

CHEPS, Summer School 2004.

The impact of the Institutional Evaluation on the academic culture of the teachers at the University of Barcelona.

Martín Aiello

Universitat de Barcelona

1. Introduction

The Western university, an especially the European, has experimented great changes in the last thirty years. The new relationships between the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) with the State, and the requests of society, are the origins of most of these transformations. The relation and the distance with the state power define the institutions' autonomy. The grade of autonomy allows the institutions to define (or not) the different instances of the higher educational policy (i.e. the curricular contents, the recruitment of teachers, etc.) (Neave,2001).

The HEIs faced an increased request of services without the strict prescriptions of the state: the rise of student population and the diversification of the titles offered. In the 80's, in some countries, but in general during the 90's, the concept of education quality started to be used in the university field, and its assessment to cover that reference free space. This process is what Neave and Van Vught (1991) characterized as the "rise of the Evaluative State" in Higher Education, in contrast with classical state control of the HEIs.

But there is not only one historical and univocal process. There are different ways of understanding evaluation and assessment in education and the specific versions in the HI ambit. In educative evaluation (as a judgement of the

educative value of a centre, a curricular project, the organization of a classroom, a text book or another university educative reality), we can identify two main different models: the improvement of the quality or **formative model**, and the accountability **model** (Rodríguez, 1997).

This last version of the educative evaluation is shown as an administrative discourse about educational practice, about its control and how this control must be developed. It's a principle that rules the relationship between who has the power and who does not (Simey, 1988). Henkel (1991) connected this conception with positivist epistemological and methodological position and also with a univocal and generalist conception of science.

The formative evaluation is shown as a relationship between the evaluator and the evaluated reality, which must be collaborative, critical and constructive, and must contribute to educational improvement. We can find positivist visions as well as interpretative ones, quantitative and qualitative analysis. In this kind of evaluation the focus is on:

'Its formative potential is based in the quality of the dialogue between the participants and the evaluators, it's an information and interpretation's interchange, open, free, equal, tolerant and responsible" (Mac Donald, 1995).

As Rodríguez underlines, the university evaluation is a key factor for setting a policy in an educational institution. In each kind of evaluation, the information produced or exchanged during the assessment is connected to the decision making process. If one supports an accountability position, they favour an administrative vision, vertical, where authority becomes the legitimacy of the action. On the contrary, the formative vision follows the creation of value judgements from the own practice, directed towards improving their educational practice.

However, each of these conceptions raises the need of using evaluation as an adequate tool for transformative management. A well-developed formative

evaluation would produce data to improve the educational process, which means that it will produce richer inputs for the management.

In the 90's, before the Universities Organic Law (LOU in Spanish), the Spanish Higher Education System, chose an institutional evaluation model based on self-evaluation plus an external peer review (Rodríguez, 1999). The University of Barcelona was one of the pioneers and one of the most active institutions in the Spanish Higher Education System, in continuing this evaluative experience that followed an educational improvement, supported by the institutional autonomy and academic peer review. (EC, 1996)

This was the way the University of Barcelona joined “the rise of the evaluative state” in Higher Education. This paper aims to go deep into what these evaluations produced in the academic culture, and especially, which conceptions academics have nowadays involved in these processes, and the relationship with their values around the university practices.

1.1. Justification of the context

Currently institutional evaluation is challenged as a formative activity by sectors who want to replace it by another kind of evaluation or assessment, with external and non-academic criteria, going deeply into the accountability model. The past government has approved a law (the LOU) that aims a centralized evaluation, with market emphasis on certification and accreditations, and with opposition of almost the whole university sector.

Although the Spanish University System has different traditions, the LOU pursues the transfer of power from the academic sphere to other sectors. In this context, institutional evaluation as a tool to organize and take decisions to improve the quality of education is threatened, and the institutional autonomy also. As Vidal remarks (1996) the university system consists of autonomous units that support their objectives by holding up a plurality of objectives inside the organizations. But if the government limits the set up of the objectives with

funding methods (restrictions), for example, it is taking away a part of institutional autonomy.

If there is the aim of replacing a formative and autonomous evaluation system by another that favours objectives related to the funding values, the institutional autonomy is threatened. **So it is relevant to study the effect of evaluation, its consequences related to the educational improvement in order to support the Institutional Evaluation as a formative process.**

The activities to analyse are those that have been set up by the University Council in the context of the Experimental Evaluation Programme for the Quality of the University System (Programa Experimental de la Calidad del Sistema Universitario) and in the National University Quality Evaluation Programme (Programa Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad de las Universidades).

The current situation justifies a study of the IE's impact in order to defend these experiences as a formative and autonomous process. The IE as a formative process needs:

“To take into account, the previous acceptance of the professors by setting up processes to announce it; furthermore, their collaboration and participation would be essential, above all for the sake of improvement”
(Benedito, 2000:590, own translation)

At the same time, recent studies on the improvement assessment processes are critical about these practices, and therefore, they contribute to the analyzed evaluations. In the Spanish case we can quote the contribution by Vroeijensteijn, asked by Catalan Quality Agency (AQU, 2000), about the fact that more emphasis must be given to self-evaluation. Another contribution is from Apodaca & Grao (1997), who analyze how to improve the assessment's environment of the evaluated units in order to predispose the teachers in a positive way; and from Alemán Leyra (1999) about the quality-teaching indicators adaptation after the first PNECU's round.

These examples show that a formative assessment process means a continuous adaptation and improvement, with a philosophy that underlines that the activities to assess should always be improved (by internal modifications or by a clearer communication of its achievements). In this context, the study of the impact of IE at the UB aims to go deeper into its consequences connected with the improvement of the university quality, into the influence that it has in the university organization and decisions making process related with the educational quality.

At the moment there is a paradoxical situation: the former government has set up a new IE programme, but at the same time the LOU imposes a compulsory accreditation process during the next years. This kind of activities is contrary to the IE frame, where the courses, departments or universities evaluated are voluntary (an essential issue in a formative evaluation). The coincidence of two different kinds of evaluation programmes, the accreditation one and the institutional evaluation one, would divide the efforts, but with the preponderance of the accountability one, as Greall et.al. (1997) underline in the case of Quality Enhancement Division and the Audit Division of the English Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC).

At the same time there are queries that remain unresolved, related to the competences of the new National Quality Evaluation Agency (ANECA, with competences in the whole Spanish State). The possibility still exists that this agency, created by the LOU, will not recognize the previous autonomous agencies, like the Catalan Agency. The new centralized context adds a specific interest to the study, focussed on the IE as input of an autonomous political decision. The Catalan Autonomous Community has been one of the first organisms in reaching the national de-centralization of educational policy, including university competences. In 1996, the government, together with the public Catalan universities, has set up the Catalan University System Quality Agency (AQU, 1999), which has been in charge of promoting educational quality policies, especially the university institutional evaluation.

Because of the LOU, the higher education competences transfer as established before the law was approved, has been modified. As Krotsch remarks (2001) in his analysis of the English context during the '80s, there are decentralization processes promoted by the central government, with the aim of control the Higher Education. They showed a decentralization of the process and its instrumentation, but also a centralization of the decision-making, the set up of funding mechanisms and assessment indicators, etc. The central government plays a referee role, penalizing the universities and the teachers, who are in charge of Higher Education.

1.2 A first approach to the notion of the 'impact of evaluation' .

The impact as a concept is not connected originally with the educational evaluation in a broad sense. According to Angulo Rasco (1995), the impact was connected, in his terms, with a narrow conception of evaluation, linked with student tests; a method that measures the people's use of educational services.

Agreeing with Angulo Rasco, I do not support this narrow conception of evaluation that measures the reach in persons. I agree with an approach congruent with the broad conception of evaluation that allows us to deeply understand the achievement and difficulties in education as social dynamic process. So, is the impact concept out of the evaluation's vocabulary in this last conception?

Some studies affirm the opposite and do not part from a technocratic vision of evaluation. Westerheijden (1999) points out that the impact is one of the different guidelines that future empirical studies will have to follow. But the author underlines that it must not search for impact in exactly causal relations, nether efficiency or effectiveness. The researcher must have less ambition: to know the participant's perception of what the evaluative process has produced. But these impact studies must go beyond the student's satisfaction or learning outputs.

This kind of impact links with cultural approaches, and not with the classical

ones, which are related to, for example the amount of measures taken as a consequence of evaluation suggestions. As a cultural research we need to describe to context where the evaluation has taken place. The impact will not be the same in an Autonomous Community that has already developed IE processes, as in another one that hasn't developed them yet.

1.3 The objectives of the study.

The study's objectives are connected with the perception of the teacher involved in IE activities in the UB, especially their perception of that evaluation process, the importance and place that the institutional evaluation has in their academic labour. This perspective is central as the indicator of the effect of the evaluation process in the university. From a formative approach, the quality of the system lies not only in the objective outputs but also in how this formative activity is understood, perceived, have become part of their activities, how the teachers elaborate criticism and contributions, etc.

The research objectives are:

- Offer an approach of the situation of IE policy impact in the academic culture, adapting it to the Spanish context and to the University of Barcelona (UB).
- Know and understand the teacher's perspective about the IE in the UB.
- Analyze the IE processes developed in a UB area.
- Find out about the academic culture values of teachers who have participated in these evaluations.
- Analyse how the teachers have incorporated the evaluation activities in their academic values
- Elaborate, if possible, suggestions for the next evaluations rounds.

To reach these objectives the research will be focused on:

- Which evaluative purposes, methods, techniques, etc., are best accepted by the teachers? Why?
- How do the teachers value the developed IEs?
- What are the best institutional conditions to develop an IE in an adequate way?
- What is the academic's perception around their role as teachers, researchers and university managers?
- How does the evaluation system and the university evaluation policies affect this perception?
- Institutional evaluation is a condition to the university and higher education system improvement.

The research aims to approach the topic from the point of view of the different educational agents involved. These different approaches allow us to understand the evaluation as a cultural phenomenon and how this has affected their academic activities conception.

2. The university institutional evaluation and its impact study.

2.1 The University Institutional Evaluation in the European context.

The evaluation in the university ambit, as we understand it nowadays, is a relative new process (especially compared to the 900 years of history of Western university) that began in the '80s and started to consolidate in the 90's. Because of the relatively recent fact that the universities are autonomous from public administration, university evaluation is not an easy topic to address (Neave, 2001).

The controversy of the topic is the fact that one of the first experiences (in the European context) was when the conservative British Government wanted to attack the Welfare State (Neave & Van Vught, 1991). With evaluative mechanisms the government wanted to control and reduce university expenses when the Higher Education Institutions became mass institutions (due to the student's number in the classrooms). These mechanisms aimed to transfer the funding decisions to the market (Bauer & Kogan, 1997). The process was based on promoting the relationship between the universities and the private sector using different mechanisms, including the teaching and researching assessment criteria. This shows that the beginning of evaluative practices in the UK has a strong political and economic component.

2.1.1 A brief description of the European University Systems.

The irruption of system assessment was so important that it has changed the European University System ever since. During the XX Century we can distinguish 3 historical types of university systems: the *elite university*, the *mass university system* and then, because of the crisis of the mass system, what some authors (Neave, 2001; Krottsch, 2001; Harvey & Knight, 1996) call the *evaluated autonomous university*. _

During the 80's and with the arrival of the conservative government (the British is the paradigmatic case) the Welfare State was challenged, and the public university as a part of it. At the same time market oriented policies were set up to reduce public funding and to privatize.

In this frame, the university became a victim of the conservative sectors and media mistrust in the general public affairs (Krottsch, 2001). This was evident in two complementary aspects:

- The higher education funding reduction, followed by a number of accountability measures.
- Quality requirement of the university activities and measure system or quality evaluation policies were set up.

These ensued in a perverse combination: an increased quality requirement, combined with less funding, which would be distributed by granting privilege to the private sector and the market. These coincided with some decentralization policies, but of the process and not of the outputs: the institutions and the non-national states (regions, Länders, or autonomies) had the freedom and the responsibility of running the educational processes but with goals set up by the central government. This model lead to pseudo-market oriented policies, because the State was intervening more than before by setting up the assessment criteria.

Another transformation inside the university was the increase of academic

supply, orienting its degrees to vocational contents and courses, to the detriment of specific academic topics. The new offer changed not only the university topics, (courses related to the new economy like Marketing, Tourism, etc. started to appear) but also short time degrees (like the *diplomaturas* in Spain) were offered. Subirats (2001) shows as an example the growth and diversification of the Spanish University System, which in 1976 had offered 42 degrees, and in 1996 157.

Subirats (2001) remarks:

“The governments, (...), want to condition university funding increasingly; and the companies seek to steer the university research and teaching with new economic and materials resources. All this happens in a growing frame of science and teaching internalization, and in a new radical technology environment” (Subirats, 2001: p.13, own translation from Spanish)

Neave (1998) points out that the educative policy tendency of adaptation to the mainstream public policy trend is combined now with other answers. The institutions have also developed mechanism to protect academic activities from massification and external exposure like, for example, the set up of doctorate training schools (Ecoles doctorales in France, Graduierten Kollege in Germany, Onderzoeksscholen in The Netherlands).

But Harley and Lee (1997) point out that in accountability evaluative process developed during 80's in the UK:

“ the commodification of academic labor, as academics are increasingly constrained to produce and disseminate knowledge that has immediate exchange-value in terms of increasing funding for research or for attracting increasingly vocationally-oriented student's now reconstituted as “customers”. The consequence is a developing, if still partial, proletarianization of academic labor with academics losing

not only strategic but also operational control of their work” (pp 1429)

So the accountability process has been used to produce some special kind of scientific and academic knowledge linked with the market. This has happened because the State has begun to set up assessment criteria not defined by the academics.

A clear positive value shown as positive during these processes is diversity (Harvey and Knight, 1996). Diversity is linked, especially in the Anglo-Saxon perspective, to a reduction of the university activity control by the State. The evaluative proposals supported the idea that the homogeneous state interventions had to be replaced by other, more independent mechanisms. But in the English case some authors remark the facts that there was not an institutional diversity after the end of the “binary” system (Taylor, 2003) and that there has been a concentration of research topics (Harley 2002).

2.2.2 The influence of evaluation in the university models.

As Neave points out (2001) the European university models have been divided in British and Continental (with two types, the Napoleonic and the German based in the Von Humbolt’s Higher Education ideas) according to who is in charge of creation, organization and definition of programmes and curriculums. The British model was characterized by the independence of the universities as to their academic activities (judged by a peer committee, which Neave understands as the beginning of the peer review evaluation system). In the continental system, the State was in charge of these matters and the universities accepted these regulations.

Some authors, such as Harvey & Knight (1996), point out that both systems (Anglo-Saxon and continental) tend to meet in an accountable autonomy system: the Anglo-Saxon system which used to have more freedom - because of the rise of extern control by the quality and funding assessment. The continental systems, once out side the total state control, are now regulated by

the new quality systems.

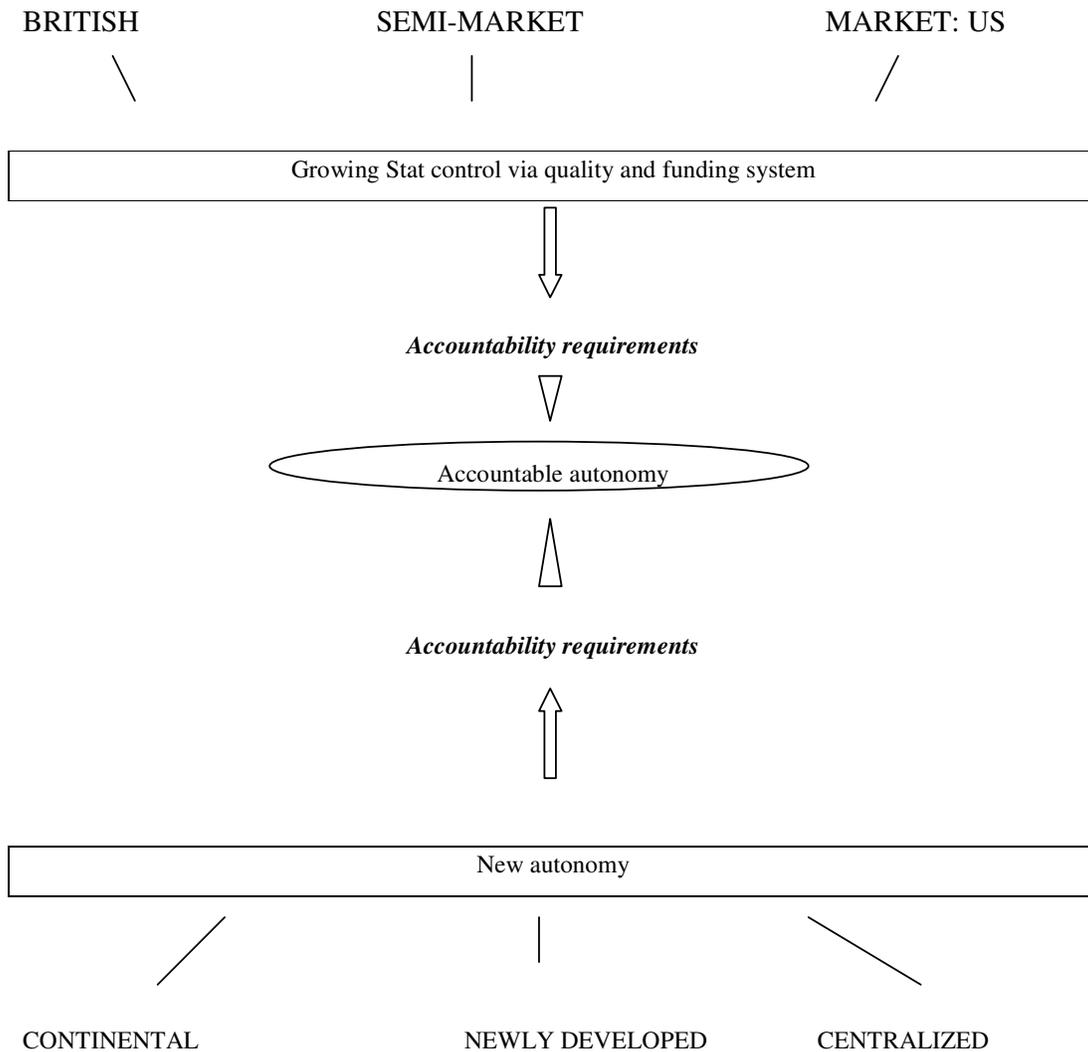


Figure 1: Convergence to accountable autonomy, from Harvey y Taylor (1996: 89).

This will be a good frame to analyse the different trends in the European Higher Education Systems (HES), but it would be too optimistic to assume that in all the continental systems the state has delegated the university control in quality (with accountability or not) systems. As we can see in the Spanish case, more than using the external quality system to transfer the control, it has been used to strengthen the university control. As an example of the diversity of current HES, we can quote the case of The Netherlands. Since the end of the 80's the Dutch system developed university self-evaluations to inform to society about

the university quality, but also as an institutional quality management tool (Van Vught, 1991).

After all of these experiences, a new agent has started to play an important role in the system. As Westerheijden et. al. point out (1994), in the University-State dialectic now there is a new element to consider: the agency that coordinates or sponsors the evaluation processes. This 'meta-agent' may be created or dependent on the universities, like in the Dutch case; it may be an independent governmental agency, like in the Danish case; it may be centralized as in France, or external to the university but with close market interests, like in England.

We can affirm that in Catalonia and Spain we find a special situation. In Catalonia, the Regional Government and the universities, as early as 1996 set up a Quality Agency (AQU). But the LOU has recently created a new national agency, the ANECA. At this moment a new competence problem is rising between the AQ and the ANECA.

The specific Spanish system with Autonomies, Catalonia as a historical nation inside the Spanish State, and the centralism of the LOU is driving the situation in a strange context, characterized by a triple game between the universities, the autonomic institutions and the central organisms. This game of agents in the higher education system and its specific tradition is very important when we want to analyze the evaluative model (Rodríguez, 1998).

2.3 The University Institutional Evaluation and the new quality's approach.

The need of the university evaluation is based on the fact that these processes search, promote, assure or certify (it depends on which type of evaluation) the educational quality. Especially the Institutional Evaluation is based on a specific

quality searching, different than the programme assessment (if the university is not a single programme institute), because:

“IE cannot deal with the quality of the content of all educational programmes executed. Instead, it focuses primarily on the internal conditions enabling delivery of good quality programmes” (Kalkwijk, 1998:21).

So the Institutional Evaluation is an internal formative quality process, with external peer review, which aims to promote the best conditions for the programme delivery.

2.3.1 The University Institutional Evaluation and the new quality concept.

Due to the fact that its principal purpose is to find the best condition to deliver a programme, Institutional Evaluation is not only a judgement of the university activities, but also an educative practice based in documents, statistical data and internal opinions, plus their assessment by a peer review report. This process was called *quality assessment spiral* (Westerheijden, 1997). If we want the process to work, we need a commitment from the agents involved in the evaluation, in the beginning of the spiral and at end, accepting the recommendations and setting up an improvement plan (as a new input in the quality spiral process). This shows that the evaluation is much more than a data collection, it is a commitment to quality education objectives and the actions oriented to reach them.

The quality-oriented evaluation in the university directs us to pay attention to the concept that we want to evaluate: **quality** in the university education. The concept is not *univocal* and does not have only one definition, in spite of having a general acceptance inside and outside the university field. The different agents of the university system aim to develop quality actions; but the problem is that there is not only one conception.

Van Vught (1994) points out two types of quality related to the functions of the university: the intrinsic and the extrinsic. The first are related to the ideal of searching truth and scientific knowledge. The internal functions are the scientific, philosophical and artistic research and its transmission through teaching. The extrinsic functions are the services that the university renders to society, also connected with research and teaching. For example, vocational training to fulfil the needs of the labour market; or research programmes linked with external university partners (companies and other institutions).

Van Vught states that a combination between these two functions must be the basis for an effective quality evaluation system. The different quality aspects and the specific combination for reaching quality as a social value, turn educative quality in a political, multidimensional and subjective concept.

Harvey and Knight (1996) point out five different quality approaches:

1. Quality as an exception: the idea of excellence, with an elitist stress on accountability evaluation.
2. Quality as perfection or consistency: focus on the process and the specification to fulfil.
3. Quality as fitness for purpose: accountability evaluation based on meeting requirement (also student employability)
4. Quality as value for money: performance indicators, customer charters.
5. Quality as transformation: enhancing or empowering the participant.

Weisterheijden et.al (1994) also remark different meanings of quality. They group them in the same five categories as Harvey and Knight. Westerheijden linked the quality as *exceptional* with the traditional concept of academic excellence. This conception means that the majority of the students, programs or institutions are not part of the excellence group. It is a concept linked with the elite university system.

The second one, as *perfection or consistency*, has relation with the zero defects culture and the strict fulfilment of administrative obligations. This is the typical criterion that the state education inspectors used to follow in the continental system. Quality as *fitness for purpose* is linked with the meeting requirements. The quality as *value for money* can be illustrated with the money incomes produced of students fee, research-funding resources, etc.

The last approach, quality as *transformation*, is connected with the conception of the learning process as a transformation, a change oriented towards improvement. As we can see, the university education quality concept shows a great complexity because a lot of stakeholders are playing in the system: the State, the academics, the students, the institutions, the graduates, the private sector, society, etc.

2.4 The impact of the quality evaluation in the university.

In general, the studies about the impact of quality evaluation aim to analyze the changes that these practices have produced in the university. At the same time, the studies related with the impact of institutional evaluation have an extra objective because they imply an improvement-oriented process, with formative aims and with the agents' implication. So it is important to analyze the opinion and perception of these agents in order to renovate the pedagogical and formative character of the evaluation processes.

After the generalization of different types of evaluation processes in the European university system, studies about those evaluative experiences have started to appear. These studies are oriented towards collecting information about the different kind of experiences, their methodologies, consequences, aims, effects and their implication in the educative system.

Those different works focused their objectives on the effects of the evaluative actions. The EVALUE Programme is a large project from the European Commission (EC, 1996) based on researching the first experience in quality

evaluation during the 90's in different European universities (also in Spanish and Catalan universities and at the UB). The study includes form contextual analysis in each country to the specific institutional and staff experiences.

Other studies are focussed on comparative analysis of the national systems and are oriented towards describing the specific trends in each system and their incidence in the evaluation system. Bauer and Kogan (1997) compare evaluation the systems of the United Kingdom and Sweden. For them, the traditional free British system is currently transformed by the quality assessment of teaching and research. These processes are controlled by the Funding Councils, which distribute vacancies and funds, according to the assessment's results. These councils are oriented towards obtaining funding from the private sector, so there has been a transformation to an academic free state system to a market oriented one.

On the other hand, in the Swedish case, Bauer and Kogan remark that the social conditions imposed the university quality assessment policies and the creation of a Central State Agency. This agency did not promote common evaluations, but promoted and gave support to the quality system development and cooperation in each institution. In this frame different kinds of quality evaluation have been developed: teaching and researching programmes, management functions, equality between men and women in university, etc.

These differences also show the effects of the different kind of evaluations, formative or accountability. The latter, and much more if they are linked with funding allocation, make the difference between good and bad practices larger, and stigmatize this disparity. In the British case the process increased the difference between researching and teaching. The formative processes, on the other hand, imply a compensation effect, for example promoting the improvement of the link between teaching and researching.

2.5 The studies on the impact of the university evaluation.

During the 90's, together with the generalization of the evaluation in Higher Education, studies on its impact started to appear. There is the case of Mandrup and Hansen (1998) about the HEI self-evaluation in Denmark. The authors comment on the effect of a good self-evaluation process when the government aimed to set up an accountability evaluative system. In this case, a well-developed formative self-evaluation was the main argument to refuse the external accountability system. This case will be interesting when compared with the Spanish and Catalan case.

Another interesting contribution is a study by Vroeijerstijn (1994), which analyzes the first round of assessment of Dutch universities and the preparation of the second round. The self-evaluations have been analysed and reviewed by external peer committees at the national level. Vroeijerstijn observes that the peer recommendations were focussed on the self-evaluation process more than on specific judgements developed in the self-evaluation.

Vroeijerstijn arrives to the conclusion that an improvement oriented system, like in The Netherlands, must be based on improving the self-evaluations, so the peer review can be focussed on comparing the different reports at national level. From an improvement approach it is better that the peer review can focus on content aspects and not so much on the process, improving the recommendations about the educational quality of the assessed units.

Also very interesting is Westerheijden's work (1994, 1997) about the effects of the Dutch evaluation system, which he understands as the use of the evaluation's outputs by the institutions and academics. The author found two basic types of impact: the passive use, and the active use. The active use is divided in three subcategories: the instrumental use linked to the outputs; the incremental use linked to the indirect decision made from the outputs; and the conceptual use that legitimises the practices.

But in a more recent study (1999), Weisterheijden points out to the limitations of this typology, because the peer review report should be made by specialists who have a different view on the pedagogical process than the assessed

institution. The assessed unit has the right to (partially) accept, or not, the recommendations of the final report, a right based on the university autonomy. Furthermore, if the evaluated unit is well assessed or is near perfection, the evaluation's output will not have an impact because it will not have a direct or indirect consequence.

Westerheijden also quotes other kinds of evaluation impact (1997):

- Research co-operation in the department /faculties
- Research activity, specially linked to publication
- Connections between researchers, research group leaders and faculties and universities managers
- Quality policies at faculty and university levels
- Funding allocation and professional recruitment policies coherent with the research programmes
- Centre and university management improvement
- Connections between the academics and the external agents, improving the social image of the university.
- And finally, the improvement of education

Not all of these effects are linked with the academic culture and the evaluation culture, but later Westerheijden (1999) points out that it must be a trend to analyse the cultural impact of the evaluations.

2.6 Evaluation impact and academic values and cultures

There are some works about the impact of the evaluation in the academic values and their answer to evaluation systems and the quality policies. Brennan y Shah (2002) analyse the impact of evaluation policies. The authors developed a conceptual frame to analyse the impact as a consequence of the used methodology in the specific national and institutional ambits. There are different

levels of impact: systemic, institutional, in the basic units, and individual; and there different mechanisms: awards, policies and structures, and culture.

The awards, for the authors, are applied to the system or institutional level, and are a direct output from the assessment process results. The policies are connected to changes in the composition of the government at institutional level and in the curricula structure; they may or may not be a direct consequence of the outputs. The impact on culture is shown at the individual academic level and it is not a direct consequence of the assessment outputs. This dimension is expressed in the values of academics and in their priorities.

The authors point out four different types of cultures: the academic culture, based on specific criteria and knowledge of each discipline; the organizational culture, focussed on administrative values and the educational service delivery; the pedagogical culture, focussed on the values of the teaching techniques; and, finally, the employment culture, based on the capabilities of the graduates to find a job. .

However, this approach is based on the need of the accountability policy implementation and the setting up of management policies inside the institutions. According to the authors, the impact of the evaluation must weaken the academic culture because there is not a homogenous quality concept inside it (because of discipline differences). But, on the other hand, they point out to the possibility that formative evaluations are based on academics cultures.

With a different approach, Bauer & Henkel (1999) oriented their work to the *academic inside world* in Sweden and England and how the professors have reacted to the evaluation policies, the consequences for their professional roles and values. The main question is to what degree the values of academics and their professional conception have changed. These changes are detectable in the dialectics between evaluative policies and university culture, not in a causal relationship (as Brennann and Shah point out.)

Bauer and Henkel quote three types of quality cultures: market oriented, administrative and professional. They identify themselves with the professional quoting that:

Individual independence, collective self-regulation and collegial forum of governance are perceived to be the essential and mutually reinforcing conditions for the central task of academic organisation: the production, the testing and transmission of knowledge” Bauer and Henkel (1999: 238).

They also point out three basic activities in the academic task: research, management and teaching. Depending on the context, the evaluative processes can focus on one or more activities. The authors find different impacts of the evaluative processes. One, general and positive, is that the university teachers find a forum to discuss about educational quality and develop a collective commitment within the institution. In the accountability process, like in the English case, academics perceive evaluation as an increase in administrative tasks which takes up too much research and teaching time.

In Sweden, they find as a cultural impact that academics are stimulated to think of curricula goals, methods and organisation, and the quality or value of working with the students. They are critical about the market values and support a discipline-based approach and good teaching methods (connecting with the professional and pedagogical values of Brennan and Shah’s approach).

2.6.1 Academic values and departmental cultures

Where are these academic values organised in the University? Henkel (2000) points out that science is internally organised in disciplines. Kekäle (2002) points out that this is based on the fact that the social and cognitive characteristics of each discipline change in a significant way.

The disciplines are expressed in the institutional organisation by the departments (in the Spanish case there is a specific organisation: department, faculties and discipline areas). Knight and Trowler (2000) quote that the organisation of these values is the department culture. They underline that projects which improve teaching and research productivity must connect with the department characteristics and the teachers' perception.

As Becher points out (2001), there are different kinds of academic identities or departmental cultures, but it is important to choose a kind of typology that we can connect with how academics understand the quality, with their idea of the university as institution, and with how to manage research (Neave, 1998). These perceptions are connected with the departmental cultures.

2.7 The evaluation and its impact on academic culture.

The evaluative impact is, in this frame, the analysis of the effect at different levels produced by the quality policies in HE. But the cultural impact is not located in isolated academics, but in their university context, the department (or wherever their culture, faculty, knowledge area, etc is organised). The departmental culture is understood as a whole of academic values and attitudes (Brennan and Shah, 2000), their expression in the academic agenda, and the self-perception (Henkel, 2000) of academics (especially the leaders of research groups and departments, because of their prominence in the discipline. Henkel, 2000; Knight & Trowler, 2000).

The impact of institutional evaluation on departmental culture is understood as the way the agents, teacher and researchers, have adapted their values to the assessment values. Or, in other words, how academics have adopted the institutional evaluation values, methods and process in their academic conception.

Each type of evaluation promotes specific kind of cultures (Brennan and Shah, 2000), but the kind of values also change from one institution to other. The

values shown in the proceeding or based on administrative policies do not change. But they will change if they are based on academic values or on the discipline authority.

The institutional evaluation, as a formative evaluation process, is different from an accountability process in the following aspects (Harvey and Knight, 1996):

- The developing of bottom-up continuo quality improvement process
- Trust in who develop the process and commitment to reach quality
- The external review must answer internal initiatives to add a strategic perception
- The formative evaluation process is linked to professional development

Because of this, it is important to not break the academic cultures but to base the evaluation on them in order to reach institutional improvement. So the evaluation impact changes because of the institutional context (Westeheijden, 1999). The cultural impact must take into account that evaluation is not a uniform tool. Following Knight and Trowler (2000) we can quote this kind of perception:

Kind of evaluation	Accountability	Formative
Values of Departmental Culture	• Administrative	• Academic-professional
	• Employment	• Student's developing capabilities
	• Pedagogic (technical)	• Pedagogic (critic)
Perception categories	• Administrative task	• Revision of the curriculum, the methods, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise to pass an exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible conceptualisation of teaching, learning and researching
--	--	---

The University of Barcelona, as a Spanish university, is organised in faculties and departments. The evaluation activities are focused on the studies (which are organised in the faculties) but the departments also participate in the process (AQU, 1999). This means that in order to analyse the impact in the Spanish universities is better to refer to academic cultures and not departmental cultures.

3. The model of cultural impact and their methods

3.1 A naturalistic approach

The cultural impact of the institutional evaluation must show a model that allows us to understand the perceptions of academics. Henkel (1998) quotes that, despite the possibility of challenging the peer reviews with the management paradigm, there are four tendencies in university evaluation:

- The rise of specific contextual conclusions
- The trend from accountability to improvement focus evaluation (because of the influence of hermeneutic approaches)
- Resettle the role of value judgments and argumentation
- The trend to univocal perspectives to pluralistic perspectives

For a quality process, the importance of this kind of approach is that “*another way of control of the quality of evaluation is to look into the process itself*” (Guba and Lincoln, 1990: 248). These authors also underline that a possibility to reach this quality is by collecting the opinion of the persons involved.

Westerheijden (1999) also quotes that the possible new trend will be focussed on comprehension and soft approaches in order to let the agents speak and add methodological diversity. He also underlines the importance of developing a follow-up of the evaluative activities. Because of these reason, this study is based on a naturalist approach and on Geertz's conception of dense description (Geertz, 1990).

3.2 The general design of the study

According to Guba and Lincoln (1990) impact can be analysed from a social or communitarian perception of the effects or utilities of a programme. Therefore, in order to value the institutional evaluation in the UB, the study should be focused on the perception of the academics involved in it. So the setting, the sources of information, the sample, and the data collection resources will be in connection with internal validity, and credibility.

The qualitative process is emergent, flexible and not lineal. The contextual character of naturalistic studies emphasizes these qualities (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). So it is important to analyze the context in order to better understand the academics' perceptions. There is a permanent connection between the analysis of the academics' perception and the context analysis.

3.2.1 The universe of the study.

For the departmental culture it is important to analyse the research group leaders' opinion, as Knight and Trowler point out (2000). These kinds of academics are the same as the Evaluation Handbook from the Catalan Agency (AQU, 2000) suggests that will lead the process. So academics who have lead the evaluation process are the right choice for our sample. But in the evaluation not only professors from each study have participated, but also academics from the Division (specific organism of the UB), and academics in charge of the Quality Plan and the University Evaluation and Innovation Bureau.

As Westerheijden (1999) quotes, each evaluation process is different. If we want to reach transferability, according to Guba (1989), we have to evaluate processes with similar objectives and developments. In order to solve these we will take into account the former divisional organization of the UB. It will be a theoretical sample focus in a specific knowledge area. In order to solve theoretical and practical problems, as Bellavista (1991) points out, we have to find a sample that gives us information linked with our objectives and availability.

The study will therefore be focussed on the Exact Sciences Division, which groups together convergent disciplines (Kekäle, 2002), allowing us to clearly identify the academic culture. The institutional evaluation process to analyse will be the following:

- Biochemistry (1997)
- Mathematics (1997)
- Chemistry (1999)
- Physics (2000/1)

3.2.2 The data collection mechanisms

The typical mechanisms of the interpretative approaches are participating observation, the qualitative interviews, and document analysis (Colás, 1994). Qualitative interviews and document analysis are focused on three kinds of objectives:

- Past actions
- Past representations
- Psychological organisations

These two tools are suitable to analyse academic cultures and their link with institutional evaluation. It is important to combine two different mechanisms in order to reach credibility.

3.2.3 Scientific precision procedure

As Guba (1989) quotes, the differences between naturalistic researches and rationalistic ones are based on the conception of reality and on the relationship between research and object. They are also variations in the scientific precision procedure to develop.

- To reach *credibility*, the naturalistic approaches look for acceptable discoveries with internal validation.
- To reach *applicability* they look for transferability by relevant discoveries in a specific context.
- To reach *consistency* they look for dependence by using overlapping mechanisms.
- To reach *neutrality* they look for confirmation by triangulation.

Procedure during the research

- Triangulation: different sources, different kinds of professors, managers, etc. Different mechanisms: interviews and document analysis.
- Theoretical sample: the specific evaluation processes in the Exact Sciences Area of UB.
- Identification of the researcher's interests and objectives
-

3.3 Synopsis of the cultural impact analysis

