for mobilization or resources, and the group's position of the issue in question.

The first thing that is needed to know to construct the stakeholder analysis matrix, is which stakeholders might have an interest in a policy, and to know when actor's interests should be given serious consideration (Crosby & Brinkerhoff, 2001).

This investigation considers that there are seven stakeholders or groups interested in the implementation of the referred public policy (two external and five internals): MERCOSUR, specialized agencies in accreditation processes (ISSAP), Ministry of Education, the CEUB, the ANUP, indigenous universities, and universities of special regime.

The present study aims to evaluate the feasibility of moving the positions from the APU and the Ministry of Education, as main actors in university education in Bolivia to the centre of the continuum depicted in the above figure. This feasibility is related to the degree of autonomy that a unified accreditation mechanism for the SSUF might need to have to allow the implementation of the APEASU as a 'Type B' public entity.

The complete stakeholder analysis which includes the seven actors mentioned above and performs an in-detail analysis of the four-dimensions used by this tool to assess resource availability. The mobilization capacity of each resource is shown in the annex. The next section of this study presents a short version of the stakeholder analysis, which is focused on the groups that have stronger positions to influence the implementation of the APEASU as a Type B public entity, emphasising the resources they possess, and its mobilization capacity.

6.2.1. Stakeholder analysis of main actors for the implementation of the APEASU

Stakeholder analysis *“is directed at assessing the nature of a policy constituents”* based on the following four dimensions: *“their interests, their expectations, the strength or intensity of their interest in the issue, and the resources that they can bring to bear on the outcomes of a policy change”* (Crosby & Brinkerhoff, 2001, p. 141). Generally, *“stakeholder analysis focuses on two key elements. Groups or actors are analyzed in terms of (1) the interest they have in a particular issue, and (2) resources they can mobilize to affect outcomes regarding that issue”* (p. 142).

The aim of the stakeholder matrix is *“to provide a means for estimating the importance or potential impact of various stakeholders' interest on a given issue or policy and*

thereby assists decision makers or policy managers in their determination of which of those groups ought to be taken into consideration in the decision-making calculations” (p. 143). Crosby and Brinkerhoff (2001) suggest as a rule of thumb to include in the analysis *“only those groups with resources that they can mobilize and apply directly for or against an issue”* (p. 142) in the negotiations that precede the *“formulation”* and *“implementation”* of public policies, since these are groups *“with the potential to affect decisions or implement outcomes”* (p. 142).

Finally, Crosby and Brinkerhoff (2001, p. 141) points that there are three categories of stakeholders:

- *“Groups that are in position to damage or weaken the authority or political support for decision-makers or their organization’s so that they can actively oppose the policy reform;*
- *Groups that provide a net benefit, strengthens implementing enhancing decision-makers’ authority (and capacity to secure compliance with decisions) and,*
- *Groups that are capable of influencing the direction or mix of implementing organizations’ activities, service users and consumers that are important stakeholders (p. 141)” (i.e. MERCOSUR, students, etc.)”.*

According to these rationales, from the complete stakeholder matrix of this study (refer to Table 5 of the annex) can be observed that:

- Actors that might have more interest in a policy related to the implementation of the APEASU as a Type B public entity are in the **first group**, and the **Ministry of Education** and **CEUB, MERCOSUR** and **ANUP** in the **second group**.
- APEASU and CEUB are actors who show the strongest position in support of the implementation of the referred policy. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education might constitute the main opponent to its implementation.
- CEUB and the Ministry of Education are actors with the highest resource mobilization capacity of the different resources they possess.

It becomes clear then, that there are three main actors whose interests should be considered for the implementation of the APEASU as a Type B public entity: the ANUP, the CEUB and the Ministry of Education. It is suggested that should be given special attention to the latter two, because this would not just improve the chances of success of the suggested public policy but also Government’s capabilities to manage the SSUF.

Likewise, policy makers should consider and combine group interests focus that are shown in the next figure, when designing the normative that contains the specific regulations of the APEASU. Have to ensure that these views are also reflected in the Manual of Functions and Organization, Methods and Procedures and Strategic Planning of the APEASU, with special attention with what is related with its mission and vision.

Figure 10: Focus, rationale, quality assessment and evaluation approach and resources of main stakeholders for the implementation of the APEASU as a Type B public entity

ACTOR	FOCUS	RATIONALE	APPROACH	MECHANISM	RESOURCES
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	SSUF & UNIVERSITY EDUCATION POLICY CONTROL	ACCOUNTABILITY	ACCREDITATION	EXTERNAL EVALUATION	SIGNATURE OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ON STATE'S BEHALF
CEUB	UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY & APU CONTROL	ACCOUNTABILITY & IMPROVEMENT	INTERNAL AND INTERN EVALUATION	ACADEMIC PROGRAM EVALUATION	COERCION AND LEGITIMACY
ANUP	LEVELING UP THE PLAYING FIELD WITH APU	ACCOUNTABILITY & IMPROVEMENT	INTERNAL EVALUATION AND EXTERNAL RECOGNITION	ACADEMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION	LEGITIMACY

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Crosby and Brinkerhoff (2001) ; Harvey and Askling (2002)

If the APEASU does not include strong institutional checks and balances, so that the Ministry of Education, the CEUB and the ANUP perceive it as a legitimate accreditation mechanism that represents its interests there exist two risks. First one, other actors, especially public universities will be willing to reconcile their divisions within the SSUF to protect and promote their own interests, using its resource mobilization capacity to resist its implementation. Second, the APEASU won't develop the degree of autonomy neither the quality culture tradition that requires for boosting the quality of university education in Bolivia.

It seems that the position of these stakeholders is favourable to engage in a dialogue (Interview with Antonio Carvalho, 2019); (Interview with Jiovanny Samanamud, 2019). In an interview with Marcelo Loayza (2019), former Secretary of Accreditation of CEUB, points out that *"there is a better acceptance of quality discourse within the SSUF, and a more flexible position of the APU"*. It is also important to recognize that the topic is still not positioned in public opinion, but is limited to discussions among certain academic elites (Interview with Luis Valdivia, 2019).

6.3. Conclusions: Summing up the research

The research aimed to answer why the SSUF has not been able to implement APEASU as a unified accreditation mechanism for both APUs and private universities. For this purpose, it has used the 'cultural perspective' of NPM and NEI as its main theoretical and conceptual frameworks. At the same time, the concepts of 'myth' (Francovich, 1980), 'consociational democracy' (Lijphart, 1969), 'conceptual stretching' (Sartori, 1970), and 'associational governance' (Wagemann, 2005) were also revised to sustain the argument of the investigation.

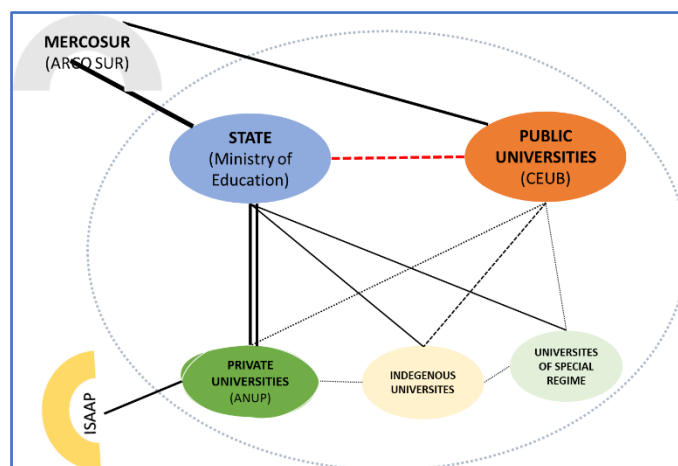
The research proposed the hypothesis that the institution named university autonomy has become an important part of 'Bolivia's deep myths. It has crossed its original limits, restricted to the environment of the public universities, to be embedded in the psyche of all Bolivian citizens

It has also been argued that the presence of this institution has (and will) inhibit the development and implementation of any 'state initiative' that proposes developing an 'accreditation mechanism' which does not acquire an 'autonomous' character, and where the role of APU is not given 'centrality' and 'prominence'. If this does not happen, the tendency is that the division within SSUF will deepen, moving its stakeholders towards a

point of no return, where ‘cleavages’ might be perceived as obstacles that is ‘rationally’ preferable to avoid.

At the same time, it has been shown that the consequences of these power struggles were not limited to stressing the relationship between the ‘state’ and ‘APU’ but had also affected the relations of other participants and stakeholders within the SSUF, especially private universities. This is shown in next figure:

Figure 11: Map of actors within the SSUF



Source: Author’s own elaboration based on (Fundación UNIR Bolivia, 2011, p. n.p.)

The public universities located in small urban areas and in rural localities have not the same institutional readiness to pursue accreditation processes that the other ones located in big cities. As a result, not all public and private universities show traits of having a strong accreditation tradition as part their quality culture.

At the same time, the study has argued that ignoring the role of the institution of ‘university autonomy’ in the implementation of an unified accreditation mechanism has resulted not only in strong power struggles between APUs, private universities, and the state, but also in the emergence and constitutional recognitions of a two headed SSUF. Each block of this two headed SSUF has its respective ‘area of influence’.

Accreditation mechanisms implemented in Bolivia, both in APUs as well as in private universities, emphasise the importance of having ‘facilitating factors’ to improve quality of university education. Therefore, studies that aim to measure the ‘impact’ of these schemes in the ‘transformation’ of students’ learning have not yet been developed. This fact has also caused that reasons related to market had taken more prominence over quality rationales, as justifications of accreditation mechanisms implementation. This is especially true when what the authorities of the university, are looking is to ensure their pursue of elective positions, in detriment of the ‘quality logics’ proposed by the NPM for the education sector.

Therefore, instead of enhancing budget efficiency, quality culture, students’ transformation, and the development of a group of professionals that could increase Bolivia’s competitiveness and productivity, and thus influence reduction of poverty and unemployability rates reduction in Bolivia, accreditation mechanism have been used by ‘university elites’ to give the ‘sensation’ of quality fulfilment before society and state, and to boost the individuals’ political careers, especially in APU.

As a consequence of these power struggles, accreditation mechanism has been transformed in an ‘ideology’ whose content varies according to different stakeholders and

context; an ideology which is sometimes used by ‘university elites’ to strengthen its position by increasing the tension between ‘improvement’ and ‘accountability’.

The rest of this chapter will list some policy recommendations to allow the implementation of APEASU as an ‘autonomous’ entity, recognizing the role that APUs and the institution of ‘university autonomy’ need to play.

6.4.Recommendations

“Stakeholder analysis should not be viewed as a ‘one-shot’ tool to be applied at the outset of policy implementation and then not used again” (Crosby & Brinkerhoff, 2001, p. 149). Policy implementation is a long-term process that might be applied several times, both at the formulation and implementation of the policy proposed to implement the APEASU, and even when this accreditation mechanism is already operating, since “even in a relatively stable society, stakeholder coalitions will shift over time; support and opposition will wax and wane as a function of changing interests, relative shifts in power among social groups, increase in capacity, and perception of policy” (p. 149)..

At the same time, *“while stakeholder analysis is certainly helpful to gain a better understanding of the interests and resources of the important players in policy decision-making and implementation, it is even more valuable when used in conjunction with other analytic tools such as political mapping or force-field analysts” (Crosby & Brinkerhoff, 2001, p. 149).*

In this sense, it might be recommended to complement the analysis presented in this research with other qualitative and quantitative instruments and methodologies to confirm the accuracy of its results. At the same time, it is suggested to conduct a complementary analysis that don’t use group heterogenous actors in one broad category. If this simplification has being done in the present study, it was just to make easier its analysis.

This decision could have caused that important differences between actors and groups and within them were overlooked. For example, when an actor's resource mobilization capacity is overestimated or when some important sub-groups are not taken into consideration as main actors for the formulation or implementation of the suggested policy, this fact could even, invalidate or suggest major changes in the conclusions of the research.

In general, belittling this type of actors, could cause important resistance when implementing public policy, especially when disputes among group elites are not recognized. Also, might cause important scissions such as the decision of not recognizing agreements. Since stakeholders are not homogenous it is suggested to include in the study the opinion of important minorities, to contrast the of elite’s opinion.

This study had followed a top-down approach to unravel its argument, in the sense that its focus is analyzing the perspective of decision makers in the education sector (i.e. the Ministry of Economy). Therefore, it could be interesting to complement this research with a bottom-up approach, in which the criteria of university education users about the characteristics that they expect of the APEASU is assessed, with special emphasis on students, professors and parents.

Since the typology of universities is not homogeneous, it is recommended to repeat the study, whenever necessary and possible, using more heterogeneous categories (i.e. private universities or APUs by type or institutional readiness). This could be useful to measure the accurateness of the stakeholder matrix developed in this study. These

recommendations aim to avoid biases in the perception of the policy maker and /or researcher.

To perform a holistic and complete evaluation about the characteristics and limitations of the SSUF, it is essential to undertake a complementary study which aims to evaluate the characteristics of regular education, emphasizing the characteristics of students, from private, public and agreement schools i.e. semi private schools which, usually, are managed by the Roman Catholic Church or their religious confessions, since they are the main users of the university education. Its quality of education determines, to a large degree, the quality that could be reached by universities within the SSUF.

Should be conducted an impact study of all the accreditation mechanisms that are currently in use in Bolivia, because their results could be used as a base to propose schemes of accreditations differentiated by types of university and institutional readiness of universities and academic programs. It also is suggested to consider the feasibility of the creation of private agencies of accreditation in Bolivia, creating specializations in quality assessment of its workers and APEASUs.

The study also shows that **associational governance** has resulted in a clear agent/principal problem. To understand the specific characteristics, manifestation, and consequences of it for the SSUF, it is necessary to conduct another study that takes agent/principal theory as its main analytical framework. This might highlight the inappropriateness of the fact that universities evaluate themselves through their own mechanism, because its results are subject to bias and elite capture. This is especially important in the case of APUs.

It is also necessary to conduct the following complementary studies:

1. An in-depth study of the cost and fees that private and special regime universities charge to its students, and the budget of APUs.
2. Analysis of demographic characteristics, programs and objectives of Indigenous universities and Autonomous Public University of El Alto City which mainly rural migrant students conform.
3. Perform an inventory of facilitating factors of the different types of universities
4. Recollection of the institutional capabilities of the CEUB, the ANUP, the Ministry of Education, and the CNACU

It is suggested that these studies would be differentiated by rural and urban area, city, and within the sub headquarters and academic programs, among others. As a rule of thumb, it is suggested that all these studies might be completed before the implementation of the APEASU, so it can be used as guidelines for planning its organization and activities. In this sense, it is important to highlight that autonomy of APEASU, both from the APUs and the government, is important to boost the quality of Bolivia's university education. At the same time, the transparency of information must orient all the actions within the APEASU. This fact must become a tradition and part of its organizational culture.

The typology of universities presented in this study is subject to improvements, especially in relation to the characteristics of the NAPU. Finally, it is important that accreditation mechanisms currently used in Bolivia develop specific schemes to evaluate not just the processes and facilitating factors, but the results of university education.

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9. ANNEX

9.1. Interview Guide

Interviewee Data

Name:	
Date:	
Current position:	
Time:	

First, thank you very much for your time. This semi structured interview aims to evaluate the impacts of the accreditation process carried out by the Career of Political Science and Public Management in 2017 from the perspective of relevant stakeholders related to it.

The interview is composed of 10 guide questions and is expected to last from 30 – 45 minutes.

Before starting I would like to ask you for your consent to record it. The information obtained will be used strictly for academic purposes without mentioning the identity of the interviewee.

Let's Start.

Questionnaire

Identification

1. What **role** have you performed in the Process of Accreditation undertaken by the career of Political Sciences and Public Management in 2017?
2. What was the **main purpose** of the accreditation process carried out by the career of Political Sciences and Public Management in 2017?
 - i. Controlling standards/quality
 - ii. Improving the standards/quality
 - iii. Complying with the normative and regulations
3. Which were the **expectations** you had when you realized that the Career of Political Science and Public Management was going to be evaluated through an accreditation process?
4. What do you **understand** by the term “Quality in Higher Education”?
 - i. According to this definition:
 - In what aspects do you think that the career of Political Science and Public Management shows quality? Explain.
5. What do you **understand** by the term “Culture of Quality”?
 - i. According to this definition:
 - Do you think that the career of Public of Political Science has developed a Culture of Quality? Explain your answer.
 -

6. Do you know the content of the reports of the accreditation?
- i. Yes
 - ii. No
7. In your opinion, has the process of evaluation/accreditation led to any improvement in the career of Political Science and Public Management?
- i. Yes
 - ii. No

If Yes, in which of the following areas. Choose two among the following option and explain your answer.

- a. Quality of the education/teaching
- b. Quality assurance of the education/teaching
- c. Reputation of the institution
- d. Academic discussion on learning and teaching
- e. Staff engagement in learning and teaching questions
- f. Student engagement in learning and teaching questions
- g. Development of new courses/programs
- h. Governance structures of the institution
- i. New routines and procedures
- j. Internal resource allocation
- k. Resources/material/accommodation for teaching/learning

If No, please explain why not.

8. To what extent do the results of the accreditation coincide with the expectations that you had of the process? Explain.
9. In your opinion, how should the quality of the career of Political Science and Public Management be assessed? What aspects should be taken into consideration? Are these already covered by the accreditation process in 2017? Please explain.
10. Are there any adjustments that you would like to suggest for the improvement of the accreditation/ evaluation process? Please explain.

9.2.Areas and variables used by the CEUB to perform accreditation processes in the APU

Table 4: Areas and variables used to perform accreditation process in Bolivia

Area	Objective	Variables	Rate
1. Norms	Evaluate if the academic program has the normative, permissions and plans required for its operation	1. Organic Statute of the BUS 2. Resolutions that authorize the operation of the career 3. Plan of Institutional Development 4. General and specific regulations 5. Manual of functions and organization	5
2.Mision and Objectives	Have an idea of whether the institution, and the units that compose it, have a mission statement that orient its activities, and if the purposes of the latter are aligned to the entity's.	1. Mission of the university 2. Mission of the faculty 3. Mission of the career 4. Career objectives	5
3. Study plan	Assess how the career is organized with the aim to produce certain type of knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences in students and its level of compliance.	1. Professional profile 2. Objectives of the study plan 3. Organization of the subjects and distribution of hours 4. Compliance of the study plan 5. Methods of teaching and learning 6. Graduation modalities	10
4. Academic administration	Have an idea of the way in which activities planned by the institution are executed to reach its objectives, and how the organization coordinate its actions.	1. Academic administration 2. Organism and decision level 3. Global plans by subject 4. Teacher/student rate 5. Administrative support 6. Results and impact	5
5. Professors	Value the characteristics of the teaching staff of the academic program and determine its level of performance.	1. Academic degree 2. Type of professors 3. Academic and professional experience 4. Admission and permanence 5. Teaching performance	25
6. Students	Know the characteristics of the students registered in the academic program and assess their learning results and graduation Rate.	1. Admission 2. Characteristics 3. Learning evaluation 4. Permanence 5. Graduation 6. Welfare services 7. Scholarships and recognition	10

7. Investigation and social interaction	Establish whether the academic program has lines of investigation, its outcomes and the level of involvement of students and professors on it.	1. Research policies 2. Professor and students participation 3. Research 4. Policies of social interaction 5. Publications	5
8. Educational resources	Evaluate the disposition and use of tools that facilitate the teaching and learning process of both, professors and students.	1. Bibliography 2. Equipment and cabinets 3. Equipment for teaching 4. Information networks	15
9. Financial management	Assess whether the budget allocated for the operation of the program is enough to guarantee its operation and demonstrate that costs per student are optimal.	1. Budget execution 2. Policies for resources allocation 3. Costs	10
10. Infrastructure	Evaluate the sufficiency and appropriateness of the physical structure of University or Academic Program to carry out the teaching and learning process.	1. Classrooms 2. Academic training rooms 3. Office and service areas 4. Space and equipment for professor	10
TOTAL			100

Source: Author's own adaptation from CEUB (2014)

9.3 Stakeholder Analysis (Complete)

Table 5: Stakeholder analysis for the implementation of the APEASU as an autonomous Public Entity

Group	Groups interest in the issue	Interest intensity	Resources available	Resource mobilization capacity	Position in the issue
MERCOSUR	Consolidate its organization as the most important and credible accreditation mechanism in the region	Medium to High	Financial resources to mount lobbying over some prominent actors of the SSUF (i.e. the APU and private universities)	Medium	2 ⁺
			Access and control over vital information (i.e. expertise in conducting accreditation procedures in the region)	High	
			Prestige and status	Medium to High	
			Legitimacy within the Ministry of Education and the private universities	High	
ISAAP	Do not lose and decrease its share in Bolivia's accreditation market	Medium to Small	Financial resources to mount lobbying over some prominent actors of the SSUF (i.e. the private universities)	Small	1 ⁻
			Access and control over vital information (i.e. expertise in conducting accreditation procedures)	High	
			Prestige of their brand among universities and Bolivian academics' market	Medium to High	
Ministry of Education	Ensure the implementation of policies in the education sector, issued as sector head, and keep	High	Financial resources to mount lobbying over some prominent actors of the SSUF (i.e. the private	Medium to High	2 ⁻

Group	Groups interest in the issue	Interest intensity	Resources available	Resource mobilization capacity	Position in the issue
	a central role in any accreditation mechanisms that aims to do full oversight the SSUF		universities, Government, MERCOSUR)		
			Monopoly for education international agreements signature in behalf of the Government	High	
			Access and control over vital information (i.e. expertise in conducting accreditation procedures within MERCOSUR)	High	
			Status	Medium	
			Coercion	High	
			Legitimacy within private, special regime and indigenous universities	High	
CEUB	Take care that university autonomy is not affected in the implementation of any accreditation mechanism ensuring that the APU keep a leading role on it	High	Financial resources to mount lobbying over some prominent actors of the SSUF (i.e. Government, MERCOSUR)	High	2+
			Access and control over vital information (i.e. expertise in conducting accreditation procedures within MERCOSUR and the APU)	High	
			Status	High	
			Coercion	High	
			Legitimacy within the APU	High	
ANUP	Strengthen its position by levelling up the playing field,	Medium to High	Financial resources to mount lobbying over some prominent actors	Medium	3+

Group	Groups interest in the issue	Interest intensity	Resources available	Resource mobilization capacity	Position in the issue
	by getting similar perks as the APU and develop a unified accreditation mechanism, that take into consideration unequal institutional readiness that exists within this type of universities.		of the SSUF (i.e. Government, MERCOSUR)		
			Access and control over vital information (i.e. expertise in conducting accreditation procedures within MERCOSUR)	Medium to High	
			Status	Medium to High	
			Coercion	Small	
			Legitimacy within private universities	High	
Indigenous Universities	Participate in a unified accreditation mechanism which includes differential schemes, that consider the particular cultural aspects and the unequal institutional readiness that characterizes this type of universities.	Medium to Small	Influence on mount lobbying over some prominent actor of the SSUF (i.e. Government)	Medium	1+
			Legitimacy specially within indigenous universities		
Universities of special regime	Participate in the accreditation mechanisms which include differential schemes that take into account the objectives that Police's and Army's universities must have.	Medium to Small	Influence on mount lobbying over some prominent actors of the SSUF (i.e. Government, and CEUB in the case of a military university)	Medium	1,5+
			Legitimacy within police and military regimes	High	
			Coercion	Medium to Small	

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Crosby & Brinkerhoff (2001, p. 7)